TPM Vol. 32, No. S4, 2025
ISSN: 1972-6325
https://www.tpmap.org/

Open Access

REAL TIME ATTENTION MONITORING IN MECHANICAL WORKSHOPS USING WEARABLE DEVICES

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Abstract
Industry 4.0 is gathering momentum, and cognitive preparedness is required for human workers working in tandem with intelligent machines. Neurocognitive markers of attention and engagement in factory environments are investigated in this study through a multimodal biosensing framework. Observational techniques are not timely enough, and this research combines wearable EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking sensors to record cognitive states dynamically. Run with 20 subjects in a simulated innovative factory environment, the experiment simulated realistic tasks under long focus and stress-induced decision-making. Analysis of data confirmed that EEG frontal theta power and HRV measures were valid indicators of cognitive load, and eye-tracking measures were valid to detect attention patterns. Cross-modal analysis validated the complementarity of the tools for adaptive human-machine interface design. The work presents industrial applications like real-time workload monitoring, dynamic assignment of tasks, and adaptive responsiveness of the interfaces. Ethical issues of user permission and data privacy are brought into the limelight. Scaling with deployability and personalization by machine learning for human-driven automation is a direction for the future.
Keywords: Neurocognitive monitoring, Industry 4.0, EEG, cognitive readiness, wearable sensors, human factors, real-time analytics.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of Industry 4.0, where industry is dominated by automation and intelligent human-machine systems, has revolutionized industrial work, placing greater cognitive burdens on human workers [2][5][13]. As workers shift from manual tasks to those requiring continuous attention, choice-making, and flexibility, traditional methods of evaluation—such as self-reports and performance ratings—fail to capture real-time mental states [6]. In response, wearable neurocognitive technologies such as electroencephalography (EEG), heart rate variability (HRV) monitoring, and eye tracking have been developed as potential solutions [3][8][11]. They provide continuous non-invasive recording of brain activity, physiological tension, and visual attention, providing more depth of understanding of cognitive workload in industrial tasks. Their use in simulations provides an assessment of how people respond to different levels of task complexity and environmental conditions [7]. But ethical issues like data privacy, inclusivity, and fairness of algorithms need to be tackled in order to establish safe and equitable use. This paper speaks to the place of neurocognitive assessments in automation preparedness, specifically their usability, interpretability, and human-centered design considerations for business.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The fourth industrial revolution has moved industrial work towards cognitive control, promoting the necessity of attention monitoring and mental workload [12]. Old-fashioned means such as error rates can no longer be used to measure cognitive states in dynamic environments [4]. It has created the rise of neuroergonomics, which merges neuroscience and human factors for an investigation of brain-behavior interactions. The three highlighted topics of this review include conventional methods for measuring attention, wearables biosensors advancements, and theoretical frameworks to offer real-time cognitive feedback [14][9]. A closed-loop adaptive system is suggested that uses EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking to facilitate situational awareness and performance. Challenges to the system include signal accuracy, interpretation of data, and ethics [15].

2.1 Conventional Methods for Monitoring Attention in Industrial Contexts

- The traditional methods of behavioral observation and self-report tools (e.g., questionnaires) are prone to subjective responses and, therefore, bear the limitations of bias, memory decay, and unreliable self-awareness.

- These methods lack real-time monitoring capabilities, making them ineffective for capturing dynamic cognitive fluctuations during complex industrial tasks [1].

2.2 Advances in Wearable Biosensing and Cognitive Metrics in Human Factors Research

2.2.1. Real-Time, Multimodal Cognitive Monitoring with Wearable Biosensors

- Wearable tech such as EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking provides real-time, non-invasive attention, stress, and workload cognitive states feedback within the industry.
- Blending of these bio signals multimodally—augmented with machine learning—allows for precise state-of-mind classification and enables continuous cognitive monitoring without task interruption.

2.2.2. Industrial Applications and Alignment with Industry 4.0 Goals

- Tiny, wireless biosensors offer high-fidelity real-world data collection with the realism of worker mobility and operation preserved [10].
- Such advances allow adaptive human-machine systems that can dynamically alter interfaces or suggest breaks based on user state, and let safety, productivity, and cognitive resilience in automated operations.
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3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, neurocognitive predictors of automation readiness in Industry 4.0 environments were examined with a multimodal, empirical technique based on cognitive neuroscience and human factors engineering. Real-time biosensor data were gathered during simulated industrial tasks simulating bright factory conditions. Experimental design provided ecological validity, replicability, and reliable data. Among the notable methodological aspects were enrolling participants, establishing a controlled setting, employing wearable sensors, and task design that monitored different levels of cognitive demands—e.g., assembly-line vigilance, fault detection, and real-time decision-making under various conditions of workload.

Data collection utilized synchronized EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking sensors to enable information triangulation of attention and cognitive state. Artifact rejection, signal normalization, and multimodal alignment preprocessing were used to help achieve high-quality data. Statistical analysis and machine-learning-based mental workload classification were executed at the post-experiment stage. Ethical issues—such as informed consent, subject comfort, and ethical data handling—formed the backbone of the research. As a whole, the approach not only confirmed the wearability of the sensors but also investigated how cognitive tests can be used as real-time measures of human preparedness for semi-automated tasks.

3.1 Participant Recruitment and Workshop Environment

This research comprised 20 adult participants (22–45 years old) with existing familiarity with digital or industrial systems, and they were recruited from the university and professional networks. The research was conducted in an imitation industrial workshop setting with modular working stations, automated panels, and screen-based simulation in controlled environmental conditions. The participants performed a 45-minute task schedule of varying cognitive load (low to high) while being recorded via EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking sensors. Tasks were counterbalanced to minimize learning bias, and observer notes and post-task feedback were gathered. Ethical permission was obtained, and informed consent was obtained, both of which maximized experimental validity and generalizability to Industry 4.0 settings.

3.2 Devices and Sensors Used (EEG, HRV, Eye-Tracking)

While evaluating cognitive attention and workload in manufacturing simulation, EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking were employed as wearable biosensors. EEG was recorded with an Emotiv EPOC+ headset, recording frontal and parietal areas for evaluating attention brainwaves. HRV was recorded with a Polar H10 chest strap, and SDNN, RMSSD, and LF/HF ratio features were derived to record autonomic reactions. Gaze behavior and attention were captured with the eye-tracking Tobii Pro Glasses 2. Everything was synchronized with Lab Streaming Layer (LSL) to enable proper multimodal integration. The system offered real-time, non-invasive cognitive workload neural, cardiovascular, and visual signs recording.

3.3 Experimental Task Design and Data Collection Procedures

3.1.1. Structured Task Design Across Cognitive Load Levels

- Volunteers executed tasks at low (routine monitoring), moderate (multitasking), and high (fault resolution under time pressure) levels to mimic industrial cognitive loads and evaluate attention, decision-making, and error detection.

3.1.2. Continuous, Synchronized Multimodal Data Collection

- EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking information were captured and synchronized in real-time using Lab Streaming Layer (LSL), and specific measures such as alteration in brainwaves, alteration in HRV, and the direction of movement of eyes were experimented with to assess cognitive workload.

3.1.3. Fatigue Management and Subjective Feedback Integration

- Task blocks were alternated with recovery periods to avoid fatigue, and post-task workload perception was measured by NASA-TLX so that correlation between objective biosensor measures and subjective experience is possible.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The examination of neurocognitive data revealed differences in attention and attention-related physiological responses based on varying task load levels. Multimodal biosensing inputs, including EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking data, were treated with distinct processing pipelines and then integrated for synchronized analysis. EEG data revealed frontal theta activity increase in high-load tasks, reflecting greater cognitive effort, while alpha suppression in the EEG was noted in moderate to high loads, indicating engagement. These brainwave metrics showed strong concordance with behavioral metrics like slower reaction times and increased errors at higher cognitive loads.
In addition, HRV analysis showed decreased RMSSD as well as increased LF/HF ratio, indicating increased mental stress with strong sympathetic-controlled HRV modulation. From the eye-tracking metrics, higher task load resulted in increased fixation and lower gaze entropy, indicating visual attention narrowing. Integration of biosensing EEG, HRV, and gaze patterns provided strong correlations, reiterating the rationality and need for biosensing integration for cognitive state evaluation and real-time monitoring. Participants with better task performance displayed higher adaptability in physiological responses and lower perceived workload, demonstrating the effectiveness of wearable neurocognitive technologies in improving human-machine collaboration in changing operational settings.

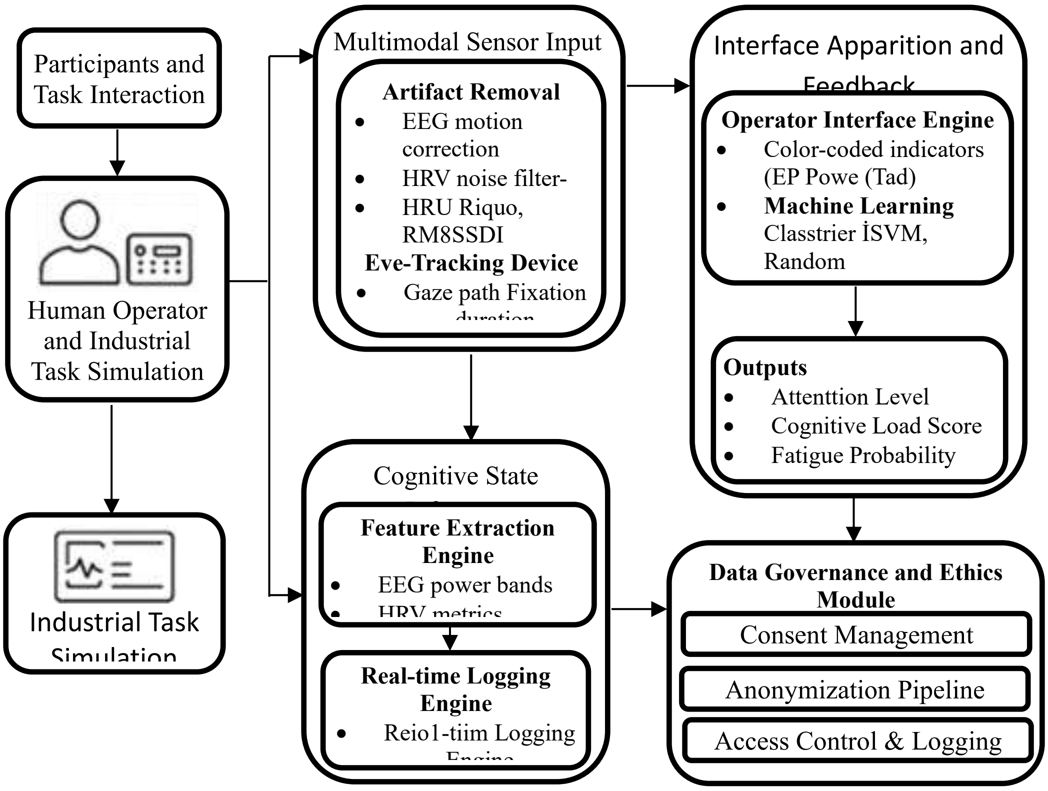

Figure1: System Architecture of Real-Time Neurocognitive Monitoring in Industry 4.0

In Figure 1, we see a comprehensive structure of a real-time neurocognitive monitoring system designed for assessing automation readiness in industrial contexts, depicted in six interactive levels. The first layer is the human operator, who can be a participant in a simulation or a live industrial task, with cognitive and behavioral reactions captured. The second layer is the multimodal sensor module, which has EEG headsets, HRV sensors, and eye trackers. These instruments capture bio signals with temporal precision and are synchronized through middleware like Lab Streaming Layer (LSL) for accuracy.

This layer concentrates on basic signal processing, like noise reduction and stream alignment. The refined output is the EEG, HRV, and gaze data, which is analyzed through machine learning classification algorithms for cognitive states such as mental fatigue, workload, and attention on different levels in the fourth layer. In layer five, adaptive dashboards and cognitive-engaged interfaces display real-time information feedback, and as a result, operators and supervisors can make real-time changes such as disencumbering workload or enforcing breaks. The last layer, which requires dynamic anonymization, user consent management systems, and secure access, focuses on ethical measures. The main contribution of the modular layers approach is the design of Intelligence 4.0 tailored to industrial data.

4.1 Cognitive Attention Patterns and Sensor Performance Across Task Conditions

The unified evaluation of EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking datasets demonstrated marked differences in cognitive attention within the range of workload tasks (low, moderate, and high). Focused attention was marked by increased frontal theta activity and alpha suppression at moderate levels during EEG. In high-load conditions, HRV revealed reduced RMSSD alongside increased LF/HF ratio characteristic of higher cognitive load and mental stress. Eye-tracking also revealed participants fixated longer and concentrated their gaze more during high-load tasks compared to low-load tasks, which featured a more scattered gaze. Integrating the different modalities revealed that participants with higher theta, Focused gaze patterns, and higher accuracy performance suggested predictive automation-readiness and cognitive efficiency.

5. INDUSTRIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of the study add value in relation to the human-centered automation approach for Industry 4.0. As industrial systems become more cognitively demanding, the ability to monitor attention and the brain's workload in real time offers significant advantages toward safety, productivity, and overall decision-making. With the automation of tasks and errors in productivity, the role of the human operator is minimized and guided through neurocognitive parameters such as EEG, HRV, and eye tracking. Within the context of neuroergonomics, Adaptive HMIs (human-machine interfaces) could adjust the information flow and temporarily hold back notifications or suggest mentally low-demand breaks during congestion to lower the cognitive workload.

In addition to the interface alterations, the implications arising from the biometric systems provide strengthening evidence for the specified training and assessment of readiness in the workforce. Through real-time biometric monitoring, the surveillance systems become context-aware, capable of timelier and more appropriate adaptive and proactive responses, thus allowing the move away from preset training templates toward preset training templates tailored for the individual. Using these monitoring systems and parameters, supervisors can identify the precursors of cognitive overload and provide support to the user to allow for proactive workload management. Where the need for action is ethically justified, clear parameters around consent, privacy, data collection, and data usage frames become essential. With these criteria met, trust can be established alongside sustained neuroadaptive integration in industrial regimens.

6. ETHICAL AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The intertwining of cognitive sensing technologies with industrial systems necessitates a focus on social and ethical considerations. Though there are improvements in safety and productivity, privacy, autonomy, and consent are still significant concerns. Biometric data collects and monitors mental and emotional data, which, in the absence of proper governance, can be exploited for unwarranted surveillance, performance pressure, or biased evaluation. Biometric data oversight demands clear governance frameworks that provide managed access, interpretation, forensics, and constrained data policies for collective and informed consent.

Concern for equity and inclusion is especially relevant as actively monitored performance metrics using mental feedback loops and proprietary algorithmic assessments are deployed. Defining algorithmic equity curated from closed developer ecosystems introduces a feedback and correction loop for systems that act outside domain laws or perceived equity algorithms. Principles of inclusion and equity alongside algorithmic fairness should be front-loaded, along with governance frameworks mandating regular system checks, ongoing audits, and enforcement of boundaries. Ethical governance frameworks will enable preventive action on perceived inequities, thus supporting autonomy and transparent direct and indirect assessment bodies as algorithmic systems evolve.

6.1 Ethical Use of Biometric Data and Informed Consent

- Biometric monitoring in industrial contexts poses distinctive ethical risks, especially with data such as EEG, HRV, and eye-tracking that can reveal subconscious thoughts. Protection of individual privacy requires informed, voluntary, and retractable consent, as well as rigorous confidentiality frameworks, anonymization, and data minimization.
- Biometric systems must also be secure and resilient against data breaches, providing stringent access controls, encryption, safe storage, and protection against abuse for employee monitoring or bias. Ethical use of biometric systems can be ensured through outside supervision, regular audit cycles, and open access to audit outcomes reporting.

6.2 Inclusivity and Bias Concerns in Cognitive Monitoring

- As with any sensor technology, neurocognitive monitoring tools need to be biased to the sensor design and algorithm interpretation that classify mental states, so the technology does not exclude user groups. Many systems are trained on homogeneous samples, which means neglecting their efficacy across genders, ages, ethnicities, and even different health conditions.
- To resolve this, there needs to be diverse data collection and adaptive algorithms that forsake universality in calibration. The design needs to be centred on the user, such that the targeted populations also include people

with disabilities and those not accustomed to wearable technologies. The ongoing bias audits alongside stakeholder involvement help ensure equitable as well as accountable deployment in the industrial context.

6.3 Future Research Directions in Real-Time Cognitive Technologies

- Real-world implementation in extended periods of time still needs more focus regarding research on wearable, integrated, augmented-reality, or helmet-based cognitive sensing systems that require less interruption of workflow for better tracking comfort and providing precision of captured data.
- An equally critical focus area is ensuring contextual frameworks that determine a user's cognitive baseline are individually tailored on privacy-sensitive models, such as federated learning, that uphold privacy and secrecy concerning data used.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the promising impact of wearable neurocognitive monitoring devices in the context of Industry 4.0 and in mechanical workshop environments. By integrating EEG and HRV with eye-tracking technologies, the study shows real-time and multimodal biosensing captures workers' cognitive engagement in intricate tasks. Neurophysiological signals, including theta power from the frontal region, HRV, and fixation with the eyes, were found to robustly signal cognitive workload, mental workload, attention, and mental stress. Cross-modal analysis underscored the contextual credibility of integrating these metrics to evaluate readiness for automation. The results of the study are significant for real-time adaptation and control of the human-machine interface, adaptive workload management, and tailored instructional systems design. The integration of these technologies has the potential to make workplaces safer and more efficient, while enhancing productivity and employee well-being. On the other hand, issues of ethics, such as privacy of data, consent, and the need to reduce bias, do pose challenges. Subsequent studies ought to focus on the design of automation systems that are scalable and AI-powered, but still uphold human-controlled decision-making within autonomous systems.

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