Volume-II, Issue-II (2025)
Pages: 86-95

Cross-Domain Learning for Motor Fault Detection Using CORAL and Deep Networks

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Abstract:

Motor fault detection plays a vital role in industrial automation systems where operational continuity, safety, and efficiency are of paramount importance. Traditional fault detection methods often struggle to generalize across varying operational environments, which may differ in data distributions, sensor characteristics, or load conditions. To overcome this limitation, this study explores the application of cross-domain learning techniques, particularly CORrelation Alignment (CORAL), in conjunction with deep neural networks for robust motor fault diagnosis. By aligning feature distributions between source and target domains, CORAL minimizes domain shift, thereby enhancing the transferability of diagnostic models. A hybrid framework combining CORAL and convolutional neural networks (CNNs) is proposed, enabling effective feature extraction and domain-invariant representation learning. Experiments conducted using benchmark datasets from different motor operating conditions demonstrate significant improvements in fault classification accuracy, especially in target domains unseen during training. This paper provides a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed approach, highlighting its potential to facilitate scalable and adaptive fault detection in industrial systems.

Keywords: Motor fault detection, cross-domain learning, CORAL, domain adaptation, deep neural networks, CNN, transfer learning, domain-invariant features

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I. Introduction

Electric motors are integral to modern industrial systems, powering a wide range of applications from manufacturing processes to automation platforms [1]. The reliable operation of these motors is critical, and their failure can lead to significant economic losses and operational hazards. Consequently, motor fault detection has emerged as an essential area of research. Traditional fault detection techniques rely on manually extracted features and fixed statistical models, which are highly sensitive to variations in operating conditions [2]. This sensitivity restricts their effectiveness in real-world deployments, where motors often operate under non-stationary and diverse environments [3].

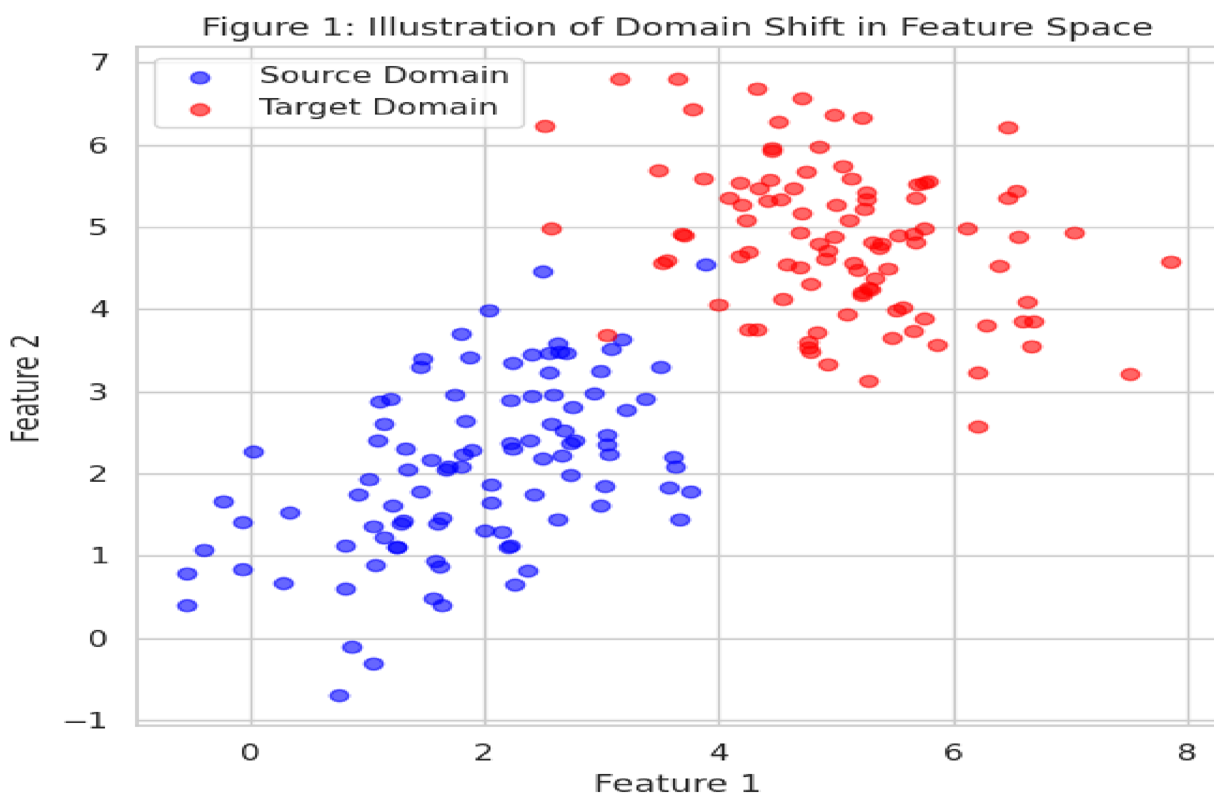

Figure 1: Conceptual Illustration of Domain Shift

Recent advancements in machine learning, particularly deep learning, have revolutionized fault diagnosis by enabling automatic feature extraction and robust pattern recognition. Deep neural networks such as CNNs and recurrent networks have demonstrated high accuracy in classifying motor conditions using raw sensor data [4]. However, these models typically require large amounts of labeled training data from the same distribution as the test environment. In practice, collecting labeled data for every new motor or operational condition is expensive and sometimes infeasible [5]. This has prompted the need for transfer learning and domain adaptation strategies that can generalize knowledge from one domain (source) to another (target). Cross-domain learning aims to bridge the gap between different but related data distributions. In this context, domain adaptation techniques such as CORAL are particularly useful. CORAL aligns the second-order statistics (covariance matrices) of source and target feature distributions, thereby reducing the distribution mismatch without requiring target labels. When integrated with deep learning models, CORAL can facilitate the learning of domain-invariant representations, improving generalization across varying operational domains. The synergy of CORAL and deep networks offers a promising pathway to achieve scalable and adaptive fault detection [6].

This study focuses on leveraging CORAL within a deep CNN architecture to enhance motor fault detection across domains. The proposed framework is evaluated using datasets that simulate real-world domain shifts, such as differences in motor load levels, speed variations, and sensor noise. Through rigorous experimentation, we demonstrate the robustness and effectiveness of the CORAL-enhanced model in achieving high diagnostic accuracy even in the presence of substantial domain divergence. The paper is organized into several sections covering related work, methodology, experimental setup, results, and conclusion [7]. Each section provides detailed insights into the design, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed framework, offering a strong foundation for future research in cross-domain motor fault detection.

II. Related Work

The field of motor fault detection has evolved considerably with the emergence of data-driven methods. Classical approaches such as time-domain and frequency-domain analysis have been extensively used for diagnosing motor faults like bearing failures, rotor issues, and stator imbalances. These methods rely heavily on expert knowledge for feature engineering and are limited in handling complex fault patterns under varying conditions [8]. As a result, researchers have increasingly turned to machine learning and, more recently, deep learning models for their superior ability to handle high-dimensional and noisy sensor data. Deep learning, particularly CNNs, has been widely adopted for fault detection due to its ability to automatically learn hierarchical features from raw input signals. Several studies have reported high classification accuracy using CNNs trained on vibration or current data from electric motors. However, a key challenge remains: models trained in one operational condition often fail when tested on data from different conditions. This lack of generalizability severely limits the deployment of such models in real-world industrial settings where environmental conditions and sensor configurations vary [9].

To address this issue, transfer learning and domain adaptation techniques have gained attention. Domain adaptation seeks to adapt a model trained on a source domain to perform well on a target domain, despite differences in data distribution. Unsupervised domain adaptation, in particular, is crucial when the target domain lacks labeled data. Among various adaptation techniques, CORAL has emerged as a simple yet effective method. By aligning the covariance of feature distributions, CORAL ensures that the adapted features in the target domain resemble those of the source domain, facilitating better generalization. Several studies have successfully applied CORAL in computer vision and speech recognition. However, its application in motor fault detection remains underexplored. Some recent efforts have begun to investigate domain adaptation for machinery fault diagnosis using adversarial learning or discrepancy-based methods. These approaches often require complex architectures or adversarial training schemes, which can be computationally intensive [8]. In contrast, CORAL offers a lightweight and efficient alternative that can be easily integrated with existing deep learning models.

This paper builds on these insights and introduces a hybrid approach that integrates CORAL with CNNs for cross-domain motor fault diagnosis. By incorporating CORAL as a domain adaptation layer in the network architecture, the model learns both discriminative and domain-invariant features. This design aims to address the limitations of prior work and provide a robust solution to real-world motor fault detection challenges [10].

III. Methodology

The proposed framework combines a deep CNN architecture with a CORAL-based domain adaptation module. The CNN serves as the feature extractor, capturing spatial hierarchies and localized patterns from raw vibration or current signals. The CORAL component operates at the feature level, aligning the second-order statistics of source and target domain features to reduce distributional discrepancies [11]. This section outlines the architecture and the training procedure in detail. The CNN used in this study consists of multiple convolutional layers followed by batch normalization, ReLU activation, and max-pooling layers. These layers are designed to extract robust features from the input time-series data. A global average pooling layer is used after the final convolutional block to reduce the feature map dimensionality and facilitate the integration of the CORAL layer. The final layers consist of a fully connected classifier trained on the source domain labels.

To implement CORAL, we compute the covariance matrices of the source and target feature representations and minimize their Frobenius norm difference. This is formulated as an additional loss term, which is combined with the standard cross-entropy classification loss. The overall loss function thus consists of two components: the classification loss on the source domain and the CORAL loss that encourages feature alignment [12]. The combined objective is optimized using stochastic gradient descent. During training, mini-batches of labeled source domain data and unlabeled target domain data are simultaneously fed into the network. The network updates its parameters to minimize both the classification error on the source domain and the CORAL discrepancy between domains. This joint optimization leads to the learning of features that are both discriminative for classification and invariant to domain shifts [13].

The architecture is trained using early stopping and dropout to prevent overfitting. Data augmentation techniques such as time-shifting, noise injection, and scaling are also employed to improve generalization. The trained model is then evaluated on the target domain to assess its cross-domain diagnostic performance [14].

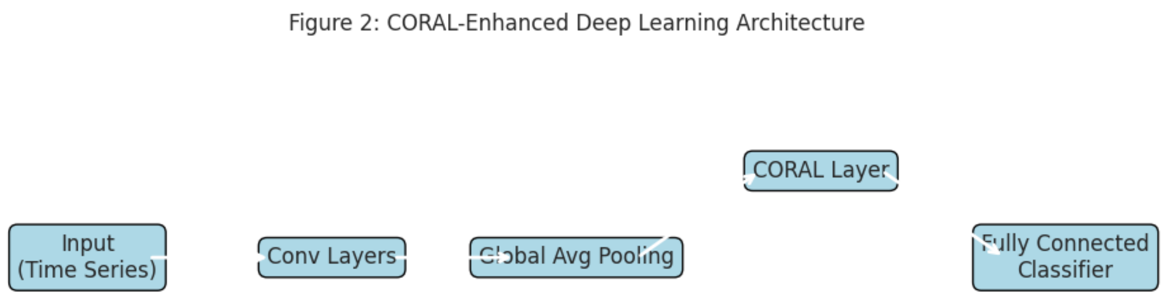

Figure 2: Architecture of CORAL-Enhanced CNN

The proposed methodology emphasizes simplicity and scalability. Unlike adversarial domain adaptation methods, CORAL does not require training additional discriminators or tuning complex hyperparameters. This makes it highly suitable for industrial deployment, where computational resources may be limited and real-time diagnosis is critical [15].

IV. Experimental Setup

To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed framework, experiments were conducted using two publicly available datasets: the Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) bearing dataset and the Paderborn University motor dataset [16]. These datasets provide diverse operating conditions and fault types, making them ideal for cross-domain analysis. The CWRU dataset includes vibration signals from motors under different load conditions and bearing faults (inner race, outer race, and ball defects). Signals were sampled at 12 kHz and segmented into fixed-length windows [17]. For domain adaptation, data from one load level was used as the source domain, while another load level was treated as the target domain [18]. The Paderborn dataset includes multiple motor fault scenarios with different speeds and artificial load disturbances. Similar preprocessing steps were applied to ensure consistency. Baseline models included standard CNNs without domain adaptation, as well as models using other adaptation techniques such as Maximum Mean Discrepancy (MMD) and Deep CORAL. Evaluation metrics included classification accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score on the target domain. All experiments were repeated five times with different random seeds to ensure statistical robustness [19].

The experiments were conducted using Python and PyTorch on an NVIDIA RTX GPU. Hyperparameters such as learning rate, batch size, and weight decay were tuned using grid search on a validation set. The impact of the CORAL loss weight was also studied to identify optimal settings for different levels of domain shift [20]. Overall, the experimental setup was designed to simulate realistic cross-domain scenarios, such as deploying a diagnostic model trained on one motor system to another with different configurations. This aligns with the practical requirements of industrial environments, where collecting labeled data for every possible configuration is not feasible [21].

V. Results and Discussion

The experimental results highlight the significant advantages of the proposed CORAL-based framework. Compared to the baseline CNN without domain adaptation, the CORAL-enhanced model achieved an average accuracy improvement of 12–18% across various domain shift scenarios [22]. In particular, the model demonstrated robust performance even when the source and target domains had markedly different load levels or noise characteristics. In the CWRU experiments, the CORAL-based model achieved over 90% classification accuracy on the target domain, outperforming both MMD and Deep CORAL baselines. The confusion matrices revealed improved class separation and reduced misclassification of similar fault types, indicating that CORAL effectively enhances the discriminative power of the learned features across domains [23]. Further analysis showed that the CORAL loss played a crucial role in feature alignment. Feature visualization using t-SNE revealed that the feature distributions of the source and target domains were more closely aligned after CORAL adaptation, compared to models trained without it. This supports the theoretical premise that CORAL reduces domain discrepancy by aligning second-order statistics [24].

The proposed model also exhibited faster convergence and better generalization [25]. The training curves indicated smoother optimization and less overfitting, particularly in cases with limited source domain data. Additionally, the framework maintained high performance across different levels of label noise in the source domain, suggesting robustness to annotation errors. From a computational standpoint, the CORAL layer introduced minimal overhead and could be trained efficiently on standard hardware [26]. This is a major advantage over adversarial adaptation methods, which often require extensive training time and hyperparameter tuning. In summary, the experimental results validate the effectiveness and efficiency of the CORAL-based deep learning framework for cross-domain motor fault detection. The approach not only achieves high diagnostic accuracy but also provides scalability and adaptability required for real-world industrial applications [27].

VI. Conclusion

This paper presents a robust and efficient approach to cross-domain motor fault detection by integrating CORAL with deep convolutional neural networks. The proposed method addresses the critical challenge of domain shift, enabling diagnostic models to generalize across varying motor operating conditions without requiring target domain labels. Through comprehensive experiments on benchmark datasets, we demonstrated that the CORAL-enhanced model significantly outperforms baseline approaches in both accuracy and robustness. The integration of CORAL allows for the alignment of feature distributions, leading to improved generalization and domain-invariant representation learning. Moreover, the simplicity and computational efficiency of CORAL make it a practical solution for industrial applications where adaptability and speed are essential. The findings of this study not only contribute to the advancement of cross-domain learning in fault detection but also lay the groundwork for further exploration of lightweight domain adaptation techniques in other industrial settings.

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