

1 **Temporal and spatial transferabilities of hydrological models under different climates**  
2 **and underlying surface conditions**

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12 **Abstract**

13 Changing conditions of the climate and underlying surface have altered the rainfall-runoff  
14 relationships in many basins, greatly increasing additional challenges in the applicability of  
15 hydrological models for studying the hydrological response to those potential changes. However,  
16 systematic and simultaneous testing and comparing of both temporal and spatial transferabilities of  
17 different hydrological models under changing conditions have not received enough attention. The  
18 present study investigates the potential differences between temporal and spatial transferabilities of  
19 different hydrological models under different climatic and underlying surface conditions, which are  
20 synthesized from two basins in Southern China with 50-year historical records (1966–2015). The

21 transferability of five hydrological models, i.e., XAJ, HBV, SIMHYD, IHACRES and GR4J, is  
22 investigated under the synthesised changing conditions by using a new evaluation method, proposed in  
23 this study. The results show that: (1) the proposed evaluation method is proved to be effective in  
24 evaluating the transferability of the models; (2) for temporal transferability under stationary condition,  
25 the five models show similar performances, but for spatial transferability, the performances of  
26 complex models (XAJ and HBV) are better than that of the simple model (GR4J); (3) the difference in  
27 underlying surface conditions in the target basin affects spatial transferability of the models; (4)  
28 hydrological models have much better transferability from dry to wet period than otherwise. This  
29 study provides an insight to test temporal and spatial transferabilities of hydrological models in the  
30 context of changing climate and underlying surface conditions.

31 **Keywords:** hydrological model, changing condition, spatial-temporal transferability, validation  
32 method

### 33 **1. Introduction**

34 The global climate and land use changes caused by substantial anthropogenic activities affect regional  
35 rainfall-runoff relationships, directly affecting local water resource availability (Arnell, 2004; Frich et  
36 al., 2002; Lu and Qin, 2020; Ma et al., 2008; Ragetti et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2011,  
37 2012). Scientific and accurate assessments of future water resources under changing environment have  
38 attracted more attention than before because water-related issues, such as flooding, drought and  
39 pollution, are becoming increasingly grave due to the impact of global warming and human activities  
40 (Alcamo et al., 2007; Chen et al., 2019; Doll, 2002; Li et al., 2015; Milly et al., 2008; Xiong et al.,  
41 2019). Hydrological models are the most important tool to study the impact of the changing

42 environment on water resources (Chen et al., 2019; Fan et al., 2019; Guo et al., 2019; Xu and Singh,  
43 2004). Hydrological models have several advantages in studying the impact of environment change  
44 (Gleick, 1986; Jiang et al., 2007; Klemes, 1986; Schulze, 1997). Firstly, many models are already  
45 available for different climatic or physiographic conditions, increasing flexibility in identifying and  
46 choosing the most appropriate model to evaluate any specific region. Secondly, extensive climate  
47 change scenarios obtained by climate models can be used as inputs for hydrological models when  
48 assessing the hydrological response to climate change. Thirdly, hydrological models are easy to  
49 manipulate and improve for specific areas or conditions. They are usually calibrated by using historic  
50 records, assuming that conditions of the model application period will be similar to those of the  
51 calibration period (Jiang et al., 2007; Xu, 1999b; Xu et al., 2005). However, altered rainfall-runoff  
52 relationship caused by climate and land use changes has also created some limitations and challenges  
53 in the use of hydrological models, which may cause the established models to become less skillful or  
54 lose their prediction ability in the new environment (Klemes, 1986). Therefore, it is essential to study  
55 the transferability of hydrological models in a changing environment.

56 Many studies on testing the applicability of hydrological models in changing climatic conditions have  
57 shown that many models do not have good temporal transferability, especially under non-stationary  
58 climatic conditions (Boorman and Sefton, 1997; Cornelissen et al., 2013; Eregno et al., 2013; Jiang et  
59 al., 2007; Li et al., 2012; Merz et al., 2011; Panagoulia and Dimou, 1997a, b). Moreover, the studies  
60 revealed that different hydrological models delivered different results when simulating hydrological  
61 responses to future climate change scenarios. Coron et al. (2012) used three lumped models (GR4J,  
62 MORDOR6 and SIMHYD) to simulate runoff processes in 216 watersheds in south-eastern Australia

63 and found that the greater the climate difference between the calibration and validation periods, the  
64 worse was the transferability of the models. Broderick et al. (2016) used six lumped hydrological  
65 models to conduct a cross-validation study by dividing dry and wet years in the 37 watersheds of  
66 Ireland; results showed that model transferability depended on the selected catchment, tested scenarios  
67 and evaluation criteria. Oni et al. (2016) used historical wet and dry years as a proxy for expected  
68 future extreme conditions in a boreal catchment, demonstrating that runoff may be underestimated by  
69 at least 35% when model parameters were transferred from dry to wet years.

70 Hydrological models' spatial transferability has been studied using regionalisation methods (Bao et al.,  
71 2012; Merz and Blöschl, 2004; Parajka et al., 2013; Samuel et al., 2011; Swain and Patra, 2017; Yang  
72 et al., 2017, 2019, 2020). Yang et al. (2019) applied a lumped conceptual hydrological model  
73 (WASMOD) to investigate the transferability of regionalisation methods under changing climate  
74 conditions, based on 108 catchments in Norway. Lute and Luce (2017) built snow models of varying  
75 complexity in the western U.S. to evaluate model transferability in new locations and periods,  
76 indicating that the transferred models performed well in the new location with conditions similar to the  
77 trained location. They also found that simple to moderately complex models performed better than  
78 complex models when transferred to new locations in their study. Different results are reported by  
79 Yang et al. (2020) who tested spatial transferability of five conceptual hydrological models with  
80 varying number of parameters from 6 to 17, and concluded that the model with more parameters  
81 produced better results in most cases. A comprehensive survey of literature shows that there is no  
82 consistent conclusion about which regionalisation method or model performs best. Moreover, climate  
83 conditions are changing or are becoming non-stationary (IPCC, 2014), and under non-stationary

84 climate conditions, the reliability of the model's spatial transferability needs to be investigated.  
85 Therefore, it is very meaningful to further jointly study temporal and spatial transferabilities of  
86 different hydrological models under different climatic periods and in different basins.

87 The problem of general model transferability (spatial and temporal) has been recognised early as the  
88 major aim and the most difficult aspect of hydrological modelling (Klemes, 1986; Xu, 1999b). Despite  
89 this fact, less attention has been paid to the testing of this most important aspect, compared with many  
90 other modelling issues like manual versus automatic calibration, optimisation, regionalisation, etc.  
91 (Klemes, 1986; Xu, 1999b). In other words, operational testing of the models is not given the priority  
92 it deserves. Xu (1999b) made a preliminary attempt to evaluate temporal and spatial transferabilities of  
93 a lumped model in different simulation strategies; however, the study was limited by the number of  
94 models and data available at that time.

95 Above discussion reveals that although previous studies have explored transferability of hydrological  
96 models, some key issues are yet to be studied, which motivated the current study: (1) How do  
97 temporal and spatial transferabilities of hydrological models differ with the model complexity? (2)  
98 How do temporal and spatial transferabilities of hydrological models depend on different climates and  
99 underlying surface conditions of the basin? (3) What are the performance differences when the models  
100 are calibrated under dry/wet condition and transferred to wet/dry condition? To achieve these goals,  
101 five lumped hydrological models, including XAJ (Zhao, 1980), HBV (Bergstrom, 1976), SIMHYD  
102 (Chiew, 2002), IHACRES (Jakeman et al., 1990), and GR4J models (Perrin et al., 2003) with different  
103 complexities and flow generation methods are applied to two catchments in central-south China in this  
104 study. The temporal and spatial transferabilities of the five conceptual models are compared and

105 analysed by using the split-sample, differential split-sample, proxy-basin and differential proxy-basin  
106 tests under stationary and changing conditions, including different climatic periods, different basins  
107 and their combinations. The rest of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 introduces the study  
108 area and data. Section 3 provides the details about the five lumped models, and model calibration and  
109 validation methods. Section 4 presents and discusses the results corresponding to different simulation  
110 strategies. Finally, section 5 draws major conclusions and presents the limitations and possible future  
111 development of this study.

## 112 **2. Study area and data**

113 The study area for such a study must meet three requirements: (1) availability of long-term  
114 observation data; (2) extreme and variable climatic conditions to make it possible to select contrasting  
115 periods to test the capability of hydrological models under extreme conditions; and (3) significant  
116 differences of the underlying surface between the two basins. According to the requirements, Daxitan  
117 and Xiangxiang basins are selected as the study areas, whose location is shown in Fig. 1 and  
118 characteristics are listed in Table 1. The two basins are located in central-south China and cover a total  
119 area of 3010 km<sup>2</sup> and 5970 km<sup>2</sup>, respectively. They both belong to a humid climate zone, which is also  
120 a necessary condition, as in practice, one will not expect to transfer a calibrated model in a humid  
121 region to an arid region, and vice versa. Affected by the monsoon climate and terrain, more than 65%  
122 of rainfall occurs in the rainy season from April to September for both basins. The mean annual  
123 rainfall, evapotranspiration and air temperature are 1560 mm, 847 mm, and 17°C, respectively, in  
124 Daxitan basin, and 1363 mm, 750 mm, 16.5°C, respectively, in Xiangxiang basin.

125 <Figure 1 here please >

126 < Table 1 here please >

127 Although both basins belong to the same climate zone, differences in their underlying surface, i.e.,  
128 land covers and slope of the terrain, etc., are significant, as detailed in Table 1. Underlying surface  
129 conditions of Daxitan basin are more favourable for runoff generation and concentration than that of  
130 Xiangxiang basin, which can be verified by their runoff coefficients.

131 In this study, daily values of rainfall, pan evaporation, runoff and mean air temperature of the two  
132 basins for the period 1966–2015 are used to calibrate and validate the models. The daily mean air  
133 temperature is obtained from the National Meteorological Information Centre (<http://data.cma.cn/>),  
134 and other data are obtained from the published Yearly Hydrological Books of China. Considering the  
135 uneven distribution of meteorological stations, the Thiessen polygon method is used to calculate mean  
136 areal rainfall, evaporation and temperature of both basins as model input. These hydro-meteorological  
137 data are quality controlled by the Hydrology and Water Resources Bureau of Hunan Province, China  
138 and have been used in many other studies (e.g., Li et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2015a; Zeng et al., 2018).

139 <Figure 2 here please >

140 Figure 2 shows standardised annual rainfall and runoff (defined as deviation from the mean divided by  
141 the mean values) and standardised mean daily temperature (defined as deviation from the mean) and  
142 their five-year sliding results. Consistent changes between runoff and rainfall series can be seen,  
143 indicating that runoff is mainly driven by rainfall in the region. Temperature difference between the  
144 two basins is very small as they belong to the same climatic zone. The annual rainfall and runoff show  
145 no obvious trend but with distinct dry and wet periods, while the temperature of both basins showed a  
146 major upward trend over the entire record period, indicating that the selected period of 1966–2015 can

147 be taken as the climate warming period to study the transferability of the hydrological models.

### 148 **3. Hydrological models and methods**

#### 149 **3.1. Hydrological models**

150 Five conceptual hydrological models (XAJ, HBV, SIMHYD, IHACRES and GR4J), running at a daily  
151 time step, used to investigate transferability under changing conditions, are listed in Table 2. They are  
152 selected based on consideration of three aspects. First of all, the models are popular and commonly  
153 used in previous studies. Secondly, there are remarkable differences in their parameters and structures.  
154 Thus, they provide a good range of conceptual models available. Thirdly, as conceptual hydrological  
155 models are most widely used in assessing the impact on water resources in a changing environment, it  
156 is important to compare transferabilities between different conceptual hydrological models in changing  
157 environments (Broderick et al., 2016; Coron et al., 2012; Dakhlaoui et al., 2017; Fowler et al., 2016;  
158 Li et al., 2015, 2019; Vaze et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2020).

159 <Table 2 here please >

160 The XAJ model proposed by Zhao (1980) has been widely applied in humid and sub-humid regions  
161 (Jie et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2014; Yao et al., 2014; Zeng et al., 2016). In this model, hydrological  
162 processes can be divided into four groups: evapotranspiration, runoff production, separation of runoff  
163 components, and flow routing, linked to 15 parameters (Zhao, 1992). The HBV, originally developed  
164 by Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) (Bergstrom, 1976), has been applied in  
165 many countries. The HBV model consists of a soil moisture routine, a response routine with three  
166 linear reservoir equations and a routing routine using the unit hydrograph (Osuch et al., 2019; Seibert,



167 1999). The SIMHYD model has nine parameters and includes three storages for interception loss, soil  
168 moisture and groundwater and the routing process (Chiew, 2002; Li et al., 2013). It considers different  
169 runoff production mechanisms for application in dry and wet areas. The IHACRES model is a lumped  
170 conceptual model based on the principle of unit hydrograph (Jakeman et al., 1990). It applies a transfer  
171 function/unit hydrograph approach to transform total rainfall to total runoff in two stages. In the first, a  
172 non-linear module is used to calculate effective rainfall by deducting the loss of rainfall, and then in  
173 the second linear module, effective rainfall is transformed into total runoff by fast and slow flows. The  
174 GR4J model is a simple lumped conceptual hydrological model with four parameters (Perrin et al.,  
175 2003). It routes runoff through a production reservoir, two linear unit hydrographs and a non-linear  
176 routing reservoir (Wang et al., 2018). Based on the difference in the routing time, the total runoff  
177 generation is divided into two runoff components according to the ratio of 9:1 (Perrin et al., 2003).

178 The five models are different in the way they conceptualise the hydrological processes and in their  
179 complexity (4–15 free parameters). The physical process is described in more detail and physical  
180 mechanism is more complex in XAJ, HBV, and SIMHYD models. The IHACRES model is a hybrid  
181 conceptual metric model, while GR4J is more simplified and empirical. The main feature of the runoff  
182 generation of XAJ and HBV models is that runoff is not generated until the soil moisture content of  
183 the aeration zone reaches its field capacity (i.e., saturation excess flow mechanism), while for  
184 SIMHYD model, surface runoff is not produced until the effective rainfall intensity is greater than the  
185 infiltration (i.e., infiltration excess mechanism). For the simulation of evaporation, XAJ model uses a  
186 three-layer evaporation model, while HBV and SIMHYD models use a one-layer model. Additionally,  
187 XAJ and HBV models consider uneven distribution of rainfall, but SIMHYD model does not. While

188 IHACRES model is designed to utilise the simplicity of the metric model to reduce the uncertainty of  
189 the hydrological model, it attempts to represent more detail of internal processes than is typical for a  
190 metric model (Coron et al., 2012). The GR4J model has the simplest structure between the models.

### 191 **3.2. Validation methods for hydrological models**

192 The test framework proposed by Klemes (1986) is used in this study. It is a typical test procedure  
193 based on selecting a specific contrast period from a long historical record to test a model's capability  
194 under changing conditions. The purpose of the test is to provide a set of basic safeguards and prevent  
195 the application of the model for tasks beyond its ability. The proposed scheme is called hierarchical  
196 because the modelling tasks are ordered according to their increasing complexity, and the demands of  
197 the test increase in the same direction. The four major categories are shown in Fig. 3.

198 <Figure 3 here please >

199 The split-sample test is the most common and fundamental operation to test model performance under  
200 stationary conditions. Available data are split into two parts; one for calibration and other for  
201 validation. Depending on the length of available sequences, segmentation can usually be done in a  
202 ratio of 1:1 or 7:3 (Klemes, 1986).

203 Proxy-basin test should be applied as a basic test when models are to be transferred between different  
204 basins, i.e., from a gauged to an ungauged catchment. The test needs to select at least two gauged  
205 basins in an adjacent region. The model is calibrated on a gauged basin and validated on the other  
206 gauged basin and vice versa. Only if the validation results of two basins are acceptable, the model  
207 might be used in the ungauged basin.

208 Differential split-sample test is used when a model is to be applied to simulate hydrological process  
209 under climate change in a gauged basin (Daggupati et al., 2015; Dakhlaoui et al., 2017; Fowler et al.,  
210 2016; Patil and Stieglitz, 2015; Westra et al., 2014; Zheng et al., 2018). This test is meaningful  
211 whenever a model is used to simulate runoff under conditions different from those corresponding to  
212 the available historical record. The main distinction from the split-sample test is that historical records  
213 are divided according to contrasting conditions of rainfall or other climatic variables, attempting to  
214 show that the model has general validity when used under climate change. For example, if increase in  
215 rainfall/temperature is the main change scenario in future, a dry/cold segment is selected to calibrate  
216 the model and wet/hot segment to validate it. The model with better validation results means better  
217 transferability under climate change.

218 The proxy-basin differential split-sample test is the most complicated test in Klemes' hierarchy. The  
219 model parameters need to be transferred under different climatic and spatial conditions. Such  
220 extensive transferability can be used as the ultimate objective and evaluation criterion of hydrological  
221 models. The specific test procedure is the combination of the proxy-basin and differential split-sample  
222 tests. First, two gauged basins A and B need to be selected, belonging to the same climate zone. Then,  
223 if increase in rainfall/temperature is the main change scenario in future, a dry/cold segment of basin A  
224 (B) is selected to calibrate the model and wet/hot segment of basin B (A) to validate it. The model  
225 with the best validation results will become the candidate model.

### 226 **3.3. Model calibration and evaluation method**

227 The shuffled complex evolution (SCE-UA; see Duan et al., 1992) algorithm, an effective global  
228 optimisation algorithm, is used to calibrate the models in this study. The algorithm is mainly based on

229 the concept of information-sharing and natural biological evolution (Duan et al., 1994). It integrates  
 230 the advantages of global sampling and complex evolution (Nelder and Mead, 1965). These  
 231 characteristics can ensure the full use of sample information and greatly improve the convergence  
 232 efficiency of the algorithm (Jeon et al., 2014). Therefore, it is widely used to calibrate parameters of  
 233 conceptual hydrological models (Jie et al., 2018; Zeng et al., 2018).

234 In general, model parameters need to be calibrated with the criterion of making the difference between  
 235 the simulated and observed runoff values from the historical record as small as possible. In this study,  
 236 the objective function is a weighted combination of Nash efficiency coefficient (NS) and relative  
 237 volume error (RE) proposed by Viney et al. (2009):

$$F = NS - 5 \times |\ln(1 + RE)|^{2.5} \quad (1)$$

238 where, NS and RE are shown in Eqs. (2) and (3), respectively. The optimal value of F is 1. This  
 239 objective function is selected considering that it can effectively minimise RE, while at the same time  
 240 maximise NS (Vaze et al., 2010).

$$NS = 1 - \frac{\sum(Q_{obs}^t - Q_{sim}^t)^2}{\sum(Q_{obs}^t - \overline{Q_{obs}})^2} \quad (2)$$

$$RE = \frac{\sum(Q_{sim}^t - Q_{obs}^t)}{\sum Q_{obs}^t} \times 100\% \quad (3)$$

241 Here,  $Q_{obs}^t$  and  $Q_{sim}^t$  are the daily observed and simulated runoffs at time t, respectively, and  $\overline{Q_{obs}}$   
 242 is the mean value of daily observed runoff. The NS represents the ratio between residual variance and  
 243 observed data variance (Nash and Sutcliffe, 1970). To minimise the influence of initial condition on  
 244 model performance, one year before the calibration period is used as the warm-up period.

245 The NS and RE are generally used to evaluate the accuracy of runoff simulation. Moriasi et al. (2007)  
246 proposed an NS and RE evaluation-grading category (Table 3) for evaluating model performance,  
247 widely used in runoff simulation in the world (Dakhlalla and Parajuli, 2016; Yang et al., 2019).  
248 However, numerical values of NS and RE are very different depending on, among others, geographic  
249 regions and hydrological models. For example, different threshold values of NS and RE are  
250 recommended in China for Hydrological Information and Hydrological Forecasting (HIHF) (Ministry  
251 of Water Resources, 2008). They are also listed in Table 3.

252 <Table 3 here please >

253 In order to have an objective criterion for evaluating the performance of transferability of hydrological  
254 models, we defined a new evaluation method based on the changes of NS and RE, shown in Table 4  
255 and described as follows.

256 <Table 4 here please >

257 (1) If NS of the target catchment  $NS_T \geq 0.70$  and RE of the target catchment  $RE_T \leq 10\%$ , the  
258 model is considered to have transferability regardless of the change range of NS ( $\Delta NS$ ) and RE  
259 ( $|\Delta RE|$ ) between the calibrated and transferred models.

260 (2) If  $NS_T < 0.70$  and  $RE_T \leq 10\%$ , the model is considered to have transferability when  $\Delta NS \leq$   
261  $0.2$ ; otherwise, it is considered to not have transferability.

262 (3) If  $NS_T \geq 0.70$  and  $RE_T > 10\%$ , the model is considered to have transferability when  $|\Delta RE| \leq$   
263  $20\%$ ; otherwise, it is considered to not have transferability.

264 (4) If  $NS_T < 0.70$  and  $RE_T > 10\%$ , the model is considered to have transferability when  $\Delta NS \leq 0.2$

265 and  $|\Delta RE| \leq 20\%$ ; otherwise, it is considered to not have transferability.

## 266 **4. Results and discussions**

### 267 **4.1. Spatial-temporal transferability tested by using odd and even years split-sample and** 268 **proxy-basin methods**

#### 269 **4.1.1 Temporal transferability tested by using odd and even years split-sample test method**

270 The split-sample test is carried out under stationary climate and basin conditions. In this experiment,  
271 the complete 50-year record is divided into odd and even years to avoid the influence caused by  
272 climate change. The Mann-Kendall (MK) test results reveal that the odd and even years runoff series  
273 in both basins do not have significant changing trends at 5% significance level and are considered to  
274 be stationary series. The models are calibrated using data of odd (even) years, and optimised  
275 parameters are used to simulate the runoff of even (odd) years.

276 The NS and RE values for different calibration and validation periods for the split-sample test are  
277 shown in Table 5. The five models perform similarly well for all calibrations, with all NS values  
278 greater than 0.79 and all RE values seem to be 0. All validations are slightly poorer but also show very  
279 good performance with all NS values exceeding 0.79 and RE values within  $\pm 10\%$ . According to the  
280 proposed evaluation method in Table 4, performances of the five transferred models for this test are  
281 considered to be acceptable, as all  $NS > 0.70$  and  $RE < 10\%$ , indicating that the five models have  
282 temporal transferability under stationary conditions. Additionally, the difference between the results of  
283 different models is small.

284 <Table 5 here please >

#### 285 4.1.2 Spatial transferability tested by using proxy-basin method

286 Similar to the split-sample test, the odd and even years described in Section 4.1.1 are used to obtain  
287 stationary climate conditions in this test. In this section, the spatial transferability test includes the  
288 proxy-basin and differential split-sample proxy-basin tests as shown in Figure 3, with the following  
289 combination scenarios: (1) Proxy-basin: calibrated on odd (even) years in Daxitan basin (A) and tested  
290 on odd (even) years in Xiangxiang basin (B) ( $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{odd}}$  or  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{even}}$ ), calibrated on odd (even) years  
291 in Xiangxiang basin (B) and tested on odd (even) years in Daxitan basin (A) ( $B_{\text{odd}}-A_{\text{odd}}$  or  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{even}}$ ).  
292 (2) Differential split-sample proxy-basin: calibrated on odd (even) years in Daxitan basin (A) and  
293 tested on even (odd) years in Xiangxiang basin (B) ( $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{even}}$  or  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{odd}}$ ), calibrated on odd (even)  
294 years in Xiangxiang basin (B) and tested on even (odd) years in Daxitan basin (A) ( $B_{\text{odd}}-A_{\text{even}}$  or  
295  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{odd}}$ ).

296 Showing NS and RE values of different scenarios for the proxy-basin test, Fig. 4 reveals: (1) In most  
297 cases there is a slight increase in NS values when calibrated on Xiangxiang basin (B) and transferred  
298 to Daxitan basin (A), which include all four scenarios and almost all models (i.e.,  $B_{\text{odd}}-A_{\text{even}}$ ,  $B_{\text{odd}}-A_{\text{odd}}$ ,  
299  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{odd}}$  and  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{even}}$ ), except  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{odd}}$  for HBV model. This slight increase in NS values is  
300 because the calibration result of Daxitan basin as measured by NS is about 0.05–0.1 higher than that of  
301 Xiangxiang basin, as seen in Table 5. In this case, the XAJ model performed best for all the scenarios  
302 and GR4J is the worst for two scenarios ( $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{odd}}$  and  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{even}}$ ). (2) In all scenarios, there is a big  
303 drop of NS values when calibrated on Daxitan basin (A) and transferred to Xiangxiang basin (B) (i.e.,  
304  $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{even}}$ ,  $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{odd}}$ ,  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{odd}}$  and  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{even}}$ ). In this case, the XAJ model performed best and GR4J  
305 is the worst for all scenarios. (3) In terms of RE values, there is a 10% to 20% negative bias when the

306 models are calibrated on Xiangxiang basin and transferred to Daxitan basin, which is true for all four  
307 scenarios and five models (i.e.,  $B_{\text{odd}}-A_{\text{even}}$ ,  $B_{\text{odd}}-A_{\text{odd}}$ ,  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{odd}}$  and  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{even}}$ ). The opposite is true  
308 when the models are calibrated on Daxitan basin and transferred to Xiangxiang basin, where there is  
309 10% to 30% positive bias depending on the model (i.e.,  $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{even}}$ ,  $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{odd}}$ ,  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{odd}}$  and  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{even}}$ ).  
310 (4) According to the evaluation criterion defined in Table 4, transferability of all five models is not  
311 accepted under  $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{even}}$  scenario; GR4J does not have transferability under  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{odd}}$  scenario, as its  
312  $RE > 10\%$  and  $|\Delta RE| > 20\%$ . The GR4J and SIMHYD models do not have transferability under  
313  $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{odd}}$  scenario as their  $RE > 10\%$  and  $|\Delta RE| > 20\%$ ; only IHACRES shows transferability under  
314  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{even}}$  scenario, as its  $NS > 0.7$  and  $|\Delta RE| < 20\%$ . Only performances of transferred GR4J and  
315 SIMHYD are not acceptable under scenario  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{odd}}$  because their  $RE > 10\%$  and  $|\Delta RE| > 20\%$ .

316 <Figure 4 here please >

317 Above discussion reveals that performances of the five models in Daxitan basin (A), with a runoff  
318 coefficient of 0.58, are consistently and significantly better than those in Xiangxiang basin (B) with a  
319 runoff coefficient of 0.44, in the calibration period. This is an important reason behind the sharp drop  
320 in NS values and a positive bias when the models are calibrated on Daxitan basin (A) and transferred  
321 to Xiangxiang basin (B) (i.e.,  $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{even}}$ ,  $A_{\text{odd}}-B_{\text{odd}}$ ,  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{odd}}$  and  $A_{\text{even}}-B_{\text{even}}$ ). On the contrary, there is a  
322 negative bias when the models are calibrated on Xiangxiang basin (B) with lower runoff coefficient  
323 and transferred to Daxitan basin (A) with a higher runoff coefficient (i.e.,  $B_{\text{odd}}-A_{\text{even}}$ ,  $B_{\text{odd}}-A_{\text{odd}}$ ,  
324  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{odd}}$  and  $B_{\text{even}}-A_{\text{even}}$ ). In this case, there is even a slight increase in NS values; however,  
325 transferred NS values in Daxitan basin (A) are still lower than calibrated values in the basin (Table 5).  
326 These results mean that when a model is transferred from a basin with favorable runoff generation



327 conditions to one with less favorable runoff generation conditions, a big drop in NS values may be  
328 expected.

## 329 **4.2. Spatial-temporal transferability tested by using driest and wettest periods using split-sample** 330 **and proxy-basin methods**

### 331 **4.2.1 Temporal transferability tested by using driest and wettest periods using split-sample** 332 **method**

333 This section verifies the prediction ability of the hydrological models in transferring from more  
334 contrasted periods of five consecutive driest (wettest) years to five consecutive wettest (driest) years,  
335 using the differential split-sample test. The consecutive driest and wettest five-year records from the  
336 50-year historical dataset are selected for this test. As runoff generation is mainly driven by  
337 precipitation in both basins, the driest and wettest hydrological periods are chosen according to the  
338 sum of consecutive five-year annual rainfall amounts from the rainfall series. Table 6 shows the mean  
339 monthly rainfall, runoff, temperature and runoff coefficient of the selected consecutive five-year  
340 driest and wettest periods. Compared with the driest hydrological period, the rainfall of the wettest  
341 period increases by nearly 20% and the runoff increases by more than 50%.

342 <Table 6 here please >

343 To perform this differential split-sample test, the driest and wettest periods are in turn taken as  
344 calibration and transfer periods in the study basins, whose results are shown in Fig. 5. Figure 5 reveals  
345 that results of transferred models in Daxitan (A) and Xiangxiang basins (B) are quite different. In  
346 Daxitan basin (A), the five transferred models show slight decrease in NS values, where GR4J model

347 has the biggest drop in  $A_{\text{wet}}-A_{\text{dry}}$  scenario, but the transferred NS value is still higher than 0.77. As for  
348 the RE value, both positive and negative biases are seen depending on the model and the scenario.  
349 However, only in the  $A_{\text{wet}}-A_{\text{dry}}$  scenario, the positive bias of GR4J model exceeded the threshold limit  
350 of 20%, and all other models and scenarios are considered as acceptable. In Xiangxiang basin (B),  
351 when the driest period is used as the calibration period, performances of the five models when  
352 transferred to the wettest period are satisfactory, as their  $NS > 0.7$  and  $|\Delta RE| < 20\%$ . When the five  
353 models are transferred from the wettest to the driest period, XAJ, IHACRES and GR4J have temporal  
354 transferability, while HBV and SIMHYD do not have temporal transferability as their  $|\Delta RE| > 20\%$ .

355 <Figure 5 here please >

356 From these results, the models perform better in Daxitan basin (A) than they do in Xiangxiang basin  
357 (B). It also can be found that they perform better when transferred from the driest to the wettest period  
358 in both basins than when transferred from the wettest to the driest period.

#### 359 **4.2.2 Spatial transferability in contrast periods by using proxy-basin test**

360 In order to further investigate spatial transferability of the models under contrast hydrological  
361 conditions, a process similar to Section 4.1.2 is performed here, except that the calibration and transfer  
362 periods are replaced by the consecutive wettest and driest five-year periods, whose results are shown  
363 in Fig. 6.

364 <Figure 6 here please >

365 Figure 6 reveals that the five transferred models perform well under  $B_{\text{wet}}-A_{\text{dry}}$  and  $A_{\text{dry}}-B_{\text{wet}}$  scenarios,  
366 as all NS values of the transferred models  $> 0.7$  and  $|\Delta RE| < 20\%$ . Under  $A_{\text{wet}}-B_{\text{dry}}$ ,  $B_{\text{dry}}-A_{\text{wet}}$  and

367 B<sub>dry</sub>-A<sub>dry</sub> scenarios, the transferability of XAJ and HBV is acceptable, but for other three models it is  
368 not acceptable, as their  $|\Delta RE| > 20\%$  in the transferred models. The five models perform poorest under  
369 A<sub>dry</sub>-B<sub>dry</sub> scenario, as all  $\Delta NS > 0.2$  and  $|\Delta RE| > 20\%$  in the transferred models. Under B<sub>wet</sub>-A<sub>wet</sub> and  
370 A<sub>wet</sub>-B<sub>wet</sub> scenarios, GR4J and IHACRES do not have transferability as their  $|\Delta RE| > 20\%$ .

371 It can be concluded from the results in Fig. 6 that all five models are verified to have transferability  
372 under scenarios B<sub>wet</sub>-A<sub>dry</sub> and A<sub>dry</sub>-B<sub>wet</sub>. While SIMHYD, IHRCRES and GR4J do not have  
373 transferability, XAJ and HBV have transferability under other three scenarios: B<sub>dry</sub>-A<sub>wet</sub>, A<sub>wet</sub>-B<sub>dry</sub> and  
374 B<sub>dry</sub>-A<sub>dry</sub>. Transferred results of SIMHYD, IHRCRES and GR4J deteriorate sharply under A<sub>wet</sub>-B<sub>dry</sub>  
375 scenario, as seen from their large  $\Delta NS$  and  $|\Delta RE|$  values. Under A<sub>dry</sub>-B<sub>dry</sub> scenario, all five models  
376 lose their simulation ability as reflected by low NS values and high RE values of the transferred  
377 models.

### 378 **4.3. Transferability test under the most extreme conditions**

379 In previous sections, studies on transferability of the hydrological model are carried out under  
380 long-term (Section 4.1) and contrast consecutive five-year wettest and driest periods (Section 4.2). As  
381 the occurrence of extreme climatic or hydrological events has been on the rise in recent years  
382 (Groisman et al., 2004; Westra et al., 2013), it is of great significance to study the mechanism and  
383 influence of extreme hydrological events on an annual scale. Here, the driest and wettest years of the  
384 50-year series will be selected to verify the ability of hydrological models to simulate extreme  
385 hydrological events on an annual scale, in order to answer the question: Do the models still have the  
386 similar predictive ability when calibrated under the driest or wettest year condition? To answer this  
387 question, we design and perform another transferability experiment under driest and wettest year of the

388 50-year series. Characteristics of the driest and wettest years are shown in Table 7. Climate difference  
389 is more significant than the consecutive five-year record, as expected (shown in Table 6). Rainfall and  
390 temperature variations of the two basins have exceeded 60% and 1.0°C between the driest and wettest  
391 years, respectively. Compared with the driest year, runoff changes in the wettest year exceed 160%  
392 and 290% for Daxitan (A) and Xiangxiang basins (B), respectively. They can represent the main  
393 characteristics of annual extreme hydrological events in both basins.

394 <Table 7 here please >

395 The results of this experiment obviously magnify the runoff simulation error shown in Section 4.2  
396 (comparing Figs. 6 and 7). Figure 7 reveals that for temporal transferability (up panel), the five models  
397 do not have transferability under  $A_{wet}-A_{dry}$  and  $B_{wet}-B_{dry}$  scenarios as their  $\Delta NS > 0.2$  and  $|\Delta RE| >$   
398 20%; only SIMHYD does not have transferability under  $A_{dry}-A_{wet}$  scenario as its  $|\Delta RE| > 20\%$ . The  
399 SIMHYD and IHACRES models do not have transferability under  $B_{dry}-B_{wet}$  scenario as their  $|\Delta RE| >$   
400 20%, although their NS values are higher than 0.70. For spatial transferability (lower panel), five  
401 transferred models perform well under  $B_{wet}-A_{wet}$  and  $A_{wet}-B_{wet}$  scenarios because their  $NS > 0.70$  and  
402  $|\Delta RE| < 20\%$ . For  $B_{dry}-A_{dry}$  scenario, only HBV and XAJ perform well as their  $NS > 0.70$  and  $|\Delta RE| <$   
403 10%. For  $A_{dry}-B_{dry}$  scenario, HBV, XAJ and SIMHYD perform well as their  $NS > 0.70$  and  $|\Delta RE| <$   
404 20%. For temporal and spatial transferabilities (middle panel), most models perform poorly and do not  
405 have transferability because of large change in their NS and RE values, especially under  $A_{wet}-B_{dry}$   
406 scenario. The HBV performs well when transferred from the driest year in Xiangxiang Basin (B) to the  
407 wettest year in Daxitan basin (A). The GR4J performs well under  $B_{wet}-A_{dry}$  and  $A_{dry}-B_{wet}$  scenarios, as  
408 its  $NS > 0.70$  and  $|\Delta RE| < 20\%$ . The XAJ and HBV also show transferability under  $A_{dry}-B_{wet}$

409 scenarios, as its  $NS > 0.70$  and  $|\Delta RE| < 20\%$ . It is concluded that all transferred models show greater  
410 uncertainties in different scenarios under yearly extreme scenarios, especially from the wettest to the  
411 driest year. According to the ranges of changes in NS and RE values, the five models perform worse  
412 when transferred from the wettest to the driest year, although their calibration performances are very  
413 good in both the driest and wettest years.

414 <Figure 7 here please >

415 In order to further test the transferability of the models under the driest and wettest years, five typical  
416 years with quantiles of 5%, 25%, 50%, 75% and 95% are selected from the 50 annual runoff series,  
417 sorted from low to high. The five models are transferred from the driest or wettest year to the five  
418 typical years between the two basins, which will generate 200 cases for this test. Based on the  
419 proposed evaluation method, the case that the transferability of one model is accepted is recorded as 1,  
420 otherwise 0, counted for each model and listed in Table 8. For temporal transferability, the five models  
421 show better performances in Daxitan basin (A) than in Xiangxiang basin (B), consistent with the fact  
422 that Daxitan basin (A) has a favourable runoff generation condition. For spatial transferability, similar  
423 results can be found wherein the five models perform poorly when transferred from Daxitan basin (A)  
424 to Xiangxiang basin (B); only XAJ and HBV perform well when transferred from the driest year in  
425 Xiangxiang basin (B) to five typical years in Daxitan basin (A). Other three models show no  
426 transferability in these scenarios. Five models except IHACRES show good performance when  
427 transferred from the wettest year in Xiangxiang basin (B) to the five typical years in Daxitan basin (A).  
428 According to the results given in Table 8, the transferred XAJ model performs the best, while  
429 IHACRES is the worst between the five models. The main reason is that IHACRES in the calibration

430 driest or wettest year has a lower NS value than other models in both basins, according to Fig. 7.

431 <Table 8 here please>

#### 432 **4.4 Comprehensive evaluation of spatial and temporal transferabilities of the hydrological** 433 **models**

434 According to the results from Sections 4.1 to 4.3, in total, 76 change scenarios are used to compare  
435 spatial and temporal transferability differences of the five models. From the above discussion it is seen  
436 that the model evaluation method defined in this study (Table 4) has been proved to be useful since it  
437 simultaneously evaluates the NS and RE values together with the changes in them. In order to  
438 synthetically compare the transferability of the five models based on the results from Sections 4.1 to  
439 4.3, the 76 scenarios are divided into different categories as shown in Table 9. Results of the  
440 transferred models with acceptable transferability are recorded as 1, while results with unacceptable  
441 transferability as 0, counted for each scenario and listed in Table 9.

442 <Table 9 here please >

443 For temporal transferability, XAJ, GR4J and HBV show good transferability as their recorded numbers  
444 are more than 22 of the total 32 scenarios. For spatial transferability, there is a big difference between  
445 the complex and simple models. For example, there are 10 scenarios for XAJ and HBV, while only  
446 four for GR4J to have acceptable transferability. Similar results can be found in temporal-spatial  
447 categories. This is helpful in selecting models to transfer runoff in spatial and temporal dimensions. In  
448 this study, the selected two basins are adjacent and belong to the same climatic zone; thus, their  
449 precipitation regimes can be regarded as similar, while, their terrain and land covers are significantly

450 different, as detailed in Table 1. The percentage of the model cases recorded with acceptable  
451 transferability from B to A (59.1%) is much higher than 46.4% of the models transferred from A to B,  
452 meaning that the underlying surface conditions of the target basin are important impactors to the  
453 spatial transfer of the hydrological models. Results of the five transferred models between the driest  
454 and wettest conditions are also quite different. There are 70% of the model cases with acceptable  
455 transferability from the driest to the wettest period, while the number is 37.5% from the wettest to the  
456 driest period according to the data in Table 9. As there are only two basins selected to compare the  
457 models' transferability in this study, the results and findings need to be further verified by selecting  
458 more basins.

## 459 **5. Summary and conclusions**

460 Hydrological models have been widely used in hydrology and water resources management. It is also  
461 the most important tool for hydrologic prediction in ungauged basins, and for studying the impact of  
462 climate change and human activities on hydrology. However, models have different conceptualisation  
463 schemes and mathematical representation of the hydrologic processes, which determines that the  
464 prediction ability of each model is different. When a model is transferred to another basin or period,  
465 the question to be answered is whether the model still has the same ability of simulation and prediction  
466 as in the calibration period? To answer it, exploratory research on temporal and spatial transferabilities  
467 of hydrological models is carried out in this study. To achieve the goal, five hydrological models with  
468 different complexities of structure are used to illustrate differences in transferability between the  
469 models. Two basins with different underlying surface conditions are adopted to set up 76  
470 transferability scenarios, including odd and even stationary series, driest and wettest series, which can

471 reflect temporal and spatial changes between the two basins. Simulation results of these scenarios are  
472 evaluated by a new evaluation method proposed in this study, and the main conclusions are as follows.

473 (1) The proposed evaluation method for transferability based on absolute and relative changes of NS  
474 and RE values is used to judge whether the transferred model has the ability of simulation and  
475 prediction. The study proves the proposed evaluation method is effective in evaluating the transfer  
476 ability of the model, as it provides an objective and quantitative measure.

477 (2) For temporal transferability under stationary condition, all five models show good performances.  
478 But for spatial transferability, the complex models (XAJ and HBV) have much better performances  
479 than the simple model (GR4J) in this study, as there are 10 of the total 12 scenarios for XAJ and HBV,  
480 while only four for GR4J to have acceptable transferability.

481 (3) The difference in underlying surface conditions in the target basin affects the spatial transferability  
482 of the models in such a way that better results are obtained when the model is transferred to a basin  
483 with favourable runoff generation condition than the opposite case.

484 (4) In the transfer between the driest and wettest periods, the error is larger when the models are  
485 calibrated in the wettest period and transferred to the driest period than the opposite approach. This  
486 provides good reference information for the study on the impact of climate change on hydrological  
487 extremes.

488 There are, however, also some limitations in this study, which warrant further study. For example, the  
489 uncertainties of the models are not considered in this study. In the study of spatial transferability, only  
490 two adjacent basins are considered, and the conclusions obtained from them may not be generalized



491 until more basins are evaluated. This study only considers different types of lumped models, however,  
492 distributed models are also widely used in changing environments. Therefore, a comprehensive  
493 comparison of the differences between distributed and lumped models in spatial and temporal  
494 transferabilities will be helpful to enrich the research results of the spatial and temporal  
495 transferabilities of hydrological modelling in changing environments.

#### 496 **Acknowledgements**

497 The study was financially supported by the National Natural Science Fund of China (51539009) and  
498 National Key Research and Development Program (2017YFA0603702), and the Research Council of  
499 Norway (FRINATEK Project 274310).

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695 **Tables**

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709 **Figures**

710 Fig. 1. Location and underlying surface mapping of the study area.

711 Fig. 2. Standardized mean annual precipitation (P), air temperature (T), and mean annual runoff for  
712 Daxitan and Xiangxiang basins. The bar chart shows the results of each year, and the red line shows  
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714 Fig. 3. Hierarchical approach for operational testing of hydrological simulations.

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716 and even years. (A = Daxitan; B = Xiangxiang; A<sub>odd</sub>-B<sub>even</sub> indicates the calibration in odd years at Daxitan and  
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729

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Chong-Yu Xu: Conceptualization Ideas, Methodology, Project administration, Reviewing and Editing.

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**Declaration of Interest Statement**

We declare that we do not have any commercial or associative interest that represents a conflict of interest in connection with the work submitted.

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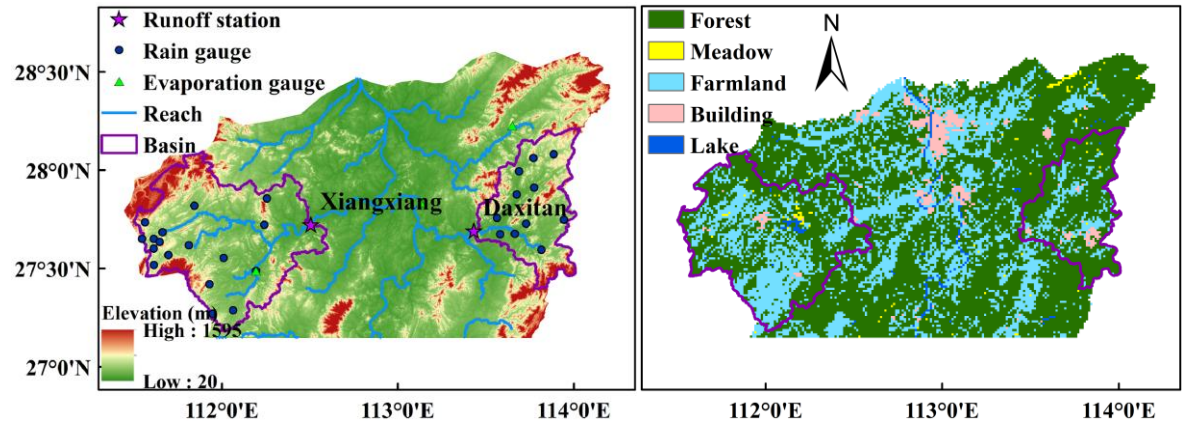


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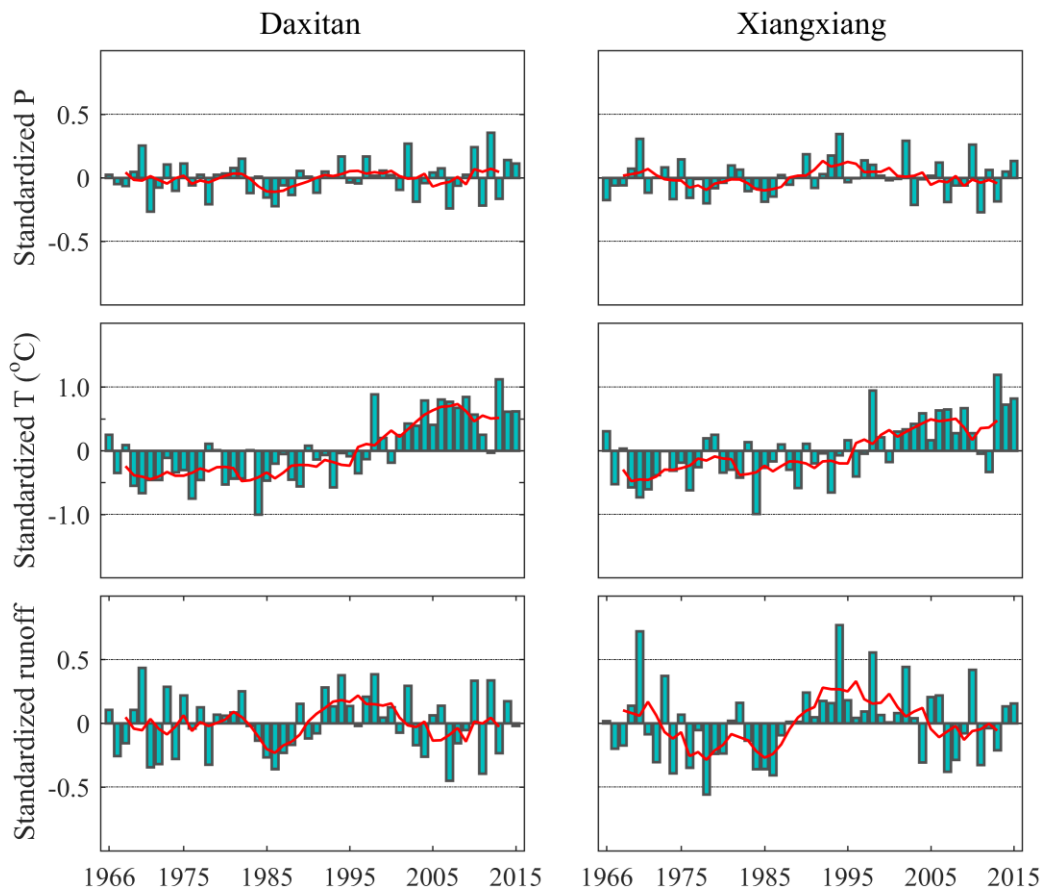


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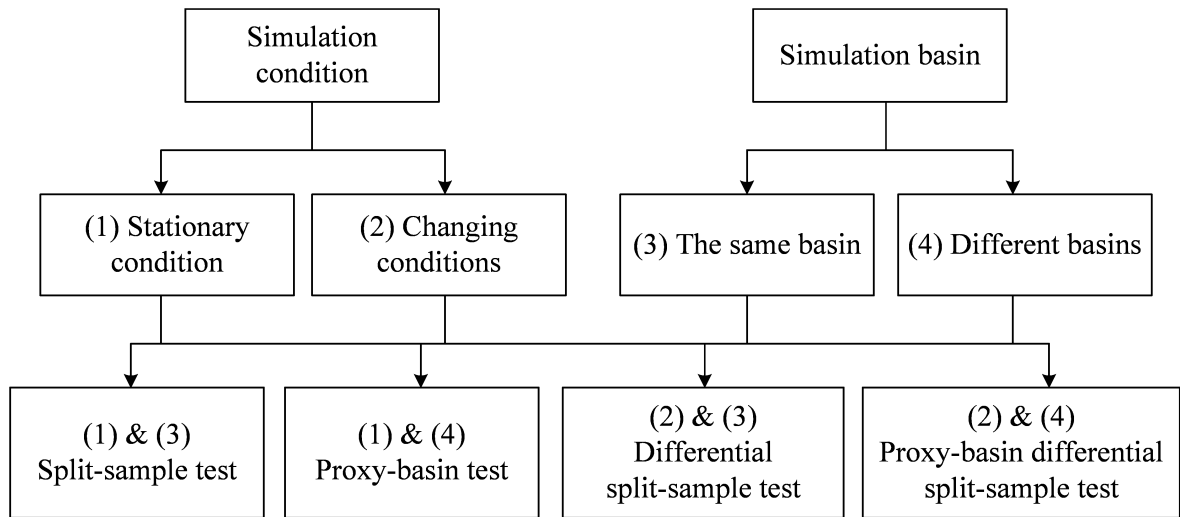


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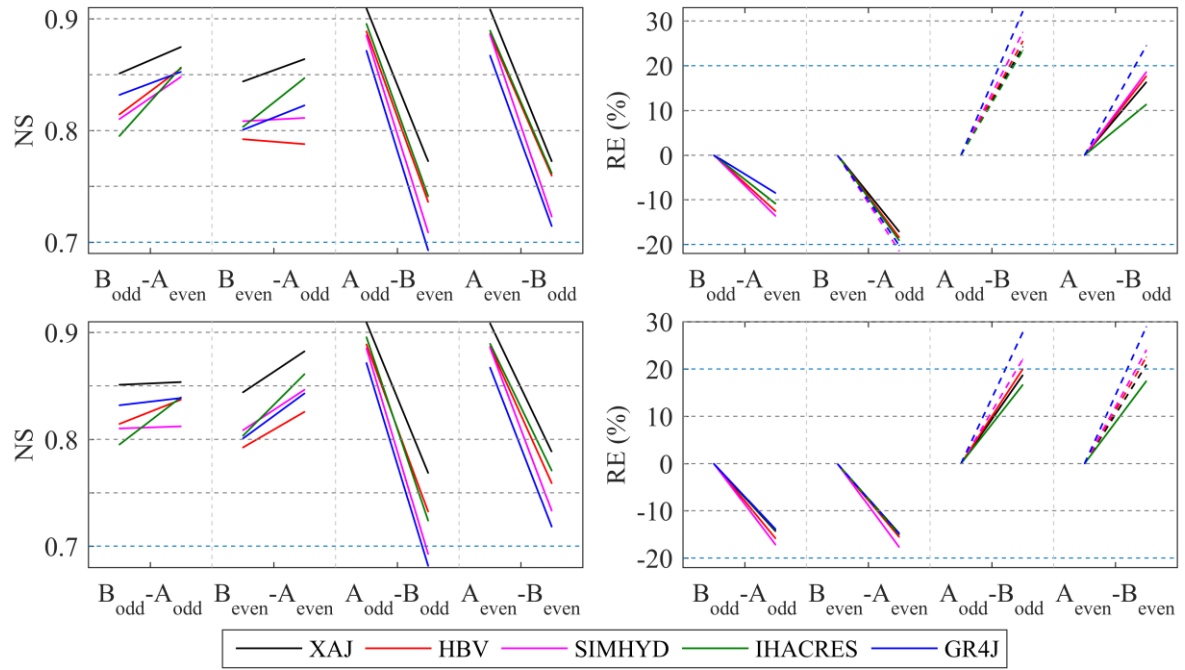


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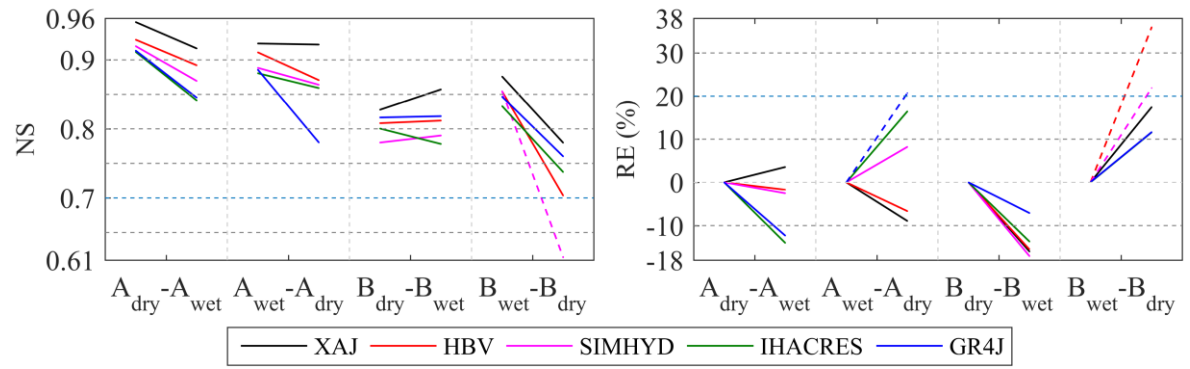


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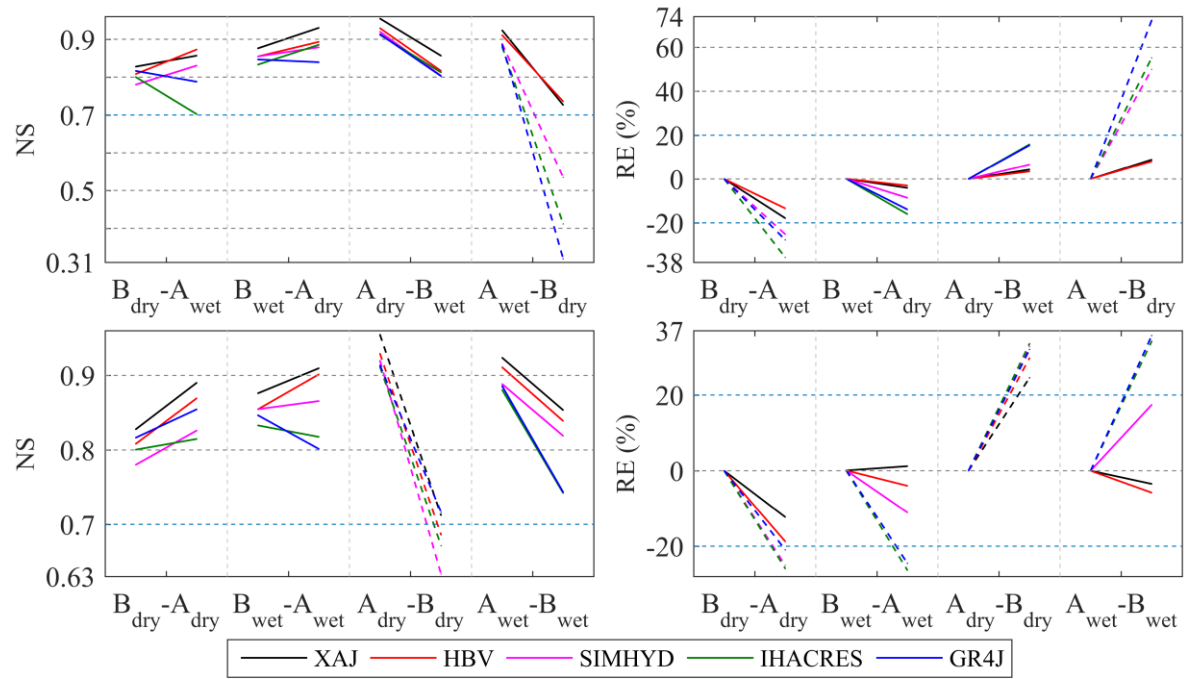


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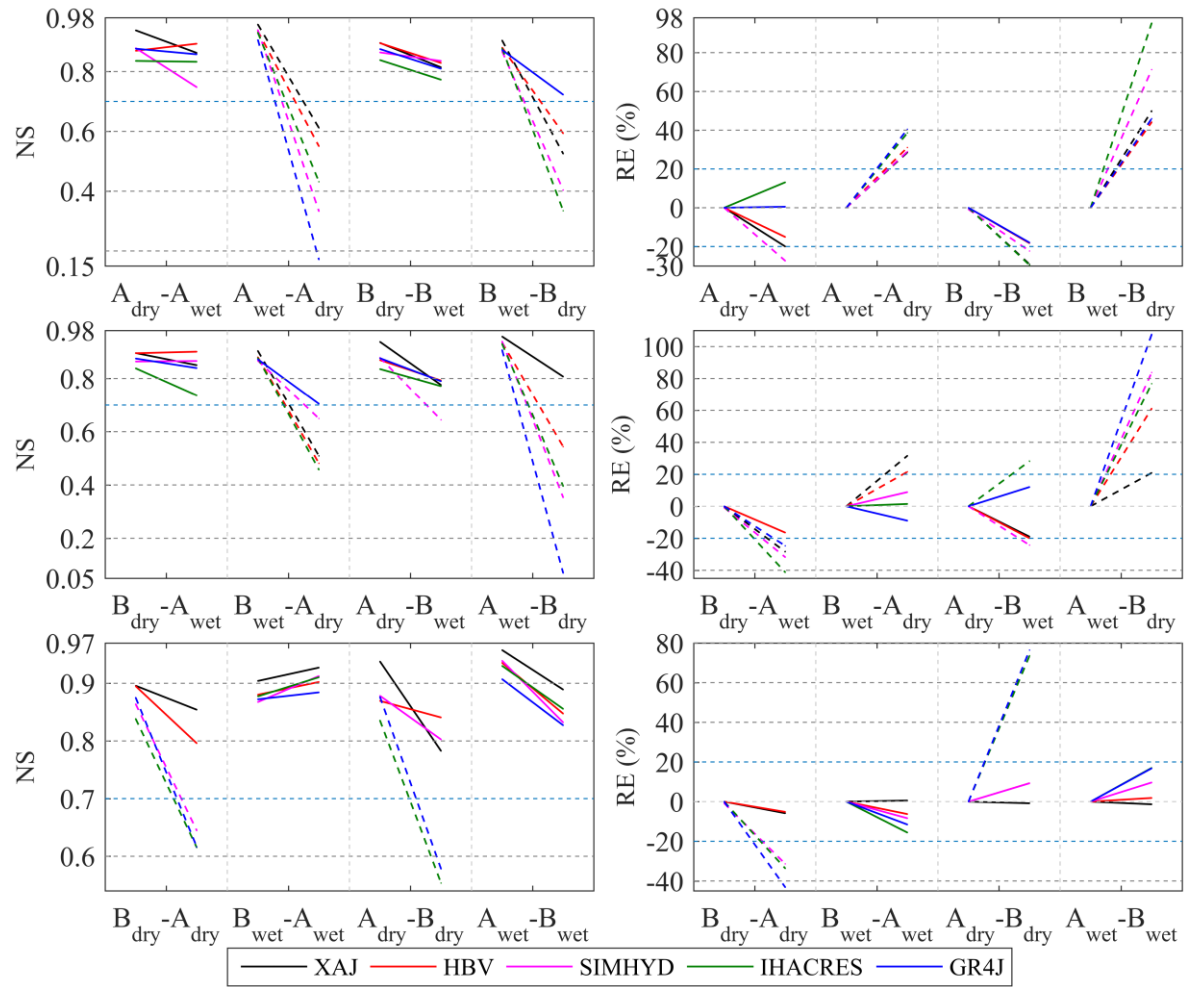


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Table 1. Characteristics of the climate, terrain and vegetation cover of the study basins.

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Table 1. Characteristics of the climate, terrain and vegetation cover of the study basins.

Basin	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Prec. (mm/m)	Runoff (mm/m)	Runoff Coefficient	Slope (°)	Forest (%)	Lake (%)	Meadow (%)	Farmland (%)	Building (%)
Daxitan	3010	130.1	75.4	0.58	9.60	75.7	0.2	0.4	19.9	3.8
Xiangxiang	5970	113.6	50.2	0.44	8.32	56.5	0.9	0.9	40.5	1.2

Table 2. Structural components of the five lumped conceptual rainfall-runoff models.

Model	Original Authors	Number of Free Parameters	Represented Stores	Catchment	Represented Flow Component/ Routing Mechanism
XAJ	Zhao et al. (1980)	15	Upper/Lower/Deep layer tension storage		Surface runoff, Interflow, Groundwater flow; a single uh routing
HBV	Bergström et al. (1976)	10	Soil moisture storage, Groundwater storage		Surface runoff, Interflow, Base flow; a single uh routing
SIMHYD	Chiew et al. (2002)	9	Soil moisture storage, Groundwater storage		Surface runoff, Interflow, Groundwater flow; a single uh routing
IHACRES	Jakeman et al. (1990)	8	Soil moisture storage		Fast flow, Slow flow; a single uh routing
GR4J	Perrin et al. (2003)	4	Production, routing		90% is routed by a uh and then a non-linear routing store, and 10% are routed by a single uh

Table 3. Classification of model performance into categories with limits following Moriasi et al. (2007)

and Standard of HHHF(Ministry of Water Resources, China, 2008) for NS and RE.

Sources	Criteria	Performance class			
		Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Moriasi et al. (2007)	NS (-)	> 0.75	0.65-0.75	0.55-0.65	< 0.55
	RE (%)	< 10	10-15	15-20	> 20
Standard of HHHF in China	NS (-)	>0.9	0.90-0.70	0.70-0.50	<0.50
	RE (%)				>20

Table 4. Evaluation criteria for hydrological model transferability based on Table 3.

Criteria		Transferability
$NS_T (-) \geq 0.70$	$RE_T (\%) \leq 10$	- Acceptable
$NS_T (-) < 0.70$	$RE_T (\%) \leq 10$	$\Delta NS \leq 0.2$ Acceptable
		$\Delta NS > 0.2$ Not
$NS_T (-) \geq 0.70$	$RE_T (\%) > 10$	$\Delta RE (\%) \leq 20$ Acceptable
		$\Delta RE (\%) > 20$ Not
$NS_T (-) < 0.70$	$RE_T (\%) > 10$	$\Delta NS \leq 0.2$ and $\Delta RE (\%) \leq 20$ Acceptable
		$\Delta NS > 0.2$ or $\Delta RE (\%) > 20$ Not

Note:  $NS_T$  and  $RE_T$  is the NS and RE of the transferred model;  $\Delta NS$  ( $\Delta RE$ ) is the NS (RE) difference between the calibrated and transferred models.

Table 5. Comparison of the statistics results of the five models for temporal transferability test by using odd and even years split-sample test.

Basin	Period	XAJ		HBV		SIMHYD		IHACRES		GR4J	
		NS	RE (%)	NS	RE (%)	NS	RE (%)	NS	RE (%)	NS	RE(%)
Daxitan	Odd(Cali)	0.91	0.0	0.89	0.0	0.89	0.0	0.90	0.0	0.87	0.0
	Even(Trans)	0.90	3.1	0.88	2.8	0.88	2.7	0.88	5.8	0.87	2.1
	Even(Cali)	0.91	0.0	0.89	0.0	0.89	0.0	0.89	0.0	0.87	0.0
	Odd(Trans)	0.91	-2.1	0.89	3.4	0.88	-3.0	0.89	-1.2	0.87	-2.3
Xiang xiang	Odd(Cali)	0.85	0.0	0.81	0.0	0.81	0.0	0.80	0.0	0.83	0.0
	Even(Trans)	0.84	7.0	0.81	6.4	0.80	5.5	0.79	9.6	0.80	8.7
	Even(Cali)	0.84	0.0	0.79	0.0	0.81	0.0	0.80	0.0	0.80	0.0
	Odd(Trans)	0.84	-2.6	0.80	9.5	0.81	-5.6	0.80	-4.6	0.83	-8.0

Table 6. The hydro-climatic variables with the driest and wettest consecutive 5-year periods.

Basin	Variables	Dry	Wet	Variability
Daxitan	P (mm/month)	116.0	137.4	18.4%
	T (°C)	17.2	17.6	0.4°C
	Q (mm/month)	60.1	91.8	52.7%
	Runoff coefficient	0.52	0.67	29.0%
Xiangxiang	P (mm/month)	102.7	121.6	18.4%
	T (°C)	16.9	16.6	0.3°C
	Q (mm/month)	35.8	58.7	64.0%
	Runoff coefficient	0.35	0.48	38.5%

Table 7. The hydro-climatic variables with the driest and wettest 1-year periods.

Basin	Variables	Dry	Wet	Variability
Daxitan	P (mm/month)	98.8	163.2	65.2%
	T (°C)	18.4	16.9	1.5°C
	Q (mm/month)	41.4	108.3	161.6%
	Runoff coefficient	0.42	0.66	58.4%
Xiangxiang	P (mm/month)	90.7	148.7	64.4%
	T (°C)	17.3	16.3	1.0°C
	Q (mm/month)	22.1	86.4	291.0%
	Runoff coefficient	0.24	0.58	138.5%

Table 8. The sensitivity analysis of the temporal and spatial transferability of the hydrological models under driest year and wettest year.

Transferability	No. of Scenarios	XAJ	HBV	SIMHYD	IHACRES	GR4J	Test Count	Accepted count
A <sub>dry</sub> -A <sub>5%25%50%75%95%</sub>	5	5	5	4	5	5	25	24
A <sub>wet</sub> -A <sub>5%25%50%75%95%</sub>	5	5	5	5	4	3	25	22
B <sub>dry</sub> -B <sub>5%25%50%75%95%</sub>	5	3	2	2	1	4	25	12
B <sub>wet</sub> -B <sub>5%25%50%75%95%</sub>	5	3	1	1	0	3	25	8
A <sub>dry</sub> -B <sub>5%25%50%75%95%</sub>	5	1	3	4	2	1	25	11
A <sub>wet</sub> -B <sub>5%25%50%75%95%</sub>	5	3	2	2	2	2	25	11
B <sub>dry</sub> -A <sub>5%25%50%75%95%</sub>	5	5	4	0	0	0	25	9
B <sub>wet</sub> -A <sub>5%25%50%75%95%</sub>	5	5	4	4	0	4	25	17
Total	40	30	26	22	14	22	200	114

Note: A-Daxitan; B-Xiangxiang



Table 9. The number of models with transferability under different scenarios.

Transferability	Scenarios Number	XAJ	HBV	SIMHYD	IHACRES	GR4J	Test Count	Accepted count	Percentage (%)
Total	76	58	54	40	34	40	380	224	58.9
Temporal	32	26	22	19	19	24	160	110	68.8
Spatial	12	10	10	7	6	4	60	37	61.7
Temporal-Spatial	32	22	22	14	9	12	160	79	52.7
A→B	22	12	13	11	9	6	110	51	46.4
B→A	22	20	19	10	6	10	110	65	59.1
Dry→Wet	8	7	8	3	4	6	40	28	70.0
Wet→Dry	8	4	3	2	3	3	40	15	37.5

Note: A-Daxitan, B-Xiangxiang; **Temporal:**  $A(B)_{\text{odd/even/dry5/wet5/dry1/wet1}} - A(B)_{\text{even/odd/wet5/dry5/wet1/dry1}}$ ,

$A(B)_{\text{dry1/wet1}} - A(B)_{5\%,25\%,50\%,75\%,95\%}$ ; **Spatial:**  $A(B)_{\text{odd/even/dry5/wet5/dry1/wet1}} - B(A)_{\text{odd/even/dry5/wet5/dry1/wet1}}$ ;

**Temporal-Spatial:**  $A(B)_{\text{odd/even/dry5/wet5/dry1/wet1}} - B(A)_{\text{even/odd/wet5/dry5/wet1/dry1}}$ ;

$A(B)_{\text{dry1/wet1}} - B(A)_{5\%,25\%,50\%,75\%,95\%}$ ; **A(B)→B(A):**

$A(B)_{\text{odd/even/dry5/wet5/dry1/wet1}} - B(A)_{\text{odd/even/dry5/wet5/dry1/wet1}}$ ,  $A(B)_{\text{odd/even/dry5/wet5/dry1/wet1}} - B(A)_{\text{even/odd/wet5/dry5/wet1/dry1}}$ ;

$A(B)_{\text{dry1/wet1}} - B(A)_{5\%,25\%,50\%,75\%,95\%}$ ; **Dry→Wet:**  $A(B)_{\text{dry5/dry1}} - A(B)_{\text{wet5/wet1}}$ ,

$B(A)_{\text{dry5/dry1}} - A(B)_{\text{wet5/wet1}}$ ; **Wet→Dry:**  $A(B)_{\text{wet5/wet1}} - A(B)_{\text{dry5/dry1}}$ ,  $B(A)_{\text{wet5/wet1}} - A(B)_{\text{dry5/dry1}}$