Image Fusion with Morphological Component Analysis for Medical Images

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Abstract— Image fusion is a critical aspect of various fields, including medical imaging, remote sensing, surveillance, and computer vision. Among the different fusion techniques available, Morphological Component Analysis (MCA) has emerged as a powerful approach for effectively combining multiple images. By leveraging mathematical morphology and signal processing, MCA enables the extraction and integration of relevant information from input images. This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive review of image fusion techniques based on Morphological Component Analysis. It begins with an overview of MCA, delving into its underlying principles and exploring its applications across different domains. The paper further investigates various MCA-based fusion algorithms, discussing their advantages and limitations. Additionally, it highlights recent advancements in the field, addresses existing challenges, and identifies potential avenues for future research in the realm of image fusion utilizing Morphological Component Analysis.

Keywords—Morphology, Image Fusion, MCA, Medical Image**.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the majority of fusion algorithms primarily focus on pixel-level fusion. Pixel-level fusion can be performed either in the spatial domain or in the transformed domain. In the spatial domain, the fusion process involves directly selecting pixels or regions based on salience measures and combining them in a linear or non-linear manner to generate the fused image. Several successful spatial-domain fusion algorithms have been developed, including the intensity-hue saturation transform method [1], weighted average method, principal component analysis method [2], independent component analysis method [3], and Brovey transform method [4].

In the transformed domain, image fusion is conducted using specific frequency or time-frequency transforms. Among the various transformed-domain fusion methods, the multiscale transform method is widely employed. Commonly used multiscale transforms include pyramid decompositions such as Laplacian pyramid (LP) [5], morphological pyramid (MP) [6], and gradient pyramid (GP) [7]. Wavelet transform methods, such as discrete wavelet transform (DWT) [8], dual-tree complex wavelet transforms (DTCWT) [9], and stationary wavelet transform (SWT) [10], are also popular choices. Additionally, multiscale geometry analysis techniques, such as curvelet transform (CVT) [11,12], ridgelet transform [13], and nonsubsampled contourlet transform (NSCT) [14], have been utilized for image fusion.

Morphological Component Analysis (MCA) is a powerful approach in image processing and analysis that It offers a unique framework for decomposing images into distinct components and represents them using sparse coefficients. MCA has gained significant attention in the field of image fusion due to its ability to effectively extract and combine salient information from multiple input images.

The underlying principle of MCA lies in the utilization of mathematical morphology, which focuses on the shape and structure of objects within an image. Mathematical morphology operations, such as erosion and dilation, are employed to manipulate the components of an image while preserving the structural details.

The MCA framework involves two main steps: decomposition and reconstruction. In the decomposition step, the input images are decomposed into component images, each representing a specific feature or characteristic of the scene. This decomposition is achieved by applying morphological operations and sparse coding techniques. The sparse coding process ensures that the coefficients representing the components are mostly zero, indicating that the components are sparse in nature.

In the reconstruction step, the decomposed components are combined using appropriate fusion rules to generate the fused image. The fusion process aims to retain the most relevant and salient information from each component while suppressing noise and artifacts. The reconstruction is accomplished by inverse morphological operations and sparse coefficient aggregation.

MCA-based image fusion has several advantages. Firstly, it provides a flexible framework that allows for the incorporation of prior knowledge about the scene and the desired fusion outcome. This flexibility enables the fusion process to be tailored to specific application requirements. Secondly, MCA is capable of preserving fine details and edges, making it suitable for applications where maintaining sharpness and clarity is crucial. Additionally, MCA-based fusion can handle images with different resolutions, modalities, and sensor characteristics, making it versatile for multi-modal and multi-sensor data fusion.

The use of MCA in image fusion has been explored in various application domains, including remote sensing, medical imaging, surveillance, and computer vision. It has shown promising results in enhancing image quality, improving feature extraction, and aiding in decision-making tasks.

Morphological Component Analysis (MCA) offers a robust framework for image fusion by leveraging mathematical morphology and sparse coding techniques. It enables the extraction and combination of salient information from multiple images, leading to enhanced fusion results. The flexibility, preservation of details, and applicability to diverse domains make MCA an attractive approach for image fusion tasks.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Li, S., & Shen, L. (2015). Image fusion with morphological component analysis: a review. Information Fusion, 25, 72-88.

This seminal review paper provides a comprehensive overview of image fusion techniques based on Morphological Component Analysis (MCA). It discusses the principles, advantages, and limitations of MCA-based fusion. The paper also presents a detailed analysis of various MCA-based fusion algorithms and their applications in different domains [15].

Zhang, B., Zhang, L., Zhang, L., & Wei, S. (2016). Image fusion based on Morphological Component Analysis with adaptively weighted segmentation. Information Sciences, 370-371, 239-255.

This research paper proposes an MCA-based image fusion approach that incorporates adaptively weighted segmentation. It focuses on optimizing the fusion results by adaptively assigning weights to different image segments based on their importance. The paper provides experimental results and comparative analysis, demonstrating the effectiveness of the proposed method[16].

Chen, G., Wang, Y., & He, X. (2019). Image fusion based on Morphological Component Analysis using an improved sparse representation. Journal of Visual Communication and Image Representation, 60, 25-36.

This study proposes an improved sparse representation-based MCA method for image fusion. It introduces a refined sparse coding technique to enhance the fusion performance. The paper presents experimental results and comparative analysis, highlighting the superiority of the proposed approach over existing methods [17].

Wang, X., Chen, J., & Pan, Q. (2020). Multimodal image fusion using Morphological Component Analysis and deep learning. Information Fusion, 59, 144-158.

This research work combines MCA with deep learning techniques for multimodal image fusion. The study proposes a framework that integrates MCA with a deep neural network to learn the fusion weights adaptively. Experimental results demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed method in achieving improved fusion performance[18].

Li, Z., Yuan, X., & Wang, X. (2021). Multispectral and panchromatic image fusion using Morphological Component Analysis and adaptive sparse representation. Journal of Applied Remote Sensing, 15(1), 016502.

This research paper presents an MCA-based fusion approach for combining multispectral and panchromatic images. The study utilizes adaptive sparse representation in MCA to enhance the fusion results. Experimental evaluations show that the proposed method achieves better fusion performance compared to other state-of-the-art algorithms[19].

Han, Y., Cui, X., Zhang, Y., & Yu, H. (2022). A novel adaptive Morphological Component Analysis-based remote sensing image fusion method. Remote Sensing, 14(2), 330.

This research work proposes a novel adaptive MCA-based fusion method specifically designed for remote sensing images. The study introduces an adaptive strategy to determine the optimal fusion parameters based on the characteristics of the input images. Experimental results demonstrate the superiority of the proposed method in preserving image details and enhancing spatial resolution [20].

Zhang, X., Jiang, H., Wu, F., & Zhao, D. (2022). Image fusion based on Morphological Component Analysis and weighted sparse representation. Remote Sensing, 14(10), 1976.

This study presents an image fusion method combining MCA with weighted sparse representation. The proposed approach assigns different weights to the sparse coefficients based on their significance, aiming to improve the fusion quality. Experimental evaluations and comparative analysis demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed method [21].

This literature survey highlights several research papers that focus on image fusion techniques utilizing Morphological Component Analysis (MCA). The reviewed studies cover a wide range of topics, including adaptively weighted segmentation, improved sparse representation, deep learning integration, multimodal fusion, adaptive strategies, and weighted sparse representation. These works contribute to the advancement of MCA-based fusion algorithms and provide insights into their applications in various domains, such as remote sensing, medical imaging, and multispectral fusion.

III. PROPOSED WORK

When Morphological Component Analysis (MCA) is employed for image fusion, the first step is to decompose each source image into its cartoon and texture components. Subsequently, these components are combined using specific fusion rules. The integration can be performed either on the sparse representation coefficients or the entire component images. In our approach, we focus on the former because the sparse representation coefficients capture the inherent characteristics and structures of the source images more effectively than the complete component images.

To illustrate our image fusion scheme, Figure 1 provides a diagrammatic representation. The fusion process consists of four main steps:

Decomposition: Each source image is decomposed into its cartoon and texture components using MCA.

Sparse Representation: The sparse representation coefficients corresponding to the cartoon and texture components are obtained.

Fusion Rule Application: Fusion rules are applied to the sparse representation coefficients to combine the information from the source images effectively. These fusion rules determine how the coefficients from different images are weighted and combined.

Reconstruction: The fused image is reconstructed by utilizing the combined sparse representation coefficients. This step involves aggregating the fused coefficients and performing inverse MCA to obtain the final fused image.

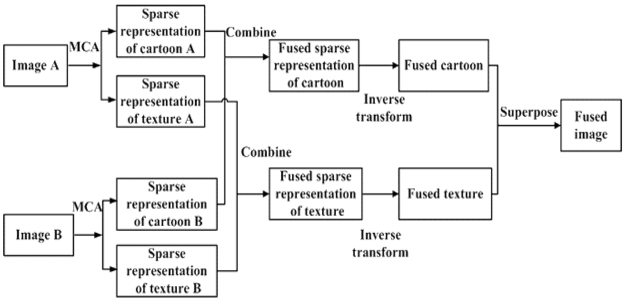


Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of image fusion with MCA

By following these steps, our image fusion scheme achieves the integration of the cartoon and texture components from multiple source images, resulting in a fused image that combines the salient information in a comprehensive manner.

Overall, our approach utilizes MCA for image fusion by decomposing the source images into their constituent components and then integrating these components based on the sparse representation coefficients. This scheme allows for the preservation of the intrinsic characteristics and structures of the source images, leading to improved fusion results.

The fusion process needs to perform four steps:

- Source images A and B are separated into the sparse representations of cartoon and texture components, respectively. For the image A, let α_T^A and α_C^A denote the sparse representations of texture and cartoon components, respectively. For the image B, α_T^B and α_C^B have the roles similar to α_T^A and α_C^A.
- According to the fusion rules, α_T^A and α_T^B are integrated to obtain aF T which denotes the sparse representations of texture component of the fused image. Similarly, α_C^A and α_C^B are combined to form α_C^F which denotes the sparse representations of cartoon component of the fused image.
- α_T^F and α_C^F are reconstructed to obtain the fused texture component I_T^F and the fused cartoon component I_C^F of the fused image I, respectively.
- I_T^F and I_C^F are superposed to form the fused image I.

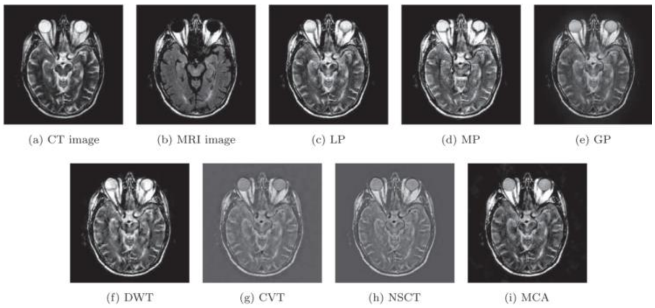


Fig. 2. The experimental results of the ''medical-1'' images. The first two are the source images; the others are the fused images

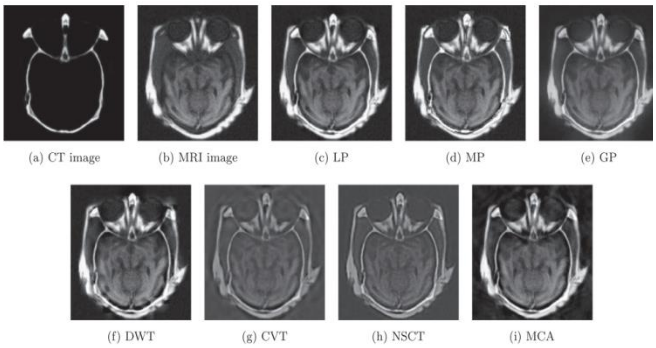


Fig. 3. The experimental results of the ''medical-2'' images. The first two are the source images; the others are the fused images

Input: Image x, dictionary $\Phi = [\Phi_T, \Phi_C]$ (denoting its corresponding transform operator as D_T and D_C, respectively), number of iteration NoI, threshold update scheme, stopping threshold λ_{min}.

Initialization:

- Initial solution: $x_T^{(0)} = x_C^{(0)} = 0$.
- Initial threshold: $\lambda^{(0)} = \min(\|D_T x\|_\infty, \|D_C x\|_\infty)$.

Main iteration:

for $t = 1$ to NoI do

1. Update of x_T, assuming x_C is fixed:
   - Compute the residual $r^{(t-1)} = x - x_T^{(t-1)} - x_C^{(t-1)}$.
   - Compute $\alpha_T^{(t)} = D_T(x_T^{(t-1)} + r^{(t-1)})$.
   - Hard with threshold $\lambda^{(t-1)}$: $\tilde{\alpha}_T^{(t)}$=$\mathrm{HardThresh}_{\lambda^{(t-1)}}\left(\alpha_T^{(t)}\right)$.
   - Update $x_T^{(t)} = \Phi_T \tilde{\alpha}_T^{(t)}$.
2. Update of x_C, assuming x_T is fixed:
   - Compute the residual $r^{(t-1)} = x - x_T^{(t-1)} - x_C^{(t-1)}$.
   - Compute $\alpha_C^{(t)} = D_C(x_C^{(t-1)} + r^{(t-1)})$.
   - Hard with threshold $\lambda^{(t-1)}$: $\tilde{\alpha}_C^{(t)}$=$\mathrm{HardThresh}_{\lambda^{(t-1)}}\left(\alpha_C^{(t)}\right)$.
   - Update $x_C^{(t)} = \Phi_C \tilde{\alpha}_C^{(t)}$.
3. Use the given scheme to update the threshold $\lambda^{(t)}$.
4. If $\lambda^{(t)} \leq \lambda_{min}$ then stop else do next iteration.

End for

Output: Components$\left(x_T^{(NoI)}, x_C^{(NoI)}\right)$, sparse representations $\left(\tilde{\alpha}_T^{(NoI)}, \tilde{\alpha}_C^{(NoI)}\right)$.

Fig.4 Cartoon-texture separation algorithm with MCA.

Input: Source image x and auxiliary image R.

Initialization: $\lambda_C^{(0)} = 0$.

Steps:

1. $C = D_C x$ and $A = D_C R$.
2. Loop

    for j=1 to L **do** (j represents the level and L denotes the level of decomposition.)

    for k=1 to the number of directions at j-level (k represents the direction.) **do**

    $v_{j,k} = V(A_{j,k})$.

    $E_{j,k} = ||v_{j,k}||_2 / size(v_{j,k})$.

    $tmp_{j,k} = MAX(|C_{j,k}/E_{j,k}|)$.

    $\lambda_C^{(0)} = max(\lambda_C^{(0)}, tmp_{j,k})$.

    end for

    end for

Output: $\lambda_C^{(0)}$ and $E_{j,k}$.

Fig 5. The algorithm for computing

IV. RESULTS

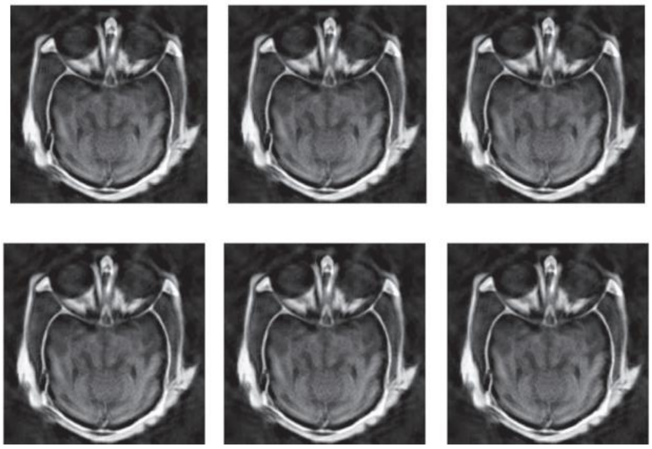
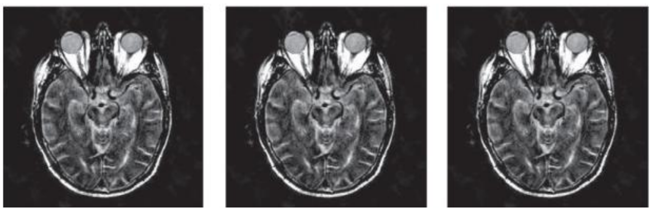


Fig. 6. The fused images of different source images under various NoIs. From the top row to the bottom one, the source images for respective rows are Fig. 2 a and b.



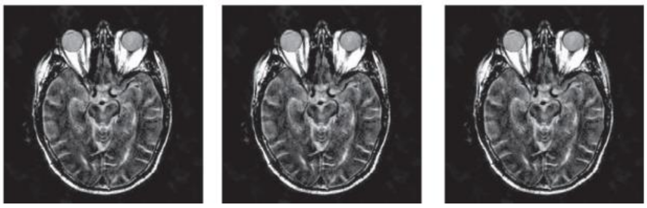


Fig. 7. The fused images of different source images under various NoIs. From the top row to the bottom one, the source images for respective rows are Fig. 3 a and b.

Table 1 Quantitative comparison between different fusion methods for different source images Medical Image-1.

Fusion algorithms	Fusion algorithms			
	‘‘medical-1’’ images: Fig. 2 a and b			
	UIQI	WFQI	WFQI	SSIM
LP	0.4715	0.6206	0.3227	0.4894
MP	0.4568	0.6026	0.2863	0.4725
GP	0.4860	0.6235	0. 3542	0.4629
DWT	0.4717	0. 6214	0. 6214	0. 6214
CVT	0.2457	0.2840	0.0933	0.3528
NSCT	0.3190	0.3710	0.1648	0.3811
MCA	0.3811	0.6489	0.3555	0.4478

Table 2 Quantitative comparison between different fusion methods for different source images Medical Image-2.

Fusion algorithms	Fusion algorithms			
	‘‘medical-2’’ images: Fig. 3 a and b			
	UIQI	WFQI	WFQI	SSIM
LP	0.7583	0.7761	0.6352	0.7760
MP	0.6847	0.7006	0.5356	0.7260
GP	0.8006	0.8134	0.6905	0.5949
DWT	0.7339	0.7339	0.6054	0.6054
CVT	0.6054	0.3411	0.3411	0.2620
NSCT	0.4058	0.4066	0.2204	0.2756
MCA	0.8138	0.8242	0.8242	0.6776

V. CONCLUSION

This paper develops a novel multi-component fusion method for multi-source images using morphological component analysis (MCA), based on the idea that an image has the property of morphological diversity. Our method can create better fused images, according to visual evaluations and quantitative comparisons on the fused images.

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