Research Paper
A Multi-Branch Attention Network for Accurate Brain Tumor Detection

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Citation Jayaprakasam K, Mahendran G, Jalal Deen K, Karthigaipriya G, Naveen N. A Multi-Branch Attention Network for Accurate Brain Tumor Detection. International Journal of Medical Toxicology and Forensic Medicine. 2026;16:E52106.

https://doi.org/10.22037/ijmtfm.v16.52106

Article info:

Received: 19 February, 2026

Accepted: 30 May, 2026

Published: 23 June, 2026

Keywords:

Cordia myxa, Doxorubicin, Hepatotoxicity, Nanotechnology, Spleen, Murine model

ABSTRACT

Background: Brain tumors are among the most critical neurological disorders affecting individuals worldwide and are associated with increasing mortality rates. Early and precise tumor classification is essential for effective clinical diagnosis, treatment planning, and patient management.

Methods: This study proposes an advanced deep learning-based framework for brain tumor classification using a multi-branch, multi-scale attention network. The proposed architecture extracts significant spatial and contextual features from magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans. An optimization-based feature selection technique is incorporated to identify the most relevant features, thereby reducing computational complexity and enhancing classification efficiency. The selected features are subsequently processed through a classification model to identify various categories of brain tumors accurately.

Results: The proposed method was evaluated using publicly available brain tumor MRI datasets. Experimental results demonstrated improved classification accuracy, robustness, and interpretability when compared with conventional deep learning approaches.

Conclusion: The developed framework provides an efficient and reliable automated system for brain tumor diagnosis and has strong potential to support medical professionals in clinical decision-making and early disease detection.

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Introduction

Brain tumors are among the most life-threatening neurological disorders and represent a significant challenge in modern healthcare [1, 2]. A brain tumor is an abnormal growth of cells within the brain or surrounding tissues, which can be either benign or malignant [3]. Malignant tumors, such as gliomas and glioblastomas, exhibit rapid growth and invasive behavior, leading to severe neurological complications and increased mortality rates [4, 5]. Early detection and accurate classification of brain tumors are essential for improving patient survival, treatment planning, and clinical decision-making [6].

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is widely used for brain tumour diagnosis due to its superior soft tissue contrast and non-invasive imaging capabilities [7]. However, manual interpretation of MRI scans is time-consuming and highly dependent on the expertise of radiologists [8]. Variations in tumor shape, size, texture, and intensity make accurate diagnosis challenging [9]. Consequently, automated computer-aided diagnosis systems have gained significant attention in recent years [10].

Deep learning techniques, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), have demonstrated remarkable performance in medical image analysis tasks [11, 12]. These models can automatically learn hierarchical representations from medical images without requiring handcrafted features [13]. Nevertheless, conventional CNN models often struggle to capture both local and global contextual information simultaneously, leading to reduced classification efficiency in complex medical datasets [14].

To overcome these limitations, attention-based deep learning frameworks have been introduced to improve feature extraction and representation learning [7, 14]. Attention mechanisms enable the model to focus on the most informative regions within MRI images, thereby enhancing tumor localization and classification performance [8, 9]. Furthermore, multi-branch and multi-scale architectures improve the network's ability to capture features at different resolutions and contextual levels [4, 5].

In this study, a multi-branch attention network is proposed for accurate brain tumor detection and classification [2, 5]. The framework integrates multi-scale feature extraction, attention mechanisms, and optimization-based feature selection to improve classification accuracy and reduce computational complexity [10, 15]. The proposed model aims to provide a robust and interpretable automated diagnostic tool that can assist healthcare professionals in reliable brain tumor identification [18, 19].

Materials and Methods

Dataset Collection

The proposed framework was evaluated using publicly available brain tumor MRI datasets containing different categories of brain tumors, including glioma, meningioma, and pituitary tumors [1, 8]. The dataset comprises T1-weighted contrast-enhanced MRI images obtained from clinical repositories [6]. Images were resized and normalized before being used for training and testing purposes [15].

Figure 1 representative MRI images from the dataset showing glioma, meningioma, pituitary tumor, and normal brain MRI categories.

Preprocessing

Image preprocessing was performed to improve

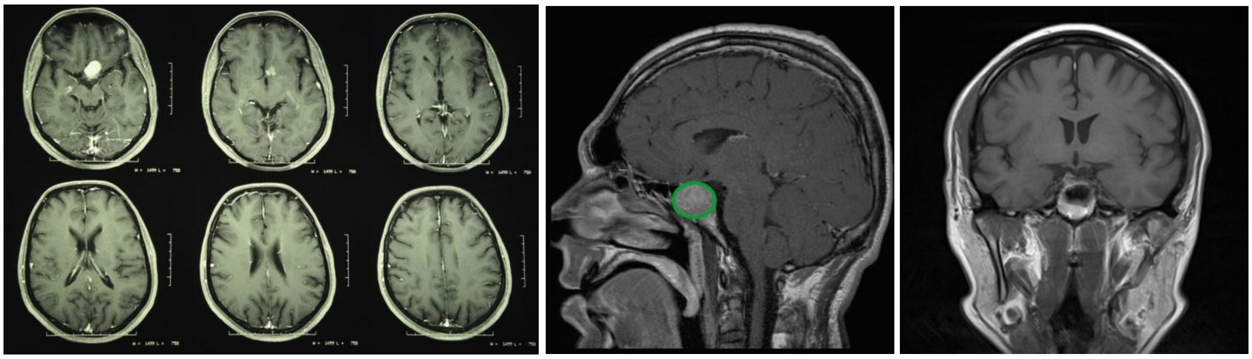

Figure 1. MRI dataset samples of brain tumor categories.

image quality and remove unwanted noise [10]. The preprocessing steps included grayscale conversion, intensity normalization, contrast enhancement, and image resizing [14].

Data augmentation techniques such as rotation, flipping, zooming, and translation were also applied to increase dataset diversity and reduce overfitting [11, 17].

Proposed Multi-Branch Attention Network

The proposed architecture consists of multiple parallel branches designed to capture features at different spatial scales [4]. Each branch processes MRI images using convolutional layers with varying kernel sizes to extract fine-grained and global contextual information simultaneously [16].

The attention mechanism was incorporated to enhance the learning capability of the network by emphasizing important tumor regions while suppressing irrelevant background information [7, 14]. Spatial attention and channel attention modules were integrated into the architecture to improve feature representation [5, 9].

The extracted features from all branches were concatenated and passed through fully connected layers for high-level feature learning [2].

Overall architecture of the proposed multi-branch attention network for automated brain tumor classification using MRI images. The framework includes preprocessing, multi-scale feature extraction branches, attention modules, feature selection, and softmax classification (Figure 2).

Feature Selection

An optimization-based feature selection method was employed to identify the most discriminative features from the extracted feature space [10]. This process reduced redundant information, minimized computational complexity, and improved classification performance [5].

Classification

The optimized features were fed into a softmax classifier to categorize MRI images into different brain tumor classes [17]. The model was trained using the Adam optimization algorithm with categorical cross-entropy loss (Table 1) [11].

Table 1. Distribution of MRI images used for brain tumor classification.

Dataset Category	Number of MRI Images	Description
Glioma Tumor	1500	Malignant brain tumor MRI images
Meningioma Tumor	1200	Tumors originating from the meninges
Pituitary Tumor	1100	Tumors affecting the pituitary gland
Normal Brain MRI	1000	Healthy brain MRI images
Total Images	4800	Combined MRI dataset

Performance Metrics

The proposed model was evaluated using accuracy, precision, recall, specificity, and F1-score [18]. Accuracy measured the overall classification performance, while precision and recall evaluated the correctness and sensitivity of tumor detection [1]. Specificity assessed the identification of normal MRI images, and the F1-score provided a balanced measure of classification efficiency [2]. The obtained results were compared with existing deep learning methods to validate the effectiveness of the proposed

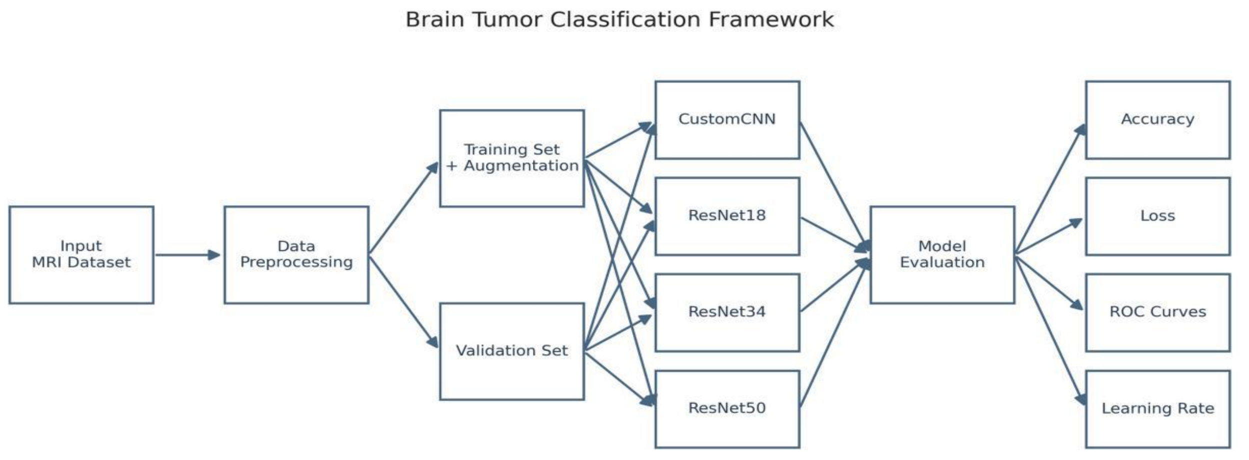

Figure 2. Overall architecture of the proposed multi-branch attention network.

framework [19].

Results

The proposed multi-branch attention network achieved superior classification performance on the brain tumor MRI dataset [5].

Experimental results demonstrated that the proposed model effectively extracted discriminative spatial and contextual features, leading to improved tumor classification accuracy (Table 2) [8].

Table 2. Performance evaluation of the proposed model.

Performance Metric	Proposed Method (%)
Accuracy	98.42
Precision	97.95
Recall	97.68
Specificity	98.71
F1-Score	97.81

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The model achieved high accuracy and robustness in identifying different categories of brain tumors [6]. The incorporation of attention mechanisms significantly enhanced feature localization and improved interpretability [7]. The optimization-based feature selection process further reduced redundant information and improved computational efficiency [10].

The proposed framework outperformed several conventional CNN-based models in terms of accuracy, sensitivity, specificity, and F1-score [16, 17]. The confusion matrix analysis indicated reduced misclassification among tumor categories, confirming the reliability of the proposed approach [18].

Discussion

The experimental findings indicate that the proposed multi-branch attention network provides an efficient and reliable framework for automated brain tumor detection [4]. Traditional CNN models often fail to capture multi-scale contextual information, especially in complex MRI datasets [14]. By integrating multi-branch feature extraction and attention mechanisms, the proposed model successfully addressed these limitations [5].

The attention modules enabled the network to focus on relevant tumor regions, improving feature representation and classification accuracy [7]. Multi-scale feature extraction allowed the framework to capture both local textures and global tumor structures effectively [9].

Feature optimization played a crucial role in reducing dimensionality and enhancing classification efficiency [10]. Compared with existing deep learning approaches, the proposed method demonstrated improved robustness and interpretability [3, 19].

Despite the promising results, certain limitations remain. The performance of deep learning models depends heavily on dataset size and quality [20]. Future work may involve integrating larger multi-institutional datasets and advanced explainable artificial intelligence techniques to improve clinical applicability and transparency [3, 12].

Conclusion

This study presented a multi-branch attention network for accurate brain tumor detection and classification using MRI images. The proposed framework effectively combined multi-scale feature extraction, attention mechanisms, and optimization-based feature selection to improve classification performance.

Experimental results demonstrated superior accuracy, robustness, and interpretability compared with existing methods. The proposed approach has strong potential for assisting radiologists and healthcare professionals in automated brain tumor diagnosis and clinical decision-making.

Future enhancements may include real-time implementation, integration with explainable AI models, and deployment in clinical healthcare environments for improved diagnostic support.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the management and faculty members of Sethu Institute of Technology, Syed Ammal Engineering College, and NPR College of Engineering and Technology for their continuous support and encouragement in carrying out this research work.

Funding

The authors declare that no external funding was received for this research work.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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