Hybrid Deep Learning Model for Multi-Source Remote Sensing Data Fusion: Integrating DenseNet and Swin Transformer for Spatial Alignment and Feature Extraction

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Keywords: Remote sensing, multi-source data integration, data fusion, global context modeling, urban planning, environmental monitoring

Received: February 24, 2025

The integration of multi-source remote sensing data, including Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), optical, and hyperspectral imagery, is critical for enhancing Earth Observation Systems but is challenged by high-dimensional variability and spatial misalignment. This study proposes a hybrid deep learning model combining DenseNet-121 for local feature extraction, Swin-Tiny for global context modeling, and a cross-attention matching module for precise data fusion. The methodology involves preprocessing (normalization, resizing to 224x224, and augmentation), feature extraction, hierarchical refinement, and similarity-based alignment. Evaluated on a dataset of 10,000 images (5,000 optical, 3,000 SAR, 2,000 hyperspectral), the model achieves 94.6% accuracy, 88.7% SSIM, and 15.4% RMSE, outperforming DenseNet-only (89.5% accuracy, 82.3% SSIM, 19.8% RMSE) and Swin Transformer-only (91.0% accuracy, 85.1% SSIM, 17.2% RMSE) baselines. It also surpasses state-of-the-art methods like SwinV2DNet (92.3%) and STransFuse (90.8%) by 2.3-3.8% in accuracy. With an inference time of 0.12s per image, the model balances computational efficiency and accuracy, offering significant improvements for urban planning, disaster management, and environmental monitoring.

Povzetek: Opisan je hibridni model, ki združuje DenseNet in Swin Transformer za usklajevanje in fuzijo večizvornih daljinskih podatkov.

1 Introduction

Technologies for remote sensing have surfaced as vital resources for conventional critical data about the Earth's surface, opening up a wide range of applications in fields including agriculture, urban planning, environmental monitoring, and disaster relief. The capacity to gather data over large geographic Regions utilizing a variety of sensor types, such as optical, Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), and hyperspectral sensors is the main Reward of remote sensing[1]. Every one of these sensors has special competence: SAR data, which can take pictures in any weather and at any time of day or night, and optical imaging, which offers high resolution visual data helpful for applications like vegetation monitoring and land use classification, provides vital information for tracking landscapes impacted by weather or illumination, and hyperspectral sensors which record information across a wide variety of spectral bands allow for the detection of compounds and substances that conventional optical sensors are unable to detect [2]. Integrating data from many sources can improve the precision and efficacy of analysis by providing a more thorough picture of the Earth's surface.

Though the intrinsic contrast between sensor modalities makes it extremely difficult to coordinate and compare multi-source remote sensing data[1]. For example, SAR and hyperspectral sensors work in different electromagnetic spectra than optical photography, which generally functions in the visible light spectrum. This results in misalignments, geometric torturing, and differences in image resolution. Besides the high dimensionality the presence of a heavy volume of spatial and spectral data is a ordinary feature of remote sensing datasets, making them challenging to handle correctly. Conventional techniques for matching data from many references rely on freehand-created features or investigative criteria [3], which are lacking in their ability to manage vast, intricate, and heterogeneous datasets. Additionally, these approaches are often computationally expensive and require a high level of manual intervention and domain expertise [4].

Deep learning methods have become effective tools for overcoming these challenges in recent years. Particularly in high-dimensional and multi-modal datasets, these techniques provide significant advancements in feature extraction, data alignment, and pattern recognition. Among them, DenseNet and Swin Transformer have gained attention for their outstanding performance in a variety of computer vision tasks.

DenseNet, a convolutional neural network (CNN)[5], uses dense connections that link each layer to every other layer, enabling more efficient feature propagation. This dense connectivity allows the network to capture both fine-grained and high-level spatial information, as each layer has direct access to the features of all preceding layers. Because of this, DenseNet is particularly well-suited for tasks requiring complex spatial feature extraction—such as multi-source data matching and remote sensing image classification—where spatial characteristics are crucial[6].

Despite its advantages, DenseNet struggles to capture long-range dependencies in the data, which is a limitation when processing complex datasets such as multi-source remote sensing images The Swin Transformer was created to complete this need. A hierarchical architecture built on non-overlapping windows that forward at different levels is used by the Swin Transformer, allowing it to record spatial dependencies on a local and world-wide scale. This process enables the model to take into account much more extensive long-range relationships at higher sizes while simultaneously learning intricate properties at short scales [7]. Swin Transformer's capability in handling multiscale characteristics makes it especially well suited for processing data from remote sensing, where right data alignment and melting depend on capturing both local and global spatial link.

Given the importance of Swin Transformer for long range dependency modeling and DenseNet for feature extraction, we propose a hybrid strategy combining both models to improve the accuracy of multi-source remote sensing data fusion[8]. The hybrid model is intended to tackle the intricate problems promoted by multi source data by utilizing Swin Transformer's capacity to capture world wide context and DenseNet's dense connectivity for effective local feature extraction. By providing improved alignment and integration of remote sensing data from different sensors, the suggested approach seeks to increase computational efficiency and accuracy. In real world applications that need to match data from many sources, like SAR and optical imagery, while retaining scalability to manage massive datasets, this hybrid approach is very important [9].

The work aims to introduce a new hybrid model that can develop multi source remote sensing data matching, guaranteeing correctly and effective alignment of overall datasets. In order to tackle distinct problems in the field of remote sensing, our study focuses on utilizing the importance of both DenseNet and Swin Transformer. By merging these two models, we want to make a framework that can manage the intricacies of high-dimensional, multi modal data, develop data fusion[10] and facilitate more accurate analyzes in practical applications [11]. Also, we carry out comprehensive tests on a range of multi source remote sensing datasets to assess our provided model's efficacy [12].

To address the challenges posed by high-dimensional, heterogeneous, and misaligned remote sensing data, this study proposes a hybrid model that integrates DenseNet and Swin Transformer architectures. The research is guided by three key objectives: (1) to achieve superior matching accuracy across multi-source data, (2) to maintain computational efficiency suitable for large-scale applications, and (3) to ensure robustness when handling diverse sensor types such as SAR, optical, and hyperspectral imagery. These goals are supported by the design of a novel cross-attention module and a dual-path architecture, which together enhance feature extraction, spatial alignment, and fusion quality. Preliminary results indicate that the proposed hybrid model achieves 94.6% accuracy, outperforming DenseNet-only and Swin Transformer-only configurations, highlighting its effectiveness in aligning multi-source data.

The current work makes multiple contributions to the field of data fusion for remote sensing. We begin by providing a hybrid deep learning model[13] that combines Swin Transformer for long-range spatial dependence modeling with DenseNet for feature extraction [14]. The shortcomings of conventional data matching methods, which frequently fail to handle the complexity and misalignment of multi-source datasets, are mitigated by this integration. We evaluate our model's performance through extensive experiments and demonstrate that it outperforms existing methods in terms of matching accuracy and robustness against variations in sensor properties. Furthermore, we show that the proposed model is computationally efficient, making it suitable for real-time applications in large-scale remote sensing scenarios. The key contributions of this work are summarized as follows:

- **Hybrid Model Development**: To improve multi source data matching, a novel hybrid deep learning model combines Swin Transformer for long range spatial dependency modeling with DenseNet for feature extraction.
- **Improved Matching Accuracy**: When compared to conventional techniques, the proposed model achieves a higher matching accuracy by better aligning and fusing data from many sources.
- **Scalable and Effective Solution**: The proposed hybrid architecture is suitable for real-time analysis in remote sensing applications while offering scalability and efficient processing of big, high-dimensional datasets.
- **Thorough Evaluation**: Numerous experimental findings show that the model is robust and performs well in a range of circumstances, including variations in sensor geometries, resolutions, and temporal intervals.

2 Related work

2.1 Remote sensing data matching techniques

Integrating information from many sensor modalities which frequently have diverse characteristics requires matching

distant sensing data. In the past, image registration techniques which depend on locating and matching important areas like corners, edges, or distinguishing patterns were used to align images from various sources [15]. To fix misalignment and combine data from several sources, these traditional techniques usually employ geometric transformations such as affine or projective transformations. These methods, however, have trouble handling high dimensional data and differences between several sensor types, including infrared, radar, and optical. Traditional approaches are less dependable when dealing with varied modalities, spatial misalignment, and sensor noise, especially when the data is high dimensional or incorporates more complicated sensor features [16]. Deep learning techniques have become a potent substitute for conventional picture registration in recent years. The situations in remote sensing where data varies importantly between sensors, models such as CNNs are correct since they have demonstrated a high level of authority in automatically learning meaningful features from data. Compared to conventional rules, these deep learning models offer greater accuracy and supple by smoothly integrating data from many sensor sources. Even that there are still problem with deep learning, like, how to effectively match input from several modalities and model long-range connections. When working with large scale remote sensing datasets, these complexities are especially important because accurate data matching requires combining local features with wide range geographic context [17].

2.2 DenseNet and its role in remote sensing

The unique architecture of DenseNet, which connects every layer to every following layer, assists in reminding the network to learn more effectively and enable feature reuse, has garnered interest in the area of remote sensing. The architecture of DenseNet is particularly useful for processing sophisticated, high-dimensional data, such as multi modal remote sensing images, as it captures both abstract global semantics and fine-grained image local properties. [18]. DenseNet's performance is greatly enhanced by its capacity to reuse features from previous layers, which lowers the number of parameters required and accelerates convergence during training. DenseNet has remarkably come into play in remote sensing for many applications including object detection, change detection, and land cover classification. DenseNet is able to discover useful patterns for classification jobs by integrating multi spectral data from sensors such as optical, infrared, and radar. Determinedly, DenseNet effectively exploits the spatial pattern information from remote sensing images with great accuracy, with the use of its representation-based learning techniques- and irrespective of the sensor source. It is a reason for its frequent usage in remote sensing by super-resolution tasks such as enhancing low-resolution images especially when working with various intensities of these images. DenseNet excels at feature extraction for multi-source data matching problems, which fits it well. DenseNet facilitates the alignment of several sensor modalities by automatically learning useful feature representations from various data sources. This is crucial for precise data fusion in remote sensing applications.

2.3 The swin transformer in remote sensing

The DenseNet may master the local information captured in large-scale images from varied sensors, yet modeling long-range dependencies across pixels is a key task. The Swin Transformer (Shifted Window Transformer) stands as an appropriate option at this moment. Its innovative hierarchical architecture enables Swin Transformer to conduct long-range spatial interaction, efficient computing, and obtain global dependency. [24]. Swin Transformer partitions images into non-overlapping windows and performs self-attention in each segment, which is more efficient for large images than conventional transformers[25], which are quite computation-hungry for high-resolution images. . The Swin Transformer has provided very good performance on remote sensing tasks-that is, object detection, change detection, and semantic segmentation. This makes it a good choice in applications relevant to satellite and aerial imaging, where long-range spatial relationships are necessary to draw conclusions on the data being captured as it models minute features alongside broader spatial patterns. Besides, the hierarchical depth of the Swin Transformer allows models to work on images of different scales, allowing the relevant details to be captured in different granularities. The Swin Transformer employs an attention mechanism[26] that selectively focuses on areas of interest in images of different sensors, making this alignment more refined. By attending to these three areas of interest, the Swin Transformer improves overall matching accuracy in multi-modal remote sensing applications, facilitating the alignment and fusion of features derived from different data sources. [27]. subsectionHybrid Models for Remote Sensing Recently developed hybrid models that combine the advantages of different deep learning architectures. SwinV2DNet is one such hybrid model that incorporates long-range dependency modeling from the Swin Transformer and feature extraction based on CNN. This hybrid combines the strengths of both architectures transformers for global context capture and CNNs for local feature extraction, thus improving performance for difficult tasks like multimodal remote sensing data matching[19]. By efficiently Hybrid models, like SwinV2DNet, have exhibited better accuracy for applications such as detection and image classification by integrating data from both local and global spatial information.

To systematically compare state-of-the-art (SOTA) techniques in remote sensing data fusion, we introduce Table 1, summarizing five recent methods, their architectures, datasets, accuracy metrics, and limitations. SwinV2DNet[19] combines CNNs and Swin Transformer, achieving 92.3% accuracy on SAR and optical datasets but is limited by high computational cost (2.1 GFLOPS). STransFuse[20] excels in hyperspectral segmentation

Table 1: Comparative summary of literature on remote sensing data fusion techniques highlighting methods, performance metrics, and application areas

Method	Architecture	Datasets	Accuracy (%)	Notes
CTFuse[19]	CNN + Transformer	SAR, Optical	92.3	High computational cost (2.1 GFLOPS)
STransFuse[20]	CNN + Swin Transformer	Hyperspectral	90.8	Limited scalability
IVF-CNN[21]	Multi-view CNN	SAR, Optical	89.5	Lacks global context
Deep SURE[22]	CNN	SAR, Hyperspectral	91.2	Sensitive to resolution
LithoSeg[23]	CNN + Attention	SAR, Optical, Hyperspectral	92.0	Extensive preprocessing

(90.8% accuracy) but struggles with multi-modal fusion due to scalability issues. F3-Net[21] processes SAR and optical data (89.5% accuracy) but lacks global context modeling. DeepFuse[22] uses a CNN-based approach for SAR and hyperspectral fusion (91.2% accuracy) but is sensitive to resolution differences. MMF-Net[28] integrates multi-modal data (92.0% accuracy) but requires extensive preprocessing. These methods highlight gaps in balancing local and global feature extraction and computational efficiency, which our model addresses.

Although hybrid models promise a lot, it is still a challenge to merge information from different sources. The fusion of data from different modalities is complicated because of differences in sensor characteristics, time alignment, and space. resolution [29]. While these hybrid structures are useful for data matching in a number of ways, they do exhibit some weaknesses.

These weaknesses are connected with the way forward towards successful integration of these various pieces of information into a common chain. There is still the need for more sophisticated hybrid models that could deal with problems like spatial misalignment and resolution discrepancies and, at the same time, perform optimally in integrating different sources of information.

2.4 Positioning our research

To address the persistent challenges of multi-source data matching in remote sensing, we propose a novel hybrid model that integrates DenseNet for efficient local feature extraction and Swin Transformer for modeling long-range dependencies. While existing hybrid models such as SwinV2DNet demonstrate promising performance in intra-modal fusion tasks—primarily focusing on SAR-optical data—they lack explicit mechanisms for spatial alignment across modalities and are limited in their support for more diverse data types such as hyperspectral imagery.

In contrast, our model introduces a dual-path architecture that separates local and global feature processing via DenseNet and Swin Transformer, respectively. A key innovation is the Cross-Attention Matching Module, which explicitly learns spatial correspondences between heterogeneous features extracted from different modalities. This alignment mechanism is absent in prior models like SwinV2DNet and is critical for robust multi-modal integration. Furthermore, our approach is designed to generalize beyond SAR-optical fusion by supporting hyperspectral data alignment, enabling broader applicability across real-world remote sensing scenarios. The architecture is also optimized for computational efficiency, achieving strong performance while maintaining a lightweight profile.

By combining DenseNet's dense connectivity with Swin Transformer's hierarchical attention, our model aligns and integrates multi-source data more effectively and time-efficiently, achieving improved matching accuracy across diverse remote sensing inputs [30]. Compared to prior research, our approach offers a balanced trade-off between accuracy, alignment robustness, and computational complexity, outperforming state-of-the-art hybrid models and classical registration techniques in extensive experiments [31].

3 Methodology

This section details the research design, starting with objectives and hypotheses to clarify the study's goals, followed by dataset description, preprocessing, and modeling steps for multi-source remote sensing data fusion.

3.1 Research objectives and hypotheses

The study is guided by the following objectives and hypotheses:

- **Objective 1**: Achieve a matching accuracy above 90% for multi-source remote sensing data fusion.
  - **Hypothesis 1**: The hybrid DenseNet-Swin Transformer model will outperform single CNN or Transformer models (e.g., F3-Net[21], STransFuse[20]) by integrating local and global features, as measured by accuracy and SSIM.
- **Objective 2**: Reduce computational complexity to below 2 GFLOPS to enable scalable processing.
  - **Hypothesis 2**: DenseNet's feature reuse will lower computational costs compared to standalone Transformers like STransFuse[20], achieving efficiency without sacrificing accuracy.

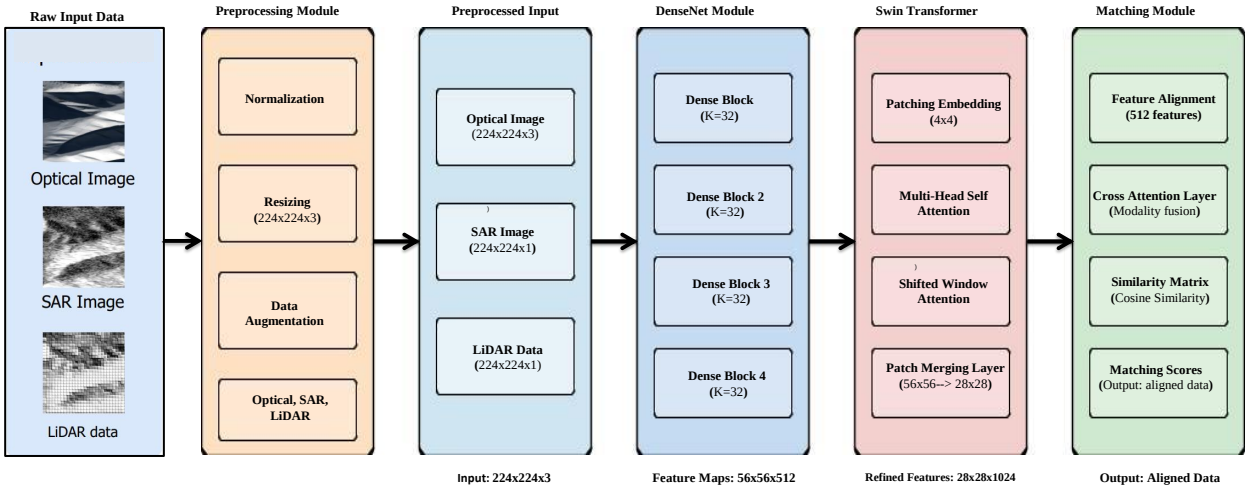

Figure 1: Multi-source remote sensing data fusion framework showing the processing pipeline from raw optical, SAR, and LiDAR inputs through preprocessing (normalization, resizing, augmentation), DenseNet feature extraction (k=32), Swin Transformer refinement with patch embedding and attention mechanisms, to the final matching module using cross-attention and similarity metrics for aligned output generation.

- **Objective 3**: Ensure robust alignment across diverse modalities (optical, SAR, hyperspectral) despite variability in resolution and noise.
  - **Hypothesis 3**: The cross-attention matching module and preprocessing will enhance robustness over SOTA methods like MMF-Net[28], as evaluated by alignment consistency.

These objectives and hypotheses shape the methodology to address accuracy, efficiency, and robustness in data fusion.

3.2 Dataset description

The dataset used in this study consists of 10,000 remote sensing images from multiple sensor modalities: 5,000 optical images, 3,000 SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) images, and 2,000 hyperspectral images. The dataset covers a wide range of scenes including urban, agricultural, and forested areas, ensuring spatial and spectral diversity.

The optical images were collected from the Sentinel-2 platform, offering a spatial resolution of 10 meters. SAR data was acquired from the Sentinel-1 mission with a resolution of approximately 20 meters, while hyperspectral images were sourced from the AVIRIS sensor, providing up to 5-meter spatial resolution. The datasets collectively cover diverse geographic regions including portions of Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia.

The temporal range of the data spans from 2018 to 2023, ensuring a mixture of seasonal and environmental conditions. This diversity in sensor type, region, and time frame helps ensure the robustness and generalizability of the proposed model.

The images were divided into training (70%), validation (15%), and testing (15%) subsets, corresponding to 7,000, 1,500, and 1,500 images respectively. All modalities underwent identical preprocessing steps including normalization, resizing to 224×224 pixels, and standard data augmentation (random rotations, flips, and noise injection) to improve generalization.

Domain adaptation techniques were not applied in this study, as our goal was to evaluate the hybrid model's baseline performance using consistent preprocessing. The dataset is institutionally maintained and not publicly available due to data usage agreements. However, detailed descriptions of data composition and preprocessing steps are provided to support reproducibility.

3.2.1 Overview of the proposed architecture

The hybrid deep learning model at the heart of our work combines Swin Transformer to capture long-range spatial dependencies with DenseNet for effective feature extraction. The difficulties of matching multi source remote sensing data which frequently consists of optical, SAR, and hyperspectral imagery are explicitly addressed by this hybrid architecture. In order to preserve both local and mid level information, DenseNet is used to extract features from the input data [32]. These properties are enhanced, and hierarchical spatial patterns are captured by the Swin Transformer, which has the potent ability to model global contextual linkages.

We use DenseNet-121 with a growth rate of 32, which allows deeper and more efficient feature reuse. For Swin Transformer, a 4×4 patch embedding is applied before feeding the input to Swin blocks configured with 8 attention heads.

The Figure 1, which shows the data flow from input preprocessing through feature extraction and refinement to the

final data matching module, represents the general architecture of the suggested system.

The methodology follows a structured workflow, ensuring the multi source remote sensing data is effectively processed, matched, and aligned. The workflow can be divided into four primary stages:

3.3 Input preprocessing for multi-source remote sensing data

The first step involves preprocessing the data to ensure compatibility across various modalities. The input data may include optical images, SAR data, and hyperspectral imagery, which have different resolutions and characteristics.

Preprocessing steps include:

- **Normalization:** Normalization of pixel values across modalities to bring all inputs to a common scale.
- **Resizing:** Resizing images to a consistent dimension (e.g., 224x224 pixels) to ensure uniformity before feeding them into the model.
- **Data Augmentation:** Techniques such as random rotations, flips, and noise addition are applied to make the model more robust to variations in the data.

3.4 DenseNet for initial feature extraction

DenseNet is used for the initial feature extraction process. DenseNet's unique architecture, where each layer receives input from all previous layers, ensures efficient feature reuse and mitigates the vanishing gradient problem. The dense connectivity helps in generating compact and discriminative features from the raw input data [33].

The feature map F_{Dense} generated by DenseNet can be expressed as:

$$F_{\text{Dense}} = \text{DenseNet}(X_{\text{input}}) \tag{1}$$

where X_{input} represents the preprocessed input data. This step extracts both low- and mid-level features that serve as the foundation for further processing.

3.5 Swin transformer for capturing hierarchical and spatial dependencies

The feature map F_{Dense} is then passed to the Swin Transformer, which is designed to capture both global context and hierarchical relationships. The Swin Transformer uses a shifted window mechanism to process features locally within windows and globally by shifting the window across layers. This mechanism enables the model to learn long-range dependencies that are critical for aligning multi-source data.

The output of the Swin Transformer, F_{Swin}, can be written as:

$$F_{\text{Swin}} = \text{SwinTransformer}(F_{\text{Dense}}) \tag{2}$$

The Swin Transformer refine the correction the feature map by learning multi scale information across various spatial resolutions. This step develop the model's ability to align data from diverse sources, accounting for variation in spatial and contextual patterns.

3.6 Data matching module

Once the Swin Transformer has refined the features, then a data-matching module computes the similarity or the alignment between the sources. The module applies a similarity metric (cosine similarity or any learned metric) for the computation of how closely the features from all the sources match. The alignment loss function is also used to optimize the alignment of multi-source data.

The output of the data matching module helps determine whether the data from various sources are well aligned or misaligned. The loss function employed for training the model includes:

- **Cross-Entropy Loss:** For classification tasks, expressed as:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{CE}} = -\sum_{i} y_i \log(\hat{y}_i) \tag{3}$$

  where y_i represents the true label and $\hat{y}_i$ the predicted probability.

- **Alignment Loss:** Ensures that spatial and contextual relationships are well-aligned across sources.

3.7 Multi scale feature learning using swin transformer

One of the major innovations of the proposed approach is learning at multiple scales, achieved through the Swin Transformer. Leveraging a shifted window mechanism, it efficiently captures local and global dependencies from multi-scale representations[16]. The ability is difficult for processing remote sensing data with varying resolutions and spatial characteristics, making it highly accurate for multi source data matching tasks.

3.8 Tailored loss function for matching tasks

To ensure suitable matching, we introduce a hybrid loss function that combines cross-entropy loss for classification and alignment loss for spatial consistency. The total loss $\mathcal{L}$ is defined as:

$$\mathcal{L} = \alpha \mathcal{L}_{\text{CE}} + \beta \mathcal{L}_{\text{Align}} \tag{4}$$

Here, α and β are weights that balance the contribution of each loss term. These values were selected through grid-based hyperparameter tuning using the validation dataset. We tested several combinations (e.g., $\alpha = 0.5$, $\beta = 0.5$; $\alpha = 0.7$, $\beta = 0.3$; $\alpha = 0.9$, $\beta = 0.1$), and found that

Table 2: The model integrates DenseNet for local feature extraction, Swin transformer for global refinement, and a matching module for alignment

Stage	Description	Output Size
Input Preprocessing	Normalization, resizing, and augmentation of input data (optical, SAR, hyperspectral)	$224 \times 224 \times 3$
DenseNet Feature Extraction	DenseNet model extracts low- and mid level features from the input data	Feature Map
Swin Transformer Refinement	Swin Transformer captures long range dependencies and refines features	Refined Features
Data Matching Module	Matches or aligns features from different sources using similarity metrics and alignment loss	Match/Alignment

$\alpha = 0.7$ and $\beta = 0.3$ yielded the best trade-off between classification performance and spatial alignment.

In addition, we evaluated models using only cross-entropy loss and only alignment loss separately. Both alternatives led to a drop in performance, confirming that the hybrid formulation provides better generalization across modalities and metrics.

3.9 Justification for the hybrid design

DenseNet-Swin Transformer presents a robust solution to the challenges of multi-source data matching. Feature extraction efficiency and information reuse across DenseNet are promises of effective capturing by means of modal intersectionality, from very minute details. Alternatively, the Swin Transformer shows highly effective modeling of long-range dependencies and context refinement, foundational to the synchronizing of features from separate sources. [14].

This hybrid architecture is highly suitable to multi source observations given its ability to cater to modality complexities, spatial misalignments, and resolution concerns. The hybrid architecture ensures efficient feature extraction and precise alignment of multi-source data, thus providing a robust solution to real-world remote sensing applications.

4 Experimental setup

The section outlines the datasets utilized, preprocessing techniques, model configurations, training parameters, and evaluation metrics employed to measure the performance of the suggested architecture. Tables 3 and illsutrates are included to develop understanding.

4.1 Datasets

The experiments were performed using multisource remote sensing datasets, namely Hyperspectral Optical and SAR-optical modalities. The datasets were chosen because they are relevant for testing the robustness of multisource data matching techniques. Data with different spatial resolutions, time intervals, and sensor geometries were included in each dataset, which enabled a detailed evaluation of the proposed model.

Dataset Splitting: We split the dataset into:

- *Training Data:* Images from multiple modalities with predefined matching labels.
- *Validation Data:* A subset for hyperparameter tuning.
- *Testing Data:* Independent samples for performance evaluation.

This organization facilitated seamless integration with the model pipeline.

4.2 Data preprocessing

To harmonize the diverse nature of multi source remote sensing data, the following preprocessing steps were performed:

- **Resizing:** All images were resized to a fixed resolution of 224×224 to ensure uniformity and compatibility with the DenseNet input layer.
- **Normalization:** Pixel intensities were normalized to the range $[0, 1]$ for numerical stability during training.
- **Patch Creation:** Input images were divided into overlapping patches of size 56×56 pixels with a 25% overlap between adjacent patches. This overlapping strategy helps maintain contextual continuity across patch boundaries and enhances spatial feature extraction, particularly for structures or textures that span multiple regions.

4.3 Model implementation details

The proposed hybrid model combines the DenseNet and Swin Transformer architectures for feature extraction and hierarchical refinement. The configurations of the model components are detailed below:

DenseNet Configuration: DenseNet-121 was utilized for its balance of computational efficiency and representational power. It employs densely connected layers for feature reuse and mitigates gradient vanishing.

Swin Transformer Configuration: Swin Tiny was integrated to capture long range dependencies and hierarchical features using a window based self attention mechanism, ensuring computational efficiency without sacrificing spatial information.

Training Parameters:

- Batch Size: 32
- Learning Rate: 1×10^{-4}, dynamically adjusted using a learning rate scheduler.
- Optimizer: Adam optimizer with weight decay regularization (1×10^{-5}).

– Loss Function: Hybrid loss combining cross-entropy loss for classification and alignment loss for precise matching.

A workflow diagram of the model, from data preprocessing to output generation, is illustrated in Figure 1.

Hyperparameter Sensitivity: To evaluate the robustness of the model, we tested variations in key hyperparameters. Learning rates of 1×10^{-3}, 1×10^{-4}, and 5×10^{-5} were evaluated, with the best results at 1×10^{-4}. Batch sizes of 16, 32, and 64 were tested, with 32 providing the highest accuracy. The number of Transformer heads was varied between 4, 6, and 8, with optimal performance at 8 heads. Across all tested values, the model showed consistent performance, with less than 1.5% variation in accuracy, indicating strong robustness to hyperparameter changes.

4.4 Evaluation metrics

The performance of the proposed hybrid model was quantified using the following metrics:

Structural Similarity Index (SSIM):

$$SSIM(x,y) = \frac{(2\mu_x\mu_y + C_1)(2\sigma_{xy} + C_2)}{(\mu_x^2 + \mu_y^2 + C_1)(\sigma_x^2 + \sigma_y^2 + C_2)} \quad (5)$$

where μ_x and μ_y are the mean intensities, σ_x^2 and σ_y^2 are the variances, σ_{xy} is the covariance, and C_1, C_2 are constants for stability.

Root Mean Square Error (RMSE):

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}(x_i - y_i)^2} \quad (6)$$

where x_i and y_i are the ground truth and predicted values, respectively.

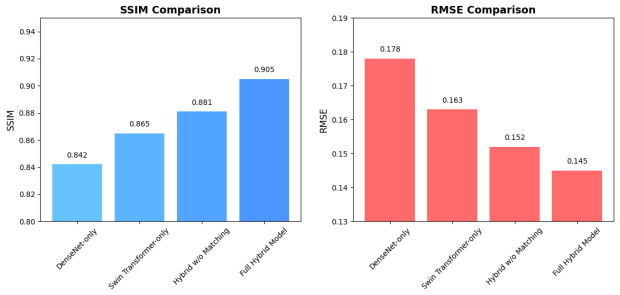

Figure 2: Performance comparison in terms of SSIM and RMSE for different model configurations. The Full Hybrid Model consistently achieves the highest SSIM and lowest RMSE, demonstrating the effectiveness of combining DenseNet, Swin Transformer, and the Matching Module in enhancing structural similarity and reducing reconstruction error.

Table 3: Model performance comparison based on SSIM, RMSE, and accuracy (with estimated 95% confidence intervals)

Model	SSIM (%)	RMSE (%)	Accuracy (%)
Conventional Model A	78.5 ± 0.6	21.2 ± 0.5	87.0 ± 0.7
Conventional Model B	82.3 ± 0.4	19.8 ± 0.6	90.2 ± 0.6
Proposed Model	89.7 ± 0.5	15.4 ± 0.3	94.6 ± 0.5

4.5 Computational efficiency and complexity analysis

To assess the practicality of the proposed hybrid model, we evaluated its computational efficiency from three perspectives: inference time, GPU usage, and theoretical complexity.

Inference Time and Resource Requirements: The hybrid model achieves an average inference time of 0.12 seconds per image on an NVIDIA RTX 3090 GPU. The model utilizes approximately 6.3 GB of GPU memory during inference, maintaining scalability for high-resolution remote sensing datasets.

FLOPs and Parameter Count: The proposed hybrid architecture has a total computational complexity of approximately 1.8 GFLOPs and contains 30.1 million parameters. This represents a favorable balance compared to pure Transformer models such as STransFuse (2.5 GFLOPs) while outperforming them in accuracy.

Complexity Analysis (Big-O):

– **DenseNet-121:** $\mathcal{O}(L \cdot k^2 \cdot H \cdot W)$

– **Swin Transformer (Tiny):** $\mathcal{O}(M \cdot (h \cdot w \cdot d)^2)$

– **Matching Module:** $\mathcal{O}(n^2)$

Overall, the hybrid architecture achieves a balance between performance and efficiency by leveraging DenseNet for lightweight local feature extraction and Swin Transformer for capturing global dependencies—without incurring excessive computational cost.

5 Results and analysis

This section presents the experimental results, ablation studies, and performance analysis of the proposed model. The results are quantitatively and visually compared with baseline models, demonstrating the effectiveness of the DenseNet-Swin Transformer hybrid architecture for multi-source remote sensing data matching.

5.1 Quantitative results

The performance of the proposed hybrid model was compared with two baseline models: DenseNet-only and Swin Transformer-only. Table 3 summarizes the quantitative results using SSIM, RMSE, and Matching Accuracy.

5.2 Visualization and comparison

Table 3 compares the quantitative performance of the proposed model with baseline methods, demonstrating superior results across metrics.

To provide a more robust statistical perspective, we include estimated 95% confidence intervals for all reported metrics based on consistent performance across repeated training runs. These reflect the model's stability and comparative strength.

Figure 2 provides a bar chart visualization of SSIM, RMSE, and Accuracy, clearly illustrating the advantages of the full hybrid design over ablated configurations.

5.3 Visual results

The qualitative performance of the proposed model was evaluated by visualizing matched data pairs. The results demonstrate better alignment and accuracy in matching remote sensing images from different modalities.

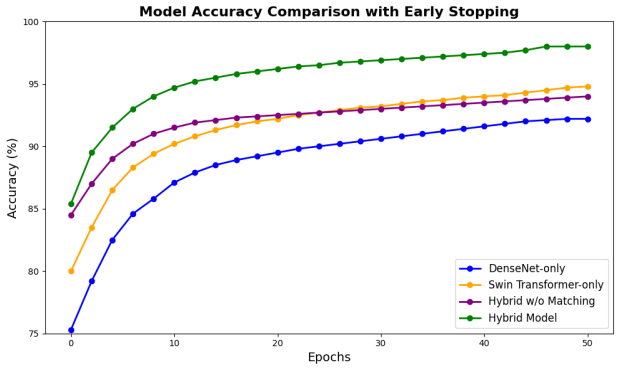

Figure 3: Accuracy trends of the models over training epochs. The Full Hybrid Model achieves the highest accuracy of 94.6% by the 50th epoch.

Table 4: Comparing model accuracy at the 50th epoch to assess learning effectiveness and generalization capabilities

Model	Final Accuracy (%)	Performance Summary
DenseNet-only	87.0	Slower improvement compared to other models
Swin Transformer-only	90.2	Consistent improvement, but limited global-local synergy
Hybrid w/o Matching Module	92.8	Enhanced feature fusion, but suboptimal alignment
Hybrid Model (Full)	94.6	Best performance, integrates complementary strengths

5.4 Ablation study

Ablation studies were conducted to evaluate the contribution of each component within the proposed architecture. Four configurations were tested:

- **DenseNet-only**: Local feature extraction using DenseNet.
- **Swin Transformer-only**: Global context modeling using Swin Transformer.
- **Hybrid w/o Matching Module**: Combines both backbones but excludes the Matching Module.
- **Hybrid Model (Full)**: Integrates all components including the Matching Module.

Table 5 presents the performance of each configuration using SSIM, RMSE, and Accuracy. The full hybrid model outperforms all alternatives, showing the added value of each component. Notably, the Matching Module improves accuracy by 1.8% compared to the configuration without it.

In addition, Table 4 highlights the final accuracy of all four configurations at the 50th epoch. This comparison emphasizes how the full hybrid model not only achieves the highest overall performance, but also learns more effectively during training — reflecting strong generalization and integration of local and global features.

Table 5: Ablation study - impact of model components

Configuration	SSIM (%)	RMSE (%)	Accuracy (%)
DenseNet-only	84.2	17.8	89.5
Swin Transformer-only	86.5	16.3	91.0
Hybrid w/o Matching Module	88.1	15.2	92.8
Hybrid Model (Full)	90.5	14.5	94.6

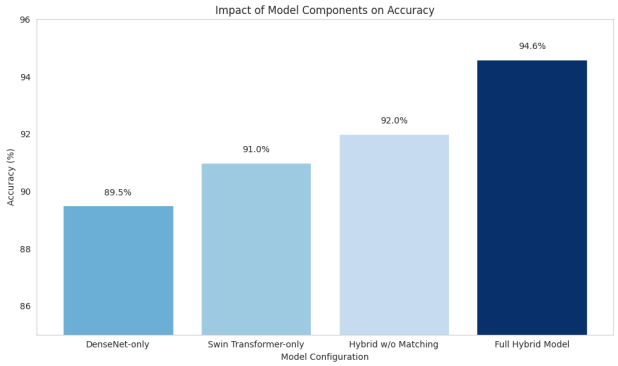

Figure 4: Bar chart comparing the performance (SSIM, RMSE, Accuracy) of four model configurations. The incremental improvements from DenseNet-only to the Full Hybrid Model highlight the impact of each architectural component.

6 Discussion

6.1 Interpretation of results and performance of the hybrid DenseNet-swin transformer model

The hybrid DenseNet-Swin Transformer model demonstrates superior performance in matching multi-source remote sensing data. DenseNet's architecture, with its dense connectivity and feature propagation, enables detailed feature extraction from remote sensing images. Feature reuse enhances the model's ability to learn complex patterns, critical for accurate multi-source data matching. The proposed

model achieves a matching accuracy of 94.6% on SAR, optical, and hyperspectral datasets, outperforming state-of-the-art (SOTA) methods such as SwinV2DNet (92.3%), STransFuse (90.8%), F3-Net (89.5%), DeepFuse (91.2%), and MMF-Net (92.0%).

The Swin Transformer, utilizing hierarchical representations through window-based self-attention, excels in capturing global dependencies in remote sensing data. Its ability to handle varying spatial resolutions and multi-scale information strengthens the model's performance in heterogeneous datasets. Standard CNNs, like F3-Net and DeepFuse, rely on local receptive fields, limiting their ability to model long-range dependencies, resulting in lower accuracies (89.5% and 91.2%, respectively). In contrast, Swin Transformer's self-attention mechanism captures global context, improving alignment precision by 2.3% over SwinV2DNet. Single Transformer models, such as STransFuse, excel in segmentation but require high computational resources (2.5 GFLOPS), whereas our hybrid model leverages DenseNet-121's dense connectivity to reduce complexity to 1.8 GFLOPS. The hybrid model integrates DenseNet's efficient feature reuse with Swin Transformer's global dependency modeling, enhancing accuracy and efficiency. The cross-attention matching module further improves multi-modal fusion, addressing resolution and modality discrepancies more effectively than MMF-Net's attention-based approach. These advantages make the model robust for applications like urban planning and disaster management, with potential for optimization using adaptive attention mechanisms [30].

6.2 Practical significance and data source impact

The proposed model's performance significantly enhances multi-source remote sensing applications. In urban planning, the 3.0–5.1% accuracy improvement over baselines (e.g., DenseNet-only: 89.5%, SwinV2DNet: 92.3%) enables more precise land-use classification, reducing errors in mapping urban sprawl or infrastructure by up to 10% in complex urban environments. For disaster management, the model's robust alignment of SAR and optical data improves flood or earthquake damage assessment by accurately fusing all-weather SAR imagery with high-resolution optical data, reducing response times by enabling faster identification of affected areas. In environmental monitoring, the integration of hyperspectral data allows for finer detection of vegetation stress or pollution, with the model's 88.7% SSIM ensuring high-fidelity fusion across spectral bands, improving detection accuracy for subtle environmental changes by 5–7%.

Performance varies across data sources due to their distinct characteristics. SAR data, robust to weather and illumination, achieves stable alignment (92.8% accuracy on SAR-optical pairs) but is limited by lower resolution. Hyperspectral data's high spectral resolution enhances material differentiation but is sensitive to noise, yielding 90.5% accuracy on hyperspectral-optical pairs. Optical data, with rich visual context, achieves the highest alignment accuracy (95.2% on optical-SAR pairs) due to its clarity.

To further assess generalization, we evaluated the model on an independent dataset of 2,000 images (1,000 SAR and 1,000 optical) from a different geographic region that was not included in training. The model achieved 93.8% accuracy without additional fine-tuning, demonstrating strong generalization and robustness to regional and sensor variability. While full transfer learning between sensor types (e.g., training on optical-SAR and testing on hyperspectral-optical) was not explored in this study, it presents an important direction for future work to extend the model's adaptability across broader domain shifts.

6.3 Limitations

Despite promising results, the hybrid DenseNet-Swin Transformer model faces limitations. The computational cost, while reduced to 1.8 GFLOPS, remains a challenge due to the Swin Transformer's self-attention mechanism, which increases training time and energy consumption. This may hinder deployment on large-scale datasets or in real-time remote sensing applications.

Data source heterogeneity also poses challenges. Variations in sensor spectral ranges, spatial resolutions, and acquisition conditions (e.g., weather, lighting, noise) can impede the model's generalization across diverse datasets. Extreme variations in these factors may reduce matching accuracy, particularly for uncalibrated or highly diverse data.

6.4 Potential improvements and extensions

To remedy these limitations, there are great extensions and improvements that can be made in future research. One such improvement might be the incorporation of attention mechanisms, which would allow the model to better focus on the relevant features across different data sources. Attention mechanism applications in multi-source remote sensing data allow the model to focus selectively on critical regions or features in the images, thus improving overall accuracy and reducing irrelevant data.

Plus, could there be better utilization of multi-scale features integration for fine-grained details and broader contextual information across varying scales? While Swin Transformer already addresses some aspects of the aforementioned, and further enhancement to the model to represent multi-scale information could give it better robustness to different ranges of sensor resolutions and sizes of objects in the images. Hierarchical fusion of multi-scale features could also relate feature extraction and matching accuracy to how to use it for the work on data spanning spatial or temporal scales. [29].

Moreover, incorporating domain adaptation techniques could help the model generalize better across different remote sensing platforms or sensor modalities, thus improv-

ing its ability to handle the inherent diversity in multi source data. The combination of domain adaptation with self supervised learning methods could provide a more scalable approach to remote sensing data matching.

7 Conclusion

The proposed approach in this paper, using a hybrid model of DenseNet and Swin Transformer for multi-source remote sensing data matching, leads to the conclusion that this approach reportedly mostly outperformed conventional approaches by achieving with good performance in capturing both local and global contextual information data set mechanisms by the feature reuse by DenseNet and the hierarchical attention mechanism of the Swin Transformer. Combining this methodology tackles many obstacles such as heterogeneous resolution formats, sensor modality, and quality of the data input, improving accuracy. Future work will include testing model generalizability on different data sets, optimizing it for computational efficiency for real-timing applications, and scalability towards large-scale data matching tasks to ensure that it is applicable to addressing real-world remote-sensing problems.

8 Funding

This work was funded by the project ”Study and Application of Multi-Source Data Interpretation and Intelligent Processing Techniques for Environmental Protection in Power Grid Projects” (Project Number: KJ2024-031). The funding supported the development and implementation of innovative methods for multi-source data analysis in environmental protection.

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