



Glioma-meningioma tumor classification on MRI scans

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1 Introduction

Brain tumors are among the most complex and dangerous diseases affecting the central nervous system. Early and accurate diagnosis is crucial in order to achieve effective treatment on time. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a widely used modality for detecting and characterizing brain tumors due to its high resolution and contrast.

Meningiomas and gliomas are two of the common types of primary brain tumors with different prognoses and treatment strategies. Manual differentiation by radiologists can be time-consuming and subject to variability. One solution for supporting clinical decision making, is an automated classification system. A system like this, can reduce diagnostic workload, increase consistency, and potentially improve early detection rates. It also provides a framework for future research into AI-assisted diagnostics in radiology or related application domains.

In this project, a machine learning-based system that automatically classifies MRI images into meningioma or glioma categories using custom hand-crafted, frequency and radiomic features is developed and evaluated. The two machine learning models employed for the classification task of tumors in the two categories are a Random Forest classifier and a Neural Network (Multi-Layer Perceptron).

2 Related Work

In [4], authors review the usage of AI based radiomics and radiogenomics in glioma, while emphasizing in their roles in diagnosis, treatment response prediction and understanding tumor heterogeneity. Also the challenges in standardizing feature extraction and analysis methodologies are addressed.

Duron et al. [3], in their research proposed a radiomics-based classification model for distinguishing gliomas from meningiomas by utilizing T1-weighted MRI scans. The author's approach involved extraction of a vast set of radiomic features which was then followed by the application of machine learning techniques for training and validating a classifier. Results from this particular study demonstrated high diagnostic performance, showing the potential of data-driven radiomics for the support of non invasive tumor characterization. This work can serve as a foundational reference for MRI based tumor classification and can support development of automated systems that may offer assistance in clinical decision-making, similar to the goals of the current project.

Li and co-authors[5], in their work created radiomic models for the prediction of meningioma grade and Ki-67 index, by integrating clinical and radiological features. The models used, demonstrated the potential of radiomics in assessing the biological behavior of meningiomas.

3 Hw and Sw Requirements

The software stack used to implement the classification system consists of Python libraries such as *SimpleITK*, *OpenCV*, *scikit-learn*, *PyRadiomics*, *matplotlib*, *seaborn*. The code and the MRI images used for this project report are available in the following repository [2].

3.1 Data Details

MRI images were sourced from [1], which contains 7023 MRI images of human brain, divided in 4 categories: *glioma* - *meningioma* - *no tumor and pituitary*. For this report's purpose the first two categories are utilized, and selected 1000 MRI images from both *glioma* and *meningioma* classes.

3.2 Method

Related to the methodology of the classification system, for the preprocessing step all images are loaded using SimpleITK and converted into NumPy arrays and their respective pixel intensities are normalized into the range of grayscale images ($[0, 255]$). In the next step a 4 pixel masking takes place, in order to reduce the black surrounding areas appearing in every MRI image. This border mask is applied and excludes irrelevant regions at the edges of the images. The number of the extracted features can be divided into three subcategories:

1) *Features acquired from Pyradiomics*: by utilization of PyRadiomics first-order statistics (mean, variance, entropy) and texture features (GLCM, GLRLM, GLSZM) are extracted.

2) *Custom Features*: have been designed and implemented in order to intuitively help detecting a tumor alike object on an MRI image. (*intensity-skewness*, *intensity-outlier-score*, *high-intensity-area*, *max-circularity*, *top3-circularity-mean*, *solidity-outlier*, *abnormal-area-ratio*, *circular-area-score*, *asymmetry-score*, *asymmetry-outlier*, *boundary-sharpness-mean*, *boundary-sharpness-max*, *boundary-sharpness-outlier*).

3) *Frequency Domain Features*: Energy, entropy, mean, and skewness in low, mid, and high-frequency bands using FFT.

In total, 139 features were examined, which is the combination of the three previous described categories. By conducting the feature extraction process, *min-max* normalization is performed in all the generated feature values mapping them on the $[0, 1]$ range as we can observe in Figure 1.

4 Evaluation

In the classification stage, two different classifiers have been trained and evaluated, a Random Forest classifier and a MultiLayer Perceptron Neural

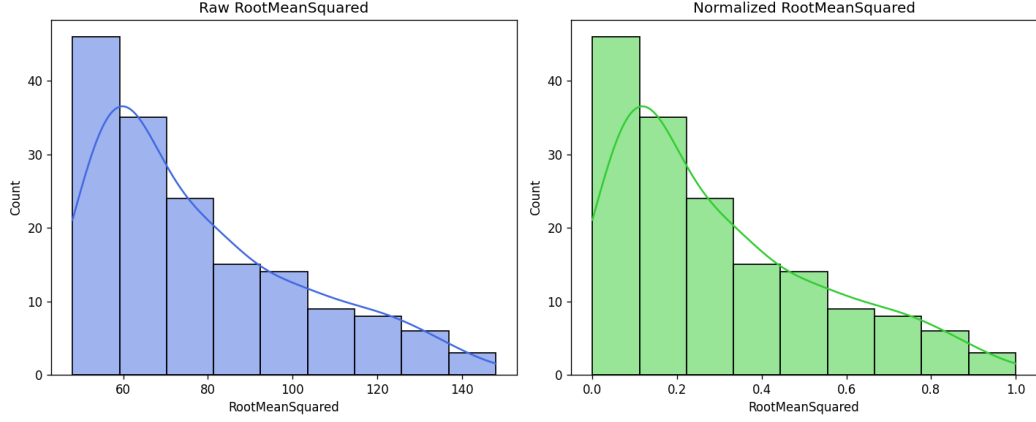


Figure 1: Comparisson of feature distribution prior and after the *min-max* normalization.

Network. Classification evaluation examined using different configurations of features in order to be able to compare the contribution of each of the feature sets in the classification accuracy and estimate the degree of their contribution.

The Random Forest model, an ensemble based method known for its robustness and interpretability, was trained using 100 decision trees and a fixed random seed for ensuring reproducibility. For the second classifier, the neural network model was configured having two hidden layers comprising 100 and 50 neurons respectively, trained for up to 500 iterations.

4.1 Classification with texture, shape and statistical features

Classification evaluation with texture, shape and statistical features results are presented below.

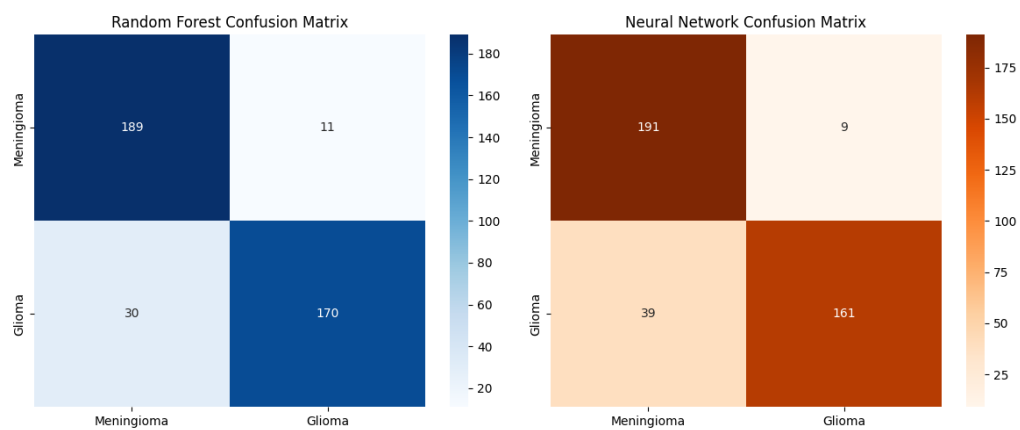


Figure 2: Metric results.

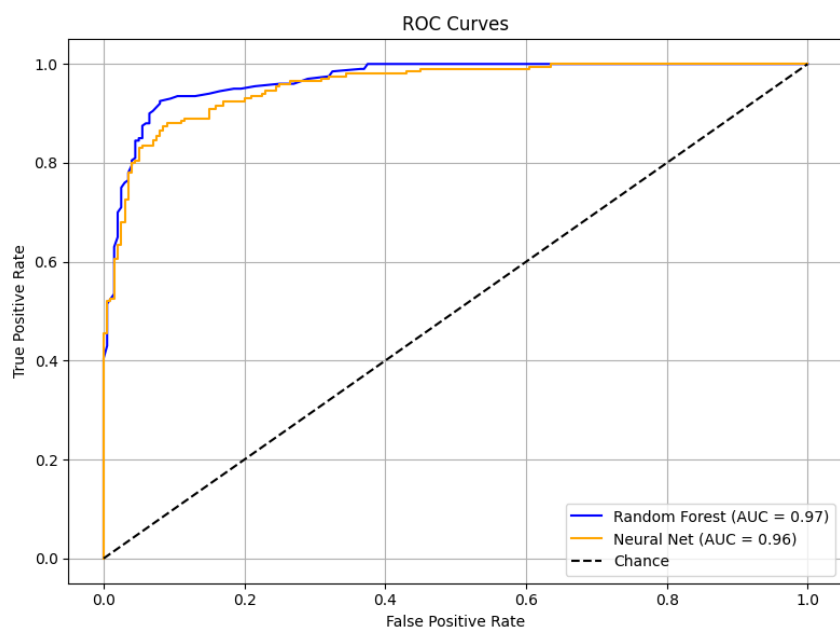


Figure 4: RoC curves for RF and MLP-nn.

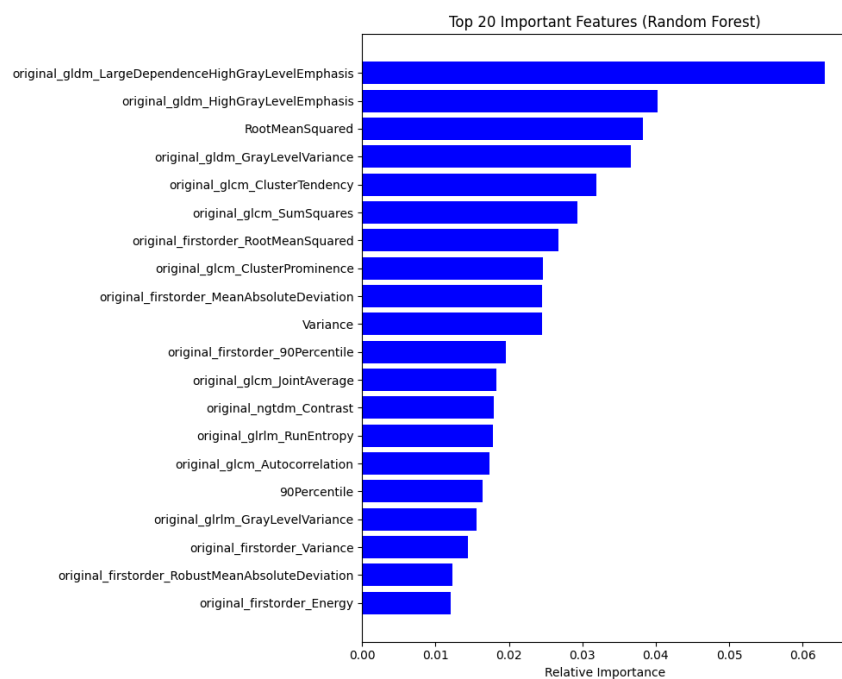


Figure 3: Top20 features of RF.

```

Training Random Forest...
Random Forest Results:
Accuracy: 0.897
AUC: 0.898

Classification Report:
      precision    recall  f1-score   support

     0       0.86      0.94      0.90      200
     1       0.94      0.85      0.89      200

 accuracy      0.90      0.90      0.90      400
 macro avg      0.90      0.90      0.90      400
weighted avg      0.90      0.90      0.90      400

Training Neural Network...
Neural Network Results:
Accuracy: 0.880
AUC: 0.880

Classification Report:
      precision    recall  f1-score   support

     0       0.83      0.95      0.89      200
     1       0.95      0.81      0.87      200

 accuracy      0.89      0.88      0.88      400
 macro avg      0.89      0.88      0.88      400
weighted avg      0.89      0.88      0.88      400

```

Figure 5: Classification report

4.2 Classification with frequency features

Classification evaluation's results using the extracted frequency features are presented in the next figures.

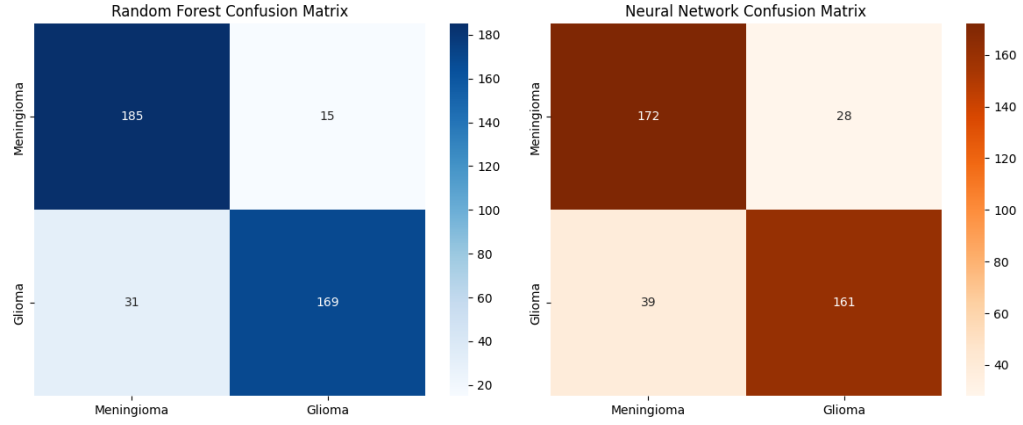


Figure 6: Metric results.

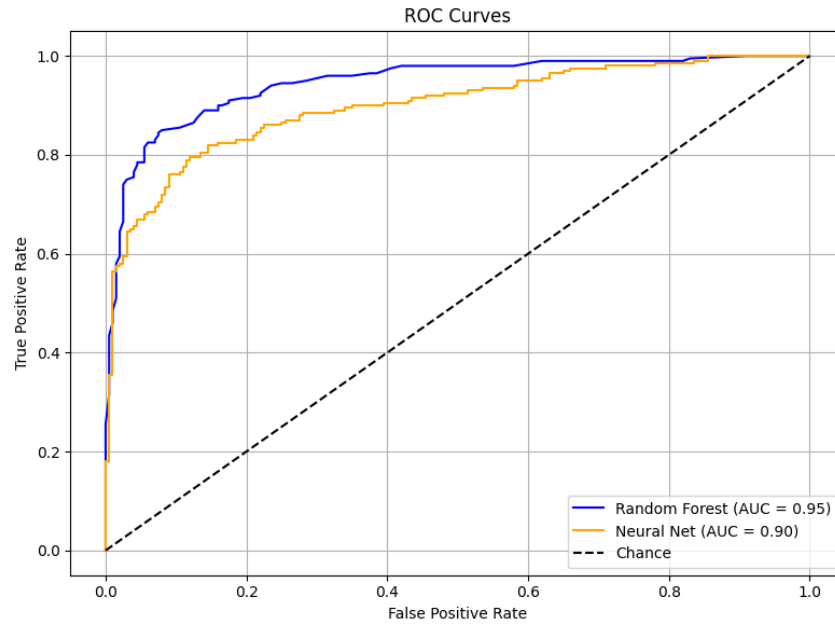


Figure 8: RoC curves for RF and MLP-nn.

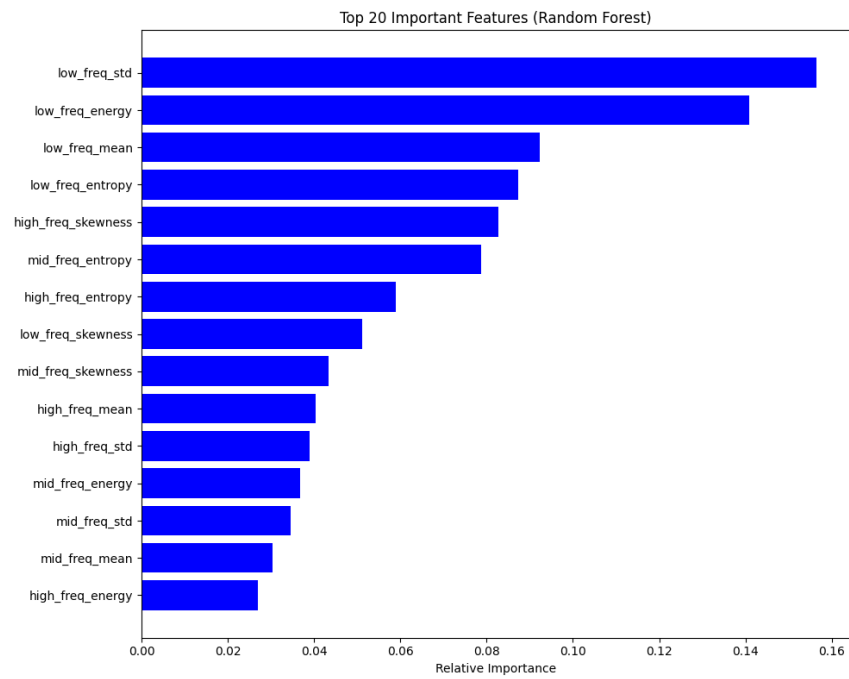


Figure 7: Top20 features of RF.

```

Training Random Forest...

Random Forest Results:
Accuracy: 0.885
AUC: 0.885

Classification Report:
      precision    recall  f1-score   support

     0       0.86      0.93      0.89       200
     1       0.92      0.84      0.88       200

   accuracy          0.89       400
  macro avg          0.89      0.88       400
 weighted avg          0.89      0.88       400

Training Neural Network...

Neural Network Results:
Accuracy: 0.833
AUC: 0.833

Classification Report:
      precision    recall  f1-score   support

     0       0.82      0.86      0.84       200
     1       0.85      0.81      0.83       200

   accuracy          0.83       400
  macro avg          0.83      0.83       400
 weighted avg          0.83      0.83       400

```

Figure 9: Classification report

4.3 Classification utilizing all features

Classification results utilizing all the available features extracted are presented in following figures.

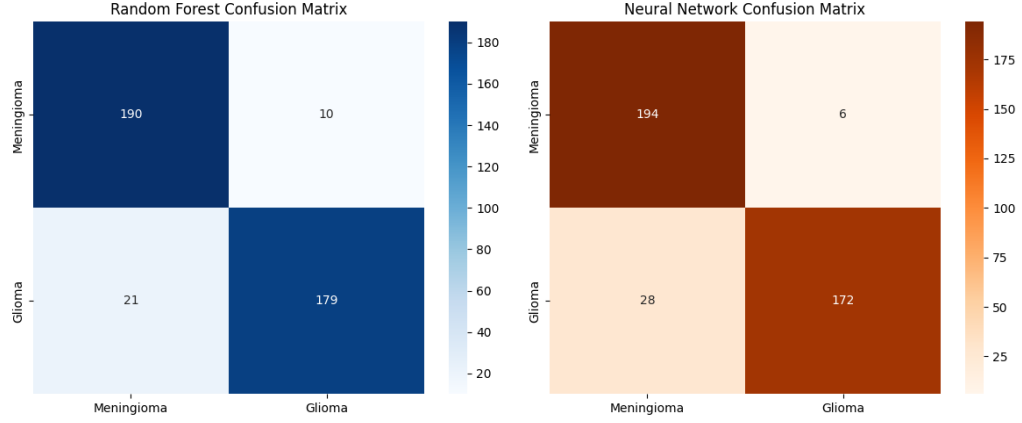


Figure 10: Metric results.

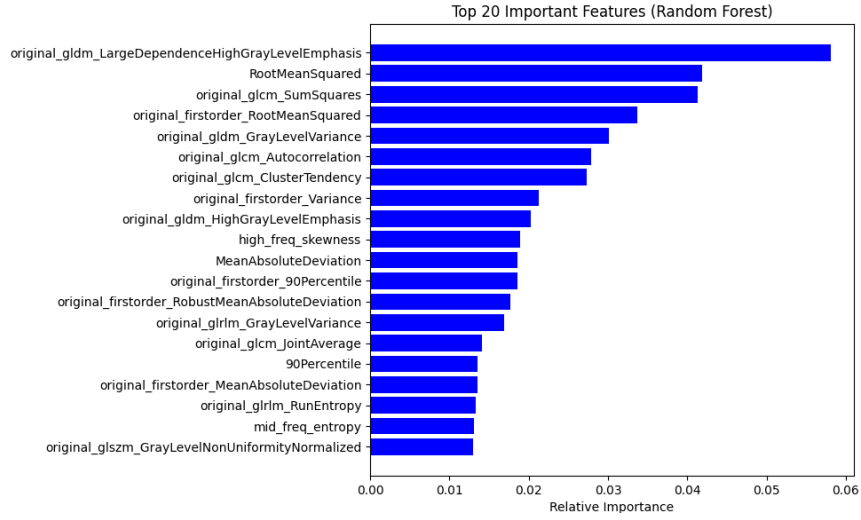


Figure 11: Top20 features of RF.

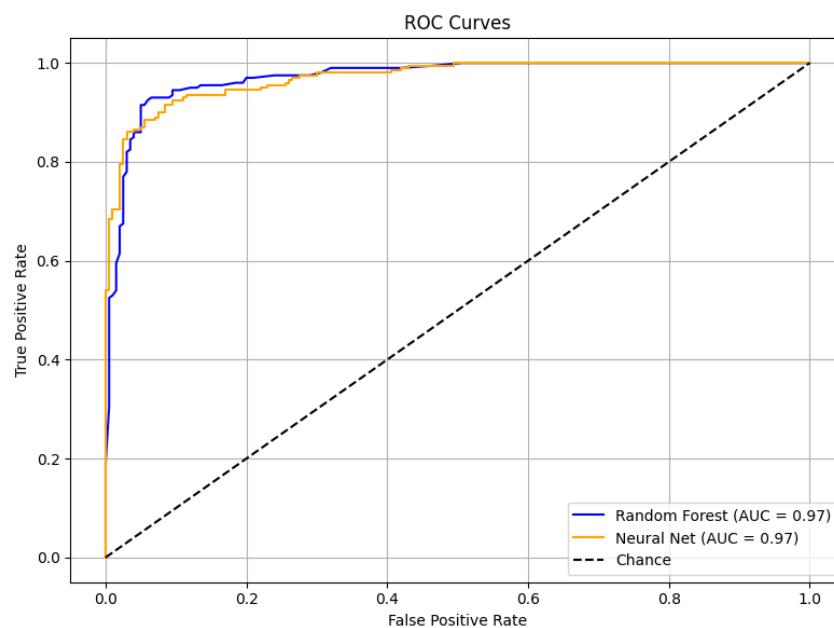


Figure 12: RoC curves for RF and MLP-nn.

```

Training Random Forest...

Random Forest Results:
Accuracy: 0.922
AUC: 0.922

Classification Report:
      precision    recall  f1-score   support

     0       0.90      0.95      0.92       200
     1       0.95      0.90      0.92       200

   accuracy       0.92
  macro avg       0.92
 weighted avg       0.92

Training Neural Network...

Neural Network Results:
Accuracy: 0.915
AUC: 0.915

Classification Report:
      precision    recall  f1-score   support

     0       0.87      0.97      0.92       200
     1       0.97      0.86      0.91       200

   accuracy       0.92
  macro avg       0.92
 weighted avg       0.92

```

Figure 13: Classification report

4.4 Classifier Optimization

At this point, hyperparameter optimization is explored in order to achieve better classification results utilizing the created models. In our workflow, first a Random Forest classifier was utilized with hyperparameter tuning to identify the 30 most important features from the dataset. The hyperparameters such as the number of trees (`n_estimators`), tree depth (`max_depth`), minimum samples per split and leaf (`min_samples_split`, `min_samples_leaf`), and others are optimized using randomized search with cross-validation.

This ensures that the Random Forest model is tuned for the purpose of capturing the most relevant patterns in the data but also for preventing overfitting. After determining the feature importances, the top 30 features are selected as inputs for the next step. These selected features are then fed into a neural network (MLPClassifier) with fixed hyperparameters (e.g., activation function, solver, learning rate, and number of iterations) for performing the final classification. Using the best subset of features reduces dimensionality and noise, and can improve the neural network’s performance and training efficiency, while benefiting from complementary strengths of both models for robust classification.

4.5 Evaluation Findings

The results from the three feature configurations demonstrate that combining all available features (texture/shape/statistical and frequency domain features) yields the highest classification performance. Key observations include:

- **Feature set comparison:**
 - *All features* achieved the best results, underscoring the complementary nature of radiomic, custom-designed, and frequency-domain features.
 - *Texture/shape/statistical features* alone provided competitive performance, suggesting and confirming the strong discriminative power they yield for tumor classification.
 - *Frequency features* were slightly less effective in isolation but contributed meaningfully when integrated with other features.
- **Glioma classification improvement:** Misclassification rates for glioma dropped significantly (from 31 out of 200 MRIs (15.5%) using texture/shape features only to 21 out of 200 MRIs (10.5%) and from 38 out of 200 MRIs (19%) using texture/shape features only to 28 out of 200 MRIs (14%)) when all features were utilized. This highlights the importance of hybrid feature engineering for capturing tumor heterogeneity.

- **Model performance:** The Random Forest classifier consistently outperformed the MLP neural network across all configurations, particularly in terms of interpretability (e.g., feature importance rankings) and robustness (AUC metrics).

5 Histogram Matching enhancement

Analysis of the histograms of the MRI images on the dataset is performed and is presented below. Results of analysing the intensities of the MRI images per category (Figure 5.1) demonstrate that unnormalized intensity distributions introduce scanner or acquisition protocol-dependent variability that could dominate the signal of interest. Via the application of histogram matching technique image intensities should be aligned on the intensity distributions while preserving the relative contrast relationships essential for the exact tumor classification.

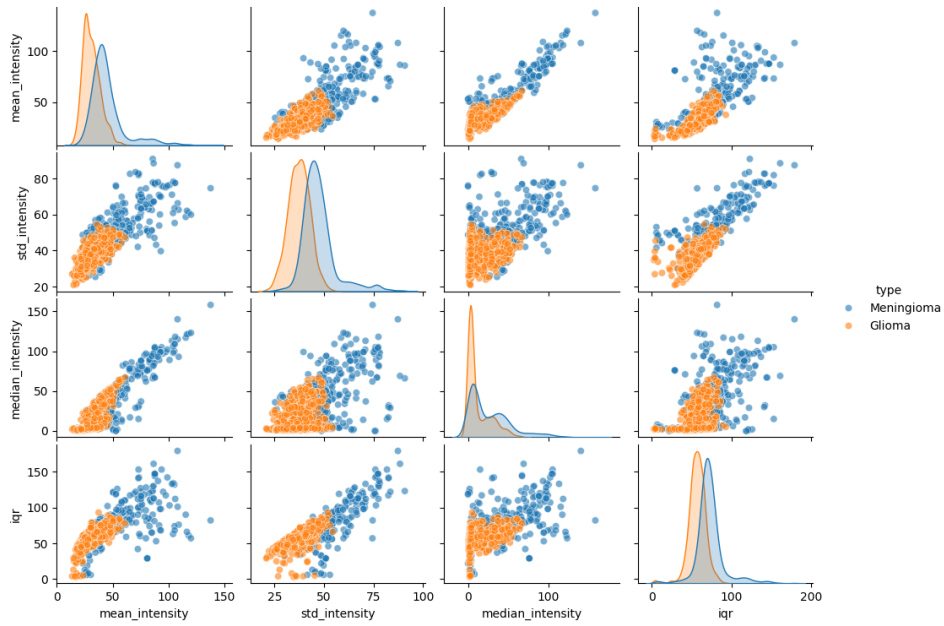


Figure 14: Analysis plot of all the MRI histograms.

Also in Figure 5.2 we can observe graphical the distribution intensities of the MRIs for both classes.

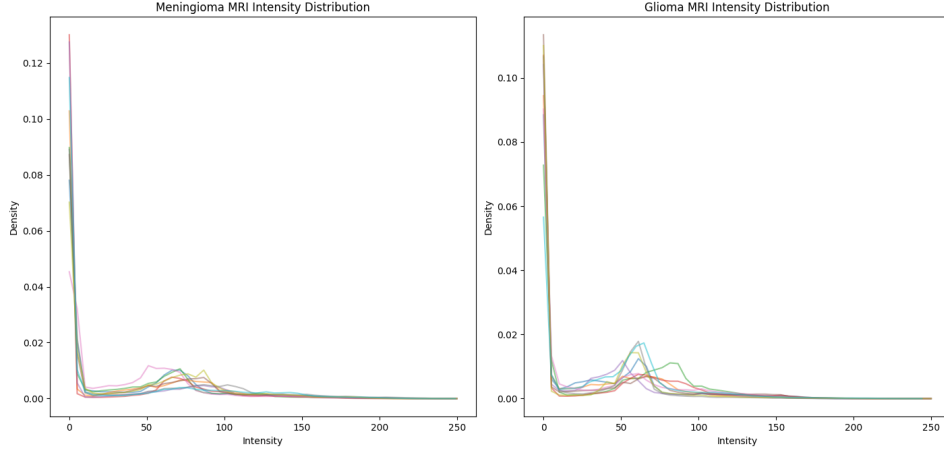


Figure 15: Intensity distributions of MRI histograms.

5.1 Reference image selection

For the process of the selection of an optimal reference image for histogram matching, MRI images have been systematically evaluated from the dataset (sampling 300 candidates by default) and choose the one that maximized class separability after histogram matching. Each candidate reference image, is tested on a subset of images (20 per class) by performing histogram matching and then calculating a separability score based on the difference in mean intensities between glioma and meningioma classes normalized by their combined standard deviation. The candidate that produces the highest score (indicating by that the best separation between classes after histogram matching) is selected as the final reference image. By following such an approach chooses a reference that maintains discriminative intensity characteristics between the two tumor types while using a single unbiased reference for all images.

The effect of histogram matching on 500 sampled MRIs belonging to meningioma category and 500 sampled MRIs belonging to glioma category is visualized in Figure 16.

```

=== Pre-Histogram Matching Intensity Analysis ===

[Pre-HM] Class 0 Intensity Stats:
  Mean: 44.75  $\pm$  16.10
  Std: 47.41  $\pm$  9.15

[Pre-HM] Class 1 Intensity Stats:
  Mean: 30.61  $\pm$  7.49
  Std: 37.33  $\pm$  5.54

=== Unbiased Histogram Matching ===

[Post-HM] Class 0 (Meningioma) Intensity Stats:
  Mean: 89.41  $\pm$  4.22
  Std: 62.45  $\pm$  3.89

[Post-HM] Class 1 (Glioma) Intensity Stats:
  Mean: 93.91  $\pm$  6.49
  Std: 57.95  $\pm$  6.71

```

Figure 16: Intensity metrics of 1000 MRIs prior histogram matching.

Prior to histogram matching, there was a greater difference in intensity statistics (mean and standard deviation) between the two classes. Meningioma MRIs exhibited a higher mean intensity (44.75 ± 16.10) and standard deviation (47.41 ± 9.15) compared to glioma MRIs (30.61 ± 7.49 mean; 37.33 ± 5.54 std), indicating class-specific variations in brightness and contrast. After performing histogram matching, the intensity distributions of both classes are aligned more closely to a common reference, resulting in similar mean intensities (89.41 ± 4.22 for healthy, 93.91 ± 6.49 for tumor) and reduced variation in standard deviation between the classes (62.45 ± 3.89 vs. 57.95 ± 6.71). This transformation effectively normalized intensity-related differences, allowing downstream radiomic feature extraction and classification models to focus more on structural and textural patterns.

5.2 Evaluation of classification with histogram matching

Utilizing the histogram matching with the previously described reference image selection method, and by extracting all the features, classification has been re-evaluated. Results of using all the available features extracted from histogram matched MRIs are presented in following figures.

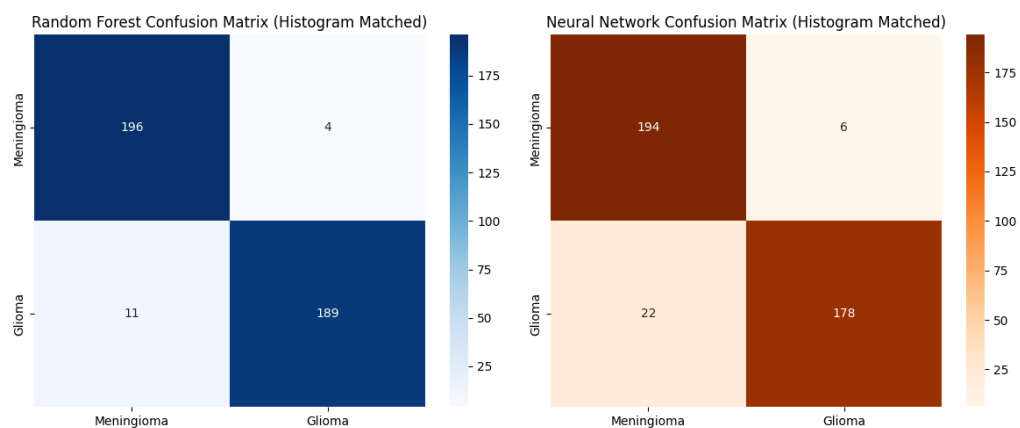


Figure 17: Metric results.

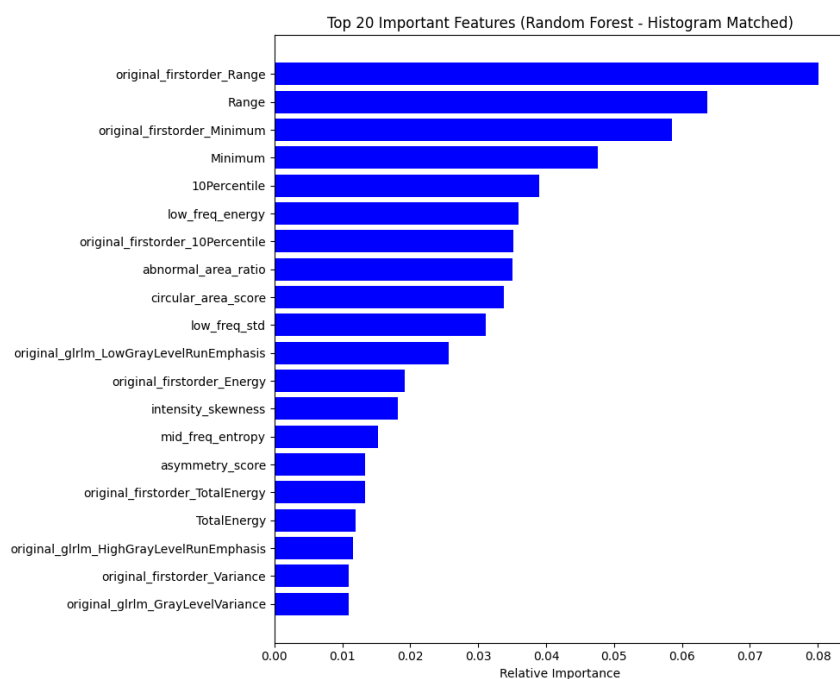


Figure 18: Top20 features of RF.

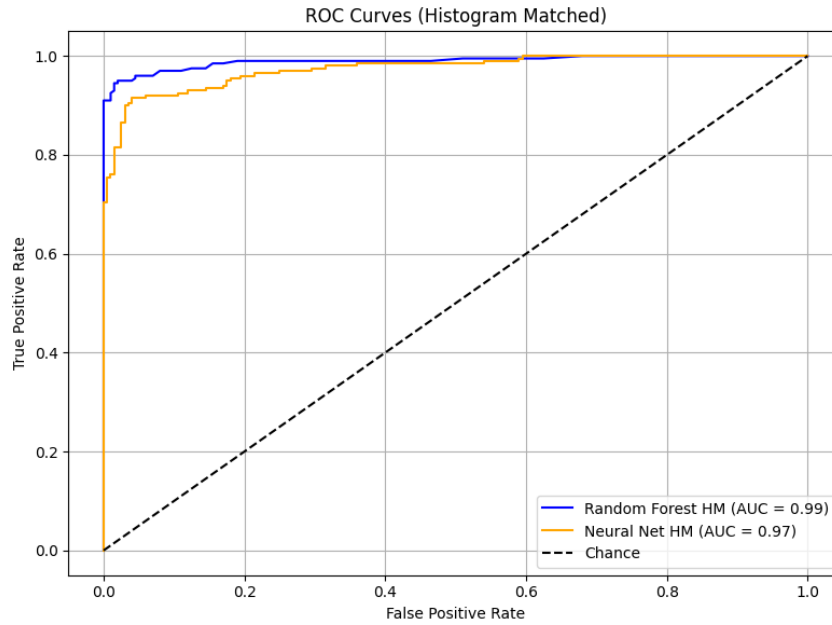


Figure 19: RoC curves for RF and MLP-nn.

```

Training Random Forest on histogram-matched images...
Random Forest Results (Histogram Matched):
Accuracy: 0.963
AUC: 0.962

Classification Report:
              precision    recall  f1-score   support

     0       0.95         0.98         0.96         200
     1       0.98         0.94         0.96         200

   accuracy          0.96
  macro avg          0.96
 weighted avg          0.96

Training Neural Network on histogram-matched images...
Neural Network Results (Histogram Matched):
Accuracy: 0.930
AUC: 0.930

Classification Report:
              precision    recall  f1-score   support

     0       0.90         0.97         0.93         200
     1       0.97         0.89         0.93         200

   accuracy          0.93
  macro avg          0.93
 weighted avg          0.93

```

Figure 20: Classification report

Histogram matching with an optimized reference image improved classification accuracy by 4.2% (RF) and 1.5% (MLP-nn), suggesting that the intensity normalization enhances model generalizability. The larger gain was

observed in the Random Forest and by observing the figure referring to the top 20 features contribution for the RF-classification we can inspect that four (20%) of the custom extracted features are included in the list.

6 Conclusion

References

- [1] <https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/masoudnickparvar/brain-tumor-mri-dataset> Accessed: 2025-05-09.
- [2] <https://www.github.com/>
- [3] Duron L, Balvay D, Vande Perre S, Bouchouicha A, Savatovsky J, Sadik J-C, et al. (2019) Gray-level discretization impacts reproducible MRI radiomics texture features. PLoS ONE 14(3): e0213459. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0213459>
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- [5] Li, M., Liu, L., Qi, J. et al. MRI-based machine learning models predict the malignant biological behavior of meningioma. BMC Med Imaging 23, 141 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12880-023-01101-7>