



Restoration of Compressed Image using Hard Thresholding Method

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ABSTRACT: In recent years, the major problem faced by the image compression is blocking artifacts which are due to high compression rates and lack of quantization bit constraints. One of the methods is deblocking which is used for restoring the compressed image. The deblocking method is broadly classified as a filtering approach and restoration of transform coefficients. The existing methods either use filters or approximate the DCT coefficients to remove the blocky edges. The proposed method uses a hard thresholding method to remove blocking artifacts. The threshold value is derived from the degraded image. The hard thresholding method includes the following steps: Forward transform, Thresholding, and Inverse transform. Even though the decomposition of the transform is different, this paper considers the transform like Wavelet Transform, Contourlet Transform, Curvelet Transform, and Shearlet Transform using a hard thresholding method. The level of decomposition of the transform is represented as $N=4$. The restored images are also analyzed based on the based on both Objective and Subjective fidelity measures and the results are also compared with existing methods based on the performance metrics like PSNR, SSIM, EPI, FSIM.

Keywords: Artifacts, Contourlet, Curvelet, Shearlet, thresholding, Wavelet.

Abbreviations: JPEG, Joint Photographic Experts Group; BDCT, Block-based Discrete Cosine Transform; MAP, Maximum of a-Posteriori; POCS, Projection Onto Convex Sets;

I. INTRODUCTION

A wide range of fascinating applications of digital images includes medical images, satellite images, and in areas like astronomy, Research, and Technology. The significant aspect of the imaging is to reduce the size of the image without comprising the quality of the image. The two reasons for reducing the size of the image is: to maintain less storage space and to increase the transmission speed. The JPEG and JPEG 2000 [1] are the traditional standard which reduces image size. The JPEG standard for lossy compression has three sub-stages which include Block-based Discrete Cosine Transform (BDCT), quantization, and Huffman encoding. The fundamental issue of image compression is that it misfortunes vital information. These inevitable losses of information are created due to quantization-bit constraints that create blocky structure called blocking artifacts. The visual imperfections that the artifacts caused are due to block bands created by degrading the original edges or degrading the corner points of the blocks.

Ramteke *et al.*, [2] described the various blind deconvolution techniques used for image restoration. George *et al.*, [3] classified the existing JPEG restoration techniques in the spatial domain into three different categories: filtering method, estimation theoretic methods, and projection onto convex sets methods. Additionally, by considering the frequency domain aspects, the existing restoration of the compressed image in the literature is categorized as deblocking methods and estimation/learning-based methods.

The deblocking methods used for restoring the compressed images are classified as filtering approach and restoration of DCT coefficients. Based on removing artifacts in compressed images, the filters are classified based on the domain: spatial filters and frequency filters. The spatial filters, which manipulates the image plane directly with the help of the convolution kernels is applied directly on the compressed image [4-11].

The frequency-domain filters [12-20], neglects the presence of interference in the image, which deals with transform coefficients within the image and the restoration is on the footing of the frequency response of correction filter, which was set up for the inverse of the frequency domain.

The Restoration of Transform Coefficients [21-28] reconstructs the image transform coefficients directly. The image transforms coefficients after quantization of compressed image is taken into consideration which has one DC coefficient and 63 AC coefficients.

The Estimation / learning methods include Maximum of a-Posteriori; MAP [29-33], Projection Onto Convex Sets; POCS [34-39] and Sparse dictionary learning [40-48]. Additionally the various other methods [49-54] are also used to remove artifacts. The existing methods restore the compressed image without any knowledge of degradation whereas the proposed method derives the threshold value from the compressed image and tries to remove the blocking artifacts.

The proposed method restores the compressed image using a Hard thresholding method and this method considers the transforms like Wavelet, Curvelet, Contourlet, and Shearlet Transform to remove blocking artifacts.

The paper is organized as Section II describes the decomposition of various transform and Section III describes the proposed method for Restoration of the compressed image using hard thresholding method, Section IV describes the experimental results and comparison between existing methods and Section V concludes the paper.

II. DECOMPOSITION OF TRANSFORM

The multi-scale of decomposition is of Wavelet Transform, Curvelet Transform, Contourlet Transform, and Shearlet Transform is as follows.

A. Multi-scale decomposition of Wavelet Transform

The two-dimensional Discrete Wavelet Transform [55] decomposes the image, into four components which maintain the temporal and spatial information. The decomposition of the wavelet divides the compressed image into four components: LL, LH, HL, and HH. The LL represents the low-resolution components called approximations and LH, HL and HH represent the horizontal, vertical, and diagonal components called detailed coefficients. The multi-level decomposition of the wavelet is represented in the Fig. 1.

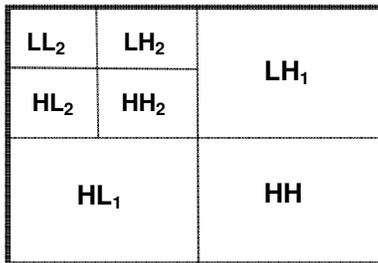


Fig. 1. Decomposition of Wavelet Transform.

The forward transform of Discrete Wavelet Transform is calculated from the image by passing through a set of filters H and G, where H and G represent the low pass filter and the high pass filter respectively. The approximations coefficients are derived from low pass filter and detailed coefficients are derived from high pass filter respectively. The two filters perform downsampling by 2 and treat half of the sub-bands of H and G filters respectively the filter is termed as quadrature mirror filter.

B. Multi-scale decomposition of Curvelet Transform

The Curvelet Transform [56] is also a multiscale transform but it is highly anisotropic and has high directional sensitivity compared to Wavelet Transform. The Curvelet Transform based image decomposition has four steps: subband decomposition, smooth partitioning, renormalization and analysis of ridgelet. The basic decomposition of Curvelet Transform is illustrated in Fig. 2. Let P be the image, then Δ_1 , Δ_2 , and P_3 represent the subband created using additive wavelet transform. The Ridgelet Transform is then performed on the subbands Δ_1 , Δ_2 . Based on the different frequency components of the image, the subband decomposition of the Curvelet Transform divides the image into different sub-bands. But it doesn't outperform the down sampling as Wavelet Transform.

The image P is decomposed in f objects is represented using the equation is

$$f \rightarrow (P_0f, \Delta_1f, \Delta_2f) \quad (1)$$

Where $\Delta_1 = P_{i-1} - P_i$ is the difference between the two consecutive wavelet plane. The smooth partitioning is done by applying windowing function $W_Q(x_1, x_2)$ across each sub band and is given by $\Delta_s f \rightarrow (W_Q \Delta_s f)_{Q \in Q_s}$.

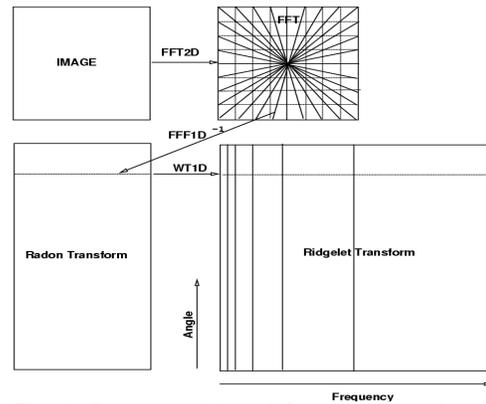


Fig. 2. Decomposition of Curvelet Transform.

Each dyadic square is renormalized to unit scale and then perform a discrete ridgelet transform of each square. The Curvelet Transform represents the lines and edges in an image efficiently.

C. Multi-scale decomposition of Contourlet Transform

The Contourlet Transform [57-58] has the potential to handle the 2D singularities like edges, lines effectively. The Contourlet Transform represents the images in various dimensions like multi-scale, multi-direction, and multi-resolution. The Contourlet Transform decomposition is illustrated in Fig. 3. To represent the images in different resolution the Laplacian pyramid is used and for representing the image in different directional natures, the Directional Filter Bank (DFB) is used. At each level, the Laplacian pyramid decomposes the image into two versions: low pass image: LL and band-pass images: LH, HL, HH. Downsampling the original image to produce the low pass image and the remaining sub-bands called band-pass images. The Directional Filter Bank takes the band-pass inputs as input and produces the contourlet coefficients as output.

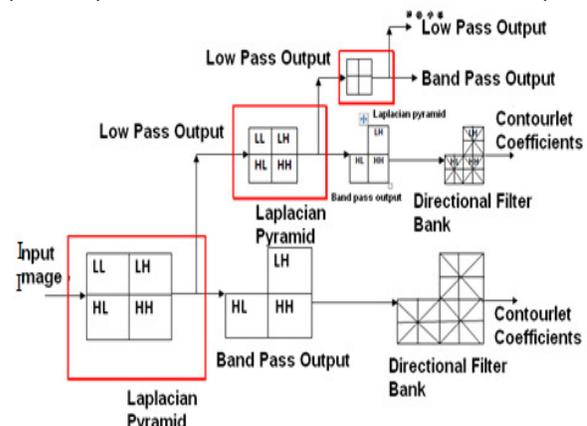


Fig. 3. Decomposition of Contourlet Transform.

D. Multi-scale decomposition of Shearlet Transform Shearlet Transform [59] optimally represents the 2D singularities of the image like edges, lines effectively. The Shearlet Transform signifies the image in different

dimensions like multi-scale and multi-directional geometry of the image. The decomposition of Shearlet Transform is illustrated in Fig.4.

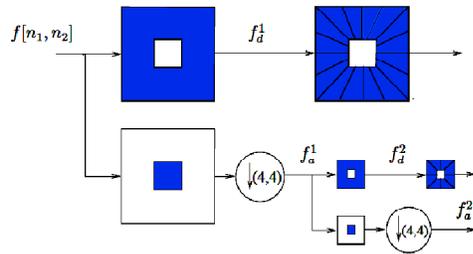


Fig. 4. Decomposition of Shearlet Transform.

In Shearlet Transform, at each level of decomposition, the image is split into four levels and generates sub-band images. The two-dimensional basis function of the Shearlet Transform is given as

$$A_{DS}(\psi) = \{ \psi_{j,k,l}(x) = |\det(B)|^{-\frac{j}{2}} \psi(S^l D^l x - l) : j \in \mathbb{Z}, k : l \in \mathbb{Z}^2 \quad (2)$$

Where, $\psi \in L^2(\mathbb{R}^2)$ and D, S are the invertible 2x2 matrices. The dilation matrix and shearing matrix are represented using D^l and S^l respectively. The Shearlet Transform represented in equation 2 performs translation, scaling, and also represent various orientation using shearing. The Shearlet basis function of an image is represented using F and is given as, $F = \{ \psi_{j,k,l}(x) : j, l \in \mathbb{Z}, k \in \mathbb{Z}^2 \}$, then the approximation function, F_N is given as

$$F_N = \langle F, \psi_{j,k,l} \rangle \psi_{j,k,l} \quad (3)$$

The N_{term} approximation error ϵ_N is obtained by approximating the set of basis functions derived from the image.

$$\epsilon_N = \| F - F_N \| = \sum | \langle F, \psi_{j,k,l} \rangle |^2 \quad (4)$$

representation and also efficiently captures the intrinsic The N-term approximation which is derived from the set of the basis function is minimized to obtain the image closed to the original image.

Even though lots of transforms are evolved after Discrete Cosine Transform the JPEG compression which uses Discrete Cosine Transform plays a vital role in image compression and produces the blocking artifacts. With the help of transform like Discrete Wavelet Transform, Curvelet, Contourlet, and shearlet transform, the proposed method tries to restore the compressed image.

III. PROPOSED METHOD

The hard thresholding method which is used for removing artifacts in the compressed image has three steps: Forward Transform, thresholding, and Inverse Transform. The restoration of the compressed image is illustrated in Fig. 5 which fed the compressed image as input and produces the restored image as output. The sqtwolog [60] is the universal thresholding method is used for calculating the threshold value from the variance of HH sub-bands. The threshold λ is determined as

$$\lambda = \sigma \sqrt{2 \log n} \quad (5)$$

Where n is the level of decomposition and

$$\sigma = \frac{\text{median}(|w|)}{0.6745} \quad (6)$$

Where w refers to the coefficients of HH sub-bands.

The transform domain restoration is based on the thresholding of the signal. The thresholding is of two types: hard thresholding and soft thresholding. The hard thresholding is expressed as:

$$T_{hard}(d_{j,k}) = \begin{cases} d_{j,k}, & \text{if } |d_{j,k}| \geq \lambda \\ 0, & \text{if } |d_{j,k}| < \lambda \end{cases} \quad (7)$$



Fig. 5. Restoration of the compressed image using Hard Thresholding Method.



Fig. 6. Five Test Images.

The hard thresholding method is used to remove blocking artifacts since the coefficients greater than the threshold level is not affected. The hard thresholding algorithm is described as follows.

1. The compressed image is decomposed into multiple frequency levels and the error/noise variance is estimated from the decomposed high-frequency coefficients.

2. Each level uses Directional Filter Bank (DFB) procedure to decompose the high-frequency coefficients into several directional sub-bands (horizontal, vertical,

and diagonal) and the threshold value is estimated from the computed noise variance of the sub-bands.

3. The hard threshold value is applied to all transform coefficients of the sub-bands for removing blocking artifacts. The transform coefficients greater than the threshold is left unchanged and the remaining transform coefficients are suppressed.

4. The resultant output image is obtained by applying an inverse transform on the transform coefficients.

The level of the decomposition is usually represented as N and even though different transforms like Wavelet, Contourlet, Curvelet, and Shearlet Transform are used

in the Hard thresholding method the value of $N = 4$ is considered.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

The experimental results obtained analyze the performance of restored images.

The results of the proposed method are compared with existing methods which are based on transform coefficients. Five widely used test images of size 256 x 256 gray-scales are considered for the comparative study.

The performance metrics considered to compare the restoration of JPEG compressed images are PSNR, SSIM [61], UIQI [62], FSIM [63], and EPI.

The Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) is calculated as

$$PSNR = 10 \log_{10} \left(\frac{255^2}{MSE} \right) \quad (8)$$

Where, MSE represents squared error between two images, and M and N be the number of rows and columns in the image respectively.

$$MSE = \sum_{M,N} \frac{|I_1(m,n) - I_2(m,n)|^2}{M*N} \quad (9)$$

Where, $I_1(m,n)$ be the original image and $I_2(m,n)$ represents the restored image.

The Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) measures the image quality based on the similar features. The index value lies between -1 to 1. The SSIM calculation is given as

$$SSIM(x,y) = \frac{2(\mu_x + \mu_y + C_1)(2\sigma_{xy} + C_2)}{(\mu_x^2 + \mu_y^2 + C_2)(\sigma_x^2 + \sigma_y^2 + C_2)} \quad (10)$$

Where μ_x and μ_y represent the mean of x and y respectively as well as σ_x^2 and σ_y^2 be the variance of x and y respectively. The σ_{xy} represents the covariance of xy and C_1 and C_2 are the constants used for denominator stabilization.

The Universal Image Quality Index (UIQI) measures the distortions of the image and the value lie in-between -1 to 1 and it is defined as

$$Q = \frac{4\sigma_{xy}\bar{x}\bar{y}}{(\sigma_x^2 + \sigma_y^2)[\bar{x}^2 + \bar{y}^2]} \quad (11)$$

Where \bar{x} and \bar{y} represent the mean of x and y respectively.

The Feature Similarity index (FSIM) measures the quality of the image based on Phase Congruency maps (PC) and Gradient Magnitude (GM) maps derived from the original image f_1 and reconstructed image f_2 . The FSIM is given as

$$FSIM = \frac{\sum_{x \in \Omega} S_L(x) PC_m(x)}{\sum_{x \in \Omega} PC_m(x)} \quad (12)$$

$$S_L(x) = S_{PC}(x) \cdot S_G(x) \quad (13)$$

$$S_{PC}(x) = \frac{2PC_1(x) \cdot PC_2(x) + T_1}{PC_1^2 + PC_2^2 + T_1} \quad (14)$$

$$S_G(x) = \frac{2G_1(x) \cdot G_2(x) + T_2}{G_1^2 + G_2^2 + T_2} \quad (15)$$

Where, T_1, T_2 represents constant, PC_1, PC_2, G_1, G_2 be the PC maps and GM maps extracted from f_1 and f_2 respectively.

The Edge Preserving Index (EPI) is computed between the original image and restored image is given as

$$EPI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^M \sum_{j=1}^{N-1} |y(i,j+1) - y(i,j)|}{\sum_{i=1}^M \sum_{j=1}^{N-1} |x(i,j+1) - x(i,j)|} \quad (16)$$

Where x be the original image and y be the restored image.

Table 1 represents the comparison of the proposed method with the existing method based on PSNR value and also it is differentiated based on the transforms used in the hard thresholding method. The quality factor, QF of the compressed images is 10.

Table 1: Comparison of the proposed method with the restoration of transform coefficients methods.

Images	Existing Method						Proposed Method			
	JPEG	[25]	[24]	[26]	[28]	[27]	Wavelet	Curvelet	Contourlet	Shearlet
Butterfly	25.23	23.77	25.71	25.21	25.66	25.03	25.08	25.23	23.63	25.73
Lena	27.71	27.35	28.25	27.55	28.22	28.43	28.58	28.68	27.13	29.15
Parrot	28.94	28.63	29.32	28.97	29.53	29.58	28.85	28.91	26.99	29.6
Bike	24.06	23.77	24.28	24.01	24.25	24.43	24.04	24.09	22.38	24.33

Table 2 represents the comparison of the proposed method with the existing dictionary learning methods based on PSNR value and also it is differentiated based on the transforms used in the hard thresholding method. The quality factor, QF of the compressed images is 5.

Table 3 represents the comparison of the proposed method with uses Transform like Wavelet, Contourlet Curvelet, and Shearlet Transform in Hard Thresholding algorithm. The comparison is represented for the images with the quality factor QF= 5,10.

The Objective fidelity performance metrics are indicated in Table 1 and 2. For the Subjective fidelity performance, the following images represent the compressed image, hard thresholding method based on Transforms like Wavelet, Contourlet Curvelet, and Shearlet Transform. The comparison is represented for the images with the quality factor QF= 10. From the Objective and Subjective performance metrics, it is clear that our proposed method yields better results compared to all the existing methods.

Table 2: Comparison of the proposed method with the existing dictionary learning methods.

Images	Existing Method			Proposed Method			
	JPEG	KSVD	DICTV	Wavelet	Curvelet	Contourlet	Shearlet
Butterfly	22.57	23.8	23.54	22.59	22.58	22.13	23.8
Leaves	22.48	23.66	23.27	22.49	22.52	21.9	23.71
Bike	21.7	22.56	22.28	21.73	21.71	21.25	22.6

Table 3: Comparison of the proposed method with different performance metrics.

Images	Performance metrics	QF	Compressed	Proposed Method			
				Wavelet	Curvelet	Contourlet	Shearlet
Butterfly	PSNR	5	22.57	22.59	22.58	22.13	23.8
	SSIM		0.7373	0.7268	0.7374	0.68	0.8055
	UIQI		0.9977	0.9976	0.9977	0.997	0.9979
	FSIM		0.7555	0.762	0.7557	0.7369	0.8095
	EPI		0.4699	0.4764	0.47	0.4619	0.6004
	PSNR	10	25.23	25.08	25.23	23.63	25.73
	SSIM		0.8232	0.8059	0.8247	0.769	0.8641
	UIQI		0.9933	0.9992	0.9993	0.9987	0.9993
	FSIM		0.8118	0.8105	0.8122	0.7848	0.8585
	EPI		0.6163	0.6058	0.6172	0.5198	0.6873
Leaves	PSNR	5	22.48	22.49	22.52	21.9	23.71
	SSIM		0.7789	0.7673	0.781	0.7277	0.8321
	UIQI		0.9984	0.9983	0.9984	0.9979	0.9983
	FSIM		0.7813	0.7789	0.7826	0.7591	0.8247
	EPI		0.6202	0.6301	0.6201	0.6373	0.7409
	PSNR	10	25.38	25.08	25.41	23.14	26.06
	SSIM		0.8618	0.8406	0.8643	0.7662	0.8942
	UIQI		0.9996	0.9994	0.9996	0.9991	0.9994
	FSIM		0.8413	0.8337	0.8434	0.7892	0.8789
	EPI		0.7314	0.719	0.7338	0.6785	0.8053
Parrots	PSNR	5	26.18	26.23	26.21	25.84	27.58
	SSIM		0.7626	0.761	0.7629	0.7353	0.8322
	UIQI		0.9976	0.9974	0.9976	0.9973	0.9979
	FSIM		0.8268	0.8593	0.8272	0.8623	0.8861
	EPI		0.6553	0.6779	0.6564	0.6649	0.7569
	PSNR	10	28.94	28.85	28.91	26.99	29.6
	SSIM		0.8365	0.8325	0.8367	0.7608	0.8666
	UIQI		0.9994	0.9993	0.9994	0.9987	0.9994
	FSIM		0.8961	0.9087	0.8962	0.879	0.9082
	EPI		0.746	0.7492	0.7474	0.7011	0.7978
Bike	PSNR	5	21.7	21.73	21.71	21.25	22.6
	SSIM		0.6575	0.6528	0.6578	0.587	0.6895
	UIQI		0.9953	0.9952	0.9952	0.9939	0.9954
	FSIM		0.7909	0.8051	0.7914	0.786	0.8113
	EPI		0.4628	0.4693	0.4637	0.427	0.5623
	PSNR	10	24.06	24.04	24.09	22.38	24.33
	SSIM		0.776	0.7691	0.7776	0.6575	0.7706
	UIQI		0.9984	0.998	0.9983	0.9965	0.9978
	FSIM		0.862	0.8618	0.8629	0.813	0.8517
	EPI		0.6067	0.6019	0.609	0.5025	0.6597
Lena	PSNR	5	25.85	25.88	25.85	25.88	27.28
	SSIM		0.6876	0.6848	0.6876	0.6639	0.749
	UIQI		0.9971	0.9968	0.9971	0.9968	0.9976
	FSIM		0.8035	0.8363	0.8034	0.8447	0.8489
	EPI		0.5714	0.6037	0.573	0.6433	0.7204
	PSNR	10	27.71	28.58	28.68	27.13	29.15
	SSIM		0.7895	0.7824	0.7899	0.7098	0.7968
	UIQI		0.9992	0.9991	0.9992	0.9985	0.9992
	FSIM		0.8837	0.8913	0.8835	0.8647	0.8807
	EPI		0.6704	0.6803	0.6723	0.6668	0.7591

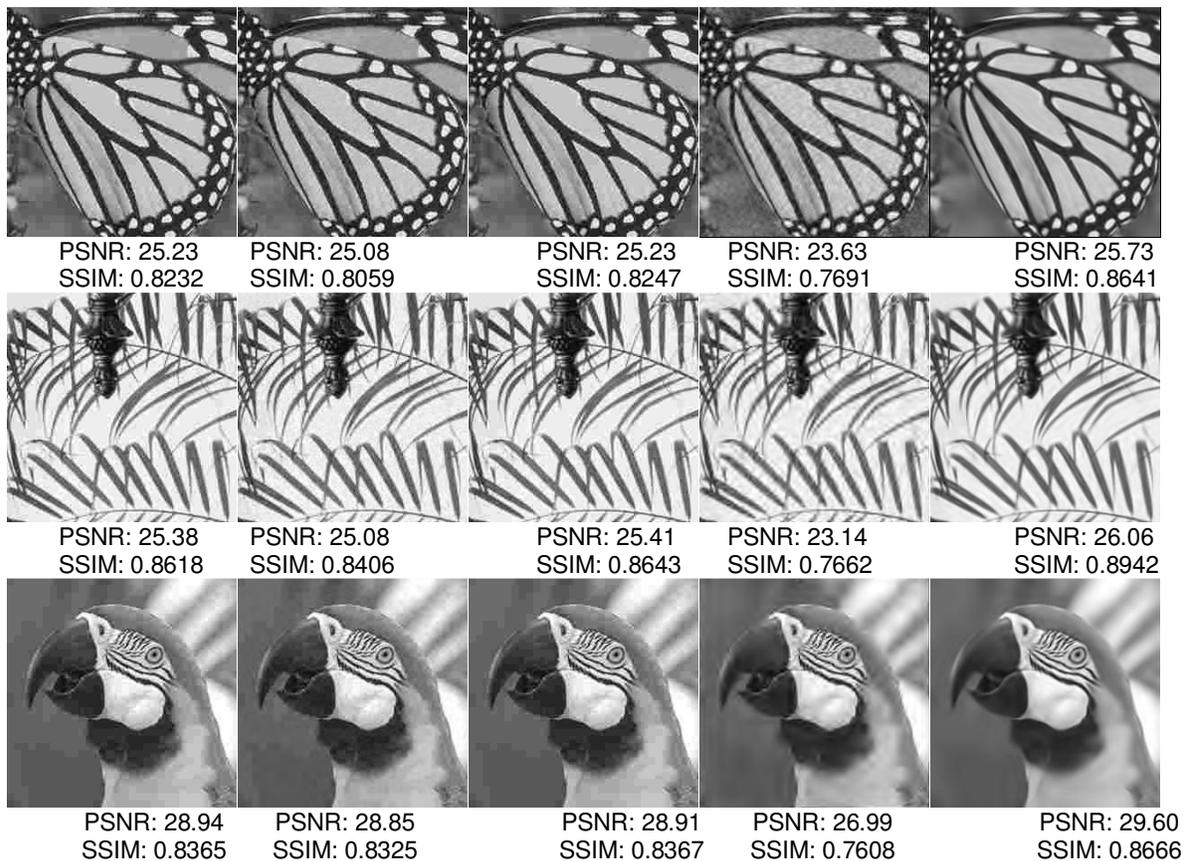


Fig. 7. a) Compressed image b) Hard thresholding method based on Wavelet Transform, c) Hard thresholding method based on Curvelet Transform, d) Hard thresholding method based on Contourlet Transform e) Hard thresholding method based on Shearlet Transform. (b,c,d,e represents proposed method)

V. CONCLUSION

This method concentrates mainly on JPEG compressed image, which uses a Discrete Cosine Transform that supports strong energy compaction. The hard thresholding method used for restoring the transform coefficients is based on a theoretical approach which tries to calculate the quantized transform coefficients. The first step and last step of hard thresholding method depend on the transform, this paper considers the different transforms like Wavelet, Contourlet, Curvelet, and Shearlet Transform. From the objective and subjective analysis, it is evident that for restoring the compressed image, the hard thresholding method based on Shearlet Transform produces state-of-art results. Specifically, the proposed method is compared with the existing restoration of transform coefficients methods and also this method removes artifacts in the image and achieves better results at a high computational cost.

VI. FUTURE SCOPE

In the future, this method is applied to various other applications like image inpainting and image classification.

Conflict of Interest. No.

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