

**ENHANCED DARK CHANNEL PRIOR AND  
TRANSMISSION MAP ESTIMATION  
TECHNIQUES FOR REMOVING FOREGROUND  
DENSE HAZE ON STATIC IMAGE**



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UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH  
2019**

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DENSE HAZE ON STATIC IMAGE**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE**

**FACULTY OF SCIENCES AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH  
2019**

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TRANSMISSION MAP ESTIMATION TECHNIQUES  
FOR REMOVING FOREGROUND DENSE HAZE ON  
STATIC IMAGE**

DEGREE : **MASTER OF SCIENCE (MATHEMATICS WITH  
COMPUTER GRAPHICS)**

DATE OF VIVA : **7<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abdullah bin Bade for all his advice, guidance and support that led me directly and indirectly until the completion of this thesis. Besides that, I would like to thank the family for giving continuous support, especially to my parents who always cheer up through difficulties until the end of my master study. Apart from that, I would like to express my big gratitude to the M-GRAVs team, as we also have a companion on the same path. They always gave me encouragement, comments, and provide ideas regarding my research. This research will not succeed without the guidance and support from several individuals who are willing to spend their precious time and energy by assisting me throughout the milestones of my journey.

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## ABSTRACT

Haze removal on a degraded image was the challenging task in image processing field. A reliable technique must be able to remove dense haze effects on the static image, in addition, improving the quality of the image. Hence, this research proposes the integration between the two enhanced techniques for dense haze effects restoration at the foreground of outdoor scenery image. For the first technique of modified dark channel prior allows it to remove haze, which improves of contrast quality and obtains the haze intensity. The intensity of dark channel allows estimation of the thickness value of haze. Additionally the second technique, transmission map estimation, was modified to improve the image colour quality and its details. Both of these techniques will be integrated to form a full process of dehazing technique. The restored image then proceeds to the post-processing stage for contrast enhancement and gamma correction. Histogram equalization technique is used for contrast enhancement and gamma correction is used for colour correction of image, with improved brightness. Besides that, the median filter is applied for transmission refinement and to improve edges on the image scene. Several tests were implemented in order to validate the results of this experiment. For example, the Mean Square Error (MSE) test and Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) test were used for the image quality assessment. The obtained test values show that the proposed technique achieved better results with lower values for MSE and higher values for PSNR compared to the other established haze removal techniques in the field of image enhancement; Kaiming and Gibson techniques. The MSE test value for the proposed technique was only 2009.76dB, meanwhile, Kaiming and Gibson techniques showed 3920.13dB and 2785.07dB respectively and the PSNR test value was 15.13dB, however, both of Kaiming and Gibson techniques recorded 12.23dB and 13.72dB respectively which further proves that the proposed technique produces a better image. Finally, a test of Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) will be taken in order to show that the output scene of haze-free image was not similar to the input scene of hazy image. In general, the proposed technique is able to remove the foreground dense haze from the outdoor scenery static images and at the same time improves the contrast and colour quality on-scene image.

## **ABSTRAK**

### **PENAMBAHBAIKAN GABUNGAN TEKNIK-TEKNIK DARI DARK CHANNEL PRIOR DAN TRANSMISSION MAP ESTIMATION UNTUK PEMBUANGAN JEREBU PADAT PADA LATAR DEPAN IMEJ STATIK**

*Penghapusan jerebu pada imej yang terdegradasi adalah merupakan tugas yang mencabar dalam bidang penyelidikan pemprosesan imej. Oleh itu, hanya ada beberapa teknik sahaja yang mampu untuk menghapuskan kesan jerebu padat pada imej latar depan, disamping dapat meningkatkan kualiti imej. Kajian ini mencadangkan proses integrasi di antara dua teknik yang telah dipertingkatkan untuk membaikpulih kesan jerebu padat yang merosakkan pemandangan pada latar depan imej statik. Teknik yang pertama, iaitu teknik dark channel prior yang telah diubahsuai akan mempertingkatkan kualiti kontras serta untuk memperoleh intensiti jerebu. Intensiti dark channel prior mampu untuk menganggarkan nilai ketebalan jerebu. Diikuti pula teknik yang kedua, pengubahsuaian teknik transmission map estimation adalah untuk meningkatkan kualiti warna imej serta butiran-butiran pada imej. Kedua-dua teknik ini akan diintegrasikan untuk membentuk satu proses penuh teknik dehazing. Di samping itu, penapis median akan digunakan untuk penambahbaikan transmission dan untuk meningkatkan butiran pada adegan imej. Imej yang telah dipulihkan akan ke fasa post-processing, untuk peningkatan kontras dan pembetulan gamma. Teknik histogram equalization akan digunakan sebagai penambahbaikan kontras serta untuk menyesuaikan intensiti pada imej, sementara itu, pembetulan gamma adalah untuk membaikpulih warna pada imej, serta untuk kecerahan yang lebih baik. Terdapat beberapa ujian yang akan dilaksanakan untuk mengesahkan hasil terbaik daripada eksperimen ini. Contohnya adalah ujian Mean Square Error (MSE) dan ujian Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) yang akan dilaksanakan untuk penilaian kualiti imej. Nilai ujian yang diperolehi menunjukkan bahawa teknik yang dicadangkan ini mampu menghasilkan keputusan yang baik berbanding teknik lain dalam bidang image enhancement iaitu teknik Kaiming dan teknik Gibson. Nilai yang lebih rendah untuk MSE dan juga nilai yang lebih tinggi untuk PSNR adalah contoh keputusan yang baik. Nilai ujian MSE untuk teknik ini menunjukkan hanya 2009.76dB, manakala teknik Kaiming dan Gibson masing-masing menunjukkan 3920.13dB dan 2785.07dB. Sementara itu, nilai ujian PSNR menunjukkan 15.13dB, bagaimanapun, teknik Kaiming dan Gibson masing-masing mencatatkan 12.23dB dan 13.72dB. Akhir sekali, ujian Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) pula menunjukkan bahawa pemandangan pada output imej tanpa jerebu adalah tidak sama jika dibandingkan dengan pemandangan pada input imej yang berjerebu. Secara umumnya, teknik yang dicadangkan ini dapat menghilangkan jerebu padat pada latar depan imej dan pada masa yang sama dapat meningkatkan kualiti kontras dan warna pada pemandangan dalam imej.*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>TITLE</b>	i
<b>DECLARATION</b>	ii
<b>CERTIFICATION</b>	iii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	iv
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	v
<b><i>ABSTRAK</i></b>	vi
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	vii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xi
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xiii
<b>LIST OF SYMBOLS</b>	xv
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	xvi
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	xvii
<b>CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Problem Background	2
1.3 Problem Statement	5
1.4 Research Aim	5
1.5 Research Objectives	6
1.6 Research Scope	6
1.7 Research Justification	7
1.8 Research Organization	7

## **CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1	Overview	9
2.2	Haze Weather	11
2.2.1	Haze Effects on the Environment	12
2.2.2	Air Pollutant Index (API) Value	14
2.2.3	Haze Effects on the Computer Vision and Graphics Applications	17
2.3	Purpose of Image Processing for Haze Removal Technique	19
2.3.1	Pre-processing Data	20
2.3.2	Post-Processing Data	20
2.4	History of Haze Removal Technique on Image	22
2.5	Framework of Haze Removal in Image Processing	24
2.6	Classification of Haze Removal Technique	26
2.6.1	Haze Detection Technique	28
2.6.2	Haze Perfection Technique	29
2.6.3	Haze Removal Technique	29
2.7	Classification of Experiments Test	35
2.7.1	Mean Squared Error (MSE) Test	35
2.7.2	Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) Test	36
2.7.3	Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) Test	36
2.8	Discussion	37

## **CHAPTER 3 : METHODOLOGY**

3.1	Overview	38
3.2	Research Framework	38
3.3	Haze Image Formation Model	41
3.4	The Architecture of Enhanced Techniques for Removing Foreground Dense Haze	42
3.4.1	Process Flow Diagram for Contrast Restoration	44
3.4.2	Process Flow Diagram for Post-Processing (Dense Haze Removal)	45
3.4.3	Process Flow Diagram for Colour Correction	46
3.5	Testing and Analysis	47
3.5.1	Experiment Setup	48
3.5.2	Comparison Test	48

3.6	Summary	49
-----	---------	----

#### **CHAPTER 4 : MODIFICATION OF DARK CHANNEL PRIOR**

4.1	Overview	50
4.2	Dark Channel Prior Technique	50
4.2.1	Detection of Haze on Image	51
4.3	The Architecture of Modified Dark Channel Prior	54
4.4	Modification of Dark Channel Prior	55
4.5	Post Processing with Histogram Equalization	57
4.6	Experimental Layout	57
4.7	Results and Analysis	57
4.7.1	Mean Squared Error (MSE) Test	74
4.7.2	Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) Test	75
4.8	Summary	76

#### **CHAPTER 5 : ENHANCEMENT OF TRANSMISSION MAP ESTIMATION**

5.1	Overview	78
5.2	Transmission Map Estimation Technique	78
5.3	The Architecture of Enhanced Transmission Map Estimation	79
5.4	Enhancement of Transmission Map Estimation	81
5.5	Post Processing with Gamma Correction	82
5.6	Experimental Layout	83
5.7	Results and Analysis	84
5.7.1	Mean Squared Error (MSE) Test	105
5.7.2	Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) Test	106
5.8	Summary	107

#### **CHAPTER 6 : INTEGRATION OF TECHNIQUES FOR REMOVING**

#### **FOREGROUND DENSE HAZE ON THE OUTDOOR SCENERY STATIC IMAGE**

6.1	Overview	108
6.2	The Architecture of Integration of Enhanced Dehazing Techniques	109

6.3	Experimental Layout	111
6.4	Results and Analysis	111
6.4.1	Mean Squared Error (MSE) Test	128
6.4.2	Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) Test	129
6.4.3	Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) Test	130
6.5	Summary	130

## **CHAPTER 7 : CONCLUSION**

7.1	Overview	139
7.2	Achievement Results	140
7.3	Thesis Contribution	140
7.3.1	Modification of Dark Channel Prior Technique for Dense Haze Effect Removal and Contrast Restoration on Image	140
7.3.2	Enhancement of Transmission Map Estimation Technique for Colour Correction on Image	141
7.3.3	Integration of the Two Modified Techniques to Produce a Quality of Haze-Free Image	141
7.4	Future Work	142
7.5	Conclusion	142

<b>REFERENCES</b>	143
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<b>APPENDICES</b>	151
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## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 2.1: Category of haze based on range of API values	15
Table 2.2: Category of haze based on a range of API values	16
Table 2.3: The significant harm level with 500 of API values	16
Table 4.1: The comparison output result for Image 1	58
Table 4.2: The comparison output result for Image 2	59
Table 4.3: The comparison output result for Image 3	61
Table 4.4: The comparison output result for Image 4	63
Table 4.5: The comparison output result for Image 5	65
Table 4.6: The comparison output result for Image 6	66
Table 4.7: The comparison output result for Image 7	68
Table 4.8: The comparison output result for Image 8	70
Table 4.9: The comparison output result for Image 9	71
Table 4.10: The comparison output result for Image 10	73
Table 5.1: The comparison output result for Image 1	84
Table 5.2: The comparison output result for Image 2	86
Table 5.3: The comparison output result for Image 3	88
Table 5.4: The comparison output result for Image 4	90
Table 5.5: The comparison output result for Image 5	92
Table 5.6: The comparison output result for Image 6	94
Table 5.7: The comparison output result for Image 7	96
Table 5.8: The comparison output result for Image 8	99
Table 5.9: The comparison output result for Image 9	101
Table 5.10: The comparison output result for Image 10	103
Table 6.1: The comparison output result for Image 1	112
Table 6.2: The comparison output result for Image 2	113
Table 6.3: The comparison output result for Image 3	115
Table 6.4: The comparison output result for Image 4	116
Table 6.5: The comparison output result for Image 5	118
Table 6.6: The comparison output result for Image 6	120
Table 6.7: The comparison output result for Image 7	121

Table 6.8:	The comparison output result for Image 8	123
Table 6.9:	The comparison output result for Image 9	125
Table 6.10:	The comparison output result for Image 10	126



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## LIST OF FIGURES

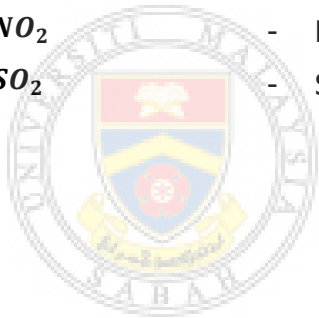
	Page
Figure 1.1: Example of Hazy Image	1
Figure 1.2: Haze Removal Using Dark Channel Prior by Kaiming (a) Original Hazy Image (b) Haze-Free Image with Halo Effects	4
Figure 2.1: Taxonomy of Image Processing (Jayaraman, 2011)	10
Figure 2.2: Chronology of haze weather since 1983 until 1997	13
Figure 2.3: The image of air pollution in Southeast Asia that is captured by satellite	14
Figure 2.4: Haze Image Formation Model.	17
Figure 2.5: The examples results of histogram equalization (a) Input image (b) Output image (c) Original histogram (d) Result histogram	21
Figure 2.6: Timeline Research of Dehazing Techniques which recommended by Researchers from 1999 until 2015	24
Figure 2.7: Framework of Haze Removal Technique	25
Figure 2.8: Classifications of Haze Removal Techniques with Examples	27
Figure 3.1: Research Framework	40
Figure 3.2: Architecture of Enhanced Techniques for Removing Foreground Dense Haze	43
Figure 3.3: Process Flow Diagram: Dense Haze Removal	45
Figure 3.4: Process Flow Diagram: Post-processing	46
Figure 3.5: Process Flow Diagram: Colour Corrections	47
Figure 4.1: How the results of haze removal produced by fundamental of dark channel prior (He et al., n.d.)	51
Figure 4.2: Histogram of intensity values on RGB channels: Image 1 (a) Original hazy image (b) Output of image after contrast enhancement	52
Figure 4.3: Histogram of intensity values on RGB channels: Image 2 (a) Original hazy image (b) Output of image after contrast enhancement	52

Figure 4.4:	Histogram of intensity values on RGB channels: Image 3 (a) Original hazy image (b) Output of image after contrast enhancement	53
Figure 4.5:	Architecture of Modified Dark Channel Prior	54
Figure 4.6:	The Mean Squared Error (MSE) Test - to Compare with Modification of Dark Channel Prior Technique	75
Figure 4.7:	Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) Test - to Compare with Modification of Dark Channel Prior Technique	76
Figure 5.1:	How the Method of Transmission Map Estimation Occurred	79
Figure 5.2:	Architecture of Enhanced Transmission Map Estimation	80
Figure 5.3:	Graph of Mean Squared Error (MSE) Test - to Compare with Enhancement of Transmission Map Estimation Technique	106
Figure 5.4:	Graph of Peak Signal Noise Ratio (PSNR) Test - to Compare with Enhancement of Transmission Map Estimation Technique	107
Figure 6.1:	Removal of haze on image by using the proposed technique (a) Original image (b) Haze-free image	109
Figure 6.2:	The Architecture of Integration of Enhanced Dehazing Techniques	110
Figure 6.3:	Graph of Mean Squared Error (MSE) Test - to Compare with Integration of Enhanced Dehazing Techniques	129
Figure 6.4:	Graph of Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) Test - to Compare with Integration of Enhanced Dehazing Techniques	130
Figure 6.5:	Graph of Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) Test	131
Figure 6.6:	To compare image similarities for Image A	132
Figure 6.7:	To compare image similarities for Image B	133
Figure 6.8:	To compare image similarities for Image C	134
Figure 6.9:	To compare image similarities for Image D	135
Figure 6.10:	To compare image similarities for Image E	136
Figure 6.11:	Summary- Stages in Proposed Technique	137



## LIST OF SYMBOLS

$H$	- Hazy Image with Observed Intensity Colour
$c$	- RGB colour channels
$F$	- Haze-Free Image
$p$	- Represented as pixels of $x$ and $y$ (for hazy image)
$q$	- Pixels of Dark Channel
$t(p)$	- Transmission Map
$F(p)t(p)$	- Direct Attenuation
$A(1 - t(x, y))$	- Airlight
$A$	- Global Atmospheric Light
$(x, y)$	- Pixels at its location on the image
$O_3$	- Ozone
$CO$	- Carbon Monoxide
$NO_2$	- Nitrogen Dioxide ( $NO_2$ )
$SO_2$	- Sulphur Dioxide ( $SO_2$ )



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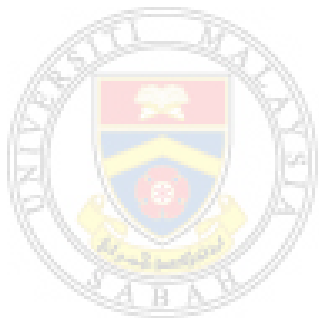
<b>DCP</b>	- Dark Channel Prior
<b>HSI</b>	- Hue, Saturation, Intensity
<b>RGB</b>	- Red, Green, Blue
<b>MSE</b>	- Mean Squared Error
<b>PNSR</b>	- Peak Signal to Noise Ratio
<b>SSIM</b>	- Structural Similarity Index
<b>API</b>	- Air Pollutant Index
<b>PSI</b>	- Pollutant Standards Index
<b>BSHTI</b>	- Background Suppressed Haze Thickness Index
<b>VCP</b>	- Virtual Cloud Point
<b>HTM</b>	- Haze Thicknesses Map
<b>MAAGs</b>	- Malaysian Air Quality Guidelines



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## LIST OF APPENDICES

		Page
Appendix A	Acceptance to Publication	151
Appendix B	Oral Presentations for Conferences	
	The 3 <sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Computational Science and Technology 2016 (ICCST 2016)	152
	The 4 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Southeast Asian Natural Resources and Environmental Management 2017 (SANREM 2017)	153



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

In the era of technology, image processing field is influencing many aspects of our daily life. For example, image processing is applied in the medical field (interpretation of X-ray images) and in robot vision. Recently, many researchers have studied image processing. A digital image can be manipulated based on the various image processing techniques such as restoration, colour correction, sharpness adjustment and contrast enhancement to create a better quality of image. The original image is taken as the input data, and mathematical operations can be applied to the image for manipulating the output results.

Malaysia has developed its economy by expanding the industries, which can lead to heavy pollution especially air pollution. This kind of air pollution causes bad weather, such as haze. Dense haze always affects the quality of outdoor photography images. This will be the most annoying problem faced by photographers. This case would lead problems to many applications in computer vision. However, the quality of images can be improved by using image processing method. The example of an outdoor scenery image was taken during dense haze, which is shown in Figure 1.1.



**Figure 1.1: Example of Hazy Image**

The presence of haze in the atmospheric area will disturb the observation of real scenes due to the loss of visibility and contrast on image, which makes the images appear unclear (Lv *et al.*, 2010). The haze that is scattered on the image will be analysed by several potential methods, which is discussed throughout this thesis. Hence, a suitable, improved method by the means of image processing will be implemented in order to restore the hazy image. The improved algorithm of haze removal is based on the estimation of haze thickness. It becomes more difficult to remove haze on image when the haze is dense.

Besides that, the quality of haze-free images depends on noise reduction and error that is scattered on the images. In the future, this research might be adapted for the development of mobile applications on Android and iOS platforms to realise the motivation of this research. This is because previous developers have done the applications of haze removal on mobile for static image. However, they need efficient algorithms to detect dark pixels and use its value to calculate the transmission for estimating the value of nearby pixels (Chiang, 2013). Therefore, this thesis will improve the techniques mentioned in previous studies to restore images affected by haze.

## **1.2 Problem Background**

The main concern of this research is to improve the performance of haze removal technique for the outdoor scenery static image. Many drawbacks occur during the process of haze removal. In the image processing field, haze removal process is the most challenging process due to the unknown scene of depth information on image. This problem has occurred on the classical approaches of haze removal. The classical approaches are known as multiple images haze removal and additional information haze removal. Both of these techniques might be costly due to many requirements needed and extra hardware device for the dehazing process, in order to gain the accurate of depth information on image. If there is only a single input of hazy image during the dehaze process, the experiment might be inaccurate due to the lack of information.

In order to reduce this problem, a technique of single image haze removal has been proposed. It can also deliver with faster execution compared to the classical approaches. This is because it requires only a single input of hazy image. A

single input of hazy image is enough to produce the output results. Since then, many researchers carry out their study regarding a single input of image without any additional requirements.

The type of input image plays an important role in order to ease the process of haze removal. Obtaining input of static image is the easiest compared to video. The captured video sequences need to provide an input, and then the system will process it into several frames (Alajarmeh *et al.*, 2014). The input of grayscale image cannot achieve satisfying results as its colour information of RGB channel on image is the basic source from a dark channel prior based techniques (J. Li *et al.*, 2015). The type of weather also affects the experiment process. Resolving of steady weather problems, such as haze, is the easiest to be processed compared to dynamic weather, like rain. It is due to the haze that has very small particles size in the atmosphere; meanwhile, the size and velocity of the rain streak are larger than haze. If the size of rain particles is smaller, then only some techniques for solving haze problem can also be applied for rain. However, if the size of rain particles are larger, then the problem will occur when the techniques are applied for haze. The larger the size of rain streak will cause the other techniques and statistical characteristic may be applied (Wahab *et al.*, 2013).

Apart from that, haze weather can cause many drawbacks on the input of hazy image. It includes the change in colour scenes and it can also diminish the view of the scenes (Kurian, 2014). Besides that, the contrast of image is reduced due to the scattering of light towards a camera, where it is also caused by attenuation (Inampudi *et al.*, 2002). In addition, the input of degraded image obtains with very low intensity. Therefore, an adaptive gamma correction technique will be applied in order to adjust the intensity of the transmission map. A well-known algorithm of transmission map estimation works for three colour channels randomly. It is derived from the dark channel prior algorithm. Transmission of haze occurs when the light passes through objects on the scene. Haze also can increase the whiteness on image. The whiteness in the scene image is caused by airlight. The image is also degraded due to the loss of high-frequency components, which can lead to scene blurring (Cho *et al.*, 2013).

The haze removal research grows tremendously as there are many issues occurring in this field. One of the biggest issues in haze removal is to remove dense haze on outdoor scenery static image. By focusing on this issue is to ensure that

the image quality will improve. Some of the haze removal techniques may fail in some extreme cases especially in the case of dense haze. For example, a method that estimates the optical transmission in hazy scenes cannot remove haze when the haze is too thick, and it frequently exhibits overstretched contrast. It is due to the incorrect estimation of scene depths (Fattal, 2008). Accordingly, a dark channel prior technique is suitable for dense haze because the intensity of dark channel allows approximating the thickness value of haze. Besides that, this technique allows detecting the most haze-opaque region on the input of hazy image (C. H. Yeh *et al.*, 2012).

Based on the previous technique of dark channel prior by Kaiming, it allows restoring high quality of haze-free image and it can directly estimate the haze thickness on image. However, dark channel prior is known as a statistic, where it cannot perform very well for some particular of images especially for the image that scattered with dynamic weather. Besides that, the output results might contain with few of halo effects (He *et al.*, 2011). Figure 1.2 shows the example of images that resulting in halo effects. The output result in Figure 1.2(b) shows the halo effects that can be seen around the building and trees.



**Figure 1.2: Haze Removal Using Dark Channel Prior by Kaiming. (a) Original Hazy Image, (b) Haze-Free Image with Halo Effects**

Apart from that, one of the factors that can lead to halo effects on image is when the transmission map estimation occurs incorrectly. It also delivers problems such as false textures and blocking artifacts. In order to overcome the problem of halo effects and unsatisfactory estimation of transmission map, a median filter will be applied. The median filter also can improve the edges information on image (Huang *et al.*, 2014).

Gamma correction can be worst on the certain image until it provides with bleached out or too dark of output image. Therefore, apply the contrast enhancement that can improve the quality of image based on its statistic, such as histogram equalization in order to balance the colour image (Gibson *et al.*, 2010). Both of these techniques can be obtained as tone mapping techniques (Fattal, 2008). However, histogram equalization generates a saturated of output image.

Based on the problems that have been discussed in this section, the technique of haze removal will be improved in order to restore dense haze image.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The main problem of haze removal technique is to handle the case of dense haze with special attention to improve the quality foreground scene of hazy image. Apart from that, this research is mainly concerned with improving the performance of the image quality. The quality of the image depends on the amount of noise and error, where the output results will be compared with the previous research through experiment. The results of haze-free image cannot be the same as the original of hazy image, hence the similarities level will be tested in an experiment. Besides that, the output of haze-free image can be oversaturated, too bright or too dark, so the contrast of image will be adjusted and the colour corrections will be applied. Furthermore, the output results may contain halo artifacts and the edges information were blurred. Therefore, the details of image will need to be restored. In recent times, many techniques of haze removal have been proposed. One of them is to enhance by using dark channel prior as its base. The enhanced approach of dark channel prior will be then recomputed the transmission map estimation in order to perform a better of haze removal process.

### **1.4 Research Aim**

The aim of this research is to restore the degraded outdoor scenery static image from the dense haze, provide with better quality results while at the same time able to remove haze at foreground scene by integrating the modified dark channel prior technique and enhanced transmission map estimation technique.