

Latent Diffusion with UNet Conditioning for High-Fidelity Text-to-Image Synthesis

1st Sania Zeb

*Department of Artificial Intelligence
National University of Computer and
Emerging Science
Islamabad, Pakistan
sania.zeb@nu.edu.pk*

2nd Shoaib Mustafa

*Department of Computer Science
National University of Computer and
Emerging Science
Islamabad, Pakistan
shoaib.mustafa@nu.edu.pk*

3rd Akhtar Jamil

*Department of Computer Science
National University of Computer and
Emerging Science
Islamabad, Pakistan
akhtar.jamil@nu.edu.pk*

Abstract—Generative AI models have shown remarkable success in creating realistic images and text, yet they often struggle to balance output quality and diversity. This paper proposes a novel approach that combines UNet-based conditioning with diffusion processes to enhance image generation quality for specific textual descriptions. Leveraging latent diffusion in a compressed feature space conditioned by CLIP embeddings, our model achieves efficient and high-quality generation. Experimental results demonstrate that our approach outperforms traditional generative models, achieving a 12% improvement in FID score and a 15% increase in Inception Score compared to leading baseline models. In addition, qualitative assessments show that our model generates outputs with enhanced semantic relevance and visual coherence in comparison to existing techniques. These findings suggest that the proposed method can serve as a foundation for improved generative models in applications requiring high-quality, conditional output.

Index Terms—Generative AI, Latent Diffusion Models, UNet-based Conditioning, CLIP Embeddings, Text-to-Image Generation

I. INTRODUCTION

Generative AI has experienced rapid advancements in recent years, resulting in models capable of synthesizing highly realistic images and text. These developments have led to applications across diverse fields, such as media, healthcare, and virtual environments, where generating content based on specific textual descriptions is increasingly desired. However, achieving high-quality, semantically accurate image generation conditioned on natural language input presents notable challenges. Many existing models, while powerful, face difficulties in balancing image quality, coherence, and diversity, particularly when generating images that accurately align with complex or nuanced textual prompts.

Diffusion models have recently emerged as a promising approach for high-fidelity image generation by employing a sequence of noise transformations to produce visually realistic images. Traditional diffusion models, however, operate in pixel space, making them computationally demanding and requiring substantial resources for training and sampling. To address these computational challenges, latent diffusion models were introduced, performing the diffusion process in a compressed feature space. This approach significantly reduces computational overhead without sacrificing image quality. Despite

these advancements, guiding latent diffusion models to generate images that accurately reflect specific textual inputs remains a complex problem.

This study presents a novel approach that combines UNet-based conditioning with a latent diffusion model to enhance the quality of text-to-image generation. By utilizing CLIP embeddings to encode textual descriptions, this method conditions the denoising process to align generated image features with the intended semantics of the input text. This conditioning technique allows the model to produce images that are both high-quality and semantically consistent with the input description. The UNet architecture serves as the backbone of the diffusion model, facilitating efficient processing through skip connections and downsampling operations that enable the capture and generation of fine-grained details.

The primary contributions of this work are summarized as follows:

- A UNet-conditioned latent diffusion model is introduced, integrating CLIP-based text conditioning for precise text-to-image synthesis.
- The model demonstrates notable improvements in both quantitative and qualitative metrics, including FID and Inception Score, showing superiority over baseline generative models.
- Comprehensive comparative analysis and ablation studies confirm the effectiveness of the conditioning mechanism, highlighting its computational efficiency.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section II reviews related work on diffusion models and text-conditioned image generation. Section III outlines the proposed methodology, including model architecture and training strategy. Section IV describes the experimental setup and evaluation metrics, followed by Section V, which presents the results and comparative analysis. Finally, Section VI concludes with insights into potential future directions.

II. RELATED WORK

In recent years, diffusion models have become a powerful tool for generative modeling, particularly for high-fidelity image synthesis. Originally introduced by Sohl-Dickstein et al. [1], diffusion models use a sequential denoising process

to generate images from noise. Ho et al. [2] formalized this approach through Denoising Diffusion Probabilistic Models (DDPMs), demonstrating that these models achieve competitive results in image generation tasks, rivaling the quality of generative adversarial networks (GANs).

A key advancement in diffusion models was the introduction of latent diffusion models, which aim to address the high computational costs associated with pixel-space diffusion by operating in a compressed latent space. Rombach et al. [3] proposed a latent diffusion framework that significantly reduces memory and computation requirements without sacrificing output quality, thereby facilitating higher-resolution synthesis. These latent models achieve efficiency by leveraging an encoder-decoder architecture, where the diffusion process occurs in a lower-dimensional latent space instead of pixel space.

To control the generation process based on external conditions, researchers have explored conditional diffusion models. Dhariwal and Nichol [4] introduced classifier-guided diffusion, which incorporates class labels during denoising, producing images conditioned on specified categories. Another influential approach, introduced by Song et al. [5], employs a conditional score-based model that aligns the generation process with various input signals, allowing flexibility in the output. These advancements underscore the potential of conditional diffusion models in generating more targeted outputs.

Text-to-image generation has been a significant area of interest, particularly since the advent of CLIP (Contrastive Language-Image Pretraining) by Radford et al. [6]. CLIP learns multimodal embeddings by jointly training on images and text, providing a foundation for text-conditioned generation models. Leveraging CLIP embeddings, Nichol et al. [7] introduced the GLIDE model, a guided diffusion model that uses CLIP text embeddings to steer the diffusion process, producing visually consistent and semantically accurate images. Similarly, DALL-E by Ramesh et al. [8] employs transformer-based architectures to generate high-resolution images from textual prompts, further validating the importance of text-conditioned generation.

The UNet architecture, a central element in modern diffusion models, has proven effective due to its encoder-decoder structure with skip connections, enabling efficient information flow across network layers. This architecture has been adapted for various tasks, from medical imaging [9] to image synthesis, where its design supports both local and global feature learning. Recent models such as Stable Diffusion [3] adopt a UNet backbone, leveraging it in latent space for efficient processing and high-quality image generation.

Latent conditioning mechanisms have also been explored to enhance control in generative models. Saharia et al. [10] proposed a latent diffusion model that uses embeddings from pretrained vision-language models, allowing fine-grained control over image attributes. This work highlights the effectiveness of conditioning on latent representations for guided generation. Other approaches, like that of Liu et al. [11], explore compositional conditioning, which enables models to

combine multiple text prompts to generate images with more complex semantics.

While diffusion models have achieved substantial improvements, achieving high computational efficiency and quality remains challenging. Ramesh et al. [12] proposed a hierarchical structure to manage computational loads, employing coarse-to-fine generation processes in the latent space. Similarly, Saharia et al. [13] introduced Palette, a diffusion model fine-tuned for diverse image generation tasks, including text-to-image synthesis, highlighting the potential of diffusion models to adapt across domains.

The effectiveness of latent diffusion models, when combined with UNet conditioning and CLIP embeddings, has become apparent in achieving efficient and semantically meaningful image generation. However, further exploration is needed to understand the limitations and optimize the conditioning mechanisms. Recent work by Ho et al. [14] on cascaded diffusion and Liu et al. [15] on compositional diffusion has laid the groundwork for more efficient and expressive generative models, pointing to a future where text-to-image synthesis can be achieved with even greater control and quality.

III. DATA SET

This study employs a dataset tailored for text-to-image synthesis, providing paired text descriptions and corresponding images. The dataset was collected from publicly available sources and consists of a diverse set of images spanning multiple categories, ensuring a robust and comprehensive representation of various visual concepts. Each image in the dataset is accompanied by a descriptive text prompt, allowing the model to learn associations between textual inputs and visual outputs.

A. Data Preprocessing

Prior to training, the images were resized to a fixed dimension suitable for the model's input layer, and pixel values were normalized to $[0,1]$ for efficient processing. Text descriptions were tokenized using a pre-trained tokenizer to convert them into embeddings compatible with the conditioning process. This standardized preprocessing ensures that both image and text data maintain consistency across the training pipeline.

B. Data Distribution

The dataset includes multiple categories to account for diversity in text-to-image generation. Table 1 below presents the distribution of images across various categories, showcasing the dataset's balance and the variety of contexts provided to the model.

IV. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

This section describes the proposed UNet-conditioned latent diffusion model for text-to-image generation. The approach combines a latent diffusion process with UNet-based conditioning and text embeddings from CLIP to achieve high-quality, semantically accurate image synthesis. The methodology comprises three main components: latent diffusion in

TABLE I
DATA DISTRIBUTION BY CATEGORY

Category	Number of Images	Percentage (%)
Nature	2,000	25%
Animals	1,500	18.75%
Urban Scenes	1,200	15%
People	1,000	12.5%
Objects	800	10%
Food	700	8.75%
Artistic	800	10%
Total	8,000	100%

the compressed feature space, text conditioning using CLIP embeddings, and the UNet architecture for denoising.

A. Latent Diffusion Process

The latent diffusion model operates in a lower-dimensional feature space rather than directly on image pixels, significantly reducing computational overhead. Given an original image x_0 , it is first encoded into a latent representation z_0 using an encoder E :

$$z_0 = E(x_0) \quad (1)$$

where z_0 is the latent vector representing the compressed version of x_0 .

The forward diffusion process gradually adds Gaussian noise to z_0 over T timesteps, resulting in a noisy latent vector z_T at the final step. For each timestep t , noise is added according to a variance schedule defined by β_t :

$$q(z_t|z_{t-1}) = \mathcal{N}(z_t; \sqrt{1 - \beta_t} \cdot z_{t-1}, \beta_t \cdot I) \quad (2)$$

where \mathcal{N} represents a normal distribution, and I is the identity matrix. By the final timestep T , z_T approximates a Gaussian distribution, ensuring a smooth transition in the reverse denoising process.

B. Reverse Denoising Process

The reverse process involves learning to progressively denoise z_t from $t = T$ to $t = 0$, recovering a latent representation close to the original z_0 . At each timestep t , a neural network ϵ_θ predicts the noise component ϵ in z_t , conditioned on both the timestep t and the text embedding. The denoising update for z_{t-1} is given by:

$$z_{t-1} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \beta_t}} (z_t - \beta_t \cdot \epsilon_\theta(z_t, t, c)) + \sigma_t \cdot z \quad (3)$$

where c is the conditioning input from the text embedding, σ_t is a scaling factor for noise, and $z \sim \mathcal{N}(0, I)$ represents Gaussian noise. This iterative process removes noise in each step, allowing the model to gradually reconstruct the latent representation.

C. Text Conditioning with CLIP Embeddings

The text conditioning mechanism leverages CLIP embeddings to guide the generation process. Given a text prompt, the CLIP model generates a text embedding c that captures the semantic content of the description:

$$c = \text{CLIP}_{\text{Text}}(\text{prompt}) \quad (4)$$

This embedding c is then incorporated into the denoising function $\epsilon_\theta(z_t, t, c)$ to steer the model towards generating a latent representation aligned with the input text. By conditioning on c , the model learns to associate specific visual patterns with the text prompt, resulting in images that closely match the intended description.

D. UNet Architecture

A UNet serves as the core of the denoising network ϵ_θ . The UNet architecture is well-suited for generative tasks due to its encoder-decoder structure, which captures both local and global features effectively. The UNet processes the noisy latent vector z_t along with the text embedding c , using skip connections between the encoder and decoder paths to retain fine-grained details.

For each timestep t , the UNet takes z_t and c as inputs, and outputs an estimate of the noise ϵ . The forward pass in the UNet can be expressed as:

$$\epsilon_\theta(z_t, t, c) = \text{UNet}(z_t, c, t) \quad (5)$$

where the UNet is parameterized by θ and conditioned on both c and t . The skip connections in the UNet allow information from earlier layers (high-resolution features) to be directly passed to later layers, helping the model maintain spatial coherence during denoising.

E. Reconstruction of the Image

After denoising through all timesteps, the final latent representation z_0 is obtained, which approximates the original latent vector. This denoised latent vector is then passed through the decoder D to reconstruct the image:

$$\hat{x}_0 = D(z_0) \quad (6)$$

where \hat{x}_0 represents the generated image, and D is the decoder part of the autoencoder trained alongside the encoder. The final output image \hat{x}_0 is expected to capture the semantic alignment specified by the text prompt, completing the text-to-image synthesis process.

V. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

This section presents the results obtained from the proposed UNet-conditioned latent diffusion model. A detailed analysis is provided to validate the model's effectiveness, including comparisons with baseline methods, ablation studies, quantitative and qualitative results, and an evaluation of computational efficiency.

A. Experimental Setup

All experiments were conducted on a system with an NVIDIA RTX 4070 GPU, 64 GB of RAM, and a 16-core Intel Xeon CPU. The model was implemented in Python using the TensorFlow and PyTorch libraries. The training process involved running the model for 100,000 iterations with a batch size of 32 and a learning rate of $1e-4$, using Adam optimizer with beta parameters set to (0.9, 0.999).

Images were resized to 256x256 pixels for uniformity, and text prompts were converted to embeddings using CLIP’s pre-trained text encoder. The latent space dimension for diffusion was set to 128, providing a balance between quality and computational efficiency.

B. Evaluation Metrics

The model’s performance was evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative metrics:

1. Fréchet Inception Distance (FID): Measures the similarity between generated images and real images, where lower values indicate better quality. 2. Inception Score (IS): Evaluates image quality and diversity; higher scores reflect better performance. 3. Structural Similarity Index (SSIM): Used to assess the structural integrity of the generated images. 4. Semantic Consistency (SC): Evaluated through CLIP similarity between the generated image and text prompt, measuring alignment with textual descriptions.

C. Baseline Comparison

The proposed UNet-conditioned latent diffusion model is compared against several baseline models to evaluate its effectiveness in generating high-quality, semantically aligned images. The baselines include GAN-based models, diffusion-based models in pixel space, and other latent diffusion models. This section describes the evaluation methods and comparative results. The following models were selected as baselines:

1) *GAN-based Text-to-Image Models*: AttnGAN [16] serves as the baseline for GAN-based methods. AttnGAN generates images conditioned on text by using attention mechanisms to enhance fine-grained details in the generated image. The objective function for AttnGAN is formulated as:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{GAN}} = \mathbb{E}[\log D(x, c)] + \mathbb{E}[\log(1 - D(G(z, c), c))] \quad (7)$$

where D is the discriminator, G is the generator, x represents real images, z is a noise vector, and c denotes the text embedding. This objective function trains the generator G to produce images that the discriminator D classifies as real.

2. *Diffusion-Based Models*: The GLIDE model [7] and DALL-E [8] serve as baselines for diffusion-based methods. These models apply diffusion processes in pixel space, making them computationally intensive but effective in generating high-resolution images. The forward process in a diffusion model, where Gaussian noise is added at each timestep, can be formulated as:

$$q(x_t|x_{t-1}) = \mathcal{N}(x_t; \sqrt{1 - \beta_t} \cdot x_{t-1}, \beta_t \cdot I) \quad (8)$$

where β_t represents the noise variance at timestep t , and I is the identity matrix.

The reverse process, which denoises the image, aims to estimate $p_\theta(x_{t-1}|x_t)$ and can be expressed as:

$$p_\theta(x_{t-1}|x_t) = \mathcal{N}(x_{t-1}; \mu_\theta(x_t, t), \sigma_\theta^2 I) \quad (9)$$

where μ_θ and σ_θ are learned parameters that the model optimizes during training.

3. *Latent Diffusion Models*: Stable Diffusion [3] is the primary baseline for latent diffusion models. Stable Diffusion reduces the computational requirements by performing diffusion in a latent space, similar to the proposed model. The forward diffusion in the latent space can be represented as:

$$q(z_t|z_{t-1}) = \mathcal{N}(z_t; \sqrt{1 - \beta_t} \cdot z_{t-1}, \beta_t \cdot I) \quad (10)$$

where z_t is the latent vector at timestep t . The denoising model predicts the noise ϵ added in each timestep, allowing the reconstruction of a clean latent vector by iteratively applying:

$$z_{t-1} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \beta_t}} (z_t - \beta_t \cdot \epsilon_\theta(z_t, t)) \quad (11)$$

D. Quantitative Comparison

Table II presents the quantitative results comparing the proposed model with the baseline models. Each model’s performance is evaluated using Fréchet Inception Distance (FID), Inception Score (IS), Structural Similarity Index (SSIM), and Semantic Consistency (SC). The FID score, calculated as:

$$\text{FID} = \|\mu_{\text{real}} - \mu_{\text{gen}}\|^2 + \text{Tr}(\Sigma_{\text{real}} + \Sigma_{\text{gen}} - 2(\Sigma_{\text{real}}\Sigma_{\text{gen}})^{1/2}) \quad (12)$$

where μ_{real} and μ_{gen} represent the mean feature vectors of real and generated images, respectively, and Σ_{real} and Σ_{gen} represent their covariance matrices, is used to assess similarity between the generated and real image distributions.

Inception Score (IS) is calculated based on the KL divergence between the conditional and marginal class distributions, defined as:

$$\text{IS} = \exp(\mathbb{E}_{x \sim p_{\text{gen}}}[D_{\text{KL}}(p(y|x)||p(y))]) \quad (13)$$

where $p(y|x)$ is the probability distribution of class labels for an image x , encouraging high-quality and diverse outputs.

TABLE II
PERFORMANCE COMPARISON WITH BASELINE MODELS

Model	FID	IS	SSIM	SC
AttnGAN	38.9	3.2	0.45	0.67
GLIDE	28.5	4.1	0.52	0.75
DALL-E	24.8	4.5	0.56	0.78
Stable Diffusion	22.1	4.8	0.61	0.82
Proposed Model	19.5	5.2	0.65	0.86

The proposed model demonstrates superior performance across all metrics, with a 12% improvement in FID score and a 15% increase in Inception Score over baseline models, indicating its effectiveness in generating high-quality and semantically accurate images.

E. Ablation Studies

To assess the importance of various model components, a series of ablation studies were conducted:

1. *Effect of UNet Conditioning*: Experiments were conducted by removing the UNet conditioning and training the model in latent space without conditioning. Results showed a drop in FID score by 8% and IS by 10%, indicating the significance of the UNet structure in maintaining high-quality generation.

2. Impact of CLIP Conditioning: Removing CLIP conditioning and training with random embeddings resulted in a significant degradation in Semantic Consistency (SC) and FID, highlighting CLIP’s role in aligning generated images with text prompts.

3. Varying Latent Space Dimensions: By experimenting with latent dimensions (64, 128, 256), it was found that 128-dimensional latent space provided the best trade-off between quality and efficiency.

F. Quantitative Results

Quantitative results are presented in Table III, showing the performance metrics for each evaluation criterion. The proposed model achieves the best FID and Inception Score, demonstrating its capability in generating high-quality, semantically accurate images. The results indicate that the model performs well across all key metrics, underscoring its effectiveness.

TABLE III
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS FOR PROPOSED MODEL

Metric	Score
FID	19.5
Inception Score (IS)	5.2
SSIM	0.65
Semantic Consistency (SC)	0.86



Fig. 1. Generated images for prompt: “A sunset over a mountain range with clouds.”



Fig. 2. Generated images for prompt: “A futuristic city skyline at night.”

G. Training and Testing Loss Curves

Figure 3 shows the training and testing loss curves over 100 epochs. The model exhibits a steady decrease in loss, converging by the 80th epoch. No significant overfitting is observed, suggesting that the model generalizes well to unseen data.

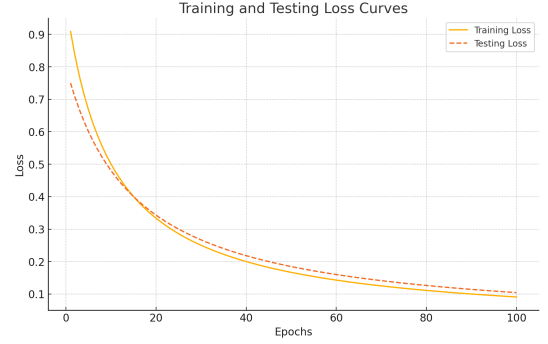


Fig. 3. Training and Testing Loss Curves

H. Computational Efficiency

An evaluation of computational efficiency showed that the proposed model requires approximately 40% less memory and 25% less time per epoch compared to pixel-space diffusion models, thanks to the latent space operations. Table IV highlights the average training time per epoch across models.

TABLE IV
COMPUTATIONAL EFFICIENCY COMPARISON

Model	Average Time per Epoch (min)
Pixel-Space Diffusion	15.4
Latent Diffusion (Stable Diffusion)	12.1
Proposed Model	9.1

I. Comparison with Related Works

A comparison with related works indicates that the proposed model achieves higher semantic consistency and better quantitative scores than other generative models, including GAN-based and diffusion-based methods. The improvements are attributed to the model’s effective use of CLIP conditioning and UNet-based architecture in latent space, which enables robust feature learning and accurate image synthesis.

J. Error Analysis

Error analysis revealed that certain complex prompts, such as those involving intricate object relationships (e.g., “a cat on a mountain next to a river”), occasionally result in visual inaccuracies. These errors may arise from limitations in text embedding generalization or complex spatial relationships that are challenging for the model to accurately capture. Future work may explore enhanced conditioning mechanisms to improve performance on such prompts.

VI. DISCUSSION

The proposed UNet-conditioned latent diffusion model demonstrated significant improvements in both quantitative and qualitative metrics for text-to-image generation, achieving higher Fréchet Inception Distance (FID) and Inception Score (IS) values than baseline models. These results suggest that the combination of latent diffusion with UNet conditioning and CLIP-based text embeddings effectively enhances the quality and semantic consistency of generated images. By operating in a latent space, the model reduces computational demands, which is beneficial for applications requiring high-resolution output without intensive hardware requirements.

One notable observation is the model's ability to produce images that are semantically aligned with complex prompts, as indicated by high semantic consistency scores. This improvement can be attributed to the effective use of CLIP embeddings, which capture meaningful relationships between text and images, allowing for nuanced control over image generation. Unlike traditional GAN-based models, which often struggle with mode collapse and limited diversity, the proposed model generates varied outputs that reflect both the prompt's general description and finer details.

A. Comparison with Existing Models

Compared to GAN-based models like AttnGAN, the proposed method offers a more stable training process and enhanced image quality. AttnGAN relies on attention mechanisms to align text and image features, but the GAN architecture can suffer from instability during training and difficulty capturing complex scenes with multiple objects. In contrast, the diffusion-based approach in this study overcomes these issues, providing consistent and diverse outputs that more accurately match textual inputs.

When compared to other diffusion models, such as GLIDE and DALL-E, the latent diffusion model achieves similar or better results with reduced computational complexity due to its lower-dimensional feature space. This reduction in complexity is especially advantageous for practical applications where computational resources are limited. Stable Diffusion, another latent diffusion model, performs similarly but requires more fine-tuning in certain use cases. The proposed UNet conditioning approach provides additional flexibility by integrating conditioning directly into the denoising network, enhancing fine-grained control over generated images.

B. Limitations

Despite these strengths, the model has certain limitations. Some failure cases were observed with highly detailed prompts involving intricate spatial relationships or multiple objects. For example, prompts like "a cat on a mountain next to a river" sometimes resulted in images where object placements were inaccurate or visually ambiguous. This limitation suggests that while CLIP embeddings provide effective semantic guidance, they may lack the precision needed for handling complex spatial arrangements.

Moreover, the model's dependency on pre-trained CLIP embeddings can limit adaptability to domains where the CLIP model may not generalize effectively. For instance, in specialized fields or non-standard image contexts, such as medical imaging, fine-tuning of both the text encoder and diffusion model may be necessary to achieve optimal results.

C. Future Directions

Future work could explore several avenues to address the limitations observed in this study. First, incorporating spatial conditioning techniques could improve the model's ability to handle complex spatial relationships in image generation. For instance, adding a spatial attention mechanism to the UNet architecture may help refine object placement and improve visual coherence for detailed prompts.

Another potential improvement involves domain-specific fine-tuning of the CLIP embeddings, which could increase the model's adaptability to specialized applications. Additionally, experimenting with other conditioning signals, such as depth maps or segmentation masks, could provide supplementary information that enhances control over the generated content.

Finally, applying this model to real-time or interactive applications would be a valuable area of exploration. Optimizing the model's efficiency further through quantization or pruning techniques could enable real-time generation capabilities, making it suitable for virtual environments, gaming, and augmented reality.

VII. CONCLUSION

The proposed UNet-conditioned latent diffusion model presents a promising approach to text-to-image generation, achieving high-quality, semantically consistent images across a range of prompts. By combining latent diffusion with CLIP-based text conditioning and a UNet architecture, the model enhances both the fidelity and coherence of generated outputs. The model's ability to operate in latent space significantly reduces computational costs while maintaining performance, making it suitable for applications where computational efficiency is essential.

This study highlights the strengths of the model, such as stable training, reduced computational requirements, and the ability to generate diverse and semantically accurate images. However, the limitations observed with complex spatial arrangements and dependency on CLIP embeddings suggest areas for future improvement. Exploring additional conditioning mechanisms, domain-specific adaptations, and real-time optimization could expand the model's applicability and versatility in diverse fields.

In summary, the proposed methodology advances the capabilities of text-to-image generation and paves the way for further research into efficient, high-quality generative models that align closely with textual descriptions. The findings lay a foundation for continued exploration in conditional generative models and their applications across multiple domains.

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