

Multimodal Motion Conditioned Diffusion Model for Skeleton-based Video Anomaly Detection

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<https://github.com/aleflabo/MoCoDAD>

Abstract

Anomalies are rare and anomaly detection is often therefore framed as One-Class Classification (OCC), i.e. trained solely on normalcy. Leading OCC techniques constrain the latent representations of normal¹ motions to limited volumes and detect as abnormal anything outside, which accounts satisfactorily for the openset'ness of anomalies. But normalcy shares the same openset'ness property since humans can perform the same action in several ways, which the leading techniques neglect.

We propose a novel generative model for video anomaly detection (VAD), which assumes that both normality and abnormality are multimodal. We consider skeletal representations and leverage state-of-the-art diffusion probabilistic models to generate multimodal future human poses. We contribute a novel conditioning on the past motion of people and exploit the improved mode coverage capabilities of diffusion processes to generate different-but-plausible future motions. Upon the statistical aggregation of future modes, an anomaly is detected when the generated set of motions is not pertinent to the actual future. We validate our model on 4 established benchmarks: *UBnormal*, *HR-UBnormal*, *HR-STC*, and *HR-Avenue*, with extensive experiments surpassing state-of-the-art results.

1. Introduction

Video Anomaly Detection (VAD) is a crucial task in computer vision and security applications. It enables early detection of unusual or abnormal events in videos, such as accidents, illnesses, or people's behavior which may threaten public safety [41]. However, several aspects make VAD a challenging task. Firstly, the definition of anomaly

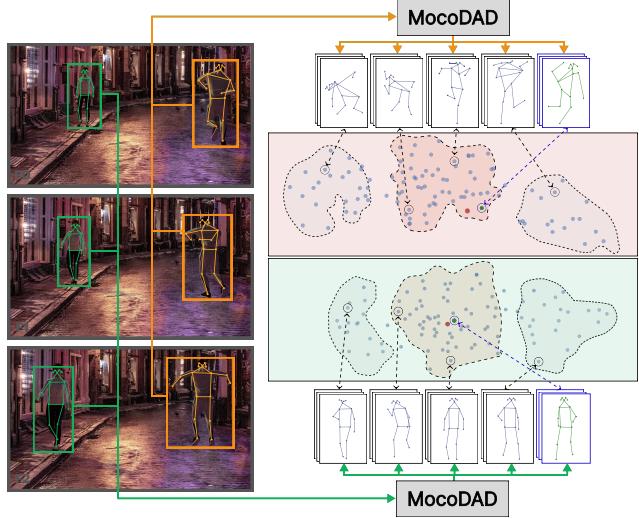


Figure 1: MoCoDAD detects anomalies by synthesizing and statistically aggregating multi-modal future motions, conditioned on past poses (frames on the left). Red (top) and green (bottom) distributions represent examples of anomaly and normality generations (2d mapped via t-SNE). Within the distribution modes (dashed-contoured), the red dots are the actual true futures corresponding to the conditioning past frames. In the case of normality, the true future lies within a main distribution mode, and the generated predictions are pertinent. In the case of abnormality, the true future lies in the tail of the distribution modes, which yields poorer predictions, highlighting anomalies.

is highly subjective and varies depending on the context and application, making it difficult to define it universally. Secondly, anomalies are intrinsically rare. To account for data scarcity, models generally learn from regular samples only (also known as One Class Classification - OCC) or have to

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cope with the data imbalance. Thirdly, anomaly detection is intrinsically an openset problem, and modeling anomalies needs to account for diversity beyond the training set.

An “ideal” model for anomaly detection should consider that there are infinitely many anomalous and non-anomalous ways of performing an action. Current state-of-the-art OCC techniques [9, 24, 25, 26] fail to address this issue. Indeed, they focus on learning either a single reconstruction or prediction of the input, or deriving a latent representation of normal¹ actions, thereby constraining them to a limited latent volume. This last approach successfully accounts for the openset’ness of anomalies, i.e., anything mapped outside the normality region is considered abnormal. However, forcing normality into constrained volumes may not work for diverse-but-still-normal behaviors, i.e., OCC misclassifies as anomalous those not fitting in the volume.

We propose Motion Conditioned Diffusion Anomaly Detection - hereafter MoCoDAD - a novel generative model for VAD, which assumes that both normality and abnormality are multimodal². Given a motion sequence, be it normal or anomalous, the sequence is split and the later (future) frames are corrupted to become random noise. Conditioned on the first (past) clean input frames, MoCoDAD synthesizes multimodal reconstructions of the corrupted frames. MoCoDAD discerns normality from anomaly by comparing the multimodal distributions. In the case of normality, the generated motions are diverse but pertinent, i.e. they are biased towards the true uncorrupted frames. In the case of abnormality, the synthesized motion is also diverse, but it lacks pertinence, as shown in Fig. 1 and discussed in Sec. 5.

MoCoDAD is the first diffusion-based technique for video anomaly detection. We are inspired by Denoising Diffusion Probabilistic Models (DDPMs) [40, 14], state-of-the-art, among others, in image synthesis [31, 30, 33], motion synthesis [43, 49], and 3D generation tasks [53]. DDPMs are selected for their improved mode coverage [48], i.e. they generate diverse multimodal motions, which MoCoDAD statistically aggregates (see the respective ablative study in Sec. 5).

Besides multimodality, a crucial aspect of MoCoDAD is the choice of the conditioning strategy to guide the synthesis. We consider human motion as skeletal representations and propose corrupting the body joint coordinates at each frame by displacing them with random translations. Conditioning refers to the process that provides the model with the uncorrupted first part of the motion sequence (past) to guide the denoising of the corrupted second part (future). In this study, we compare three modeling choices to find the most

¹To avoid ambiguity, in this work, the term “normal” is the contrary of anomalous, not the synonym of “Gaussian”. Normal refers to “normality” (or “normalcy”). Anomalous/abnormal refers to abnormality/anomaly.

²In this work, multimodal refers to distributions with multiple modes, not to mixing modalities (video, audio, text, etc.)

suitable conditioning strategy. We experiment with (1) directly feeding the denoising module with the concatenation of the uncorrupted poses with the displaced sequence [35]. For the other two strategies, we get a latent representation of the input (via (2) an encoding module and (3) an autoencoder) and feed the network with this learned representation (cf. Sec. 3.2). The third strategy works best (cf. Sec. 5.3).

We evaluate MoCoDAD on three challenging benchmarks of human-related anomalies, namely, HR-UBnormal [1, 9], HR-ShanghaiTech Campus [23, 26] (HR-STC), and HR-Avenue [22, 26], and on the most recent VAD dataset UBnormal [1]. MoCoDAD achieves state-of-the-art (SoA) performance on all four datasets, which demonstrates the effectiveness of modeling multimodality for normal and abnormal motions. Notably, by not using appearance, MoCoDAD benefits increased privacy protection (no visual facial nor body features) and better computational efficiency, thanks to the lightweight body kinematic representations. We summarize our contributions as follows:

- A novel generative VAD model based on comparing the multimodality of normal and abnormal motion generations;
- The first probabilistic diffusion-based approach for VAD, which fully exploits the enhanced mode-coverage capabilities of diffusive probabilistic models;
- A novel motion-based conditioning on the clean input sequence to steer the synthesis towards diverse pertinent motion in the case of normality;
- A thorough validation on UBnormal, HR-UBnormal, HR-STC, and HR-Avenue benchmarks where we outperform the SoA by 5.1%, 4.4%, .5%, .8%, respectively.

2. Related Work

Previous work relates to ours from two main perspectives: Video Anomaly Detection methods (see Sec. 2.1), and diffusion models for motion synthesis (see Sec. 2.2).

2.1. Video Anomaly Detection Techniques

Pioneer works analyze the trajectory of the agents in the frames to discriminate those distant from normality [5, 16, 19]. Within recent literature, two major trends can be identified: latent- and reconstruction-based methods. VAD techniques also vary based on the type of input data they use, such as videos or human skeletal pose motions. MoCoDAD, as all the VAD works presented in this section, adheres to the OCC protocol, which simulates the scarcity of anomalies in real-world scenarios [18].

Latent-based VAD methods identify abnormality according to a score extracted from a learned latent space whereby normality is supposedly mapped into a constrained volume, and anomalies are those latents lying outside, with a larger

score (see [34, 38, 42, 46] for an overview of latent-based AD). Sabokrou et al. [36] propose a two-staged cascade of deep neural networks. First, they employ a stack of autoencoders that detects points of interest (POIs) while excluding irrelevant patches (e.g., background). Second, they identify anomalies by densely extracting and modeling discriminative patches at POIs. Notice that this work constrains normality to belong to a single mode and anomalies outside, thus, addressing the openset’ness of anomalies, but it hampers the multimodal and diversity [51] aspect of normal motions. Contrarily, our work considers the multimodality of normal and abnormal motions.

Notably, Nguyen et al. [27] propose an image-based technique exploring multimodal anomaly detection via multi-headed VAEs. However, considering a fixed number of modes for reality amends multimodality only partially, as it misses to unleash its openset’ness. Differently, we adopt diffusion models for their improved mode coverage and generate multiple futures, not being constrained on a fixed number of heads (see Sec. 5).

Reconstruction-based VAD methods consider the original metric space of the input and leverage reconstruction as the proxy task to derive an anomaly score. These models are trained to encode and reconstruct the input from normal events, producing larger errors on anomalies not seen during training. [7, 13, 52] use sequences of frames and feed them to convolutional autoencoders. Gong et al. [12] “memorize” the most representative normal poses to discriminate new input samples. Liu et al. [21] tackle intensity and gradient loss, optical flow, and adversarial training. Luo et al. [23] use stacked RNNs with temporally-coherent sparse coding enforcing similar neighboring frames to be encoded with similar reconstruction coefficients. Barbalau et al. [3] builds upon [10] and integrates the reconstruction of the input frames, via multi-headed attention, into a multi-task learning framework. Besides [10, 21], all works rely on a single reconstruction proxy task via non-variational architectures that learn discrete manifolds. However, normality and abnormality are multimodal and diverse, making it hard for these techniques to have an exact match (reconstruction) over the GT. Additionally, GANs used in [21] suffer from mode collapse [44] lacking to represent the multimodality of reality. Similarly to [27], [3] can represent only a fixed number of modalities, which does represent the openset’ness of reality. MoCoDAD is a reconstruction-based approach and leverages diffusion processes [8] to account for the openset’ness of normalcy and anomalies in terms of pertinence to the GT.

Skeleton-based VAD methods exploit compact spatio-temporal skeletal representations of human motion instead of raw video frames. Morais et al. [26] use two GRU autoencoder branches to account for the global and local decomposition of the skeleton in a particular frame. Luo et

al. [24] exploit stacked layers of ST-GCN [50] to accumulate joint information over the spatio-temporal dimensions of the frame and predict joints in the future. However, [50] uses a fixed adjacency matrix, depicting joint connections, for all ST-GCN layers, which hinders the exploration of intra-frame and intra-joint relationships, two factors that play a crucial role in improving the encoding of spatio-temporal features [39]. Markovitz et al. [25] utilize the encoder of an ST-GCN autoencoder to embed space-time skeletons into a latent vector. This vector is then fed to an end-to-end trainable deep-embedded clustering procedure which produces k clusters representing the multimodality of normalcy and anomalies. Flaborea et al. [9] propose COSKAD and force the normal instances into the same latent region driving the distances to a common center. MoCoDAD is also a skeleton-based approach that mitigates the choice of k *a priori* to cover the multimodality of reality.

2.2. Diffusion Models

Diffusion models have marked a revolution in generative tasks such as image and video synthesis [35, 43, 49], but they have not been employed for VAD. Saadatnejad et al. [35] propose a two-step framework based on temporal cascaded diffusion (TCD). First, they denoise imperfect observation sequences and, then, improve the predictions of the (frozen) model on repaired frames. Tevet et al. [43] use a transformer encoder to learn arbitrary length motions [2, 29] coherent with a particular conditioning signal c . They experiment with constrained synthesis where c is a text prompt (i.e., text-to-motion) or a specific action class (i.e., action-to-motion) and unconstrained synthesis where c is not specified. Chen et al. [49] design a transformer-based VAE [29] to learn a representative latent space for human motion sequences. They apply a diffusion model in this latent space to generate vivid motion sequences while obeying specific conditions similar to [43]. Differently, MoCoDAD is a diffusion-based model that uses conditioning over a portion of the input (e.g., previous frames condition the generation of future ones).

Wyatt et al. [47] propose AnoDDPM, a diffusion model on images, which does not require the entire Markov chain (noise/denoise) to take place. They use decaying octaves of simplex noising functions to distinguish the corruption rate of low-frequency components from high-frequency ones. However, they add and remove noise without conditioning, identifying anomalies when noise removal diverges from the input. Differently, MoCoDAD is based on generating and comparing multimodal motions against the GT in terms of pertinence. Our proposed model is the first to exploit the multimodal generative and improved mode-coverage capabilities of diffusive techniques, via forecasting tasks, further to being first in adopting them for detecting video anomalies. Hence, to transfer DDPMs from video-based

Anomaly Detection to skeleton-based VAD we rely on a U-Net-shaped stack of STS-GCN [39, 37] layers, which includes the spatio-temporal aspects of joints in sequences of human poses.

3. Methodology

MoCoDAD learns to reconstruct the later (future) corrupted poses by conditioning on the first (past) poses. Sec. 3.1 describes the training diffusion denoising process, how it generates multimodal reconstructions, and statistically aggregates them at inference to detect anomalies. Sec. 3.2 details conditioning on past frames, and Sec. 3.3 describes the architecture of MoCoDAD. For the sake of completeness, in Sec. A.1 of the Supplementary, we present preliminary concepts of DDPMs.

3.1. Diffusion on Trajectories

Training We define a diffusion technique that learns to reconstruct corrupted future motion sequences conditioned on clean past ones.

Let $X_a = \{x_a^1, \dots, x_a^N\}$ be a sequence of N time-contiguous poses belonging to a single actor a . Since our model considers one actor at a time, we use $X = \{x^1, \dots, x^N\}$ for notation simplicity. Each pose x^i can be seen as a graph $x^i = (J, A)$ where J represents the set of joints, and A is the adjacency matrix representing the joint connections. Notice that each joint is attributed with a set of spatial coordinates in \mathbb{R}^C , hence $x^i \in \mathbb{R}^{|J| \times C}$, and $X \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times |J| \times C}$. Here, we use $C = 2$ as the person's pose is extracted from images at each frame.

We divide X into two parts: the past $X^{1:k}$ and the future sequence of poses $X^{k+1:N}$ with $k \in \{1, \dots, N\}$.

During the forward process q , we corrupt the coordinates of the joints by adding random translation noise. We sample a random displacement map³ $\varepsilon^{k+1:N} \in \mathbb{R}^{(N-k) \times |J| \times C}$ from a distribution $\mathcal{N}(0, \mathbf{I})$ and add it to $X^{k+1:N}$ to randomly translate the position of its nodes.

The magnitude of the added displacement depends on a variance scheduler $\beta_t \in (0, 1)$ and a diffusion timestep $t \sim \mathcal{U}_{[1, T]}$. As a result, q increasingly corrupts the joints x^i at each diffusion timestep t (i.e., $x_{t=1}^i \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow x_{t=T}^i$) making $x_{t=T}^i$ indistinguishable from a pose with randomly sampled joints' spatial coordinates.

The reverse process p_θ unrolls the corruption, estimating the spatial displacement map $\varepsilon^{k+1:N}$ via a U-Net-like architecture ε_θ (see Sec. 3.3 for more details). To achieve an approximation of $\varepsilon^{k+1:N}$, we train the network conditioned on the diffusion timestep t (embedded through an MLP τ_θ) and the embedding h of the previous trajectory $X^{1:k}$.

³In this paper, a displacement map is equivalent to the addition of noise (corruption) to the input, e.g., in [14]. We use this term to emphasize that we move the joints away from their original spatial position. We invite the reader to consider displacing and corrupting as interchangeable here.

In Eq. 1, similarly to [33], we define the displacement estimation objective⁴.

$$\mathcal{L}_{disp} = \mathbb{E}_{t, X, \varepsilon} \left[\|\varepsilon - \varepsilon_\theta(X_t, t, h)\| \right] \quad (1)$$

Inspired by [11], we smooth \mathcal{L}_{disp} as follows:

$$\mathcal{L}_{smooth} = \begin{cases} 0.5 \cdot (\mathcal{L}_{disp})^2 & \text{if } |\mathcal{L}_{disp}| < 1 \\ |\mathcal{L}_{disp}| - 0.5 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

Inference At inference time, MoCoDAD generates multimodal future sequences of poses from random displacement maps, conditioned on the past frames, then aggregates them statistically to detect anomalies.

We sample a random displacement $z \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \mathbf{I})$ and consider it the starting point of the synthesis process that generates a future human motion via Eq. 3.

$$X_{t-1} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\alpha_t}} \left(X_t - \frac{1 - \alpha_t}{\sqrt{1 - \alpha_t}} \varepsilon_\theta(X_t, t, h) \right) + z \sqrt{\beta_t} \quad (3)$$

Note the motion conditioning h , encoding the past k frames. We generate m diverse future pose trajectories Z_1, \dots, Z_m . For each Z_i , we compute the reconstruction error via the smoothed loss $s_i = \mathcal{L}_{smooth}(|X - Z_i|)$ used in training (cf. Eq. 2).

We aggregate all the scores from the generations $S = \{s_1, \dots, s_m\}$ to distill a single anomaly score for that sequence. This score is subsequently assigned to the corresponding frames to assess their level of anomaly. In scenarios where multiple actors occupy the same frames, we assign the average anomaly score to those frames. See the Supplementary for a detailed description. We explore different strategies for distilling the anomaly score from S : (1) the diversity between the normal and anomalous generations and (2) aggregation statistics. To account for diversity, we consider the diversity metric $rF = \text{mean}(\mathcal{L}_{smooth}) / \min(\mathcal{L}_{smooth})$ introduced by [6, 28]. Diversity stems from testing whether anomalous generations are more diverse than normals, but the diversity score fails to detect anomalies, nearly dropping to random chance. We explain this by normalcy and anomaly having a similar degree of diversity, as we experimentally validate in Sec. 5.1.

We consider as aggregation statistics the mean, quantile robust statistics including the median, as well as maximum and minimum selectors, in terms of \mathcal{L}_{smooth} distances between the m generated and the GT future motion. Our analysis highlights that the minimum distance is the best on average. This reinforces the original hypothesis that normality-conditioned generated motions are as diverse as abnormal-conditioned ones but more biased to the actual

⁴For readability purposes, for what follows, we omit the superscript $k+1:N$, and assume that we are considering only future motion.

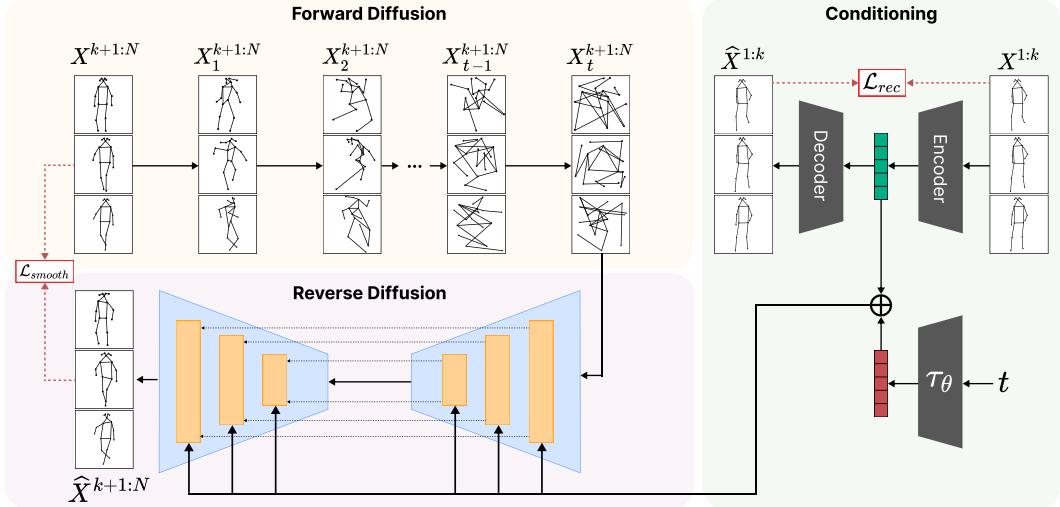


Figure 2: Overview of the proposed MoCoDAD. A sequence of N skeletal motions ($N = 6$ in the example) is split into past (top-right $X^{1:k}$ frames, $k = 3$ in the example) and future (top-left $X^{k+1:N}$ frames). During training, the Forward Diffusion block adds noise to the future frames, shifting each joint by a random vector displacement of varying intensity (increasing with the diffusion timestep t). Then the Reverse Diffusion learns to estimate the noise. A key aspect of MoCoDAD is the conditioning, i.e. how to encode the past clean k frames and guide the synthesis of relevant futures.

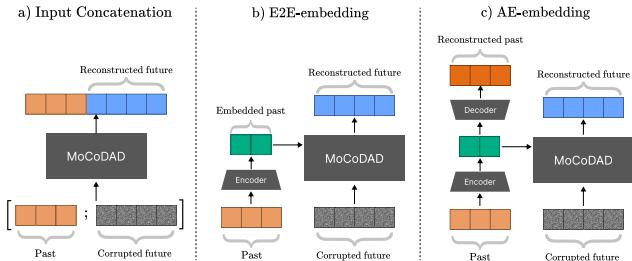


Figure 3: Comparison of the three conditioning strategies.

motion, thus more likely to generate samples close to it. See Sec. 5.2 for the experimental evaluation.

3.2. Motion Conditioning for multimodal Pose Forecasting

The choice of the conditioning strategy is a crucial factor for diffusion models, as it determines how the conditioning information is fed into the network, and it directly affects the quality of the outputs. In this work, we propose a thorough examination of different strategies for feeding the diffusion models with the conditioning information.

We identify three different modeling choices for conditioning the diffusion, illustrated in Fig. 3, i.e., *input concatenation*, *E2E-embedding*, and *AE-embedding*. *Input concatenation* refers to conditioning with a portion of the raw input motion. Here, we keep the past sequence of poses $X^{1:k}$ (the conditioning signal) uncorrupted and prepend it

to the corrupted future sequence $X_t^{k+1:N}$. Input concatenation has been explored in previous work for pose forecasting reaching SoA performances in [35].

Both *embedding* choices refer to passing the conditioning past frames through an encoder E , then providing them to all latent layers of the denoising model (cf. incoming vertical arrows into the orange layers in Fig. 2). Here, E is a GCN [39] and it encodes sequences of poses $X^{1:k}$ into the representation $h = E(X^{1:k})$. In the case of *E2E-embedding*, E is jointly learned with the rest of the architecture, leveraging the training \mathcal{L}_{smooth} loss. The *AE-embedding* adds an auxiliary reconstruction loss \mathcal{L}_{rec} to support training E , as it tasks a decoding network D to reconstruct the conditioning past frames according to the following loss function:

$$\mathcal{L}_{rec} = \left\| D(E(X^{1:k})) - X^{1:k} \right\|_2^2 \quad (4)$$

In the case of *AE-embedding*, the auxiliary is summed to the main loss, resulting in the following total loss:

$$\mathcal{L}_{tot} = \lambda_1 \mathcal{L}_{smooth} + \lambda_2 \mathcal{L}_{rec} \quad (5)$$

where $\lambda_1, \lambda_2 \in [0, 1]$ account for the contribution of each loss function respectively. Lastly, since DDPMs benefit from being conditioned on the timestep t , we add the embedding $\tau_\theta(t)$ to the latent h and feed the resulting motion-temporal signal to each layer of our network ε_θ [43].

Table 1: Comparison of MoCoDAD against SoA in terms of AUC on the three Human-Related datasets (i.e., HR-STC, HR-Avenue and HR-UBnormal) and UBnormal. OCC skeleton-based techniques are marked with a *.

		HR-STC	HR-Avenue	HR-UBnormal	 	UBnormal
Conv-AE [13]	<i>CVPR '16</i>	69.8	84.8	-		-
Pred [21]	<i>CVPR '18</i>	72.7	86.2	-		-
MPED-RNN [26] *	<i>CVPR '19</i>	75.4	86.3	61.2		60.6
GEPC [25] *	<i>CVPR '20</i>	74.8	58.1	55.2		53.4
Multi-timescale Prediction [32] *	<i>WACV '20</i>	77.0	88.3	-		-
Normal Graph [24]	<i>Neurocomputing '21</i>	76.5	87.3	-		-
PoseVAE [15] *	<i>ICPR '21</i>	75.7	87.8	-		-
BiPOCO [17] *	<i>Arxiv '22</i>	74.9	87.0	52.3		50.7
STGCAE-LSTM [20] *	<i>Neurocomputing '22</i>	77.2	86.3	-		-
SSMTL++ [3]	<i>CVIU '23</i>	-	-	-		62.1
COSKAD [9] *	<i>Arxiv '23</i>	77.1	87.8	65.5		65.0
MoCoDAD *		77.6	89.0	68.4	 	68.3

The results of evaluation are discussed in Sec. 5.3, whereby applying an AE-embedding conditioning on $X^{1:k}$ emerges with results beyond the SoA.

3.3. Architecture Description

Fig. 2 illustrates the architecture of MoCoDAD. We distinguish two main blocks: a conditioning auto-encoder for the past motion, $X^{1:k}$, and a denoising model for $X^{k+1:N}$. The main diffusion model architecture is the neural network, represented with orange blocks, tasked with estimating the corrupting noise in the input motion, thus reconstructing the actual future motion. As done in [47], we rely on a U-Net like architecture. Our skeletal-motion diffusion network progressively contracts and then expands (rebuilds) the spatial dimension of the input sequence of poses. To account for the temporal dimension of the input sequences, we build the U-Net with space-time separable GCN (STS-GCN) layers proposed in [39]. The conditioning autoencoder relies on STS-GCN to reconstruct the past motion and embed it into a latent space used to condition the diffusion.

In detail, the U-Net takes in input $X^{k+1:N}$ and a motion-temporal conditioning signal $h + \tau_\theta(t)$ which provides the network with the diffusion timestep and the encoded past-motion information. Furthermore, to align the dimensionality of this conditioning signal with that of the network’s layers, the former is fed into an embedding layer projecting it to the correct vector space. This embedded conditioning signal is then fed to each STS-GCN layer. The contracting process of the U-Net progressively aggregates the joints of the poses (i.e., $\mathbb{R}^J \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^d$ s.t. $d \leq J$) while the expansion part “deconvolutes” the joints’ vector space until it reaches the original space \mathbb{R}^J . Residual connections are present between specular layers.

4. Experiments

Here we compare MoCoDAD with SoA approaches and provide a detailed discussion on the achieved performances. In Sec. D of the Supplementary, we provide the reader with a thorough description of the implementation details.

As done in [1, 3, 9, 10, 21, 24, 25, 26], we report the *Receiver Operating Characteristic Area Under the Curve* (ROC-AUC) to assess the quality of MoCoDAD predictions on UBnormal [1], and the HR filtered [9] versions of STC [23], Avenue [22], and UBnormal.

4.1. Datasets

We use the UBnormal dataset [1] which contains 29 scenes synthesized from 2D natural images with the Cinema4D software. Each scene appears in 19 clips featuring both normal and abnormal events. The split into train, validation, and test adheres to the open-set policy, providing disjoint sets of types of anomalies for training, validation, and test; in accordance with the OCC setting, we only include normal actions for the training set. We also consider the processed poses and the human-related (HR) filtering of the dataset proposed by [9]. To compare with other state-of-the-art methods, we also experiment on the HR versions of the ShanghaiTech Campus (STC) [23] and the CUHK Avenue [22] datasets introduced by [26]. The former includes 13 scenes recorded with different cameras, for a total of about 300,000 frames, and 101 testing clips with 130 anomalous events. The latter consists of 16 training videos and 21 testing videos with a total of 47 anomalous events.

4.2. Comparison with state-of-the-art

Leading OCC techniques. We compare against SoA OCC techniques. Among these, MPED-RNN [26] combines the reconstruction and prediction errors of a two-branches-RNN to spot anomalies. Normal Graph [24] uses spatial-

Table 2: Comparison of MoCoDAD against supervised (\dagger) and weakly supervised (\ddagger) methods introduced in [1] in terms of AUC on the UBnormal dataset.

	Params	UBnormal
Sultani et al. [41] \dagger	-	50.3
AED-SSMTL [10] \dagger	>80M	61.3
TimeSformer [4] \dagger	121M	68.5
AED-SSMTL [10] \ddagger	>80M	59.3
MoCoDAD	142K	68.3

temporal GCNs (ST-GCN) to encode skeletal sequences. GEPC [25] encodes the input sequences with an ST-GCN, and clusters the embeddings in the latent space. Multi-timescale Prediction [32] encodes the observed input sequence and predicts future poses at different time scales through intermediate fully-connected layers. Both PoseCVAE [15] and BiPOCO [17] exploit a Conditioned Variational-Autoencoder to learn a posterior distribution of normal actions and use encoded past and future sequences to reconstruct the future one. The former uses an MLP-based architecture, while the latter is GRU-based. STGCAE-LSTM [20] reconstructs the past pose sequence and predicts the future one by an LSTM-based autoencoder. SSMTL++ [3] extends [10]; it replaces the convolutions with a transformer, changes the object detection backbone, and adds a few auxiliary proxy tasks. COSKAD [9] builds on STS-GCN to map the embeddings of normal poses into a narrow region in the latent space.

Results. In Table 1, we compare MoCoDAD and SoA methods on the three HR datasets and on UBnormal. MoCoDAD achieves the best AUC score of 77.6, 89.0, and 68.4 on HR-STC, HR-Avenue, and HR-UBnormal, respectively. Our proposed method outperforms the current best [9], up to 4.4%, demonstrating the importance of considering a range of different possible futures for each sample. Additionally, MoCoDAD achieves an AUC of 68.3 on the full UBnormal dataset, surpassing COSKAD by 5.1%. This can be due to the improved sensitivity that emerges from our proposed model: considering more than a single deterministic future smooths the prediction of MoCoDAD avoiding penalizing excessively hard-still-normal samples which would be considered anomalous based on the reconstruction error of a deterministic model.

Results VS. Supervised and Weakly Supervised methods
 Table 2 evaluates MoCoDAD with supervised and weakly supervised methods reported in [1]. Notice that, despite the absence of supervision or visual information, MoCoDAD is competitive with methods exploiting a stronger form of supervision. In detail, MoCoDAD (68.3) outperforms the weakly supervised method [10] (59.3) and other fully supervised methods and is competitive with [4] (68.5). Further, our approach only presents a fraction of the parameters of

its competitors. Notably, MoCoDAD is $\sim 852\times$ smaller than the current best [4].

5. Discussion

Here, we delve into a detailed discussion about the multimodal future generations (cf Sec. 5.1), the influence of the statistical aggregation of multiple generations and the normal Vs. anomalous conditioning (cf. Sec. 5.2), the effect of different conditioning strategies (cf. Sec. 3.2). Additionally, we discuss forecasting proxy tasks (Sec. 5.4) and analyze MoCoDAD’s performances with the diffusion process applied to the latent space. (Sec. 5.5).

5.1. Multimodality

We question whether MoCoDAD can generate diverse multimodal motions and whether conditioning on normal or abnormal motions affects diversity. We provide an example of generated future motions in Fig. 5 (left), where we project the samples in 2D with t-SNE [45] for better visualization. Notice that both sets of generations have similar variance, showing that MoCoDAD produces diverse samples with both normal and abnormal conditioning sequences. Motions stemming from normal conditioning are biased toward the true future since they are mapped around it. Whereas, in the case of abnormal conditioning, the ground truth motion lies on the edge of the predictions’ region, hence being correctly predicted with a lower chance.

We also measure diversity, employing the rF diversity metric from literature [6, 28]. We visualize the rF trend when increasing the number of generations in Fig. 5 (right). If the generated motion had no diversity, e.g., when generating only once, the rF would be equal to 1. Rather, the diversity ratio monotonically increases with the number of generations for both normal and abnormal cases, i.e., the more generated samples, the larger the empirical mode coverage and the diversity. We note that, following intuition, the diversity for abnormal cases grows slightly larger than for normal cases, but the rF measures remain comparable.

5.2. Statistical aggregations of generated motions

We evaluate the anomaly detection performance when varying the number of generations m and the aggregation strategy for the anomaly score S (cf. Sec. 3.1). Fig. 4 (right) shows that the AUC positively correlates with the number of generated future motions for quantiles $Q < 0.5$, while the correlation is negative for the mean estimate and $Q > 0.5$. Such correlation can be better understood by looking at Fig. 4 (left), which depicts the average reconstruction error *probability density function* (PDF) for $m = 50$: when conditioned on normal past motions, MoCoDAD produces generations which are centered around the true future and, thus, is more likely to yield lower error scores than when

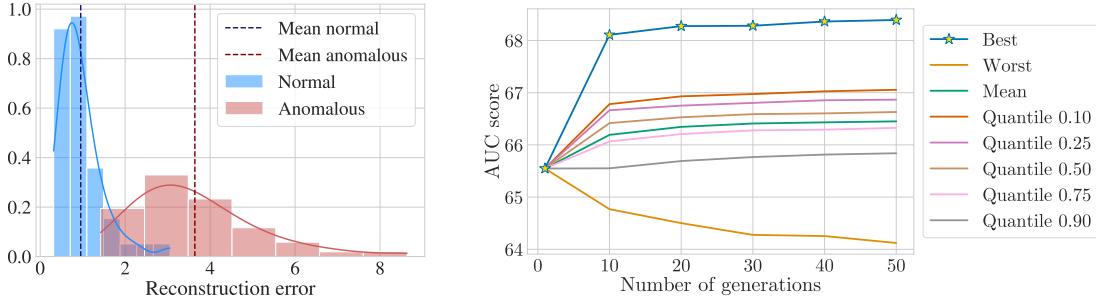


Figure 4: (left) Histograms of the reconstruction errors for 50 synthesized future motions, computed on the HR-UBnormal test set, for the case of conditioning on normal and abnormal past motions. (right) Correlation between the AUC scores and the number of generations, with each curve corresponding to a different aggregation statistic.

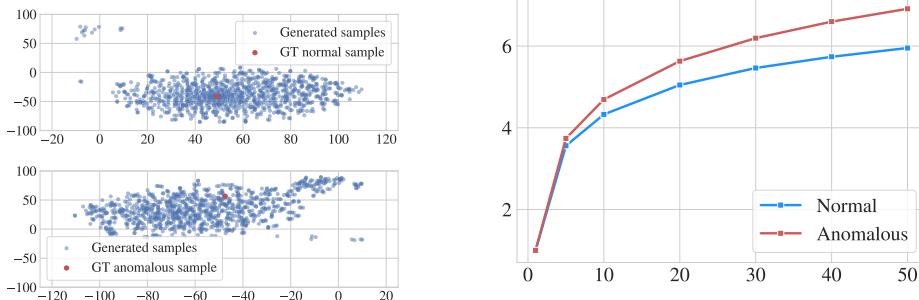


Figure 5: (left) Distribution of 1000 generated future motions, when conditioning on a normal past motion (top) and on an abnormal one (bottom). 2-dimensional projections are estimated via t-SNE [45]. Note how the true future motion (red dot) lies within a main distribution mode in the case of normality, but it lies in a marginal region for abnormality. (right) Plot of the diversity ratio rF [28], measuring the diversity of the generated future motions for normal and anomalous conditioning pasts. Moving along the x -axis, with more generated motion, the rF measures grow (MoCoDAD generates multimodal diverse motion) but they remain comparable (generating from normal and abnormal is anyhow multimodal).

generating with abnormal conditioning. The performance saturates for $m > 50$.

5.3. Conditioning

Here, we provide the reader with the performances of our method with different encoding approaches of the past (i.e., how the past motion is provided to the model) from which the future is generated (see Table 3).

As illustrated in Sec. 3.2, *Input Concatenation* concatenates the clean past frames to the corrupted part of each motion sample and feeds it directly to the denoising module. This strategy surpasses recent baselines (cf. Table 1) with AUC scores of 64.96 and 65.20 on UBnormal and HR-UBnormal, respectively. We deem this strategy suboptimal since it does not allow the past motion conditioning to be injected at each layer (as with the embedding strategies), and, thus force the network to “remember” this information rather than focusing on the denoising of the future.

The *E2E-embedding* strategy encodes the motion history in the clean past frames and provides it to the latent layers of the denoising model, but it does not improve performance. We believe this happens because the learned embedding is not supervised, and it may not be representative enough of the original motion.

AE-embedding accounts for the best performances. It couples the encoder E with a symmetric decoder D and trains the whole model with an auxiliary loss \mathcal{L}_{rec} which supervises the reconstruction of the first part of the motion (cf. Sec. 3.2). This past encoding strategy reaches 68.3 and 68.4 on UBnormal and HR-UBnormal, outperforming SoA techniques.

5.4. Proxy Task

In Table 4 we assess the effectiveness of the forecasting proxy task (cf. Sec. 3.1). To this end, instead of limiting ourselves towards a rigid past-future split of poses, we ex-

Table 3: Ablation study on the different methods for integrating conditioning information into the model.

	HR-UBnormal	 	UBnormal
Input Concatenation	65.2		65.0
E2E-embedding	64.4		64.2
AE-embedding (MoCoDAD)	68.4		68.3

Table 4: Ablation study on the type of conditioning information to feed into the model to generate the missing frame.

	HR-UBnormal	 	UBnormal
Random Imputation	65.2		65.1
In-between Imputation	65.7		65.7
Forecasting (MoCoDAD)	68.4		68.3

plore two additional proxy tasks: i.e., in-between and random imputation. For in-between imputation, we corrupt the central $N - k$ poses and reserve the start and end of the sequence to condition the diffusion. For random imputation, we randomly select $N - k$ poses out of the full motion and corrupt them; the rest of the sequence is used for conditioning. Table 4 shows that random imputation is the worst proxy task (AUC of 65.10 and 65.21 for UBnormal and HR-UBnormal, respectively). Randomly splitting the sequence into two parts introduces inter-pose temporal gaps. Hence, we believe that this makes the reconstruction of non-contiguous motion more cumbersome. In-between imputation reaches an AUC of 65.65 and 65.72, respectively. We think that “stitching” the central motion to its endpoints is an easier task leading both normal and abnormal motions to be equally well reconstructed. Finally, forecasting is the best-performing proxy task with an AUC of 68.3 and 68.4 for UBnormal and HR-UBnormal.

5.5. Latent space

Diffusion on latent space has been adopted to improve computational efficiency in various domains [33]. MLD [49] is one of the most recent works in motion forecasting that applies the diffusion process directly in the latent space.

Here, we propose an analysis that assesses the performance of MoCoDAD’s diffusion process in the latent space. Thus, we propose two latent variations of MoCoDAD: MoCoDAD+MLD and Latent-MoCoDAD. For MoCoDAD+MLD we use a VAE to produce a latent representation $Z \in \mathbb{R}^d$ of the uncorrupted sequence $X^{k+1:N}$ and we perform the diffusion process on Z with the transformer-based denoising model as described in [49]. For Latent-MoCoDAD we rely on an STS-VAE to learn Z given $X^{k+1:N}$ and use the diffusion process, proposed in Sec. 3.2, on Z . For both these variants, we feed the cor-

Table 5: AUC-ROC performance of diffusion on latent vs original space.

	HR-UBnormal	 	UBnormal
MoCoDAD+MLD	58.1		58.1
Latent-MoCoDAD	62.6		62.5
MoCoDAD	68.4		68.3

rupted Z to an MLP with conditioning signal $h + \tau_\theta(t)$ to reverse the diffusion and leave the conditioning component as is in the original MoCoDAD (i.e., encoding of history poses $X^{1:k}$).

Although the described variants can be trained end-to-end, we achieved the best performances by pre-training the autoencoder and training the diffusion module in the learned latent space keeping the autoencoder module frozen. We set the latent space dimension to $d = 16$ and the MLP blocks to (16, 8, 16) interleaved with ReLU activations.

Table 5 illustrates the performances in terms of AUC-ROC of MoCoDAD and its latent variants on UBnormal and HR-UBnormal. Notice that the latent variants underperform w.r.t. the original MoCoDAD. We suspect that diffusion on latent spaces is not effective in skeleton-based VAD due to the lightweight encoding of the skeletons. This adheres with the literature since also MLD [49] shows that applying diffusion in the latent space underperforms w.r.t. the original proposal of the model.

6. Conclusion

We have presented a novel approach that models and exploits the diversity of normal and abnormal motions. In the former case, the forecast motions are multi-modal and pertinent to the observed portion of the sequence, as the model understands the underlying action. In the case of abnormal, the forecast motions do not show a bias towards the true future as the model does not expect any obvious outcome. Motivated by the improved mode coverage, this work has been the first to take advantage of probabilistic diffusion models for video anomaly detection, including a thorough analysis of the main design choices. MoCoDAD sets a novel SoA among OCC techniques, and it catches up with supervised techniques while not using anomaly training labels.

Acknowledgements

This work was carried out while Stefano D’Arrigo was enrolled in the Italian National Doctorate on Artificial Intelligence run by Sapienza University of Rome. We thank DsTech S.r.l. and the PNRR MUR project PE0000013-FAIR for partially funding this study.

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