Improving Tabular Generative Models: Loss Functions, Benchmarks, and Improved Multi-objective Bayesian Optimization Approaches

Anonymous authors
Paper under double-blind review

Abstract

Access to extensive data is essential to improve model performance and generalization in deep learning (DL). When dealing with sparse datasets-those with limited samples relative to model complexity-a promising solution is to generate synthetic data using deep generative models (DGMs). However, these models often struggle to capture the complexities of real-world tabular data, including diverse variable types, imbalances, and intricate dependencies. Additionally, standard Bayesian optimization (SBO), commonly used for hyper-parameter tuning, struggles to optimize over aggregated metrics with different units, leading to unreliable averaging and suboptimal decisions. To address these gaps, we introduce a novel correlation- and distribution-aware loss function that regularizes DGMs, enhancing their ability to generate synthetic tabular data that faithfully represents the underlying data distributions. Theoretical guarantees for the proposed loss functions are provided, including stability and consistency analyses, ensuring their robustness. To enable principled hyperparameter search via Bayesian optimization (BO), we also propose a new multi-objective aggregation strategy based on iterative objective refinement Bayesian optimization (IORBO), along with a comprehensive statistical testing framework. We validate the proposed approach using a benchmarking framework with twenty real-world datasets and ten established tabular DGM baselines. The results demonstrate that the proposed loss function significantly improves the fidelity of the synthetic data generated with DGMs, leading to better performance in downstream machine learning (ML) tasks. Furthermore, the IORBO consistently outperformed SBO, yielding superior hyper-parameter results. This work advances synthetic data generation and optimization techniques, enabling more robust DL applications.

1 Introduction

For a wide range of deep learning (DL) applications, large amounts of data is crucial to improve both model performance and generalization. The fast-paced advancements in deep generative modeling have opened exciting possibilities for data synthesis. Models trained on images and text effectively learn probability distributions over complex data and generate high-quality, realistic samples (Karras et al., 2021; Team et al., 2023). This success on structured data has fueled a surge in deep generative model (DGM)-based methods (Goodfellow et al., 2014) for tabular data generation in recent years. Recent work has further explored hybrid approaches—combining diffusion processes with flow-based models and gradient-boosted trees—to boost synthesis fidelity on tabular benchmarks (Jolicoeur-Martineau et al., 2024; Zein & Urvoy, 2022). However, these methods still rely on unguided likelihood or adversarial objectives and do not explicitly enforce key statistics such as feature correlations or higher-order moments. Modeling tabular data thus remains challenging due to its lack of clear structure and the presence of both continuous and discrete variables with complex interactions, imbalances, and non-linear relationships.

Existing deep neural network (DNN) models struggle to capture the structure and correlations in tabular data, often failing to approximate even basic statistics like the mean and variance (Xu et al., 2019). Current

approaches to improve downstream machine learning (ML) analyses focus primarily on addressing data imbalance (Xu et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2021), neglecting the equally crucial roles of feature distribution. To overcome this gap, we propose a novel correlation- and distribution-aware loss function for DGMs, designed to enforce such statistics in generative models. This loss function works with any DGMs and promotes more effective modeling of the complex relationships in tabular data.

Effectively evaluating potential improvements requires a rigorous benchmarking framework. However, existing methods often suffer from limited evaluation scopes, making it difficult to assess the complexities of diverse datasets. To address this challenge, we introduce a comprehensive benchmarking framework to evaluate synthetic data across twenty datasets using eight statistical, thirty regression, and sixty classification metrics. This evaluation toolkit enables researchers to rigorously assess DGMs performance, offering deeper insights into how different models and loss functions impact synthetic data quality.

To complement these improvements, hyper-parameter search is essential for optimizing DGM performance, and Bayesian optimization (BO) efficiently fine-tunes hyper-parameters to improve outcomes without exhaustive trials. However, standard Bayesian optimization (SBO) struggles to aggregate multiple metrics that have different scales and units–for example, combining metrics with different ranges and units, such as classification accuracy and regression error, via a simple mean can overweight one metric and yield sub-optimal choices. To address this, we introduce iterative objective refinement Bayesian optimization (IORBO), which first converts each metric to a rank within the current set of candidates and then averages those ranks. Rank-based aggregation is invariant to metric scale and unit differences, ensures that no single objective can dominate the decision, and leads to more balanced, robust hyper-parameter selection across diverse evaluation criteria.

This work focuses on enhancing the performance of DGMs through a novel loss function, supported by a new multi-objective aggregation method and a comprehensive statistical testing framework that strengthen the performance and evaluation of our approach. In summary, we provide:

1. **A Correlation- and Distribution-Aware Loss Function:** We propose a custom correlation- and distribution-aware loss function that emphasizes the importance of feature correlations and distributions in tabular data. Acting as a regularizer, this custom loss function significantly enhances the performance of DGMs, including generative adversarial network (GAN), variational auto-encoder (VAE), and denoising diffusion probabilistic model (DDPM), as demonstrated through extensive benchmark evaluations.

2. **Iterative Objective Refinement Bayesian Optimization:** We propose IORBO to aggregate multiple objectives through ranking, resolving inconsistencies caused by metrics with different units or scales.

3. **Benchmarking Framework for Synthetic Data Generation Algorithms:** We establish a comprehensive open-source benchmarking framework that includes twenty tabular datasets and various evaluation metrics based on statistical tests. This framework implements ten state-of-the-art tabular DGMs and supports extensions with additional methods and datasets.

The rest of the manuscript is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews related work on DGMs for tabular data and highlights recent developments motivating our approach. Section 3 presents the proposed correlation- and distribution-aware loss function (Section 3.1), the IORBO (Section 3.2), and the benchmarking framework (Section 3.3–3.6). Section 4 provides theoretical guarantees for the proposed loss functions, including stability analysis, error bounds, and generalized approximation guarantees. In Section 5, we describe the datasets and implementation details and training. Section 6 reports and discusses the results, including performance improvements and ablation studies. Finally, Section 7 concludes the paper and outlines future directions.

2 Related Work

Most existing methods to generate synthetic tabular data developed in the past decade model measurements in a table as a joint parametric density and then sample from that parametric model. Different models have been employed based on data characteristics: multivariate Gaussian (Frühwirth-Schnatter et al., 2018),

Bayesian networks (Aviñó et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2017), and copulas (Patki et al., 2016) for non-linearly correlated continuous variables. However, these methods rely on strong modeling assumptions and are limited in their ability to generalize beyond those assumptions. As a result, they often fail to capture the complex relationships present in real-world tabular data.

To overcome these limitations, recent approaches have turned to more expressive and flexible DGMs, such as VAEs (Kingma & Welling, 2013), diffusion models (Sohl-Dickstein et al., 2015; Kotelnikov et al., 2023), and GANs with their numerous extensions (Arjovsky et al., 2017; Gulrajani et al., 2017; Zhu et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2017), have made them very appealing for data representation. This appeal extends to generating tabular data, especially in the healthcare domain. For example, Yahi et al. (2017) leveraged GANs to create synthetic continuous time-series medical records, and Camino et al. (2018) proposed to generate discrete tabular healthcare data using GANs. `CTGAN` (Xu et al., 2019), `DP-CGANS` (Sun et al., 2023), and `CTAB-GAN` (Zhao et al., 2021) were proposed to address the complexities of mixed-type tabular data and to address challenges when generating realistic synthetic data, particularly for imbalanced datasets. More recently, `TabDDPM` (Kotelnikov et al., 2023), a diffusion model designed specifically for tabular data, offers the flexibility to incorporate various backbone architectures to model the reverse process. While these DGMs improve flexibility, they still struggle to capture the diverse variable types, imbalances, and intricate dependencies inherent in real-world tabular data.

3 Methods

DGMs learn to map a random noise vector, denoted by $\boldsymbol{z}$, to an output sample. This allows them to generate new data instances that resemble the training data. DGMs have found various applications, *e.g.*, to generate images (Goodfellow et al., 2014; Karras et al., 2020), multi-modal medical images (Zhu et al., 2017), or vectors of tabular data (Xu et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2023). In this work, the focus was to generate tabular data with continuous and discrete variables.

3.1 A Correlation- and Distribution-Aware Loss Function

Let the training dataset be $\mathbf{X} = \{\boldsymbol{x}_i = (\boldsymbol{x}_i^{(c)}, \boldsymbol{x}_i^{(d)}) : \forall i \in \{1, \ldots, N\}\}$, where N is the number of training samples. The $\boldsymbol{x}_i \in \mathbb{R}^m$ denotes the i-th training sample from $\mathbf{X}$, and $\boldsymbol{x}_i^{(c)}$ and $\boldsymbol{x}_i^{(d)}$ are continuous and discrete features, respectively. Let $p_{\tilde{\mathbf{X}}}$ be the learned probability density over the synthetic data, $\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}$, such that $\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}} \in \mathbb{R}^m$ is a sample from the DGM, $\mathcal{G}$. Here, $\mathcal{G}$ is a learned mapping from a prior distribution $p(\boldsymbol{z})$ to the data space $p(\boldsymbol{x} \mid \boldsymbol{z})$.

Correlation-aware loss function. The correlation-aware loss function is defined as

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}} = \frac{2}{m(m-1)} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \sum_{k=j+1}^{m} (\boldsymbol{g}_{j,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k})^2, \tag{1}$$

where $\boldsymbol{g}$ is the sample correlation over the real data and $\tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}$ is the sample correlation over the generated data, such that

$$\boldsymbol{g}_{j,k} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \frac{\boldsymbol{x}_{i,j} - \boldsymbol{\mu}_j}{\boldsymbol{\sigma}_j + \epsilon} \cdot \frac{\boldsymbol{x}_{i,k} - \boldsymbol{\mu}_k}{\boldsymbol{\sigma}_k + \epsilon}, \tag{2}$$

$$\tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k} = \frac{1}{B} \sum_{i=1}^{B} \frac{\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_j}{\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j + \epsilon} \cdot \frac{\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_k}{\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_k + \epsilon}, \tag{3}$$

with B the size of the mini-batch used when training the DGM, and elements $\boldsymbol{x}_{i,j}$ and $\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}$ belonging to vectors $\boldsymbol{x}_i \in \mathbf{X}$ and $\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_i \in \tilde{\mathbf{X}}$, respectively. A small positive value, $\epsilon = 1 \cdot 10^{-5}$, was added to the denominators of the correlation terms to avoid division by zero. The mean and standard deviation of the j-th column in a tabular data set, $\mathbf{X}$, were estimated as

$$\boldsymbol{\mu}_j = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \boldsymbol{x}_{i,j} \quad \text{and} \quad \boldsymbol{\sigma}_j = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} (\boldsymbol{x}_{i,j} - \boldsymbol{\mu}_j)^2}. \tag{4}$$

Similarly, $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_j$ and $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j$ were estimated as the mean and standard deviation of the generated data, $\{\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_i : \forall i \in \{1, \ldots, B\}\}$. We discuss the theoretical guarantees for the correlation-aware loss function, including the stability analysis, in Section 4.1.

Distribution-aware loss function. The distribution-aware loss function integrates the strengths of the method of moments and maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) to align with the true distribution by capturing both statistical moments and likelihood properties in order to enhance the model's ability to learn accurate data representations (Pearson, 1936; Rice, 2007). Additionally, the choice of moments over distance-based metrics, such as Wasserstein, is motivated by their computational efficiency and stability, as lower-order moments provide a robust approximation of the distribution while avoiding the high computational cost associated with distance-based methods. To characterize the training data distribution, we employed the raw first and central second moments,

$$\mathcal{S}_j^{(1)} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \boldsymbol{x}_{i,j} = \boldsymbol{\mu}_j, \tag{5}$$

$$\mathcal{S}_j^{(2)} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} (\boldsymbol{x}_{i,j} - \boldsymbol{\mu}_j)^2 = \boldsymbol{\sigma}_j^2, \tag{6}$$

and for $h \geq 3$ the standardized higher moments,

$$\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \left(\frac{\boldsymbol{x}_{i,j} - \boldsymbol{\mu}_j}{\boldsymbol{\sigma}_j} \right)^h = \boldsymbol{\gamma}^h. \tag{7}$$

Similarly, the empirical moments were computed for the synthetic data, denoted as $\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(1)}$, $\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(2)}$, and $\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}$, again for $h \geq 3$. In this case, B was used in place of N. Finally, the distribution loss was defined as

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}} = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \sum_{h=1}^{H} \frac{1}{h} \left(1 - \frac{\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon}{\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon} \right)^2, \tag{8}$$

where the number of moments, H, was treated as a hyper-parameter. Instead of making the moments equal, their quotient was made to be equal to one as a way to handle scale differences. By using a unified distribution-aware loss, we handle continuous and discrete variables in the same manner, simplifying the implementation and preventing imbalances that could arise from separate regularization terms for different data types. We discuss the theoretical guarantees for the distribution-aware loss function, including the numerical stability and consistency, in Section 4.2.

Custom loss function for DGMs. The correlation- and distribution-aware loss function was integrated into three DGMs: GAN, VAE, and DDPM. For GANs, the proposed loss function was incorporated into the generator's loss

$$\widetilde{\mathcal{L}}_G = \underbrace{\mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{z} \sim p_{\boldsymbol{z}}(\boldsymbol{z})} \left[\log(1 - D(G(\boldsymbol{z}))) \right]}_{\mathcal{L}_G} + \alpha \mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}} + \beta \mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}, \tag{9}$$

where $\mathcal{L}_G$ is the original GAN's generator loss, and G and D the generator and discriminator of the GAN, respectively. The hyper-parameters, α and β, controlled the influence of the correlation and distribution terms.

We extended the `TVAE` model (Xu et al., 2019) (a VAE designed for tabular data) with the proposed loss function

$$\widetilde{\mathcal{L}}_{\text{TVAE}} = \underbrace{\mathcal{L}_{\text{reconstruction}} + \mathcal{L}_{\text{KLD}}}_{\mathcal{L}_{\text{TVAE}}} + \alpha \mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}} + \beta \mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}, \tag{10}$$

where $\mathcal{L}_{\text{TVAE}}$ is the original `TVAE`'s loss, and $\mathcal{L}_{\text{reconstruction}}$ and $\mathcal{L}_{\text{KLD}}$ are the reconstruction loss and the Kullback–Leibler (KL) regularization term, respectively.

For the diffusion model, `TabDDPM` (Kotelnikov et al., 2023), the proposed loss function was integrated into the total loss of the multinomial diffusions as

$$\widetilde{\mathcal{L}}_{\text{TabDDPM}} = \underbrace{\mathcal{L}_t^{\text{simple}} + \frac{\sum_{i \leq C} L_t^i}{C}}_{\mathcal{L}_{\text{TabDDPM}}} + \alpha \mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}^{(d)} + \beta \mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}^{(d)} + \zeta \mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}^{(c)}, \tag{11}$$

where $\mathcal{L}_{\text{TabDDPM}}$ denotes the original `TabDDPM` loss, comprising the mean-squared error for the Gaussian diffusion term, $\mathcal{L}_t^{\text{simple}}$, and the KL divergence for all multinomial diffusion terms, $\sum_{i \leq C} L_t^i / C$ (Kotelnikov et al., 2023).

Unlike other DGMs, `TabDDPM` handles continuous and discrete features separately. For continuous features, `TabDDPM` predicts the Gaussian noise added through a forward Markov process. For discrete features, it predicts their one-hot encoded representation. To align our proposed loss functions with this characteristic, we adapted the correlation and distribution loss functions, $\mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}^{(d)}$ and $\mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}^{(d)}$, to focus exclusively on discrete features. For continuous features, the Gaussian input noise is treated as the real data and the `TabDDPM`'s predicted noise component as the synthetic data. To encourage the model to capture the distribution of the predicted noise, we introduce a distributional loss term $\mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}^{(c)}$ for continuous features. A weighting parameter ζ is applied to this term to control its influence in the overall loss function, allowing to balance the importance of distributional alignment between real and predicted noise against other objectives.

3.2 Iterative Objective Refinement Bayesian Optimization

Previous research on DNN often relied on tuning hyper-parameters based on a single metric or aggregating multiple metrics with varying units in SBO. For example, the objective function guiding the BO process could be the Dice score for medical segmentation (Vu et al., 2021), mean macro-accuracy for visual question answering (Vu et al., 2020), or metrics like F-score (classification) and R-squared (regression) evaluated with Catboost (Dorogush et al., 2018) on synthetic tabular data (Kotelnikov et al., 2023). A significant challenge in SBO arises from managing diverse metrics, such as those used in statistical evaluations and ML performance, that differ in units, complicating direct aggregation. This limitation can hinder the ability to fully capture trade-offs between different objectives. To overcome the issues associated with aggregating metrics with varying units in multi-objective SBO, we propose a ranking-based approach, named IORBO, to enhance BO performance.

Algorithm 1 SBO

Initialize surrogate model
Initialize generative model $\mathcal{G}_i$
Suggest initial hyper-parameters Θ_1
Build and train $\mathcal{G}_i$
Perform evaluation to obtain $\boldsymbol{y}_1$
Compute $r_1 = f(\boldsymbol{y}_1)$
Fit surrogate model with (Θ_1, r_1)
for $u \leftarrow 2$ to U **do**
  Suggest Θ_u
  Build and train $\mathcal{G}_i$
  Perform evaluation to obtain $\boldsymbol{y}_u$ and r_u
  Update surrogate model with (Θ_u, r_u)
end for
return Optimal hyper-parameters Θ^*

Algorithm 2 IORBO

Initialize surrogate model
Initialize generative model $\mathcal{G}_i$
Suggest initial hyper-parameters Θ_1
Build and train $\mathcal{G}_i$
Perform evaluation to obtain $\boldsymbol{y}_1$
Compute $r_1^{(1)} = g(\boldsymbol{y}_1 \mid \boldsymbol{y}_1)$
Fit surrogate model with $(\Theta_1, r_1^{(1)})$
for $u \leftarrow 2$ to U **do**
  Suggest Θ_u
  Build and train $\mathcal{G}_i$
  Perform evaluation to obtain $\boldsymbol{y}_u$
  Update ranks $\{r_1^{(u)}, r_2^{(u)}, \ldots, r_u^{(u)}\}$ based on $\{\boldsymbol{y}_1, \boldsymbol{y}_2, \ldots, \boldsymbol{y}_u\}$
  Fit surrogate model with revised samples $(\Theta_1, r_1^{(u)}), (\Theta_2, r_2^{(u)}), \ldots, (\Theta_u, r_u^{(u)})$
end for
return Optimal hyper-parameters Θ^*

Comparison between SBO and IORBO algorithms.

To illustrate, consider optimizing a DGM. We define $\boldsymbol{y}_u$ as the vector comprising all evaluated metrics where $u \in \{1, \ldots, U\}$, with U representing the number of samples used in the optimization. In the SBO, the

objective function of sample u is defined as $r_u = f(\boldsymbol{y}_u)$ where f is an aggregation function. As outlined in Algorithm 1, the SBO holds r_u constant throughout the optimization.

In contrast, IORBO defines the objective function as $r_u^{(p)}$, where $u \leq p$ and $p \in \{1, \ldots, U\}$ (see Algorithm 2). Here, u represents the iteration where the objective is first generated, while p denotes when it is updated, introducing iterative refinement into the process. In the IORBO, the objective function of sample u is defined as $r_u^{(p)} = g(\boldsymbol{y}_u \mid \boldsymbol{y}_1, \boldsymbol{y}_2, \ldots, \boldsymbol{y}_p)$ where g is a rank-based function. For example, at the second iteration, $\boldsymbol{y}_2$ is evaluated, then both $r_1^{(2)}$ and $r_2^{(2)}$ are computed. In the third iteration, $\boldsymbol{y}_3$ is added, allowing for the computation of $r_1^{(3)}$, $r_2^{(3)}$, and $r_3^{(3)}$, and so on. The objective functions are recalculated as the mean ranks of all generated samples, yielding $r_1^{(u)}, r_2^{(u)}, \ldots, r_u^{(u)}$ based on $\boldsymbol{y}_1, \boldsymbol{y}_2, \ldots, \boldsymbol{y}_u$. To compute the mean ranks, all data points that are generated by the IORBO for each evaluated metric are first ranked and then the average rank across metrics is calculated.

The objective function for the first set of hyper-parameters, Θ_1, is iteratively updated: $r_1^{(1)} \to r_1^{(2)} \to \cdots \to r_1^{(U)}$. For the Θ_2, we update: $r_2^{(2)} \to r_2^{(3)} \to \cdots \to r_2^{(U)}$, and so on. The surrogate model is simultaneously refitted with the revised samples, $(\Theta_1, r_1^{(u)}), (\Theta_2, r_2^{(u)}), \ldots, (\Theta_u, r_u^{(u)})$. IORBO incurs a slight additional cost for refitting the surrogate model with revised samples during the iterative refinement. However, this overhead is negligible compared to the overall computational cost. Apart from this refinement step, the process is essentially the same as SBO. For a numerical illustration, see Section 3.2.1.

3.2.1 Illustrative Example: SBO and IORBO in Practice Comparison

Table 1 and Table 2 illustrate the key difference between SBO and IORBO across three optimization iterations using a toy example with four evaluation metrics: $\boldsymbol{y} = \{a, b, c, d\}$. Each row in the tables corresponds to the metric values obtained by evaluating a set of hyper-parameters at a given iteration.

Table 1: Example of SBO where the objective function is computed as the mean of all evaluated metrics.

	Iteration 1	Iteration 2		Iteration 3		
Metric / Sample	1	1	2	1	2	3
a	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	2.4
b	1	1	2.5	1	2.5	0.2
c	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.8
d	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.6
Objective function	$r_1 = 1$	$r_1 = 1$	$r_2 = 1$	$r_1 = 1$	$r_2 = 1$	$r_3 = 1$

Table 2: Example of IORBO.

	Iteration 1	Iteration 2		Iteration 3		
Metric / Sample	1	1	2	1	2	3
a	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	2.4
b	1	1	2.5	1	2.5	0.2
c	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.8
d	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.6
Metric ranking / Sample	1	1	2	1	2	3
a	1	2	1	2	1	3
b	1	1	2	2	3	1
c	1	2	1	3	1	2
d	1	2	1	3	1	2
Objective function	$r_1^{(1)} = 1$	$r_1^{(2)} = 1.75$	$r_2^{(2)} = 1.25$	$r_1^{(3)} = 2.5$	$r_2^{(3)} = 1.5$	$r_3^{(3)} = 2$

In Table 1, the objective function is computed as the mean of all metric values for each evaluated sample. As new samples are added, the objective values for previous samples remain fixed, meaning $r_1 = r_2 = r_3 = 1$ across all iterations. This is because the SBO applies a static aggregation to each sample independently, without revisiting or comparing across iterations.

In contrast, Table 2 shows how IORBO iteratively refines the objective function. At each iteration, metric values are ranked across all evaluated samples to compute the average rank per sample. This process results in dynamic objective values: $r_1^{(3)} \neq r_2^{(3)} \neq r_3^{(3)}$ and $r_1^{(1)} \neq r_1^{(2)} \neq r_1^{(3)}$. The key idea is that as more samples are evaluated, the ranking context changes, and thus the relative standing of earlier samples is updated to reflect the expanded information. For instance, the first sample has objective values $r_1^{(1)} = 1$, $r_1^{(2)} = 1.75$, and $r_1^{(3)} = 2.5$, demonstrating the refinement process.

This illustrative example highlights how IORBO uses cross-sample comparison to improve the fidelity of the optimization signal, allowing it to better differentiate between competing hyper-parameter configurations. In contrast, SBO may lead to flat or misleading optimization signals when metric values vary in scale or importance. This rank-based refinement in IORBO enables more informed and robust surrogate model updates throughout the optimization.

3.3 Evaluation

Statistical similarity. The statistical similarity evaluation focuses on how well the statistical properties of the real training data are preserved in the synthetic data. Inspired by a previous review study (Goncalves et al., 2020), we compared two aspects: (1) Individual variable distributions assess how closely the distributions of each variable in the real and synthetic data sets resemble each other; and (2) pairwise correlations reveal the differences in pairwise correlations between variables across the real and synthetic data (Step 1 in Figure 2).

We employed four key metrics to quantify how closely the real and synthetic data distributions resemble each other. (1) The KL divergence (Hershey & Olsen, 2007): This method quantifies the information loss incurred when approximating a true probability distribution with another one. (2) The Pearson's Chi-Square (CS) test (Pearson, 1992): This test focuses on categorical variables and assesses whether the distribution of categories in the synthetic data matches the distribution in the real data. (3) The Kolmogorov–Smirnov (KS) test (Massey Jr, 1951): This test is designed for continuous variables and measures the distance between the cumulative distribution functions (CDFs) of the real and synthetic data. (4) The dimension-wise probability (DWP): We leveraged the DWP (Armanious et al., 2020) to quantitatively assess the quality of the generated data. This metric evaluates how well the model captures the distribution of each individual class or variable. To calculate the DWP metric, we compute the average distance between scatter points and a perfect diagonal line ($y = x$). Each scatter point represents either a class within a categorical variable or the mean value of a continuous variable.

To assess how effectively the synthetic data captures the inherent relationships between variables observed in the real data, we compare correlation coefficients between variable pairs. For continuous variables, we employ the widely-used Pearson correlation coefficient, calculated from both the real and synthetic data matrices. In the case of categorical variables, we leverage Cramer's V coefficient to quantify the association strength between each pair in both datasets (Frey, 2018).

ML performance. The ML performance evaluation is meant to enable researchers to leverage synthetic data when developing ML methods in two key areas: Train-Synthetic-Test-Real (TSTR) (Lu et al., 2023) and augmentation (see Figure 2 and Steps 2 and 3). In the TSTR task (Step 2 in Figure 2), the goal for ML methods trained on synthetic data was to achieve performance comparable or identical to those trained on real data. This work introduces the concept of an ML augmentation task, which, to our knowledge, is the first application of its kind when evaluating tabular synthetic data (Step 3 in Figure 2). Here, the objective was for models trained on a combination of real and synthetic data to outperform models trained solely on real data. By incorporating synthetic data, the models can potentially learn from a richer dataset and achieve improved performance.

To comprehensively evaluate the performance of trained ML models on imbalanced classification datasets, we employed a suite of metrics including balanced accuracy, precision, recall, geometric mean (G-mean), F-score,

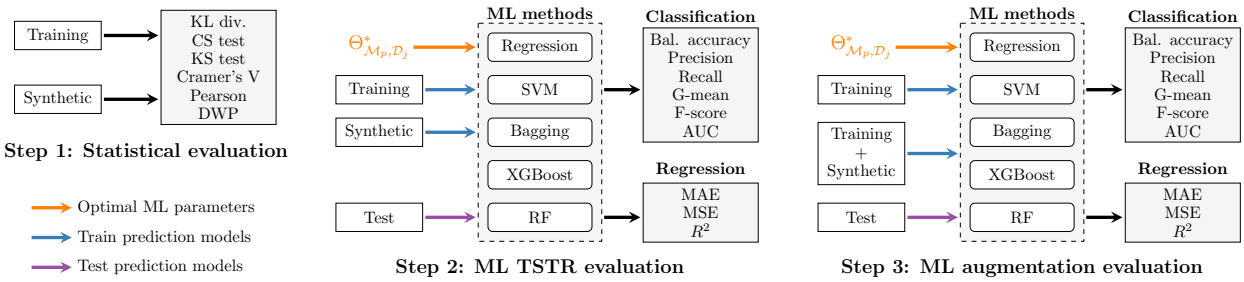

Figure 2: Evaluation pipeline. For dataset $\mathcal{D}_j$ and ML method $\mathcal{M}_p$, the optimal hyper-parameters, $\Theta^*_{\mathcal{M}_p,\mathcal{D}_j}$, were determined using five-fold cross-validation based on ML evaluation metrics (see Figure 4 in the Appendix).

and area under the ROC curve (AUC). For regression, we used metrics focused on capturing regression error: mean absolute error (MAE), mean squared error (MSE), and the coefficient of determination, R-squared (R^2). This combined evaluation approach provides a nuanced understanding of model performance across both classification and regression tasks.

To assess the ML performance in both the TSTR and augmentation tasks, we split the experimental datasets into 80% training and 20% testing sets. First, we trained the DGMs on the real training data to produce synthetic data. The real testing set served a critical role in assessing the generalizability of trained ML models on unseen data. Subsequently, for TSTR, we trained various ML methods including logistic regression (LG), support vector machine (SVM), random forest (RF), bagging (bootstrap aggregating) on top of LG, and XGBoost independently on both the real and synthetic training sets. In the augmentation task, we trained the same ML models independently on both the real training set and a combined set consisting of real training and synthetic data.

3.4 Hyper-parameter Search

Hyper-parameters play a pivotal role in tailoring ML methods and DGMs to specific datasets and achieving optimal performance. To systematically optimize the hyper-parameters, we employed BO, a powerful technique to efficiently explore black-box functions. Specifically, we utilized the tree-structured parzen estimator approach (TPE) algorithm (Bergstra et al., 2011) within the `Hyperopt`[1] library to identify optimal hyper-parameter configurations for each combination. This approach enabled us to effectively navigate the complex hyper-parameter space and select the most suitable settings for the experiments.

We conducted two distinct tuning processes. First, each ML method used in ML TSTR and augmentation evaluation (Figure 2 and Step 2 and 3), was fine-tuned for each dataset using five-fold cross-validation on the ML evaluation metrics (Figure 4 in the Appendix). Second, we optimized the hyper-parameters for each combination of DGM, dataset, and loss function (Figure 3 in the Appendix).

3.5 Statistical Tests

In Table 3, the specifications are based on the commonly accepted interpretation of p-values in hypothesis testing. A p-value less than or equal to 0.01 ($p \leq 0.01$) indicates that the result is highly significant, meaning that the null hypothesis can be rejected with high confidence. A p-value between 0.01 and 0.05 ($0.01 < p \leq 0.05$) indicates significant results, where there is still a reasonable level of evidence against the null hypothesis, though not as strong as for the highly significant results. For p-values greater than 0.05, we consider the result not to be significant, indicating insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Regarding the two-sided test, the Nemenyi post-hoc test used in our analysis is based on the Friedman test, which is a non-parametric test for repeated measures. The Nemenyi test performs pairwise comparisons between the groups following the Friedman test and is a two-sided test. This means that the test evaluates

[1] `https://hyperopt.github.io/hyperopt/`

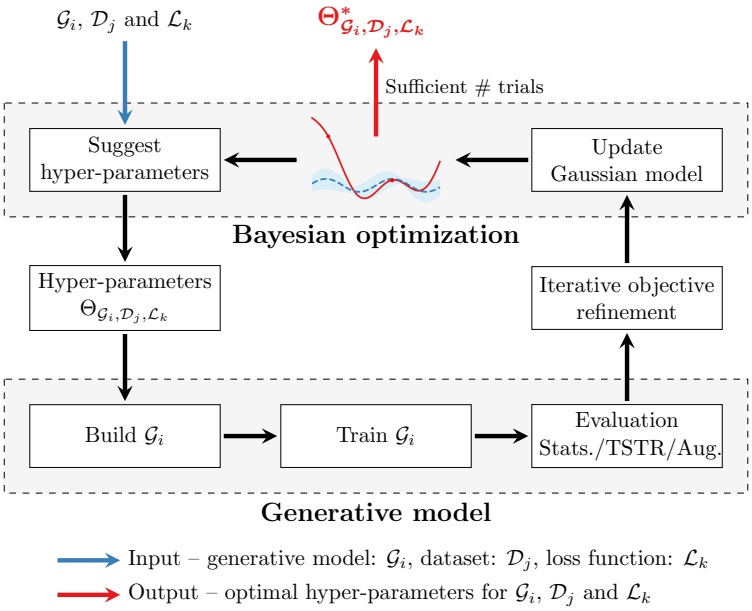

Figure 3: Hyper-parameter search for a single generative model.

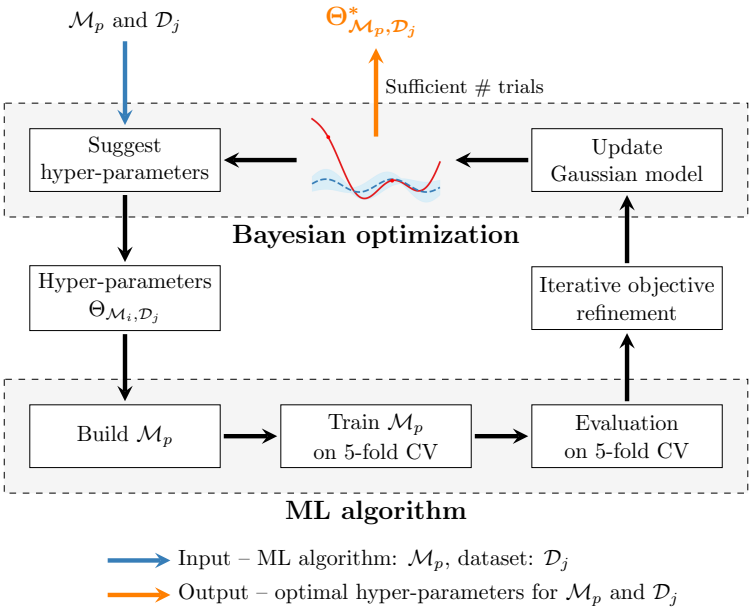

Figure 4: Hyper-parameter search for an ML algorithm.

whether the differences between the groups are statistically significant in both directions, *i.e.*, it considers whether one group is significantly better or worse than another group.

To compare loss functions across DGMs and datasets, we used the Friedman test (Friedman, 1937; 1940) to rank the loss functions independently. For non-parametric analysis of repeated-measures data, the Friedman test offers an alternative to the widely used repeated-measures ANOVA (Fisher, 1919). We used the Friedman test with equivalence on two ML efficacy problems for test set predictions and statistical similarity between training and synthetic data (detailed in Section 3.6). Following Demšar (2006), we further explored significant

differences between methods using the Nemenyi post-hoc test (Nemenyi, 1963). Table 3 shows the p-values divided into three positive and three negative differences.

Table 3: Ranges of p-values and specification obtained from statistical tests.

Notation	Rank	Range of p-value	Specification
++	Better	$p \leq 0.01$	Highly significantly better
+	Better	$0.01 < p \leq 0.05$	Significantly better
0	Better	$p > 0.05$	Not significantly better
0	Worse	$p > 0.05$	Not significantly worse
−	Worse	$0.01 < p \leq 0.05$	Significantly worse
−−	Worse	$p \leq 0.01$	Highly significantly worse

3.6 Benchmarking Framework

Figure 5 provides an overview of the proposed benchmarking framework consisting the following core components:

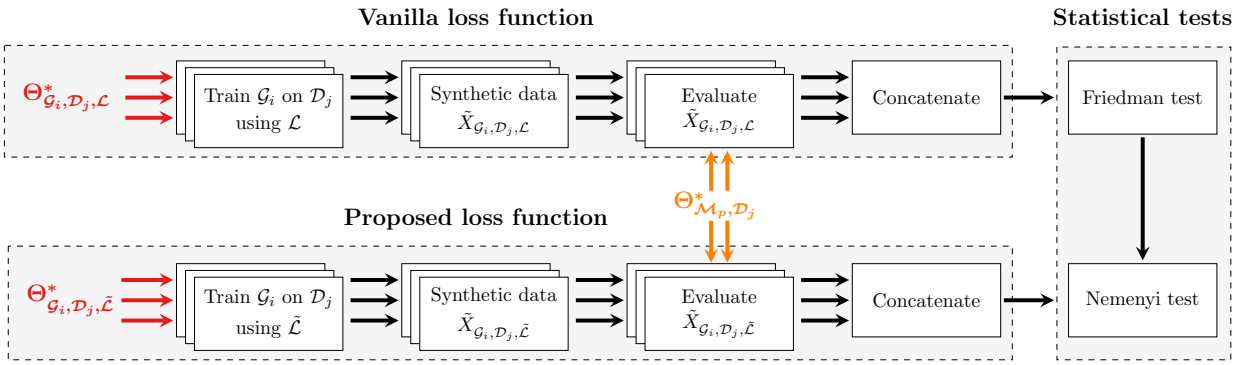

Figure 5: Proposed benchmarking framework. The $\mathcal{G}_i$, $\mathcal{D}_j$, $\mathcal{L}_k$ and $\mathcal{M}_p$ denote a DGM, a dataset, a loss function, and an ML method, respectively. Θ^* denotes the optimal set of hyper-parameters. See Figure 3 and Figure 4 in the Appendix to see how we determined $\Theta^*_{\mathcal{G}_i,\mathcal{D}_j,\mathcal{L}_k}$ and $\Theta^*_{\mathcal{M}_p,\mathcal{D}_j}$.

Generative models. DGMs are used to generate synthetic data. We evaluated six models. Three models that leverage conditional GANs for data synthesis: `CTGAN` (Xu et al., 2019), `CTAB-GAN` (Zhao et al., 2021), and `DP-CGANS` (Sun et al., 2023). A model that combines Gaussian Copula with the `CTGAN` architecture: `CopulaGAN`. A model that utilizes VAEs (Kingma & Welling, 2013) for data generation: `TVAE` (Xu et al., 2019). Finally, a model that employs DDPM: `TabDDPM` (Kotelnikov et al., 2023). To explore the impact of the conditional element, we additionally evaluated versions of `CTGAN`, `CopulaGAN`, and `DP-CGANS` with conditioning disabled. We also used two backbones for `TabDDPM`: a simple multilayer perceptron (MLP) and a ResNet.

Custom loss function. During training, each evaluated DGM utilized either the custom loss function defined in Equation 9 (for GAN models), the one presented in Equation 10 (for `TVAE` model) or the one in Equation 11 (for `TabDDPM` model). We subsequently fixed α, β, and ζ to specific values of 0 or a positive value, resulting in two different experiments: vanilla loss function ($\mathcal{L}$ with $\alpha = \beta = \zeta = 0$) and the proposed loss function, $\tilde{\mathcal{L}}$, with at least one non-zero hyper-parameters.

Statistical tests. We used the Friedman test on all evaluated metrics, followed by the Nemenyi post-hoc test detailed in Section 3.5 for comparative analyses. These analyses can be divided into three categories: (1) General-purpose loss function assesses which loss function—between the vanilla (original loss function used in the evaluated DGM) and the proposed—performs better for general applications; (2) Dataset-specific loss determines which loss function is more effective for each evaluated dataset; and (3) Method-specific

loss identifies the superior loss function for each evaluated DGM architecture. For each category, we based the evaluations on either statistical similarity, ML TSTR performance, ML augmentation performance, or a combination of evaluated metrics.

4 Theoretical guarantees

4.1 Correlation-aware loss function

We now analyze the theoretical properties of the proposed correlation-aware loss function, including its stability during optimization. This analysis provides justification for its robustness in practice. The following remark clarifies how we implement the correlation loss in a stochastic optimization setting.

Remark 4.1 (Optimization details). During the stochastic optimization of $\mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}$, the running estimates $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_j$ (raw first moment) and $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j$ (central second moment) are treated as fixed constants within each mini-batch. To ensure numerical stability and avoid division by zero, a small constant $\epsilon > 0$ is added to the denominator, *i.e.*, we use $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j + \epsilon$.

To quantify how well matching the first H moments controls the overall density approximation error, we now state our main result.

Proposition 4.2 (Stability)**.** *Assume the standardized synthetic data points*

$$Z_{i,k} := \frac{\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_k}{\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_k + \epsilon}$$

have tails that decay at least sub-Gaussian; that is, there exist constants $K, \nu > 0$ such that

$$\Pr\big(|Z_{i,k}| > t\big) \leq M\, e^{-\nu t^2},$$

for all $t > 0$. Fix $\delta \in (0,1)$ and set

$$t_\delta = \sqrt{\frac{1}{\nu} \ln\Big(\frac{M}{\delta}\Big)}.$$

Then, with probability at least $1 - \delta$, the gradient of $\mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}$ with respect to any $\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}$ satisfies

$$\left| \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}}{\partial \tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}} \right| \leq \frac{8}{m(m-1)} \cdot \frac{t_\delta}{B\,\epsilon},$$

where B is the batch size and $\epsilon > 0$ is the smoothing constant.

Proof. To analyze the gradient of $\mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}$ with respect to $\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}$, consider a single pair (j,k). The gradient can be expressed as:

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}}{\partial \tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}} = \frac{4}{m(m-1)} (\boldsymbol{g}_{j,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k}) \cdot \frac{\partial \tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k}}{\partial \tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}}.$$

Recall that the synthetic correlation term is given by:

$$\tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k} = \frac{1}{B} \sum_{i=1}^{B} \frac{\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_j}{\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j + \epsilon} \cdot \frac{\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_k}{\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_k + \epsilon}.$$

Since the statistics $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_j$ and $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j$ are treated as constants during stochastic optimization (Remark 4.1), the derivative simplifies to:

$$\frac{\partial \tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k}}{\partial \tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}} = \frac{1}{B} \cdot \frac{1}{\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j + \epsilon} \cdot \frac{\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_k}{\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_k + \epsilon}.$$

Taking the absolute value and using the property $|ab| = |a||b|$, we obtain:

$$\begin{aligned} \left| \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}}{\partial \tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}} \right| &= \frac{4}{m(m-1)} \, |\boldsymbol{g}_{j,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k}| \cdot \left| \frac{1}{B(\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j + \epsilon)} \cdot \frac{\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_k}{\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_k + \epsilon} \right| \\ &\leq \frac{4}{m(m-1)} \, |\boldsymbol{g}_{j,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k}| \cdot \frac{1}{B(\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j + \epsilon)} \cdot \left| \frac{\tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{\mu}}_k}{\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_k + \epsilon} \right|. \end{aligned}$$

Here, the inequality follows because the absolute value of a product is the product of the absolute values. Since the correlations are bounded (i.e., $|\tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k}| \leq 1$ and $|\boldsymbol{g}_{j,k}| \leq 1$, implying $|\boldsymbol{g}_{j,k} - \tilde{\boldsymbol{g}}_{j,k}| \leq 2$) and by the bounded data assumption we have

$$\left|\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}}{\partial \tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}}\right| \leq \frac{4}{m(m-1)} \cdot 2 \cdot \frac{1}{B(\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j + \epsilon)} \cdot |Z_{i,k}|.$$

By the sub-Gaussian tail bound,

$$\Pr\left(|Z_{i,k}| > t_\delta\right) \leq M e^{-\nu\, t_\delta^2} = \delta.$$

Thus with probability at least $1-\delta$ we have $|Z_{i,k}| \leq t_\delta$, and noting that $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}_j + \epsilon \geq \epsilon > 0$, it follows that

$$\left|\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{correlation}}}{\partial \tilde{\boldsymbol{x}}_{i,j}}\right| \leq \frac{8}{m(m-1)} \cdot \frac{t_\delta}{B\,\epsilon}.$$

This completes the proof. □

4.2 Distribution-aware loss function

We now establish theoretical guarantees for the proposed distribution-aware loss function.

Assumption 4.3 (High-Probability Moment Matching)**.** For any confidence level $1-\delta$, there exist constants $B_h(\delta) \geq 0$ such that, with probability at least $1-\delta$,

$$\left|\hat{\mu}_h - \mu_h\right| \;\leq\; B_h(\delta) \quad \text{for all } h = 0, 1, \ldots, H.$$

Proposition 4.4 (Numerical stability)**.** *Under Assumption 4.3, for any fixed confidence level, $1-\delta$, there exist constants $B_h(\delta) > 0$ such that, with probability at least $1-\delta$, the empirical moments satisfy*

$$\left|\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)}\right| \leq B_h(\delta) \quad \textit{and} \quad \left|\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}\right| \leq B_h(\delta) \quad \forall\, j \in \{1, \ldots, m\},\ h = 1, \ldots, H.$$

Then for each feature index j and moment order h, the partial derivative of

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}} = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \sum_{h=1}^{H} \frac{1}{h} \left(1 - \frac{\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon}{\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon}\right)^2$$

with respect to the synthetic moment $\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}$ obeys, with probability at least $1-\delta$,

$$\left|\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}}{\partial \widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}}\right| \leq \frac{4\, B_h(\delta)}{h\, \epsilon^2}.$$

Note: *We do not allow ϵ to go to zero. Instead, we treat ϵ as a small constant that maintains $\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon \geq \epsilon$. That way, the bound remains finite and numerically reasonable.*

Proof. Recall that the distribution-aware loss function is defined as:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}} = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \sum_{h=1}^{H} \frac{1}{h} \left(1 - \frac{\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon}{\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon}\right)^2,$$

where $\epsilon > 0$ is a smoothing term that ensures numerical stability by preventing division by zero.

To analyze the stability of $\mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}$, we compute its gradient with respect to the synthetic moment $\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}$:

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}}{\partial \widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}} = \frac{2}{h} \left(1 - \frac{\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon}{\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon}\right) \cdot \left(-\frac{1}{\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon}\right).$$

The smoothing term $\epsilon > 0$ ensures that the denominator $\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon$ is bounded away from zero. Taking the absolute value of this partial derivative, we obtain:

$$\left|\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}}{\partial \widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}}\right| = \frac{2}{h} \cdot \frac{\left|1 - \frac{\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}+\epsilon}{\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)}+\epsilon}\right|}{\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon} = \frac{2}{h} \cdot \frac{\left|\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} - \widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}\right|}{\left(\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon\right)^2}.$$

Under the high-probability bound in the Proposition 4.4, $|\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)}| \leq B_h(\delta)$ and $|\widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}| \leq B_h(\delta)$, we have

$$\left|\mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} - \widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}\right| \leq 2\, B_h(\delta), \quad \mathcal{S}_j^{(h)} + \epsilon \geq \epsilon.$$

Therefore, with probability at least $1 - \delta$,

$$\left|\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{distribution}}}{\partial \widetilde{\mathcal{S}}_j^{(h)}}\right| \leq \frac{2}{h} \cdot \frac{2\, B_h(\delta)}{\epsilon^2} = \frac{4\, B_h(\delta)}{h\, \epsilon^2}.$$

Since the bound depends only on h, ϵ, and $B_h(\delta)$—all of which are independent of the feature index j—this implies that the partial derivatives are uniformly bounded across all j and h. This completes the proof.

□

Remark 4.5 (Empirical moment consistency). After training on N real samples, we can draw B synthetic samples from the learned model to estimate any feature moment. By the Law of Large Numbers:

$$\frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}(x_{i,j} - \mu_j)^h \xrightarrow[N\to\infty]{P} \mathbb{E}\left[(X_j - \mu_j)^h\right], \quad \frac{1}{B}\sum_{i=1}^{B}(\tilde{x}_{i,j} - \tilde{\mu}_j)^h \xrightarrow[B\to\infty]{P} \mathbb{E}\left[(X_j - \mu_j)^h\right].$$

Since the model's moments cannot typically be computed in closed form, we estimate them by averaging over B synthetic samples. Larger values of B lead to more accurate moment estimates. In practice, setting B comparable to or larger than N (*e.g.*, $B \in [N, 10N]$) typically yields sufficiently accurate moment estimates.

5 Experiments

5.1 Datasets

Two datasets come from the UCI Machine Learning Repository (Dua & Graff, 2017) (`Adult` and `News`) and feature tabular structures with separate columns for attributes and labels. Thirteen additional datasets were preprocessed and shared by Kotelnikov et al. (2023) including `Abalone`, `Buddy`, `California`, `Cardio`, `Churn2`, `Diabetes-ML`, `Gesture`, `Higgs-Small`, `House-16h`, `Insurance`, `King`, `Miniboone`, and `Wilt`. We sourced the remaining datasets from Kaggle[2] (`Credit`, `Diabetes`, `Balanced Diabetes`, and `House`). To investigate the proposed method's behavior on high-dimensional binary data as in (Xu et al., 2019), we transformed the Modified National Institute of Standards and Technology database (MNIST) dataset (LeCun & Cortes, 2010). Specifically, we binarized the original 28×28 images, converted each sample into a 784-dimensional vector, and added a label column. The images were then resized to 12×12, reducing them to 144-dimensional vectors. We refer to this dataset as `MNIST12`.

Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the datasets evaluated in this study. It includes a diverse set of datasets, encompassing various data types and tasks to thoroughly test the proposed methods. The datasets range from small, specialized datasets like `Diabetes-ML` with 768 rows and 8 continuous variables, to large, extensive datasets such as `Credit` with 277 640 rows and 29 continuous variables. Tasks represented include regression, binary classification, and multiclass classification, showcasing the breadth of application scenarios covered. For instance, `Abalone` and `California` are used for regression tasks, while `Adult`, `Cardio`, and

Table 4: Description of experimented datasets.

Dataset	#Rows	#Continuous	#Discrete	Task
Abalone	4 177	7	1	Regression
Adult	48 813	6	8	Binclass
Buddy	18 834	4	5	Multiclass
California	20 640	8	0	Regression
Cardio	70 000	5	6	Binclass
Churn2	10 000	7	4	Binclass
Credit	277 640	29	0	Binclass
Diabetes	234 245	0	21	Binclass
Diabetes-ML	768	8	0	Binclass
Diabetes Bal.	69 515	0	21	Binclass
Gesture	9 873	32	0	Multiclass
Higgs-Small	98 049	28	0	Binclass
House	21 613	10	8	Regression
House-16h	22 784	16	0	Regression
Insurance	1 338	3	3	Regression
King	21 613	17	3	Regression
Miniboone	130 064	50	0	Binclass
MNIST12	70 000	0	144	Multiclass
News	39 644	45	14	Regression
Wilt	4 839	5	0	Binclass

Churn2 are employed for binary classification tasks. Multiclass classification tasks are represented by datasets such as Buddy and MNIST12.

Additionally, the datasets exhibit a range of characteristics in terms of the number of continuous and discrete variables. For example, Gesture has a high number of continuous variables (32) with no discrete variables, whereas Diabetes features a substantial number of discrete variables (21) with no continuous variables. The varied nature of these datasets allows for a robust evaluation of the proposed methods across different types of data and tasks, providing insights into their generalizability and effectiveness. The inclusion of datasets with different characteristics, such as Higgs-Small with 28 continuous variables and MNIST12 with 144 discrete variables, ensures a comprehensive assessment of performance and applicability.

5.2 Implementation Details and Training

Implementation Details and Training. We implemented all DGMs (CTGAN, CTAB-GAN, DP-CGANS, CopulaGAN, TVAE, and TabDDPM) and the proposed losses using PyTorch 1.13. To ensure replicability, we maintained the DGMs' original framework structures and adopted the model parameters specified in their publications. We disabled conditional elements within evaluated DGMs by reimplementing their data samplers. This modification removed the conditional vector from the training process, effectively transforming them into unconditional DGMs. For all DGMs, we employed the Adam optimizer (Kingma & Ba, 2015). We used the proposed IORBO approach introduced in Section 3.2 to fine-tune the hyper-parameters in two tuning processes (Section 3.4).

The experiments ran on a high-performance computing cluster equipped with NVIDIA A100 Tensor Core graphical processing units (GPUs) (40GB RAM each) and Intel(R) Xeon(R) Gold 6338 CPUs (256GB DDR4 RAM). Training time per model varied significantly by dataset and DGM, ranging from one hour to two weeks.

To accelerate the ML performance evaluation, we used the cuML library (Raschka et al., 2020). This library provides a Python API largely compatible with scikit-learn (Pedregosa et al., 2011) and allows seamless

[2] https://www.kaggle.com/datasets

execution of traditional tabular ML tasks on GPUs. We used `scikit-learn` for classification and regression metrics, `scipy` for statistical evaluation metrics, and `scikit-posthocs` for the statistical tests, ensuring consistency throughout the evaluation process.

6 Results and Discussion

Loss function. To analyze the performance of the proposed loss function against the vanilla version, we applied the benchmarking framework using different independent evaluations: (1) statistical analysis on its own, (2) ML TSTR performance on its own, (3) ML augmentation on its own, and (4) a comprehensive evaluation that combines all evaluated metrics.

Bayesian Optimization Method. To compare the performance of the IORBO with the SBO using mean and median aggregation methods, we fine-tuned each DGM on each dataset across different loss functions, employing three evaluated BO approaches. Statistical tests were then conducted to evaluate the three BO methods.

Loss function. To analyze the performance of the proposed loss function against the vanilla version, we employed the proposed benchmarking framework (Section 3.6) across four key tasks: statistical evaluation (Stat.), TSTR evaluation, augmentation evaluation (Aug.), and a comprehensive evaluation (Comp.) combining all three. The statistical tests evaluated the performance of the proposed loss function compared to the vanilla loss. In addition, we define the *win rate* as the proportion of evaluated metrics where the proposed loss function exceeds the vanilla loss function, relative to the total number of metrics assessed. A win rate of 1 indicates that the proposed loss function performed better than the vanilla version across all evaluated metrics, while a value of 0 signifies that it performed worse in every metric. A win rate greater than 0.5 indicates that the proposed loss function was "better" more often than it was "worse." We also report standard errors for each metric, estimated from 1 000 bootstrap rounds.

Table 5: Results of the Nemenyi post-hoc test and win rate (with standard error in parentheses) comparing the proposed against the vanilla loss function on all DGMs and datasets. Loss functions were evaluated for statistical similarity (Stat.), TSTR, augmentation (Aug.), and a comprehensive evaluation (Comp.) combining all metrics. For details on p-value ranges, refer to Table 3.

	Statistical Tests				Win Rate			
Comparison	Stat.	TSTR	Aug.	Comp.	Stat.	TSTR	Aug.	Comp.
Proposed vs. Vanilla	0	++	++	++	0.484 (0.012)	**0.611 (0.007)**	**0.551 (0.007)**	**0.567 (0.004)**

General-purpose loss function. Table 5 presents the results of a comprehensive analysis comparing the performance of the proposed loss function against the vanilla loss function across all DGMs and datasets. The table highlights the influence of loss function selection for general purposes. First, the two loss functions performed statistically similarly (zero (0) in the "Stat." column in Table 5). However, this metric does not fully capture performance in downstream tasks. In contrast, in the ML TSTR evaluation, the proposed loss function significantly outperformed the vanilla version, with a win rate of 0.611 and a standard error of 0.007, suggesting that the proposed loss function better captures the complexities of real-world tabular data during synthetic data generation. Similarly, the augmentation evaluation consistently favored the proposed loss function (win rate 0.551), demonstrating its ability to enhance the performance of predictive models trained on a mix of real and synthetic data. Finally, the comprehensive evaluation (win rate 0.567), which combined all prior evaluations, continues this trend, indicating the proposed loss function's potential to improve model generalizability. A possible reason for this superiority is that the proposed loss function provides a regularizing effect, which reduces overfitting on unseen data and positions it as a strong candidate for general-purpose use in generative modeling tasks.

Method-specific loss function. Table 6 compares the performance of the proposed loss function against the vanilla loss functions across all datasets and different DGM selections. Models denoted with an asterisk (*) have disabled conditioning. For most models, the proposed loss function demonstrates significant improvements in ML TSTR performance and augmentation effectiveness. For instance, `CTGAN`, `CTGAN*`,

CopulaGAN, and DP-CGANS consistently show highly significant gains (++) in TSTR, augmentation, and comprehensive evaluation. For example, DP-CGANS* achieved the highest win rate across the TSTR metric, 0.798, indicating that the proposed loss function significantly enhanced its ability to generate synthetic data that boosts downstream ML performance. Interestingly, the statistical similarity (Stat.) evaluation reveals no significant differences between the proposed and vanilla loss functions for most models, suggesting that both loss functions perform similarly in terms of generating synthetic data that statistically match the real data distributions. However, the CTAB-GAN model stands out as an exception, showing a statistically significant decrease (−−) in performance across most evaluations when using the proposed loss function. This result suggests that the CTAB-GAN may require a more specialized loss function or optimization strategy to fully benefit from the proposed approach. The comprehensive evaluation (Comp.), which combines all three metrics, underscores the effectiveness of the proposed loss function on eight out of ten evaluated DGMs. Models including CTGAN, CopulaGAN, DP-CGANS, and their non-conditioned variants, consistently outperform the vanilla loss function with win rates exceeding 0.5. These results imply that the proposed loss function offers a well-rounded improvement across various aspects of synthetic data generation, specifically in terms of enhancing ML utility and model augmentation performance.

Table 6: Results of the Nemenyi post-hoc test and win rate (with standard error in parentheses) comparing the proposed against the vanilla loss function across various DGMs on all datasets. Evaluations include TSTR, augmentation (Aug.), statistical similarity (Stat.), and a comprehensive measure (Comp.) combining all evaluated metrics. Models denoted with an asterisk (*) have disabled conditioning. For details on p-value ranges, refer to Table 3.

	Statistical Tests				Win Rate			
Method	Stat.	TSTR	Aug.	Comp.	Stat.	TSTR	Aug.	Comp.
CTGAN	0	++	++	++	0.478 (0.034)	**0.639 (0.020)**	**0.583 (0.021)**	**0.593 (0.014)**
CTGAN*	0	++	++	++	0.459 (0.036)	**0.726 (0.018)**	**0.611 (0.020)**	**0.640 (0.013)**
TVAE	0	0	++	++	**0.519 (0.034)**	**0.501 (0.021)**	**0.593 (0.020)**	**0.543 (0.013)**
CopulaGAN	0	++	+	++	0.491 (0.033)	**0.633 (0.020)**	**0.547 (0.022)**	**0.577 (0.013)**
CopulaGAN*	0	++	+	++	0.447 (0.034)	**0.684 (0.019)**	**0.554 (0.020)**	**0.595 (0.013)**
DP-CGANS	0	++	++	++	0.500 (0.051)	**0.669 (0.028)**	**0.683 (0.028)**	**0.651 (0.018)**
DP-CGANS*	0	++	0	++	**0.587 (0.054)**	**0.798 (0.023)**	**0.538 (0.030)**	**0.656 (0.019)**
CTAB-GAN	−−	−−	0	−−	0.391 (0.033)	0.418 (0.020)	0.497 (0.020)	0.448 (0.014)
TABDDPM-MLP	0	++	0	++	**0.516 (0.035)**	**0.617 (0.020)**	0.482 (0.021)	**0.545 (0.014)**
TABDDPM-ResNet	0	+	0	0	**0.512 (0.033)**	**0.547 (0.021)**	0.487 (0.021)	**0.517 (0.013)**

Dataset-specific loss function. Table 7 compares the proposed loss function to the vanilla loss function across various datasets on all DGMs. The results demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed loss function across diverse datasets. The statistical tests reveal that the proposed loss function achieves statistically significant improvements in TSTR performance for 14 out of 20 datasets, as indicated by the total count of (+) and (++). Additionally, the proposed loss function exhibits a consistent advantage in augmentation (Aug.). Specifically, datasets such as Insurance and MNIST12 show marked improvements in win rates (0.7). Conversely, the proposed loss function shows variable performance in statistical similarity (Stat.) across datasets. While it significantly improves TSTR and augmentation tasks for many datasets, its impact on statistical similarity is less consistent, with some datasets like Cardio, Higgs-Small, and Miniboone exhibiting inferior results compared to the vanilla loss function. From Table 7 we see that the proposed loss function demonstrates significant improvement over the vanilla loss function in 15 out of 20 datasets, as indicated by the comprehensive evaluation (Comp.) in the statistical tests column. Among the remaining datasets, four show no significant difference (0) and only one shows a statistically significant disadvantage (−).

Bayesian optimization method. The performance of the IORBO was compared to that of the SBO using two aggregation methods: mean and median aggregation. For each dataset, we fine-tuned each generative model (DGM) across two loss functions and employed three distinct BO approaches. To assess the performance of these methods, statistical tests were conducted, focusing on comparing the effectiveness of each approach. The results are summarized in Table 8, which presents the win rates and standard errors, as well as the outcomes of the Nemenyi post-hoc test that compares the methods shown in the rows against those in the

Table 7: Results of the Nemenyi post-hoc test and win rate (with standard error in parentheses) comparing the proposed against the vanilla loss function across various datasets on all evaluated DGMs. Evaluations include TSTR, augmentation (Aug.), statistical similarity (Stat.), and a comprehensive measure (Comp.) combining all three. For details on p-value ranges, refer to Table 3.

	Statistical Tests				Win Rate			
Dataset	Stat.	TSTR	Aug.	Comp.	Stat.	TSTR	Aug.	Comp.
Abalone	0	++	−−	0	**0.594 (0.059)**	**0.633 (0.043)**	0.375 (0.045)	**0.523 (0.027)**
Adult	0	++	0	++	**0.538 (0.052)**	**0.622 (0.025)**	**0.553 (0.025)**	**0.582 (0.017)**
Buddy	0	++	0	++	0.500 (0.051)	**0.607 (0.022)**	**0.552 (0.022)**	**0.570 (0.014)**
California	0	0	0	+	0.500 (0.045)	**0.583 (0.044)**	**0.583 (0.043)**	**0.566 (0.027)**
Cardio	−	++	++	++	0.387 (0.054)	**0.577 (0.027)**	**0.590 (0.027)**	**0.560 (0.019)**
Churn2	0	++	0	+	0.500 (0.059)	**0.637 (0.025)**	0.460 (0.026)	**0.543 (0.018)**
Credit	0	0	0	+	0.500 (0.057)	**0.544 (0.027)**	**0.554 (0.030)**	**0.543 (0.018)**
Diabetes	0	++	0	++	0.413 (0.031)	**0.620 (0.027)**	**0.533 (0.027)**	**0.557 (0.018)**
Diabetes-ML	0	++	0	++	0.469 (0.057)	**0.719 (0.029)**	0.479 (0.033)	**0.584 (0.020)**
Diabetes Bal.	0	++	0	++	0.438 (0.032)	**0.717 (0.022)**	**0.538 (0.025)**	**0.605 (0.016)**
Gesture	0	0	0	0	**0.609 (0.056)**	**0.562 (0.032)**	0.450 (0.029)	**0.518 (0.021)**
Higgs-Small	−	+	++	++	0.359 (0.055)	**0.575 (0.031)**	**0.635 (0.032)**	**0.576 (0.021)**
House	0	++	++	++	0.438 (0.049)	**0.667 (0.039)**	**0.667 (0.038)**	**0.618 (0.025)**
House-16h	0	0	0	0	0.500 (0.044)	0.442 (0.044)	0.500 (0.046)	0.477 (0.027)
Insurance	0	++	++	++	0.494 (0.052)	**0.693 (0.037)**	**0.700 (0.037)**	**0.654 (0.025)**
King	0	++	0	++	**0.519 (0.055)**	**0.673 (0.039)**	**0.567 (0.039)**	**0.599 (0.026)**
Miniboone	−	−−	0	−	0.359 (0.054)	0.402 (0.031)	**0.512 (0.026)**	0.446 (0.020)
MNIST12	0	++	++	++	0.484 (0.040)	**0.756 (0.023)**	**0.700 (0.024)**	**0.699 (0.016)**
News	+	++	0	++	**0.612 (0.052)**	**0.607 (0.040)**	**0.553 (0.042)**	**0.587 (0.024)**
Wilt	0	0	0	0	0.469 (0.056)	**0.538 (0.025)**	**0.552 (0.026)**	**0.536 (0.016)**

Table 8: Results of the Nemenyi post-hoc test and win rate (with standard error in parentheses) comparing the row to column method. For details on p-value ranges, refer to Table 3.

	Statistical Tests			Win Rate		
BO method	SBO-Mean	SBO-Median	IORBO	SBO-Mean	SBO-Median	IORBO
SBO-Mean		−−	−−		0.461 (0.004)	0.409 (0.004)
SBO-Median	++		−−	**0.539 (0.004)**		0.439 (0.004)
IORBO	++	++		**0.591 (0.004)**	**0.561 (0.004)**	

columns. The findings from the Nemenyi post-hoc test clearly show that the IORBO significantly outperforms both SBO-Mean and SBO-Median. Specifically, the win rates for the IORBO compared to SBO-Mean and SBO-Median were 0.591 and 0.561, respectively. These results demonstrate that the IORBO is not only more effective but also more robust in handling datasets with metrics that have different units, which often pose challenges in optimization tasks. The consistent superiority of IORBO highlights its potential as a reliable and broadly applicable BO method, suggesting it could be a valuable tool in a wide range of optimization tasks involving diverse types of data and models.

Ablation studies. The ablation study results presented in Table 9 evaluate the impact of different loss function variants combined with two optimization strategies: SBO and IORBO (denoted IOR). In our experiments, the loss function variants are defined as follows: V represents the vanilla loss; C denotes the addition of the correlation loss; D indicates the addition of the distribution loss; and CD corresponds to the combination of both correlation and distribution losses (*i.e.*, the proposed loss function). The table is organized with comparisons **vs. Mean** and **vs. Median** to succinctly present the performance metrics.

In the **vs. Mean** comparison, adding the correlation loss (C) to the vanilla setting (SBO-V) increases the win rate from 0.500 to 0.563, making it the most impactful individual component. In contrast, adding only the distribution loss (D) results in a smaller improvement from 0.500 to 0.508. However, the distribution loss should not be underestimated—it targets the overall data distribution, ensuring that the synthetic data not only capture pairwise correlations but also match higher-order statistical properties. When both

Table 9: Ablation study results of the Nemenyi post-hoc test and win rate (with standard error in parentheses) comparing row and column methods. The table presents performance across different configurations using baseline methods with SBO and IORBO (denoted IOR). The loss function variations are as follows: V represents the vanilla loss, C adds the correlation loss, D adds the distribution loss, and CD adds both distribution and correlation losses, forming the proposed loss function. Both Mean and Median aggregation strategies are evaluated. For details on p-value ranges, refer to Table 3.

	Statistical Tests							
vs. Mean	SBO-V	IOR-V	SBO-C	IOR-C	SBO-D	IOR-D	SBO-CD	IOR-CD
SBO-V		−−	−−	−−	0	−−	−−	−−
IOR-V	++		++	−−	++	0	++	−−
SBO-C	++	−−		−−	++	−−	0	−−
IOR-C	++	++	++		++	++	++	0
SBO-D	0	−−	−−	−−		−−	−−	−−
IOR-D	++	0	++	−−	++		++	−−
SBO-CD	++	−−	0	−−	++	−−		−−
IOR-CD	++	++	++	0	++	++	++	
	Win Rate							
vs. Mean	SBO-V	IOR-V	SBO-C	IOR-C	SBO-D	IOR-D	SBO-CD	IOR-CD
SBO-V		0.428 (0.005)	0.437 (0.005)	0.364 (0.005)	0.492 (0.005)	0.419 (0.005)	0.458 (0.005)	0.377 (0.005)
IOR-V	0.572 (0.005)		**0.538 (0.005)**	0.451 (0.005)	**0.579 (0.005)**	**0.526 (0.005)**	**0.547 (0.005)**	0.427 (0.005)
SBO-C	**0.563 (0.004)**	0.462 (0.005)		0.400 (0.005)	**0.555 (0.005)**	0.457 (0.005)	**0.520 (0.005)**	0.399 (0.005)
IOR-C	**0.636 (0.005)**	**0.549 (0.005)**	**0.600 (0.005)**		**0.639 (0.005)**	**0.564 (0.005)**	**0.614 (0.005)**	0.478 (0.005)
SBO-D	**0.508 (0.005)**	0.421 (0.005)	0.445 (0.005)	0.361 (0.005)		0.425 (0.005)	0.455 (0.005)	0.375 (0.005)
IOR-D	**0.581 (0.005)**	0.474 (0.005)	**0.543 (0.005)**	0.436 (0.005)	**0.575 (0.005)**		**0.544 (0.005)**	0.429 (0.005)
SBO-CD	**0.542 (0.005)**	0.453 (0.005)	0.480 (0.005)	0.386 (0.005)	**0.545 (0.005)**	0.456 (0.005)		0.390 (0.005)
IOR-CD	**0.623 (0.005)**	**0.573 (0.005)**	**0.601 (0.005)**	**0.522 (0.005)**	**0.625 (0.005)**	**0.571 (0.005)**	**0.610 (0.005)**	
	Statistical Tests							
vs. Median	SBO-V	IOR-V	SBO-C	IOR-C	SBO-D	IOR-D	SBO-CD	IOR-CD
SBO-V		−−	−−	−−	0	−−	−−	−−
IOR-V	++		0	−−	++	0	++	−−
SBO-C	++	0		−−	++	++	++	−−
IOR-C	++	++	++		++	++	++	0
SBO-D	0	−−	−−	−−		−−	−−	−−
IOR-D	++	0	−−	−−	++		0	−−
SBO-CD	++	−	−−	−−	++	0		−−
IOR-CD	++	++	++	0	++	++	++	
	Win Rate							
vs. Median	SBO-V	IOR-V	SBO-C	IOR-C	SBO-D	IOR-D	SBO-CD	IOR-CD
SBO-V		0.454 (0.005)	0.442 (0.005)	0.401 (0.005)	0.486 (0.005)	0.457 (0.005)	0.466 (0.005)	0.414 (0.005)
IOR-V	**0.546 (0.005)**		0.495 (0.005)	0.451 (0.005)	**0.541 (0.005)**	**0.526 (0.005)**	**0.517 (0.005)**	0.427 (0.005)
SBO-C	**0.558 (0.005)**	**0.505 (0.005)**		0.442 (0.005)	**0.558 (0.005)**	**0.514 (0.005)**	**0.524 (0.005)**	0.450 (0.005)
IOR-C	**0.599 (0.005)**	**0.549 (0.005)**	**0.558 (0.005)**		**0.593 (0.005)**	**0.564 (0.005)**	**0.562 (0.005)**	0.478 (0.005)
SBO-D	**0.514 (0.005)**	0.459 (0.005)	0.442 (0.005)	0.407 (0.005)		0.458 (0.005)	0.474 (0.005)	0.409 (0.005)
IOR-D	**0.543 (0.005)**	0.474 (0.005)	0.486 (0.005)	0.436 (0.005)	**0.542 (0.005)**		**0.506 (0.005)**	0.429 (0.005)
SBO-CD	**0.534 (0.005)**	0.483 (0.005)	0.476 (0.005)	0.438 (0.005)	**0.526 (0.005)**	0.494 (0.005)		0.426 (0.005)
IOR-CD	**0.586 (0.005)**	**0.573 (0.005)**	**0.550 (0.005)**	**0.522 (0.005)**	**0.591 (0.005)**	**0.571 (0.005)**	**0.574 (0.005)**	

loss components are combined in SBO-CD, the win rate reaches 0.542, indicating that the distribution loss provides complementary information that can enhance robustness and generalization, even though its impact is most pronounced when used in tandem with the correlation loss.

The effect of IOR-based optimization is even more substantial. Replacing SBO with IOR (IOR-V) boosts the win rate from 0.500 to 0.572, already surpassing most SBO variants except SBO-C. Further adding correlation loss (IOR-C) significantly improves performance, increasing the win rate from 0.572 to 0.636. Although adding only the distribution loss (IOR-D) results in a modest increase to 0.581, its contribution becomes crucial when combined with the correlation loss: the full combination (IOR-CD) achieves a win rate of 0.623, which, while slightly lower than IOR-C alone, offers more consistent performance across both **vs. Mean**

and **vs. Median** evaluations. Notably, IOR-CD maintains a stable win rate of 0.522 in both comparisons, suggesting that the distribution loss enhances the overall robustness and consistency of the optimization process.

A similar pattern emerges in the **vs. Median** results. The addition of C to SBO-V improves performance from 0.500 to 0.558, while adding D results in a smaller gain to 0.514. The combined loss SBO-CD achieves 0.534, again slightly lower than SBO-C, which underscores that while the correlation loss is the dominant factor in boosting win rates, the distribution loss contributes to a more reliable performance. When switching to IOR, IOR-V increases the win rate from 0.500 to 0.546, and adding C further boosts performance to 0.599, making it the best-performing individual term. Although adding D alone results in a slight drop to 0.543, the full IOR-CD configuration achieves 0.586—again, slightly lower than IOR-C alone but with the added benefit of improved generalization across evaluation criteria.

Overall, these results highlight three key findings. First, among the two loss components, the correlation loss (C) has the strongest impact on performance. Second, while the distribution loss (D) provides only modest gains when used alone, it plays a crucial complementary role when combined with C, ensuring that both pairwise relationships and higher-order statistical properties are effectively captured. Third, IOR-based optimization consistently enhances performance across all variants, with the best overall results achieved using the full combination (IOR-CD), which balances high win rates with robust generalization.

7 Conclusion

We have introduced a novel correlation- and distribution-aware loss function designed as a regularizer for DGMs in tabular data synthesis, which outperforms the vanilla loss function across most DGMs. To ensure its robustness, we provide theoretical guarantees, including stability and consistency. The results suggest that the proposed loss function effectively captures the complexities of arbitrary DGMs. Future research could focus on developing a tailored loss function for the `CTAB-GAN` family to match the strong performance seen with other DGMs. Additionally, we introduced a novel IORBO approach that leverages rank-based aggregation to ensure more meaningful comparisons between multiple objectives with varying units, providing a more robust optimization process. Finally, we developed a comprehensive benchmarking system evaluating statistical similarity, ML TSTR performance, and ML augmentation performance, with robust statistical tests, offering a valuable tool for future research.

References

Martin Arjovsky, Soumith Chintala, and Léon Bottou. Wasserstein generative adversarial networks. In *International Conference on Machine Learning*, 2017.

Karim Armanious, Chenming Jiang, Marc Fischer, Thomas Küstner, Tobias Hepp, Konstantin Nikolaou, Sergios Gatidis, and Bin Yang. MedGAN: Medical image translation using GANs. *Computerized Medical Imaging and Graphics*, 79:101684, 2020.

Laura Aviñó, Matteo Ruffini, and Ricard Gavaldà. Generating Synthetic but Plausible Healthcare Record Datasets. In *KDD workshop on Machine Learning for Medicine and Healthcare*, 2018.

James Bergstra, Rémi Bardenet, Yoshua Bengio, and Balázs Kégl. Algorithms for Hyper-Parameter Optimization. In *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, pp. 2546–2554, 2011.

Ramiro Camino, Christian Hammerschmidt, and Radu State. Generating Multi-Categorical Samples with Generative Adversarial Networks. In *ICML workshop on Theoretical Foundations and Applications of Deep Generative Models*, 2018.

Janez Demšar. Statistical comparisons of classifiers over multiple data sets. *Journal of Machine Learning Research*, 7:1–30, 2006. ISSN 15337928.

Anna Veronika Dorogush, Vasily Ershov, and Andrey Gulin. CatBoost: gradient boosting with categorical features support. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1810.11363*, 2018.

Dheeru Dua and Casey Graff. UCI Machine Learning Repository, 2017. URL `http://archive.ics.uci.edu/ml`.

RA Fisher. XV.—The Correlation between Relatives on the Supposition of Mendelian Inheritance. *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, 52(2):399–433, 1919.

Bruce B Frey. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation*. SAGE Publications, 2018.

M Friedman. The use of ranks to avoid the assumption of normality implicit in the analysis of variance. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 1937.

Milton Friedman. A Comparison of Alternative Tests of Significance for the Problem of m Rankings. *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 11(1):86–92, 1940.

Sylvia Frühwirth-Schnatter, Gilles Celeux, and Christian P Robert. Handbook of Mixture Analysis, 2018.

A Goncalves, P Ray, B Soper, J Stevens, L Coyle, and AP Sales. Generation and evaluation of synthetic patient data. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 20(1):108–108, 2020.

Ian Goodfellow, Jean Pouget-Abadie, Mehdi Mirza, Bing Xu, David Warde-Farley, Sherjil Ozair, Aaron Courville, and Yoshua Bengio. Generative Adversarial Nets. In Z. Ghahramani, M. Welling, C. Cortes, N. Lawrence, and K.Q. Weinberger (eds.), *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, volume 2, pp. 2672–2680. Curran Associates, Inc., 2014.

Ishaan Gulrajani, Faruk Ahmed, Martin Arjovsky, Vincent Dumoulin, and Aaron C Courville. Improved training of wasserstein gans. In *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, 2017.

John R Hershey and Peder A Olsen. Approximating the Kullback Leibler divergence between Gaussian mixture models. In *2007 IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech and Signal Processing-ICASSP'07*, volume 4, pp. IV–317. IEEE, 2007.

Alexia Jolicoeur-Martineau, Kilian Fatras, and Tal Kachman. Generating and imputing tabular data via diffusion and flow-based gradient-boosted trees. In *International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics*, pp. 1288–1296. PMLR, 2024.

Tero Karras, Samuli Laine, Miika Aittala, Janne Hellsten, Jaakko Lehtinen, and Timo Aila. Analyzing and improving the image quality of stylegan. In *IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (CVPR)*, pp. 8107–8116, 2020.

Tero Karras, Miika Aittala, Samuli Laine, Erik Härkönen, Janne Hellsten, Jaakko Lehtinen, and Timo Aila. Alias-Free Generative Adversarial Networks. *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, 34: 852–863, 2021.

Diederik P Kingma and Jimmy Ba. Adam: A Method for Stochastic Optimization. In *7th International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR)*, 2015.

Diederik P Kingma and Max Welling. Auto-encoding variational bayes. In *International Conference on Learning Representations*, 2013.

Akim Kotelnikov, Dmitry Baranchuk, Ivan Rubachev, and Artem Babenko. Tabddpm: Modelling tabular data with diffusion models. In *International Conference on Machine Learning*, pp. 17564–17579. PMLR, 2023.

Yann LeCun and Corinna Cortes. MNIST handwritten digit database, 2010. URL `http://yann.lecun.com/exdb/mnist/`.

Yingzhou Lu, Minjie Shen, Huazheng Wang, Xiao Wang, Capucine van Rechem, and Wenqi Wei. Machine learning for synthetic data generation: a review. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2302.04062*, 2023.

Frank J Massey Jr. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for goodness of fit. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 1951.

Peter Bjorn Nemenyi. *Distribution-free multiple comparisons.* Princeton University, 1963.

Neha Patki, Roy Wedge, and Kalyan Veeramachaneni. The Synthetic Data Vault. In *International Conference on Data Science and Advanced Analytics*. IEEE, 2016.

Karl Pearson. Method of moments and method of maximum likelihood. *Biometrika*, 28(1/2):34–59, 1936.

Karl Pearson. On the Criterion that a Given System of Deviations from the Probable in the Case of a Correlated System of Variables is Such that it Can be Reasonably Supposed to have Arisen from Random Sampling. *Breakthroughs in Statistics: Methodology and Distribution*, pp. 11–28, 1992.

F. Pedregosa, G. Varoquaux, A. Gramfort, V. Michel, B. Thirion, O. Grisel, M. Blondel, P. Prettenhofer, R. Weiss, V. Dubourg, J. Vanderplas, A. Passos, D. Cournapeau, M. Brucher, M. Perrot, and E. Duchesnay. Scikit-learn: Machine Learning in Python. *Journal of Machine Learning Research*, 12:2825–2830, 2011.

Sebastian Raschka, Joshua Patterson, and Corey Nolet. Machine Learning in Python: Main developments and technology trends in data science, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2002.04803*, 2020.

John A Rice. *Mathematical statistics and data analysis*, volume 371. Thomson/Brooks/Cole Belmont, CA, 2007.

Jascha Sohl-Dickstein, Eric Weiss, Niru Maheswaranathan, and Surya Ganguli. Deep Unsupervised Learning using Nonequilibrium Thermodynamics. In *International Conference on Machine Learning*, pp. 2256–2265. PMLR, 2015.

Chang Sun, Johan van Soest, and Michel Dumontier. Generating synthetic personal health data using conditional generative adversarial networks combining with differential privacy. *Journal of Biomedical Informatics*, pp. 104404, 2023.

Gemini Team, Rohan Anil, Sebastian Borgeaud, Yonghui Wu, Jean-Baptiste Alayrac, Jiahui Yu, Radu Soricut, Johan Schalkwyk, Andrew M Dai, Anja Hauth, et al. Gemini: a family of highly capable multimodal models. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2312.11805*, 2023.

Minh H Vu, Tommy Löfstedt, Tufve Nyholm, and Raphael Sznitman. A Question-Centric Model for Visual Question Answering in Medical Imaging. *IEEE Transactions on Medical Imaging*, 39(9):2856–2868, 2020.

Minh H Vu, Gabriella Norman, Tufve Nyholm, and Tommy Löfstedt. A Data-Adaptive Loss Function for Incomplete Data and Incremental Learning in Semantic Image Segmentation. *IEEE Transactions on Medical Imaging*, 41(6):1320–1330, 2021.

Lei Xu, Maria Skoularidou, Alfredo Cuesta-Infante, and Kalyan Veeramachaneni. Modeling tabular data using conditional GAN. In *Proceedings of the 33rd International Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems*, pp. 7335–7345, 2019.

Alexandre Yahi, Rami Vanguri, Noémie Elhadad, and Nicholas P Tatonetti. Generative Adversarial Networks for Electronic Health Records: A Framework for Exploring and Evaluating Methods for Predicting Drug-Induced Laboratory Test Trajectories. In *NIPS workshop on machine learning for health care*, 2017.

Lantao Yu, Weinan Zhang, Jun Wang, and Yong Yu. Seqgan: Sequence generative adversarial nets with policy gradient. In *AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence*, 2017.

EL Hacen Zein and Tanguy Urvoy. Tabular data generation: Can we fool xgboost? In *NeurIPS 2022 First Table Representation Workshop*, 2022.

Jun Zhang, Graham Cormode, Cecilia M Procopiuc, Divesh Srivastava, and Xiaokui Xiao. Privbayes: Private data release via bayesian networks. *ACM Transactions on Database Systems*, 42(4):25, 2017.

Zilong Zhao, Aditya Kunar, Robert Birke, and Lydia Y Chen. CTAB-GAN: Effective Table Data Synthesizing. In *Asian Conference on Machine Learning*, pp. 97–112. PMLR, 2021.

Jun-Yan Zhu, Taesung Park, Phillip Isola, and Alexei A. Efros. Unpaired Image-to-Image Translation Using Cycle-Consistent Adversarial Networks. In *2017 IEEE International Conference on Computer Vision (ICCV)*, pp. 2242–2251, 2017.