Sample Efficient Offline RL via T-symmetry Enforced Latent State-Stitching

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Editors: List of editors' names

Abstract

Offline reinforcement learning (RL) has achieved notable progress in recent years. However, most existing offline RL methods require a large amount of training data to achieve reasonable performance and offer limited generalizability in out-of-distribution (OOD) regions due to conservative data-related regularizations. This seriously hinders the usability of offline RL in solving many real-world applications, where the available data are often limited. In this study, we introduce TELS, a highly sample-efficient offline RL algorithm that enables state-stitching in a compact latent space regulated by the fundamental time-reversal symmetry (T-symmetry) of dynamical systems. Specifically, we introduce a T-symmetry enforced inverse dynamics model (TS-IDM) to derive well-regulated latent state representations that greatly facilitate OOD generalization. A guide-policy can then be learned entirely in the latent space to optimize for the reward-maximizing next state, bypassing the conservative action-level behavioral regularization adopted in most offline RL methods. Finally, the optimized action can be extracted using the learned TS-IDM, together with the optimized latent next state from the guide-policy. We conducted comprehensive experiments on both the D4RL benchmark tasks and a real-world industrial control environment, TELS achieves superior sample efficiency and OOD generalization performance, significantly outperforming existing offline RL methods in a wide range of challenging small-sample tasks.

Keywords: sample efficiency, representation learning, fundamental symmetry for dynamic modeling, offline reinforcement learning

1. Introduction

Offline reinforcement learning (RL) has seen rapid progress in recent years. It bypasses the reliance on environment interactions as in online RL methods, directly utilizing pre-collected offline data for policy learning, thus being ideal for many real-world tasks that lack high-fidelity simulators or have environment interaction restrictions (Levine et al., 2020; Fujimoto et al., 2018; Zhan et al., 2022). However, offline RL is also known to be prone to value overestimation, caused by extrapolation error when evaluating out-of-distribution (OOD) samples and amplified through the interactive dynamic programming procedure in RL (Kumar et al., 2019; Fujimoto et al., 2019). In the past few years, quite a few offline

RL methods have been proposed, which commonly adopt the pessimism principle using strategies such as adding explicit or implicit policy constraints to prevent the selection of OOD actions (Kumar et al., 2019; Fujimoto et al., 2019; Fujimoto and Gu, 2021), penalizing value function on unseen samples (Kumar et al., 2020; Bai et al., 2021; Lyu et al., 2022), or adopting in-sample learning to implicit regularize policy optimization (Kostrikov et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2023). What's in common with these methods is the use of some kind of action-level constraints to avoid OOD exploitation. Although this could stabilize offline value and policy learning, it inevitably leads to over-conservatism and crippled OOD generalization performance (Li et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2023). Most of the existing offline RL methods only perform well when trained in sufficiently large amounts of offline data with reasonable state-action space coverage (e.g., 1 million samples for simple D4RL tasks (Fu et al., 2020)). This forms a stark contrast to the reality of most real-world scenarios, where the historical data are often limited and scaling up data collection can be rather costly (Zhan et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2023). Hence although offline RL is initially proposed to solve a wide range of real-world tasks, we still haven't seen too many practical deployments to date.

In this paper, we find that enabling state-stitching in a coherent, fundamental symmetry-enforced latent space can actually lead to a surprisingly strong sample-efficient offline RL algorithm. We refer to our method as Offline RL via **T**-symmetry **E**nforced **L**atent **S**tate-Stitching (TELS). Specifically, we introduce a T-symmetry enforced inverse dynamics model (TS-IDM) to not only learn well-behaved T-symmetry consistency representations that greatly alleviate the difficulty of OOD generalization but can also facilitate effective action inference. Within the learned latent state space, we can optimize a T-symmetry regularized guide-policy to output the next state that maximizes the reward, bypassing the conservative action-level behavioural constraints as used in typical offline RL algorithms. Lastly, the optimized action can be easily extracted by plugging the output of the guide-policy as the goal state in the learned TS-IDM. The resulting algorithm achieves amazing sample efficiency and OOD generalization capability, significantly outperforming existing offline RL algorithms in a wide range of challenging reduced-size D4RL benchmark datasets, even using as few as 1% of the original samples. Our method greatly pushes the performance limit of offline RL under low data regimes, offering a new opportunity to tackle many previously unsolvable real-world tasks.

2. Offline RL via T-symmetry Enforced Latent State-Stitching

We now present our proposed method, TELS, which comprises a T-symmetry enforced inverse dynamics model (TS-IDM) integrated with an effective offline policy optimization procedure operated in latent state space (illustrated in Figure 1). TS-IDM overcomes multiple drawbacks of TDM in TSRL (Cheng et al., 2023), which not only extracts the generalizable, T-symmetry preserving representations from the limited data, but also can be seamlessly used as an execute-policy for optimal action extraction.

2.1. T-symmetry enforced inverse dynamic model

As illustrated in Figure 1, if inspecting the input and output of our proposed TS-IDM, it functions similarly to an inverse dynamics model that takes current and next state (s, s') as input and outputs the predicted action a. However, TS-IDM's architecture is special in several aspects. In its interior, it comprises a state encoder $\phi_s(s) = z_s$ and a corresponding

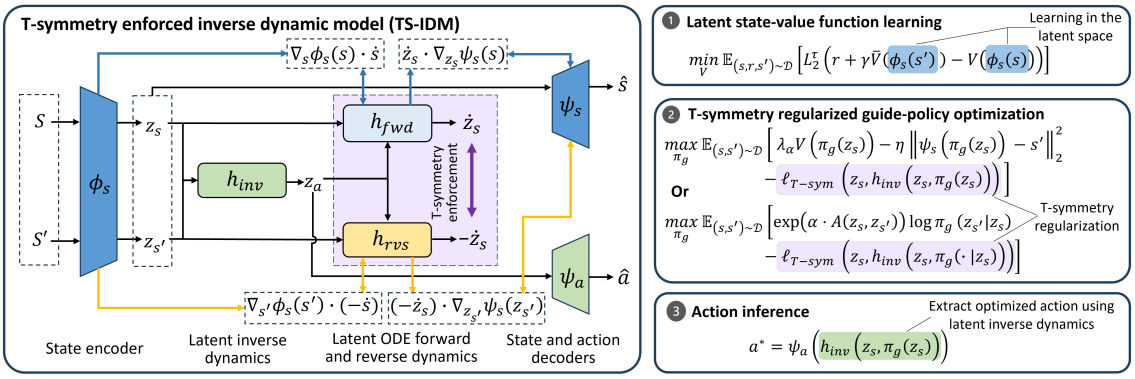

Figure 1: Overview of **T**-symmetry **E**nforced **L**atent **S**tate-Stitching (TELS) framework.

decoder $\psi_s(z_s) = \hat{s}$; a latent inverse dynamics model $h_{inv}(z_s, z_{s'}) = z_a$ followed by an action decoder $\psi_a(z_a) = \hat{a}$; and most importantly, a pair of T-symmetry enforced latent ODE forward and reverse dynamics predictors $h_{fwd}(z_s, z_a) = \dot{z}_s$ and $h_{rvs}(z_{s'}, z_a) = -\dot{z}_s$. In the following content, we will dive into the design intuitions and learning objectives of these components.

Encoding and decoding. As previously discussed, constructing an informative and well-structured latent space is critical for sample-efficient offline policy optimization. To this end, we introduce a state encoder $\phi_s(s) = z_s$ to map a state s into corresponding latent representation z_s, and also a state decoder $\psi_s(z_s) = s$ to reconstruct the original state from its latent embedding, ensuring that the learned latent representations remain faithful to the original state space and avoid excessive distortion.

We then construct a latent inverse dynamics model $h_{inv}(z_s, z_{s'}) = z_a$, which infers the latent action z_a from the latent state transitions $(z_s, z_{s'})$. By inferring actions from state transitions, the learned latent space implicitly encodes the underlying dynamics of the environment. Moreover, the inverse dynamic model h_{inv} can be integrated with a pair of latent ODE dynamic models to derive the T-symmetry property of the system, which we will introduce in more detail shortly. Finally, to ensure that the inferred actions are both meaningful and interpretable, we employ an action decoder $\psi_a(z_a) = \hat{a}$ to map the latent action back to its original action space. We can thus formulate the reconstruction loss for the states and actions as follows:

$$\ell_{\text{rec}}(s, a, s') = \underbrace{\|\psi_s(\phi_s(s)) - s\|_2^2}_{\text{reconstruction loss of states}} + \underbrace{\|\psi_a(h_{inv}(z_s, z_{s'})) - a\|_2^2}_{\text{reconstruction loss of actions}} \tag{1}$$

Latent ODE forward and reverse dynamics. Drawing inspiration from previous research that integrates physics-informed insights into dynamical systems modeling (Brunton et al., 2016; Champion et al., 2019; Huh et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2023), we embed a pair of latent ODE forward and reverse dynamics $h_{fwd}(z_s, z_a) = \dot{z}_s$ and $h_{rvs}(z_{s'}, z_a) = -\dot{z}_s$ to separately capture the forward and reverse time evolution in the latent states. We are interested in modeling ODE systems because it encourages learning parsimonious models helpful to uncover fundamental properties from the data that can maximally promote generalization (Brunton et al., 2016; Champion et al., 2019). Note that based on the chain rule, we can derive the supervision signal for the latent dynamics models with $\dot{z}_s = \frac{dz}{dt} = \frac{dz_s}{ds} \cdot \frac{ds}{dt} = \nabla_s z_s \cdot \dot{s} = \nabla_s \phi_s(s) \cdot \dot{s}$ to enforce the ODE property. Therefore, we

introduce the following training losses for h_{fwd} and h_{rvs}:

$$\begin{aligned}\ell_{\text{dyn}}(s,s') = & \underbrace{\|(\nabla_s z_s)\dot{s} - \dot{z}_s\|_2^2}_{\text{latent ODE forward dynamics}} + \underbrace{\|(\nabla_{s'} z_{s'})(-\dot{s}) - (-\dot{z}_s)\|_2^2}_{\text{latent ODE reverse dynamics}} \\ =&\|\nabla_s \phi_s(s)\dot{s} - h_{fwd}(z_s, z_a)\|_2^2 + \|\nabla_{s'}\phi_s(s')(-\dot{s}) - h_{rvs}(z_{s'}, z_a)\|_2^2, \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

where the latent action z_a is obtained from the latent inverse dynamics model $h_{inv}(z_s, z_{s'})$.

ODE property enforcement on state decoder. Note that in $\ell_{\text{dyn}}(s,s')$, we actually implicitly enforced the ODE property on the state encoder ϕ_s, the same should also apply to the state decoder ψ_s to ensure compatibility with the T-symmetry formalism, i.e. the time-derivative of the state encoder $\frac{d\phi_s(s)}{dt}$ and decoder $\frac{d\psi_s(z_s)}{dt}$ should behave in the same way as $\dot{z}_s$ and $\dot{s}$. Similar to the previous treatment on the state encoder, as $\dot{s} = \frac{d\psi_s(z_s)}{dt} = \frac{d\psi_s(z_s)}{dz_s} \cdot \frac{dz_s}{dt} = \nabla_{z_s}\psi_s(z_s) \cdot \dot{z}_s$, we can use the following objective to enforce the ODE property for the state decoder ψ_s:

$$\begin{aligned}\ell_{\text{ode}}(s,s') = & \underbrace{\|\nabla_{z_s}\psi_s(z_s)\cdot\dot{z}_s - \dot{s}\|_2^2}_{\text{enforce ODE of } \psi_s \text{ on } h_{fwd}} + \underbrace{\|\nabla_{z_{s'}}\psi_s(z_{s'})\cdot(-\dot{z}_s) - (-\dot{s})\|_2^2}_{\text{enforce ODE of } \psi_s \text{ on } h_{rvs}} \\ =&\|\nabla_{z_s}\psi_s(z_s)\cdot h_{fwd}(z_s,z_a) - \dot{s}\|_2^2 + \|\nabla_{z_{s'}}\psi_s(z_{s'})\cdot h_{rvs}(z_{s'},z_a) + \dot{s}\|_2^2 \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Again, the latent action z_a is obtained from $h_{inv}(z_s, z_{s'})$.

Notably, the ODE property enforcement in Eq. (3) is not considered in the T-symmetry enforced dynamics model (TDM) proposed by TSRL (Cheng et al., 2023). In other words, TDM only enforces the ODE properties for encoders but not for decoders. This can cause inconsistency between the learned dynamics and the underlying ODE structure, leading to inaccurate or misaligned ODE representations.

T-symmetry enforcement. To further regularize the learned latent representations, we incorporate the extended version of T-symmetry (Cheng et al., 2023) by requiring $h_{fwd}(z_s, z_a) = -h_{rvs}(z_{s'}, z_a)$, which leads to the following T-symmetry consistency loss:

$$\ell_{\text{T-sym}}(z_s, z_a) = \|h_{fwd}(z_s,z_a) + h_{rvs}(z_s + h_{fwd}(z_s,z_a), z_a)\|_2^2 \tag{4}$$

where we use the fact that $z_{s'} = z_s + \dot{z}_s = z_s + h_{fwd}(z_s, z_a)$ and $h_{rvs}(z_s + h_{fwd}(z_s,z_a), z_a) = -\dot{z}_s = -h_{fwd}(z_s,z_a)$ to further couple the learning process of h_{fwd} and h_{rvs}. Moreover, given a latent state-action pair (z_s, z_a), the above T-symmetry consistency loss can also serve as an evaluation metric to assess their agreement with the learned TS-IDM. A large T-symmetry loss indicates that the latent state-action representation (z_s, z_a) induced by some (s, s') may not satisfy the fundamental dynamics pattern, making it more likely to be a problematic or non-generalizable sample.

Overall learning objective. Finally, the complete training loss function of TS-IDM is as follows:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{TS-IDM}} = \sum_{(s,a,s')\in\mathcal{D}} \Big[\ell_{\text{rec}} + \beta\cdot(\ell_{\text{dyn}} + \ell_{\text{ode}} + \ell_{\text{T-sym}})\Big](s,a,s') \tag{5}$$

where β is a hyperparameter that balances extracting fundamental dynamics properties and ensuring the interpretability of the learned representation. Note that we use the same β

for ℓ_{dyn}, ℓ_{ode}, and $\ell_{\text{T-sym}}$ terms, this is to ensure that the ODE property and T-symmetry regularization are enforced in the same scale for state encoder ϕ_s, decoder ψ_s, latent inverse dynamics h_{inv}, latent ODE forward and reverse dynamics h_{fwd} and h_{rvs}, as all of them are strongly coupled. This forms a strongly consistent, T-symmetry preserving ODE system to capture the fundamental dynamics properties in the offline dataset, while also helping reduce unnecessary hyperparameters of the learning process. In Appendix D.3, we provide detailed results on the impact of β on the learning process of TS-IDM.

2.2. Latent space offline policy optimization

Once we have learned TS-IDM, we can extract three highly useful components from it to facilitate sample-efficient downstream offline policy optimization, including: 1) a state encoder $\phi(s)$ that provides an ideal, well-behaved latent space for state-stitching; 2) T-symmetry consistency as an additional regularizer to prevent erroneous generalization when learning a guide-policy in the latent state space; and 3) the TS-IDM itself can serve as an execute-policy to extract optimized action given a learned guide-policy.

Latent state-value functions learning. Based on the state encoder $\phi_s(s)$ from the learned TS-IDM, we can convert the entire offline policy optimization process into the latent state space, which enjoys both a stable learning process and generalizability due to more compact and well-behaved representations. Specifically, we can use a similar expectile regression loss as in Eq. (10) to learn a state-value function $V(z_s)$ in the latent state space:

$$\min_V \mathbb{E}_{(s,r,s')\sim\mathcal{D}}\Big[L_2^\tau\left(r+\gamma\bar{V}\left(\phi_s(s')\right)-V\left(\phi_s(s)\right)\right)\Big] \tag{6}$$

T-symmetry regularized guide-policy optimization. A key benefit of learning within the T-symmetry preserving latent space is that, as T-symmetry captures what is essential and invariant about the dynamical system, it can provide generalizable information even for OOD samples beyond the offline dataset. This naturally favors learning a reward-maximizing guide-policy π_g in the latent space, which can enjoy more effective state-stitching. Moreover, by leveraging the T-symmetry consistency term $\ell_{\text{T-sym}}(\cdot)$ in Eq. (4) as an additional regularizer, we can prevent π_g from outputting problematic and non-generalizable latent next state, thereby further enhancing logical state-wise OOD generalization. In TELS, we provide two instantiations for guide-policy optimization, depending on the choice of using deterministic policy $\pi_g(z_s)$ or stochastic policy $\pi_g(z_{s'}|z_s)$:

- Deterministic policy:

$$\max_{\pi_g} \mathbb{E}_{(s,s')\sim\mathcal{D}}\Big[\lambda_\alpha V(\pi_g(z_s))-\eta\|\psi_s(\pi_g(z_s))-s'\|_2^2-\ell_{\text{T-sym}}\left(z_s,h_{ivs}\left(z_s,\pi_g(z_s)\right)\right)\Big] \tag{7}$$

- Stochastic policy:

$$\max_{\pi_g} \mathbb{E}_{(s,s')\sim\mathcal{D}}\Big[\exp(\alpha\cdot A(z_s,z_{s'}))\log\pi_g(z_{s'}\mid z_s)-\ell_{\text{T-sym}}(z_s,h_{ivs}(z_s,\pi_g(\cdot|z_s))\Big] \tag{8}$$

where $z_s=\phi_s(s)$, $z_{s'}=\phi_s(s')$, and $A(z_s,z_{s'})=r+\gamma V\left(z_{s'}\right)-V\left(z_s\right)$. For the deterministic policy $\pi_g(z_s)$, we optimize the guide-policy by maximizing the latent state-value function V weighted by a normalization term λ_α, together with two extra regularization terms. The first regularizes the next state decoded from the guide-policy using state decoder ψ_s should

not deviate too much from the next state s' in the dataset. The second term regularizes the guide-policy induced latent state-action pair (i.e., $(z_s, z_a) = (z_s, h_{inv}(z_s, \pi_g(z_s)))$) to comply with the T-symmetry consistency specified in the learned TS-IDM. For the stochastic guide-policy $\pi_g(z_{s'}|z_s)$, we adopt a similar AWR-style objective as in Eq. (11), while also incorporating the T-symmetry consistency regularization as in the deterministic version. In our experiments, we find that the deterministic version objective Eq. (7) works well for the MuJoCo locomotion tasks, while the stochastic version Eq. (8) works better for more complex Antmaze tasks (Fu et al., 2020), potentially due to the more stochastic nature of the task environment.

Action inference. After learning the guide-policy π_g, we can further use it to extract the optimized action for control. To do this, we can simply use the optimized latent next state $z^*_{s'}$ obtained from guide-policy $\pi_g(z_s)$ or $\pi_g(\cdot|z_s)$, and plug it into the learned latent inverse dynamics model $h_{inv}(z_s, z_{s'})$ in TS-IDM to replace $z_{s'}$. The final action can be extracted by decoding the resulting latent action from h_{inv} using the action decoder ψ_a :

$$a^* = \psi_a \left(h_{inv} \left(z_s, \pi_g(z_s) \right) \right) \tag{9}$$

Note that there is no training process needed for this stage. Moreover, throughout our policy optimization process, actions are completely not involved, allowing TELS to directly bypass the conservatism issue caused by the action-level regularization. Please refer to Algorithm 1 in Appendix E for the complete training and inference procedure of TELS.

3. Experiments

In this section, we present the evaluation results of TELS on the D4RL benchmark tasks (Fu et al., 2020) against behavior cloning (BC), and existing offline RL methods: TD3+BC (Fujimoto and Gu, 2021), CQL (Kumar et al., 2020), IQL (Kostrikov et al., 2021), DOGE (Li et al., 2022), POR (Xu et al., 2022a), model-based methods MOPO (Yu et al., 2020) and COMBO (Yu et al., 2021), diffusion-based method IDQL (Hansen-Estruch et al., 2023), and TSRL (Cheng et al., 2023), the current SOTA method in small-sample settings. More results and implementation details can be found in Appendix D, E.

3.1. Comparative evaluation on small-sample setting

Evaluation on D4RL benchmarks. In Table 1, we evaluate TELS against baseline methods on challenging reduced-size D4RL datasets (5k∼100k samples, about 0.5∼10% of their original sizes).

As shown in Table 1, most baselines fail to learn reasonable policies under small datasets, especially in the challenging 100k Antmaze-medium/large datasets. For example, conventional offline RL methods like TD3+BC and CQL perform poorly on small datasets, primarily due to their over-conservative data-related policy constraints. Model-based methods also perform badly due to insufficient samples to learn accurate dynamics models and the use of problematic model rollout data. Baselines that have generalization promotion designs, such as DOGE and TSRL, perform slightly better but still fail miserably in the challenging Antmaze-m/l tasks, as they still adopt conservative action-level constraints to stabilize policy learning. Recent diffusion-based methods like IDQL, although perform well on large datasets,

Table 1: Normalized scores on reduced-size D4RL datasets (averaged over the final 10 evaluations with 5 seeds)

Task	Size (ratio)	BC	TD3+BC	MOPO	COMBO	CQL	IQL	DOGE	IDQL	POR	TSRL	TELS
Hopper-m	10k (1%)	29.7±11.7	40.1±18.6	5.5 ± 2.3	30.2 ± 28.0	43.1±24.6	46.7±6.5	44.2 ± 10.2	44.2±12.1	46.4 ± 1.7	62.0±3.7	**77.3 ± 10.7**
Hopper-mr	10k (2.5%)	12.1±5.3	7.3±6.1	6.8 ± 0.3	10.6 ± 13.1	2.3±1.9	13.4±3.1	17.9 ± 4.5	21.7±7.0	17.4 ± 6.2	21.8±8.2	**43.2 ± 3.5**
Hopper-me	10k (0.5%)	27.8±10.7	17.8±7.9	5.8 ± 5.8	13.9 ± 22.0	29.9±4.5	34.3±8.7	50.5 ± 25.2	43.2±4.4	37.9 ± 6.1	50.9±8.6	**100.9 ± 6.8**
Halfcheetah-m	10k (1%)	26.4±7.3	16.4±10.2	-1.1 ± 4.1	16.5 ± 2.4	35.8±3.8	29.9±0.12	36.2 ± 3.4	36.4±1.5	33.3±3.2	38.4±3.1	**40.8 ± 0.6**
Halfcheetah-mr	10k (5%)	14.3±7.8	17.9±9.5	11.7 ± 5.2	11.8 ± 15.3	8.1±9.4	22.7±6.4	23.4 ± 3.6	26.7±1.0	27.5±3.6	28.1±3.5	**33.2 ± 1.0**
Halfcheetah-me	10k (0.5%)	19.1±9.4	15.4±10.7	-1.1 ± 1.4	5.2 ± 6.1	26.5±10.8	10.5±8.8	26.7 ± 6.6	38.8±1.9	34.7±2.6	39.9±21.1	**40.7 ± 1.2**
Walker2d-m	10k (1%)	15.8±14.1	7.4±13.1	3.1 ± 4.7	3.6 ± 1.1	18.8±18.8	22.5±3.8	45.1 ± 10.2	31.7±14.2	22.2±3.6	49.7±10.6	**62.4 ± 5.3**
Walker2d-mr	10k (3.3%)	1.4±1.9	5.7±5.8	3.3 ± 2.7	4.2 ± 15.6	8.5±2.19	10.7±11.9	13.5 ± 8.4	12.2±10.5	14.8±4.2	26.0±11.3	**54.8 ± 6.0**
Walker2d-me	10k (0.5%)	21.7±8.2	7.9±9.1	0.6 ± 2.7	0.1 ± 0.1	19.1±14.4	26.5±8.6	35.3 ± 11.6	21.8±14.5	20.1±8.6	46.4±17.4	**87.4 ± 13.3**
Antmaze-u	10k (1%)	44.7 ± 42.1	0.7 ± 1.2	0.0	0.0	5.5 ± 2.3	65.1 ± 19.4	56.3 ± 24.4	67.5 ±12.4	6.1 ± 7.3	76.1 ± 15.6	**88.7 ± 7.7**
Antmaze-u-d	10k (1%)	24.1 ± 22.2	16.27 ± 16.4	0.0	0.0	0.5 ± 0.1	34.6 ± 18.5	41.7 ± 18.9	55.1 ± 36.8	42.1 ± 14.2	52.2 ± 22.1	**60.9 ± 16.9**
Antmaze-m-d	100k (10%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8 ± 5.9	0.0	9.0 ±3.4	0.0	0.0	**47.2 ± 17.3**
Antmaze-m-p	100k (10%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5 ± 5.4	0.0	9.4 ± 14.7	0.0	0.0	**62.9 ± 17.8**
Antmaze-l-d	100k (10%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6 ± 4.1	0.0	16.1 ± 8.4	0.0	0.0	**39.8 ± 14.1**
Antmaze-l-p	100k (10%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5 ± 4.1	0.0	9.7 ±8.5	0.0	0.0	**47.3 ± 13.1**
Pen-human	5k (100%)	34.4	8.4	9.7	27.7	37.5	71.5	42.6 ± 16.3	67.9 ± 17.3	64.1 ± 25.3	80.1 ± 18.1	77.4 ± 17.2
Hammer-human	5k (100%)	1.5	2.0	0.2	0.2	**4.4**	1.4	-1.2 ± 0.2	2.7 ± 1.3	0.2 ± 0.1	0.2 ± 0.3	3.6 ± 1.5
Door-human	5k (100%)	0.5	0.5	-0.2	-0.3	9.9	4.3	-1.1 ± 0.2	10.5 ± 1.5	0.1 ± 0.1	0.5 ± 0.3	**11.8 ± 1.6**
Relocate-human	5k (100%)	0.0	-0.3	-0.2	-0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1 ± 0.2	0.2 ± 0.1	0.1 ± 0.1	0.1 ± 0.1	0.3 ± 0.2

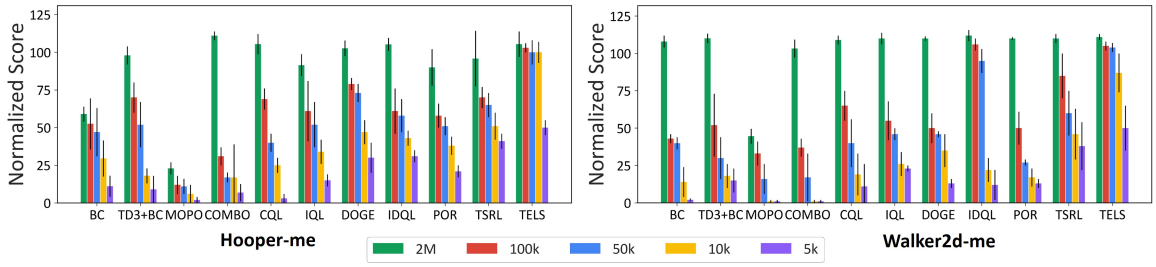

Figure 2: Performance of TELS against baselines under different data sizes

struggle to learn when given limited data. By contrast, TELS dominates the chart and outperforms all other baselines in all tasks, sometimes by a large margin. This is attributed to the leverage of fundamental, data distribution-agnostic T-symmetry property for policy learning, which greatly improves the OOD generalization performance.

We also evaluate the performance of the algorithms across different dataset sizes in Figure 2. The results show that TELS can robustly maintain reasonable performance even with only 5k samples, surpassing all the other methods, while most baseline methods suffer from significant performance drop when training samples are decreased.

Evaluation on real-world industrial control test environment. To further demonstrate the effectiveness of TELS in solving real-world industrial control tasks, we deploy TELS in a real-world DC cooling control testbed (Zhan et al., 2025b) and compare against CQL, IQL, and TSRL. This testbed comprises 22 servers with oscillating server loads and an Air-Cooling Unit (ACU) for cooling control. A small historical operational dataset (43k real-world samples collected over 61 days) with 105 state-action features is used for policy learning. The goal is to improve the energy efficiency of the DC's cooling systems (minimizing the Air-side Cooling Load Factor (ACLF), calculated as the ratio of energy consumption of ACU to servers), while satisfying thermal safety constraints (no overheating). We follow the same real-world experiment setup as in (Zhan et al., 2025b) and present the details in Appendix F.

Table 2: Evaluation results in the real-world DC cooling control testbed (6-hour length experiments)

Testbed	**CQL**	**IQL**	**TSRL**	**TELS**
Server energy consumption (kWh)	41.44	39.80	40.30	40.61
ACU energy consumption (kWh)	4.16	16.27	10.95	8.19
Energy efficiency measure: ACLF (the lower the better)	**10.3**%	40.89%	27.16%	**20.17%** ↓
Percentage of thermal safety violation (the lower the better)	40.99%	**0.00**%	**0.00**%	**0.00**%

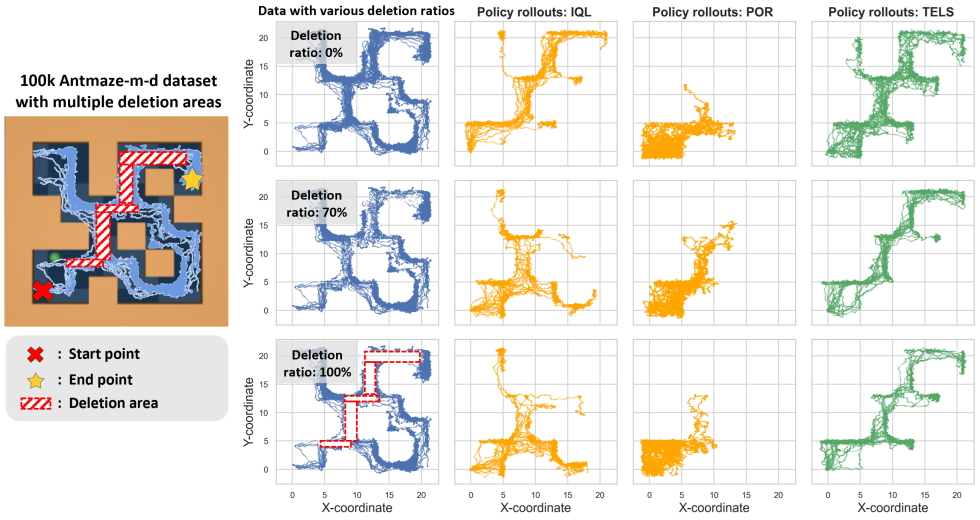

Figure 3: **Left:** Illustration of the 100k Antmaze-m-d task with multiple deletion areas, where the red cross denotes the start point, the yellow star denotes the goal locations, and the red shaded areas denote the data deletion regions. **Right:** Visualization of the training dataset and policy rollout trajectories generated by trained policies from various algorithms under varying deletion ratios.

As shown in Table 2, under a similar server energy consumption level (around 40 kWh), TELS learns the best control policy, achieving 20.17% ACLF while maintaining zero thermal safety violations. CQL learns a naive policy that achieves lower ACLF but with significant thermal safety violations. This shows TELS's effectiveness in solving real-world complex industry control tasks.

3.2. Analysis and ablation of TELS

OOD generalization capability. To further examine the OOD generalizability of TELS, we construct a very challenging task based on the reduced-size 100k Antmaze-m-d dataset, as illustrated in Figure 3. Specifically, we randomly remove samples within 5 critical regions along the critical paths from the start to the goal locations. This task requires extremely strong OOD generalization capability to solve, as the vital information for the optimal trajectory is extremely scarce or completely OOD. We train IQL, POR, and TELS on the remaining data and plot their policy rollouts over 20 episodes for performance evaluation and behavior analyses (due to page limit, we also include results for IDQL, DOGE, TSRL in Appendix D.2). As shown in Figure 3, IQL can only achieve some success when the deletion ratio is 0%, and POR fails to reach the goal in all cases. By contrast, TELS consistently learns optimal policy even with 70% and 100% deletion rates. It can effectively utilize the limited information provided in the sparse remaining data samples at the boundaries of the

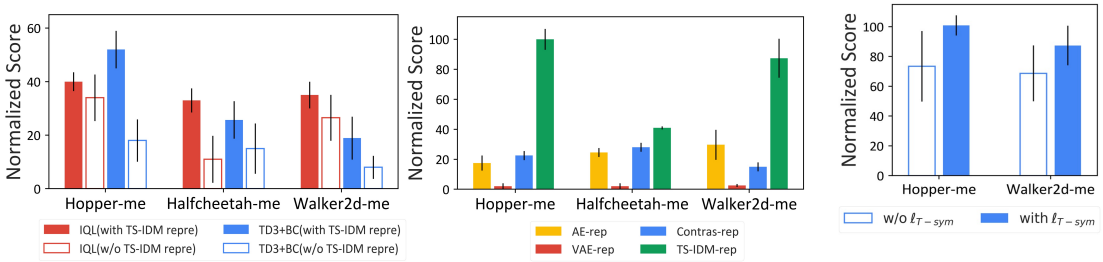

Figure 4: **Left:** Performance of IQL and TD3+BC on 10k datasets with or without using the representation from TS-IDM. **Right:** The performance of TELS with different representation models.

Figure 5: Impact of $\ell_{\text{T-sym}}$ on policy optimization.

deletion areas for policy learning. These highlight the extraordinary OOD generalization capability of TELS in extremely challenging low-data regimes.

Effectiveness of the learned representations. To verify the effectiveness of the learned latent representation in TS-IDM, we use TS-IDM's state encoder $\phi_s(s)$ as the representation learning module on top of two conventional offline RL methods: IQL and TD3+BC. Figure 4 (left) reveals significant performance improvements and variance reduction when IQL and TD3+BC are trained within the latent state space induced by $\phi_s(s)$, suggesting that TS-IDM indeed learns compact and generalizable representations that benefit policy learning. To further evaluate the quality of TS-IDM's representations, in Figure 4 (right), we replace TS-IDM in TELS with other representation learning methods, including autoencoder ("AE-rep"), variational autoencoder ("VAE-rep") (Kingma and Welling, 2014), and contrastive learning method SimCLR ("Contras-rep") (Chen et al., 2020). The results show that the TS-IDM representation achieves substantially better performance as compared to AE, VAE, and contrastive representations, due to the information-rich and well-behaved latent space learned in TS-IDM.

Ablations on regularizer terms in policy optimization. We also conduct ablation experiments in Figure 5 to validate the effectiveness of the T-symmetry consistency regularizer term $\ell_{\text{T-sym}}$ during the guide-policy optimization process of TELS. The results demonstrate that incorporating this term can effectively enhance performance while reducing variance, highlighting the importance of utilizing T-symmetry consistency regularization to promote OOD generalization and learning stability.

4. Conclusion

We propose a highly sample-efficient offline RL algorithm that learns an optimized policy within the latent space regulated by the fundamental T-symmetry property. Specifically, we develop a T-symmetry enforced inverse dynamics model, TS-IDM, to construct a well-behaved and generalizable latent space, effectively mitigating the challenges of OOD generalization. By learning a T-symmetry regularized guide-policy within this latent space, we can obtain the reward-maximizing next state to serve as the goal state input in the learned TS-IDM for optimal action extraction. Through extensive experiments, we show that TELS achieves strong OOD generalization capability and SOTA small-sample performance. Moreover, we empirically show that TS-IDM can also function as a representation learning model to provide informative representations and enhance the performance of existing methods under the small-sample setting.

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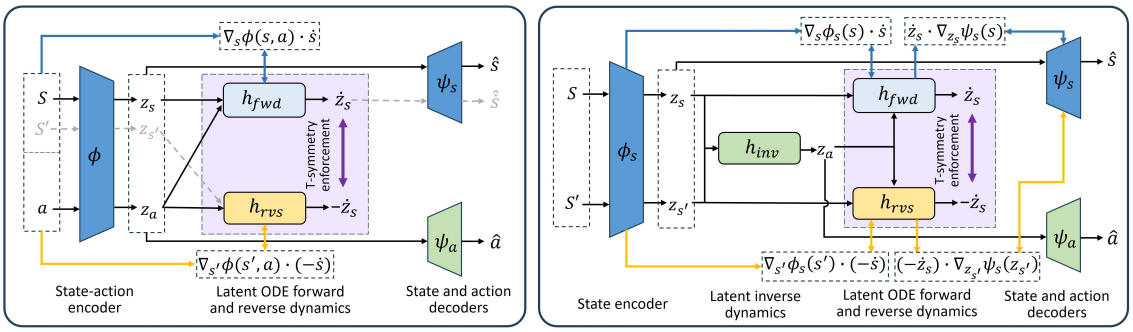
Appendix A. Additional Discussion on Related Works

In this section, we present a detailed discussion of the connections and differences between our proposed method, TELS with TSRL (Cheng et al., 2023), POR (Xu et al., 2022a), and conventional model-based approaches (Janner et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2020; Kidambi et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Zhan et al., 2022).



(a) T-symmetry enforced dynamic model (TDM) in TSRL

(b) Our proposed T-symmetry enforced inverse dynamic model (TS-IDM)

Figure 6: Comparison of the architecture between TDM in TSRL and our proposed TS-IDM in TELS.

Connection and differences with TSRL. As illustrated in Figure 6, both TSRL and TELS leverage the T-symmetry consistency enforcement to construct the latent space. Specifically, in Figure 6 (a), TSRL employs a T-symmetry-enforced dynamics model (TDM), which models system dynamics by incorporating paired latent ODE forward and reverse dynamics to enforce T-symmetry. In contrast, Figure 6 (b) illustrates our proposed T-symmetry-enforced inverse dynamics model (TS-IDM), which integrates T-symmetry constraints into both forward and reverse dynamics while incorporating an inverse dynamics model. We emphasize the main differences between TELS and TSRL as follows:

- **Architecture:** As presented in Figure 6 (a), TDM jointly encodes state-action pairs to form the latent space, which may capture behavioral biases from the dataset (e.g., expert-specific action patterns) and impede learning fundamental, distribution-agnostic dynamics patterns in data. In contrast, Figure 6 (b) illustrates that TS-IDM overcomes these limitations by adopting a state-only modeling approach, focusing on the underlying latent state variations. Additionally, the only useful component of the learned TDM for downstream policy learning is its encoder $\phi(s, a)$, wasting the dynamics-related information captured by the model. In contrast, TS-IDM trains an inverse dynamics model within the T-symmetry-enforced latent space, which can be reused as an execute-policy to extract optimal actions.

- **Detailed model design:** As shown in Figure 6 (a), TDM only enforces the ODE property for its encoder but not the decoder, which could lead to inconsistency between the learned dynamics and the underlying ODE structure, resulting in inaccurate or misaligned ODE representations. To address this problem, we introduce the loss term ℓ_{ode} in Eq. (3) specifically to achieve this goal. This design is very important as it can greatly enhance the coupling among the different elements in the model and results in a more stable learning process.

- **Training procedure:** In TSRL, the TDM encoder and decoders must be pre-trained before joint training on other components to avoid stability issues. In contrast, our proposed TS-IDM does not require pre-training; all components can be learned jointly in a single stage. Additionally, TDM requires adding L1-norm regularization to the parameters of the latent forward and reverse dynamics models to stabilize the learning process. This is unnecessary in TS-IDM (see Eq. (5)), as the design of our proposed TS-IDM enables strongly coupled and consistent relationships among all its internal components. The learning curves of TS-IDM can be found in Appendix H.

- **Policy optimization:** Since TDM requires both state and action as inputs to derive the latent representations, it is constrained to Q-function maximization for policy optimization. Consequently, TSRL adopts the TD3+BC framework as its backbone for policy optimization, which inherently suffers from over-conservative action-level constraints, particularly in small dataset settings. In contrast, TELS performs policy optimization entirely within the compact and generalizable latent state space derived from TS-IDM, enabling state-level optimization that avoids the limitations of action-space constraints.

Connection and differences with POR. As discussed in Section B, while both POR and TELS share similarities in utilizing a state-stitching approach in state space for policy optimization, they exhibit the following fundamental differences:

- **Original state-space vs. latent state-space optimization:** POR relies on policy optimization in the original state space, which inherently requires sufficient state-action coverage for valid state-stitching. In contrast, TELS mitigates this limitation by constructing a compact and generalizable latent space via TS-IDM.

- **Unregularized T-symmetry vs. T-symmetry regularized policy optimization:** POR optimizes the guide-policy solely through an AWR formulation (Neumann and Peters, 2008; Peng et al., 2019), constraining π_g to stay close to the dataset via state-stitching as in Eq. (11), but lacks additional regularization to ensure generalizable state transitions. In contrast, TELS enforces an additional T-symmetry consistency regularization $\ell_{\text{T-sym}}$, which plays a critical role in preventing π_g from outputting problematic and non-generalizable latent next states, thereby enhancing its OOD generalizability.

Differences from model-based approaches. We emphasize that our proposed TELS framework fundamentally differs from MBRL methods (Janner et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2020; Kidambi et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Zhan et al., 2022; Rigter et al., 2022). Conventional MBRL methods prioritize learning forward dynamics models to predict future states and generate rollouts for policy learning. In contrast, our proposed TS-IDM is primarily designed for state representation learning and action extraction via inverse dynamics, rather than for data generation. Furthermore, as evidenced by Table 1, in the small-sample setting, limited data samples are insufficient for the model-based approach to learn an accurate dynamics model, causing high approximation errors during model rollouts, which significantly deteriorates policy learning performance.

Appendix B. Preliminaries

Offline RL. We consider the standard Markov decision process (MDP) setting (Sutton and Barto, 2018), which is represented as a tuple $\mathcal{M} = \{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{A}, r, \mathcal{P}, \rho, \gamma\}$, and a dataset $\mathcal{D}$, which consists of trajectories $\tau = \{s_0, a_0, s_1, a_1, ..., s_T, a_T\}$. Here $\mathcal{S}$ and $\mathcal{A}$ denote the state and action spaces, $r(s, a)$ is a scalar reward function, $\mathcal{P}(s'|s, a)$ and ρ denote the transition dynamics and initial state distribution respectively, and $\gamma \in (0, 1)$ is a discount factor. Our goal is to learn a policy $\pi(a|s)$ based on dataset $\mathcal{D}$ by maximizing the expected return in the MDP: $\mathbb{E}_\pi[\sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \gamma^t \cdot r(s_t, a_t)]$.

Offline policy optimization in the state space. Instead of adopting conservative action-level constraints for offline policy learning, Policy-guided Offline RL (POR) (Xu et al., 2022a) proposes an alternative scheme, which decomposes the conventional reward-maximizing policy into a guide-policy and an execute policy. The guide-policy only works in the state space to find the optimal next state that maximizes the state-value function, and the execute-policy is learned as an inverse dynamics model (Xu et al., 2022a) or a goal-conditioned imitative policy (Park et al., 2024). Such methods only need to learn a state-only value function V using the IQL-style expectile regression (Kostrikov et al., 2022), or the sparse value learning objective as discussed in (Xu et al., 2023). We present the former as follows:

$$V = \arg\min_V \mathbb{E}_{(s,r,s')\sim\mathcal{D}} \left[L_2^\tau \left(r(s) + \gamma \bar{V}(s') - V(s) \right) \right] \tag{10}$$

where $L_2^\tau(x) = |\tau - \mathbb{I}(x < 0)|x^2$ is the asymmetric expectile regression loss and $\bar{V}$ denotes the target value network. Based on the learned state-value function, we can learn a guide-policy $\pi_g(s'|s)$ to serve as a prophet by telling which state the agent should (high reward) and can (logical generalization) go to, without being constrained to state-action transitions seen in the dataset. This can be achieved by leveraging an advantage weighted regression (AWR) objective (Neumann and Peters, 2008; Peng et al., 2019) to maximize the value while implicitly constraining π_g to $s \to s'$ transitions observed in the dataset (i.e., *state-stitching*):

$$\pi_g = \arg\max_{\pi_g} \mathbb{E}_{(s,r,s')\sim\mathcal{D}} \Big[\exp(\alpha \cdot A(s, s')) \log \pi_g(s' \mid s) \Big] \tag{11}$$

where the advantage $A(s, s') = r + \gamma V(s') - V(s)$ serves as the behavior cloning weight, and α is the temperature parameter to prioritize value maximization over state-wise imitation.

For the execute-policy π_e, POR employs a supervised learning framework and trains π_e by: $\max_{\pi_e} \mathbb{E}_{(s,a,s')\sim\mathcal{D}}[\log \pi_e(a \mid s, s')]$. During evaluation phase, given the current state s, we can sample the optimized next state s' from $\pi_g(s'|s)$, and get final action simply as $a^* = \pi_e(a \mid s, \pi_g(s'|s))$.

Time-reversal symmetry for generalizable offline RL. Recently, leveraging fundamental, universally held symmetries of dynamics such as T-symmetry discovered in classical and quantum mechanics (Lamb and Roberts, 1998; Huh et al., 2020) has been shown to be a promising approach to enhance the generalization of offline RL (Cheng et al., 2023; Zhan et al., 2025a). Specifically, if we model the system dynamics with measurements $\mathbf{x}$ as a set of non-linear first-order differential equations (ODEs) expressed as $\frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt} = F(\mathbf{x})$, a dynamical system is said to exhibt *time-reversal symmetry* if there is an

invertible transformation Γ that reverses the direction of time: i.e., $d\Gamma(\mathbf{x})/dt = -F(\Gamma(\mathbf{x}))$. For the discrete-time MDP setting, the T-symmetry can be extended as learning a pair of ODE forward dynamics $F(s,a) \to \dot{s}$ and reverse dynamics $G(s',a) \to -\dot{s}$, and require them to satisfy $F(s,a) = -G(s',a)$ (Cheng et al., 2023), where the time-derivative of state $\dot{s} = \frac{ds}{dt}$ is approximated as $s' - s$.

Based on this intuition, TSRL (Cheng et al., 2023) constructed an encoder-decoder structured *T-symmetry enforced dynamics model* (TDM) for representation learning, which embeds a pair of latent ODE forward and reverse dynamics to enforce T-symmetry. TSRL achieves impressive performance under small-sample settings, and its variant has been successfully deployed for real-world industrial control (Zhan et al., 2025a), but it still has limitations. First, TSRL only uses the learned encoder from TDM to derive the latent representations, without fully exploiting the rich dynamics-related information for downstream policy learning. Second, its representation learning scheme uses both state and action as inputs, forcing TSRL to involve policy-induced actions during policy optimization, which inevitably requires adding a conservative action-level behavioral constraint as in TD3+BC (Fujimoto and Gu, 2021) to stabilize training. Moreover, involving action as an input for representation learning is also prone to capturing biased behaviors in the behavioral policy, which could impede learning fundamental dynamics patterns in data.

Appendix C. Related Work

Offline RL faces unique challenges in mitigating the risk of OOD exploitation. Evaluating value functions in OOD regions often results in inaccurate estimates, which can lead to severe value overestimation and misguiding policy learning. To mitigate this, most offline RL methods leverage data-related regularizations to stabilize the learning process. These include explicit behavior constraint techniques that penalize action divergence (Wu et al., 2019; Kumar et al., 2019; Fujimoto and Gu, 2021; Liu et al., 2024), value regularization schemes to discourage policies from selecting OOD actions via modifying Bellman update (Kumar et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2022b; Bai et al., 2021; Lyu et al., 2022) or introducing uncertainty penalities (Wu et al., 2021; An et al., 2021; Bai et al., 2021), and in-sample learning methods (Brandfonbrener et al., 2021; Kostrikov et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2023; Mao et al., 2024b), which stabilize training by only using in-sample data for value and policy learning. While these methods perform reasonably well on datasets with sufficient state-action coverage, they often struggle in small-sample settings where exploiting OOD generalization is vital for achieving good performance. Recently, leveraging expressive model architectures such as Transformers and diffusion models (Chen et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022; Ajay et al., 2022; Janner et al., 2022; Hansen-Estruch et al., 2023; Mao et al., 2024a; Zheng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025) have gained popularity in offline RL, due to their strong capability to fit complex data distributions. However, these models are overly heavy and require extensive amounts of data to learn, making them hardly usable for the small-sample setting.

Appendix D. Additional Results

D.1. Evaluation on the full datasets

We also evaluate the performance of TELS on the original full datasets of D4RL tasks, and the results are presented in Table 3. Our proposed method achieves comparable or better

Table 3: Normalized scores on full-size D4RL datasets (averaged over the final 10 evaluations with 5 seeds).

Task	BC	TD3+BC	MOPO	COMBO	CQL	IQL	DOGE	IDQL	POR	TSRL	TELS (ours)
Hopper-m	52.9	59.3	28.0	97.2	58.5	66.3	**98.6 ± 2.1**	63.1	78.6 ± 7.2	86.7±8.7	94.3 ± 2.8
Hopper-mr	18.1	60.9	67.5	89.5	95.0	94.7	76.2±17.7	82.4	**98.9 ± 2.1**	78.7±28.1	**99.5 ± 2.3**
Hopper-me	52.5	98.0	23.7	**111.1**	**105.4**	91.5	102.7± 5.2	105.3	90.0 ± 12.1	95.9±18.4	105.4 ± 8.5
Halfcheetah-m	42.6	48.3	42.3	**54.2**	44.0	47.4	45.3± 0.6	**49.7**	48.8 ± 0.5	48.2 ±0.7	44.3 ± 0.4
Halfcheetah-mr	**55.2**	44.6	53.1	55.1	45.5	44.2	42.8 ±0.6	45.1	43.5±0.9	42.2 ± 3.5	41.1 ± 0.1
Halfcheetah-me	55.2	90.7	63.3	90.0	91.6	86.7	78.7±8.4	94.4	**94.7±2.2**	92.0±1.6	87.1 ± 2.9
Walker2d-m	75.3	83.7	17.8	81.9	72.5	78.3	**86.8 ± 0.8**	80.2	81.1 ± 2.3	77.5 ±4.5	81.3± 5.1
Walker2d-mr	26.0	81.8	39.0	56.0	77.2	73.9	**87.3 ± 2.3**	79.8	76.6 ± 6.9	66.1±12.0	**86.0 ± 3.3**
Walker2d-me	107.5	110.1	44.6	103.3	108.8	109.6	**110.4±1.5**	**111.6**	109.1 ± 0.7	109.8±3.12	**110.7 ± 1.4**
Antmaze-u	65.0	78.6	0.0	80.3	84.8	85.5	**97.0 ± 1.8**	93.8	90.6 ± 7.1	81.4 ± 19.2	94.5 ± 10.3
Antmaze-u-d	45.6	71.4	0.0	57.3	43.4	66.7	63.5 ± 9.3	62.0	71.3 ± 12.1	76.5 ± 29.7	**79.7 ± 15.3**
Antmaze-m-d	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.0±11.7	74.6±3.2	77.6±6.1	**86.6**	79.2±3.1	0.0	82.4 ± 4.5
Antmaze-m-p	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	65.2±4.8	70.4±5.3	80.6±6.5	83.5	84.6 ±5.6	0.0	**86.7 ± 5.7**
Antmaze-l-d	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.6±9.5	45.6±7.6	36.4 ±9.1	56.4	**73.4 ±8.**5	0.0	41.7 ± 14.2
Antmaze-l-p	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.8±15.3	43.5±4.5	48.2±8.1	57.0	58.0 ± 12.4	0.0	**60.7 ± 13.3**

Table 4: TELS performance on 10k datasets across various TS-IDM with different β.

	$\beta = 10$	$\beta = 1$	$\beta = 0.1$
Hopper-m	77.3 ± 5.4	**77.3 ± 10.7**	61.4 ± 5.6
Hopper-mr	15.3 ± 6.6	**43.2 ± 3.5**	19.7 ±3.4
Hopper-me	37.6 ± 17.9	**100.9 ± 6.8**	64.7 ± 3.3
Halfcheetah-m	32.9 ± 2.3	40.8 ± 0.6	**41.2 ± 1.1**
Halfcheetah-mr	8.6 ± 1.8	33.2 ± 1.0	**34.0 ± 2.2**
Halfcheetah-me	7.5 ± 2.2	**40.7 ±1.2**	39.5 ± 2.1
Walker2d-m	37.2 ± 7.9	**62.4 ± 5.3**	54.6 ± 8.2
Walker2d-mr	17.1±2.9	**54.8 ± 6.0**	39.2 ± 8.6
Walker2d-me	20.4 ± 10.4	**87.4 ± 13.3**	44.7 ± 9.8

performance than existing offline RL methods. Note that although TSRL also adopts a similar T-symmetry regularized representation learning scheme as ours, it performs poorly in Antmaze medium and large datasets. Primarily due to its use of the conservative TD3+BC backbone for policy optimization.

Moreover, we observe that as the dataset size increases and its state-action space coverage broadens, the stringent T-symmetry regularization in the TS-IDM can be proportionally reduced. Since the dataset can provide enough information for policy learning, it relieves the need to extract fundamental features within the data. Consequently, we balance this trade-off by prioritizing model expressiveness over strict generalization guarantees (i.e., deploying a lower β in Eq. (5)). For instance, in the Antmaze full dataset setting, we use the

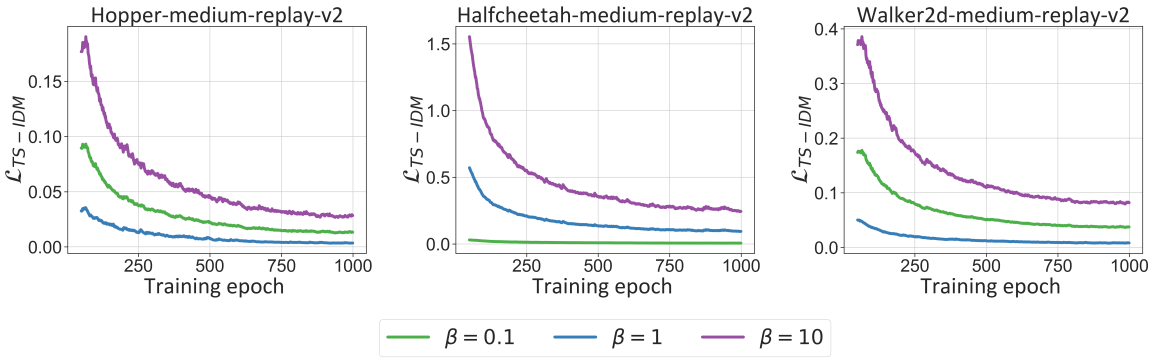


Figure 7: The learning curves for training TS-IDM on 10k dataset with different β hyperparameter.

regularization hyperparameter $\beta = 0.01$ to train the TS-IDM. Additional ablation studies analyzing the impact of β are detailed in Appendix D.3.

D.2. Additional OOD generalizability validation experiments

We further investigate the generalization capabilities of DOGE (Li et al., 2022), IDQL (Hansen-Estruch et al., 2023), and TSRL (Cheng et al., 2023) under the variation deletion degrees in the Antmaze environment. Specifically, we train each algorithm on the modified dataset after the deletion operation. We then evaluate their behaviors by visualizing rollouts over 20 evaluation episodes.

As illustrated in Figure 8, only IDQL occasionally succeeds in reaching the goal under the 0% deletion setting, while both DOGE and TSRL fail consistently. As the deletion ratio increases to 70% and 100%, none of the three methods achieves meaningful policy learning. These results highlight the inherent challenges of this setting, which requires both a compact yet expressive latent representation space and a highly generalizable policy capable of operating with extremely sparse and limited data. While TSRL integrates TDM to distill underlying patterns from the dataset, the scarcity of available data undermines its action-level constraints approach, preventing it from deriving a viable policy.

D.3. Additional ablation experiments

Ablations on the design components of TS-IDM. To examine the impact of each component in TS-IDM, we evaluate various variants of TS-IDM, starting with a vanilla latent inverse dynamics model with encoder and decoders, denoted as " $\phi/\psi+ h_{inv}$", gradually adding latent forward and reverse dynamics "h_{fwd}, h_{rvs}", ODE property enforcement "ℓ_{ode}", and eventually the T-symmetry consistency loss "$\ell_{\text{T-sym}}$", resulting in the full TS-IDM. Results on 10k datasets are shown in Table 5. We observe that the naïve autoencoder-based inverse dynamics model fails to provide reasonable representations. Incorporating dynamics-related information via latent dynamics is helpful, but the perfor-

Table 5: Ablation on the design components of TS-IDM.

	Hopper-me	Halfcheetah-me	Walker2d-me
$\phi/\psi+ h_{inv}$	17.2 ± 7.0	29.7 ± 3.6	24.5 ± 10.1
$\uparrow + h_{fwd}$, h_{rvs}	35.5 ± 7.3	31.3 ± 1.1	33.6 ± 9.2
$\uparrow + \ell_{\text{ode}}$	61.4 ± 23.7	31.2 ± 1.2	58.5 ± 18.1
$\uparrow + \ell_{\text{T-sym}}$	**100.9 ± 6.8**	**40.7 ± 1.2**	**87.4 ±13.3**

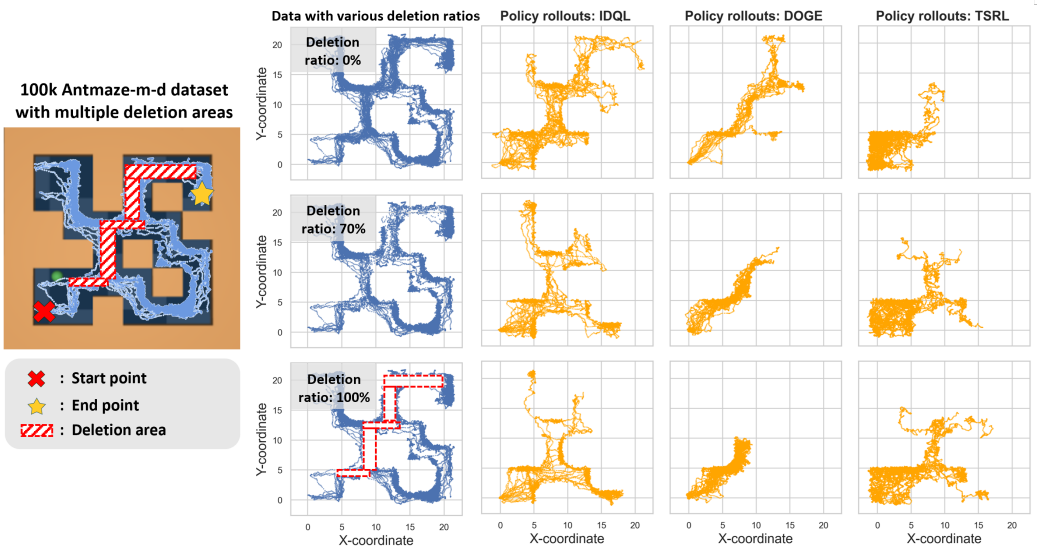


Figure 8: **Left:** Illustration of the 100k Antmaze-m-d task with multiple deletion areas, where the red cross denotes the start point, the yellow star denotes the goal locations, and the red shaded areas denote the data deletion regions. **Right:** Visualization of the training dataset and policy rollout trajectories generated by trained policies from various algorithms under varying deletion ratios.

mance gain remains mild. Enforcing ODE properties on decoders greatly enhances the quality of learned representations. Lastly, enforcing T-symmetry consistency proves to be the strongest performance improvement factor, which greatly enhances the quality of the learned representations for downstream policy learning.

Impact of T-symmetry regularization on TS-IDM. To investigate the impact of T-symmetry regularization strength controlled by the hyperparameter β in Eq. (5), we conduct additional ablation experiments by varying the value of β to assess how T-symmetry regularization influences the representation learning quality and downstream policy's performance. Specifically, we train TS-IDM on reduced-size 10k D4RL MuJoCo datasets with $\beta = \{0.1, 1, 10\}$, representing different T-symmetry regularization strengths. The learning curves of TS-IDM's overall learning loss "$\mathcal{L}_{\text{TS-IDM}}$" in Eq. (5) are presented in Figure 7. The final policy learning performances with different TS-IDM models are presented in Table 4.

From Figure 7, we observe that choosing a proper β value impacts the learning quality of TS-IDM. A large β (e.g., $\beta = 10$) could impose overly strong regularization and hurt model expressiveness, which is reflected in the high learning loss at convergence. However, when the regularization strength is lowered, maintaining a proper scale of β is important to ensure both the quality and generalizability of the learned representations. As we can see in Figure 7, in the Hopper and Walker2d tasks, choosing $\beta = 1$ provides the lowest "$\mathcal{L}_{\text{TS-IDM}}$" loss; whereas in the Halfcheetah task, "$\mathcal{L}_{\text{TS-IDM}}$" is the lowest when choosing $\beta = 0.1$. If we check the final policy's performance under different TS-IDMs in Table 4, we can see a clear correlation with what we have observed in Figure 7. TELS achieves the highest score on Hopper and Walker2d tasks when $\beta = 1$, but the scores are higher for Halfcheetah tasks when $\beta = 0.1$. This matches exactly with the learning performance of TS-IDM under

different β values. The strong correlation between TS-IDM's learning performance and the final policy's performance of TELS shows that we can select the best β hyperparameter values by simply looking at TS-IDM's training loss and using the one that provides the lowest training loss. This avoids the need to perform potentially unsafe online policy evaluations or unstable offline policy evaluations, which is favorable in real-world deployments.

Impact of regularizer terms η in policy optimization. The hyperparameter η governs the strength of regularization in TELS, balancing exploration and adherence to dataset states during policy updates. To evaluate the robustness of TELS, we test multiple η values ($\eta = \{1, 5, 10\}$) to examine its sensitivity to the state-level behavioral constraint in Eq. (7). Higher η values impose stronger constraints on the guide-policy, requiring generated states s' to align closely with dataset states. As shown in Figure 9, TELS demonstrates consistent robustness across η settings, achieving reliable performance under varying constraint strengths.

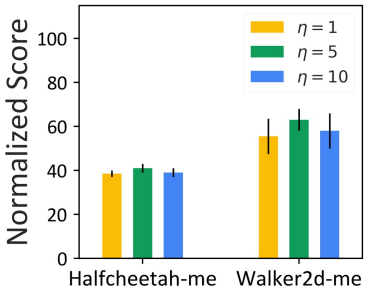


Figure 9: TELS with various η.

Impact of each component in TS-IDM for policy optimization. To validate the impact of the T-symmetry regularizer $\ell_{\text{T-sym}}$ in Eq. (8), we conduct ablation studies on 100k-sample Antmaze tasks. From the evaluation results presented in Table 6, the naïve auto-encoder based inverse dynamics model "$\phi/\psi + h_{inv}$" fails to form a reasonable latent space, yielding 0 average normalized scores across all Antmaze tasks. The introduction of latent dynamics models "h_{fwd}" and "h_{rvs}" provides marginal improvements by capturing partial system dynamics yet remains insufficient for effective policy learning. Notably, enforcing ODE properties on decoders and applying T-symmetry consistency emerge as the most significant factors driving performance improvements, substantially enhancing the reliability of learned representations for downstream guide-policy optimization.

Impact of T-symmetry regularizer term in guide-policy optimization with stochastic policy instantiation. We further conduct ablation experiments in Figure 10 (left) to validate the effectiveness of the T-symmetry consistency regularization term $\ell_{\text{T-sym}}$ during the stochastic guide-policy optimization process of TELS. The results demonstrate that in stochastic policy optimization schemes, integrating this term significantly improves performance while reducing variance, underscoring the critical role of T-symmetry consistency regularization in enhancing OOD generalization and training stability.

Effectiveness of learned representations for guide-policy optimization with stochastic policy instantiation. As illustrated in Figure 10 (right), we evaluate TELS across diverse representation learning approaches in Antmaze tasks. The results demonstrate that baseline models struggle to construct meaningful latent spaces as task complexity increases and data scarcity intensifies (with only 100k usable samples). In contrast, TS-IDM uniquely learns a compact, well-structured latent space that remains informative and generalizable, providing a more reliable latent space for policy learning.

Table 6: Ablations on the components of TS-IDM in Antmaze tasks.

	Antmaze-m-d	Antmaze-m-p	Antmaze-l-d	Antmaze-l-p
$\phi/\psi+ h_{inv}$	0	0	0	0
$\uparrow + h_{fwd}$, h_{rvs}	23.6 ± 18.4	30.4 ± 9.3	14.4 ± 5.6	7.8 ± 3.4
$\uparrow + \ell_{\text{ode}}$	34.1 ± 15.7	48.7 ± 13.3	20.1 ± 8.9	22.6 ± 16.7
$\uparrow + \ell_{\text{T-sym}}$	**47.2 ± 17.3**	**62.9 ± 17.8**	**39.8 ± 14.1**	**47.3 ± 13.1**

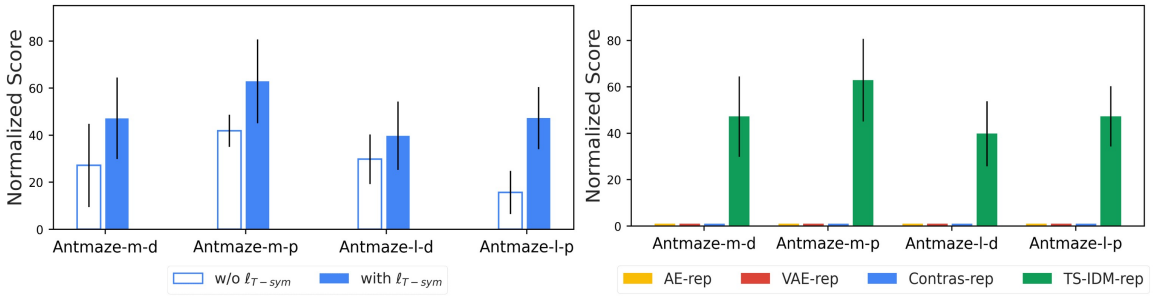


Figure 10: **Left:** Impact of $\ell_{\text{T-sym}}$ on policy optimization with 100k Antmaze datasets. **Right:** Performance of TELS with different representation models on Antmaze 100k datasets.

Appendix E. Implementation Details

E.1. Implementation details of TS-IDM

- **Network structure.** For all MuJoCo locomotion and Antmaze tasks, we deployed 3-layer feed-forward neural networks for the state encoder ϕ_s, latent inverse dynamics model h_{inv}, forward and reverse dynamics models h_{fwd} and h_{rvs}, and decoder models ψ_s and ψ_a for the latent states and actions. The activation function is ReLU and uses Adam optimizer to update the parameters. We present the hyperparameters details of training TS-IDM in Table 7, including the details of the structure we have implemented as well as the deployed hyperparameters.

- **ODE property enforcement on ϕ_s and ψ_s.** We adopt a similar approach to TSRL (Cheng et al., 2023) to train the ODE enforced forward and reverse dynamic models. Specifically, we compute the time-derivative of the state encoder $\phi_s(s)$ by calculating its jacobian matrix through `vmap()` function in Functorch [1]. This allows us to derive the supervision values $\frac{d\phi_s(s)}{ds} \cdot \dot{s}$ and $\frac{d\phi_s(s')}{ds'} \cdot (-\dot{s})$ for the forward dynamics model and reverse dynamics model respectively as in Eq. (2). This approach implicitly enforces the ODE property on the state encoder ϕ_s as the encoder is required to produce state representations that satisfy the ODE constraints. Unlike TSRL, which enforces ODE properties only on the encoders and not on the decoders, our method further regularizes the state decoder ψ_s. Specifically, ψ_s is trained to decode the predicted latent state variables generated by $h_{fwd}(z_s, z_a) = \dot{z}_s$ and $h_{rvs}(z_{s'}, z_a) = -\dot{z}_s$ ensuring that it also satisfies the ODE constraints in Eq. (3). To achieve this, we apply the same approach to compute $\frac{d\psi_s(z_s)}{dt}$ and train the state decoder accordingly.

1. https://pytorch.org/functorch/stable/functorch.html

Table 7: Hyperparameters of TS-IDM.

	Hyperparameters	**Value**
TS-IDM Architecture	State encoder hidden units	512×256
	State encoder activation function	ReLU
	Latent forward model hidden units	256×256
	Latent forward model activation function	ReLU
	Latent reverse model hidden units	256×256
	Latent reverse model activation function	ReLU
	latent inverse model hidden units	1024×1024
	Latent inverse model activation function	ReLU
	Latent inverse model dropout	True
	Latent inverse model dropout rate	0.1
	State decoder hidden units	256×512
	State decoder activation function	ReLU
	Action decoder hidden units	512×512
	Action decoder activation function	ReLU
Hyperparameters	Optimizer type	Adam
	Weight of ℓ_{rec}	1
	Learning rate	3e-4
	Batch size	256
	Training epoch	1000
	State normalize	True
	Weight of β	1 (MuJoCo locomotion 10k setting) 0.1 (MuJoCo Antmaze 10k&100k setting) 0.1 (MuJoCo locomotion full dataset setting) 0.01 (MuJoCo Antmaze full dataset setting) 0.01 (MuJoCo adroit-human task) 0.01 (Real-world DC cooling control testbed task)
	Weight decay	0 (MuJoCo locomotion 10k setting) 1e-5 (MuJoCo locomotion&Antmaze full dataset setting) 1e-5 (MuJoCo adroit-human tasks) 1e-5 (Real-world DC cooling control testbed task)

Table 8: Structure and training parameters of guide-policy optimization.

	Hyperparameters	**Value**
Guide-policy structure	Value network hidden units	1024×1024
	Value network activation function	ReLU
	Policy network hidden units	1024×1024
	Policy network hidden units	ReLU
Training Perparameters	Optimizer type	Adam
	Target Value network moving average	0.05
	Batch size	256
	Training steps	100000
	State normalize	True

E.2. Implementation details of T-symmetry regularized guide-policy

- **Network structure.** For all D4RL MuJoCo-v2 and Antmaze-v1 tasks, we deployed 2-layer feed-forward neural networks for the guide-policy π_g and the value function V. The activation function is ReLU and uses Adam optimizer to update the parameters. The parameter details are presented in Table 8.

Algorithm 1 Offline RL via T-symmetry Enforced Latent State-Stitching (TELS).

Require: Offline dataset $\mathcal{D}$.
1: *// TS-IDM learning*
2: Learning the state encoder ϕ_s, state decoder ψ_s, action decoder ψ_a, latent inverse dynamics h_{inv}, latent forward and reverse dynamics h_{fwd} and h_{rvs} using the TS-IDM learning objective Eq. (5).
3: Initialize V_θ, $V_{\theta'}$, π_σ
4: *// Policy training*
5: **for** $t = 1, \cdots, M$ training steps **do**
6: Sample transitions $(s, r, s') \sim \mathcal{D}$ and compute their representations $(z_s, z_{s'})$ using the state encoder ϕ_s.
7: Use $(z_s, r, z_{s'})$ to update the latent state-value function V using Eq.(6).
8: Use $(z_s, z_{s'})$ to update the latent guide-policy π_g using Eq. (7) or (8).
9: **end for**
10: *// Evaluation*
11: Get initial state s from environment
12: **while** not done **do**
13: Get optimized next state $z^*_{s'}$ using guide-policy π_g.
14: Extract action a using Eq. (9).
15: **end while**

- **Hyperparameters for policy optimization.** Under both small-sample and full datasets settings, we employ a deterministic policy update strategy for MuJoCo locomotion tasks, as defined in Eq. (7), with learning rates of 1e-4 for both value and policy functions. The normalization term λ is computed as $\lambda_\alpha = \alpha/[\sum_{s_i} |V(\phi_s(s_i))|/N]$, where α controls the trade-off between value maximization and policy regularization and N denotes the number of samples in the training batch. For Antmaze tasks, we utilize a stochastic policy optimization strategy, as outlined in Eq. (8), with learning rates of 1e-3 for value and policy functions.

- **Full dataset setting:** We set $(\tau, \alpha, \eta) = (0.7, 0.01, 10)$ for all MuJoCo locomotion tasks and Adorit tasks, for all MuJoCo Antmaze tasks, we deploy $(\tau, \alpha) = (0.9, 10)$ as the training parameters.

- **Small-sample setting:** For Halfcheetah and Walker2d tasks, we set $(\tau, \alpha, \eta) = (0.5, 0.01, 5)$ and incorporate policy dropout to mitigate overfitting. These tasks share identical state and action dimensions (17 states and 6 actions), enabling the use of the same parameter set for guide-policy training. In contrast, Hopper tasks with a smaller state-action space (11 states and 3 actions) are comparatively simpler given the same amount of training data (e.g., 10k samples). Consequently, we adopt a more aggressive learning strategy for Hopper, setting $(\tau, \alpha, \eta) = (0.7, 0.1, 10)$ to prioritize value maximization. For Antmaze tasks, we use an identical set of parameters $(\tau, \alpha) = (0.9, 10)$ as in the full dataset setting to train the guide-policy. For the real-world DC cooling control testbed task, we find using the $(\tau, \alpha, \eta) = (0.5, 0.01, 5)$ can derive the best performance.

Training resources. To train a TS-IDM, we utilize one NVIDIA GeForce RTX 4090 with an AMD Ryzen 9 7950X 16-Core Processor and 16GB of memory for approximately 30 minutes, running on Ubuntu 22.04.2 LTS 64-bit. We employ the same resource configurations for approximately 6 hours for the guide-policy training.

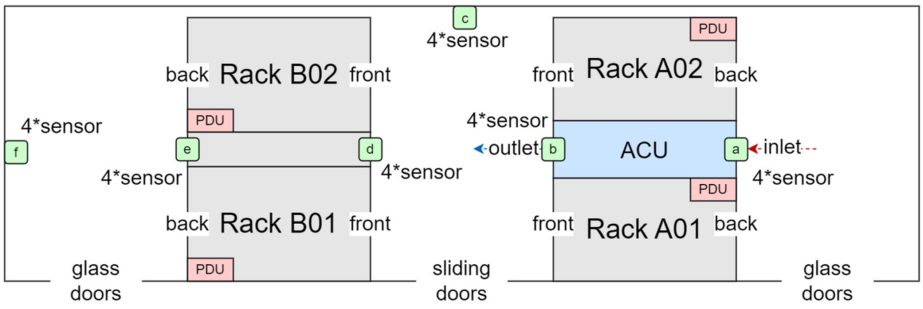


Figure 11: The layout illustration of the real-world DC cooling control testbed environment.

Appendix F. Detailed Experiment Setups

Reduced-size dataset generation. To create reasonably reduced-size D4RL datasets for a fair comparison, we use the identical small samples as in the TSRL paper (Cheng et al., 2023) for the locomotion tasks training. For Antmaze tasks, we adopt a similar approach by randomly sub-sampling trajectories from the original dataset to construct smaller training datasets. Specifically, for the "Antmaze-umaze" tasks, we randomly sample 10k data points for training, and for the "Antmaze-medium" and "Antmaze-large" tasks, we utilize 100k random samples as the training dataset of TELS.

The rationale behind this adjustment is the "medium" and "large" environments are significantly more expansive than the "umaze" environment. Sampling only 10k data points would likely result in trajectories that lack the fundamental information necessary to describe the task. Therefore, we relax the small-sample constraints for these environments to ensure that the reduced datasets at least contain enough successful trajectories for effective training.

Experiment setups for OOD generalization tasks in Antmaze. In Section 3.2, we conduct a more challenging scenario to verify the OOD generalizability of the algorithm. Specifically, based on the 100k "Antmaze-medium-diverse-v2" dataset, we manually selected five critical intervals and erased the data points within these intervals by randomly deleting them. The selection of intervals was determined based on the XY-axis coordinates. In this dataset, the first two dimensions of the state represent the vertical and horizontal coordinates, respectively. Based on this information, we randomly deleted 70% and 100% of the data in the chosen intervals. We then trained IQL (Kostrikov et al., 2022), DOGE (Li et al., 2022), IDQL (Hansen-Estruch et al., 2023), POR (Xu et al., 2022a), TSRL (Cheng et al., 2023), and TELS using this modified dataset to evaluate their performance.

Experiment details of real-world industrial control test environment. We adapted the figure from (Zhan et al., 2025a) to illustrate the layout structure of the real-world DC cooling control testbed. As shown in the figure F, the testbed comprises 22 server units and an inter-rack air conditioning unit (ACU) positioned between Rack 1 and Rack 2, supplemented by 24 temperature and humidity sensors (organized into six monitoring sets) to capture spatial thermal dynamics within the environment. Notably, the ACU employs compressor-driven cooling, with fan operation and compressor workload constituting the primary sources of energy expenditure. The thermal regulation is achieved by modulating the ACU's entering air temperature (EAT) setpoint to maintain the cold aisle temperature (CAT) below a predefined safety threshold. The energy-saving objective is to improve the

energy efficiency of the DC's cooling systems (minimizing the ACLF) while satisfying thermal safety constraints.

We leverage a dataset of 43k real-world operational samples recorded at 2-minute intervals over 61 days with 105 state-action features. During the training process, we utilize the identical reward function and follow the same experimental protocols outlined in (Zhan et al., 2025a). To ensure rigorous benchmarking, we adopt the same challenging thermal constraint (set the CAT threshold as 22°C) for comparative evaluation of TELS performance.

Experiment setups for various representation learning. To validate the effectiveness of the representations learned by TS-IDM, we integrate it as the representation module in two offline RL frameworks (IQL and TD3+BC), verifying the usability of the learned latent space as illustrated in Figure 4 (left). Specifically, we process the original states s and next states s' from the dataset using the pre-trained state encoder ϕ_s of TS-IDM to derive the latent representations: $\phi_s(s) \to z_s$ and $\phi_s(s') \to z_{s'}$. Then, train IQL and TD3+BC within the latent space to evaluate their performance under the small-sample setting.

Furthermore, in Figure 4(right), we benchmark TELS against three established representation learning baselines ("AE-rep", "Contras-rep" and "VAE-rep") to rigorously assess TS-IDM's representation quality. Implementation details for all baseline models are provided below:

- **"AE-rep"**: We implement a naïve autoencoder-based inverse dynamics framework, consisting of a state encoder and decoders ϕ_s and ψ_s to construct the latent state space. As in TELS, the inverse dynamics model h_{inv} is built within this latent space, serving as the execute-policy. For a fair comparison, we use the same network parameters for the encoder, decoder, and inverse dynamics model as in TS-IDM. The "AE-rep" model is trained with a reconstruction loss to capture the essential features of the input, and the inverse dynamics model is simultaneously trained on the latent representations to predict actions.

- **"VAE-rep"**: The variational autoencoder (VAE) (Kingma and Welling, 2014) is built based on the "AE-rep" model by introducing additional KL divergence loss terms. Specifically, the encoder outputs parameters of a Gaussian distribution in the latent space, and the latent representations are sampled using the reparameterization trick. The VAE is trained using a combined loss function that includes both the reconstruction loss and the KL divergence loss, which regularizes the latent space to follow a prior distribution. The inverse dynamic model is trained simultaneously with the VAE, sharing the latent space and optimizing for both the reconstruction of the input data and the prediction of actions.

- **"Contras-rep"**: We utilize the NT-Xent loss (Normalized Temperature-Scaled Cross Entropy Loss) used in SimCLR (Chen et al., 2020) within the latent representation space on top of the "AE-rep" model. The overall loss function combines the contrastive loss with the reconstruction loss, ensuring that the latent space not only captures the structure of the data but also learns semantically meaningful representations that are robust to variations. The inverse dynamic model is trained simultaneously within the latent space to predict actions.

Appendix G. Broader Impact

While training reinforcement learning (RL) agents on large-scale offline datasets has been extensively studied, real-world applications often face prohibitive data scarcity and collection costs. This necessitates offline RL methods that achieve reliable performance in small-sample regimes. To address this challenge, we introduce a highly sample-efficient offline RL algorithm to learn high-performing policies from extremely limited data. We empirically validate its efficacy through deployment on a real-world data center cooling control testbed, establishing its practical viability. Our approach highlights a promising pathway for advancing sample-efficient offline RL in resource-constrained settings. A potential limitation is the inherent risk of unreliable or unsafe actions within historical datasets, which may mislead policy learning.

Appendix H. Learning Curves

The following are the learning curves of TS-IDM and the T-symmetry regularized guide-policy optimization in TELS on the reduced-size D4RL MuJoCo and Antmaze datasets. We evaluate the policy with 10 episodes over 5 random seeds.

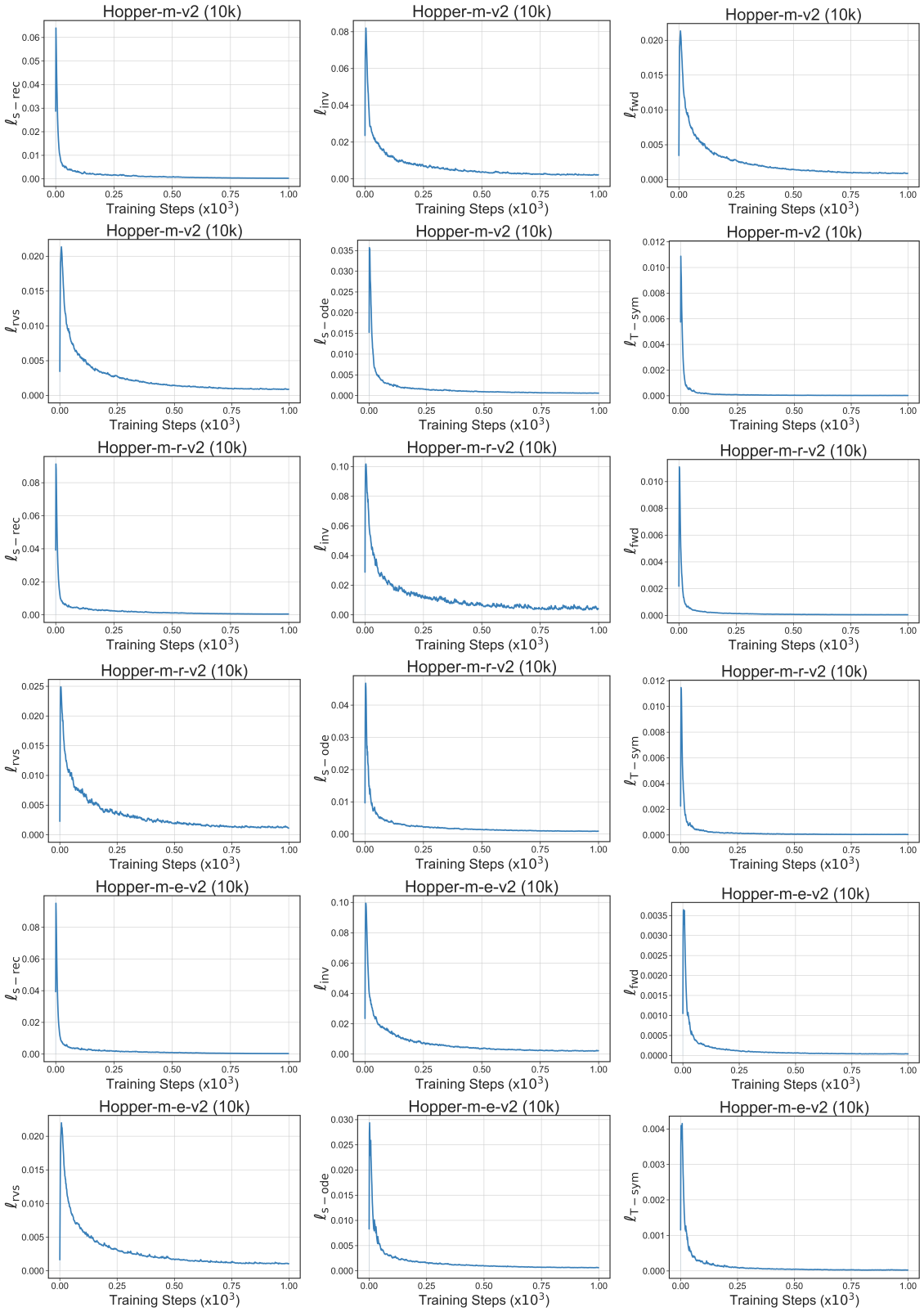


Figure 12: Learning curves of the overall and each individual loss terms in TS-IDM for Hopper tasks.

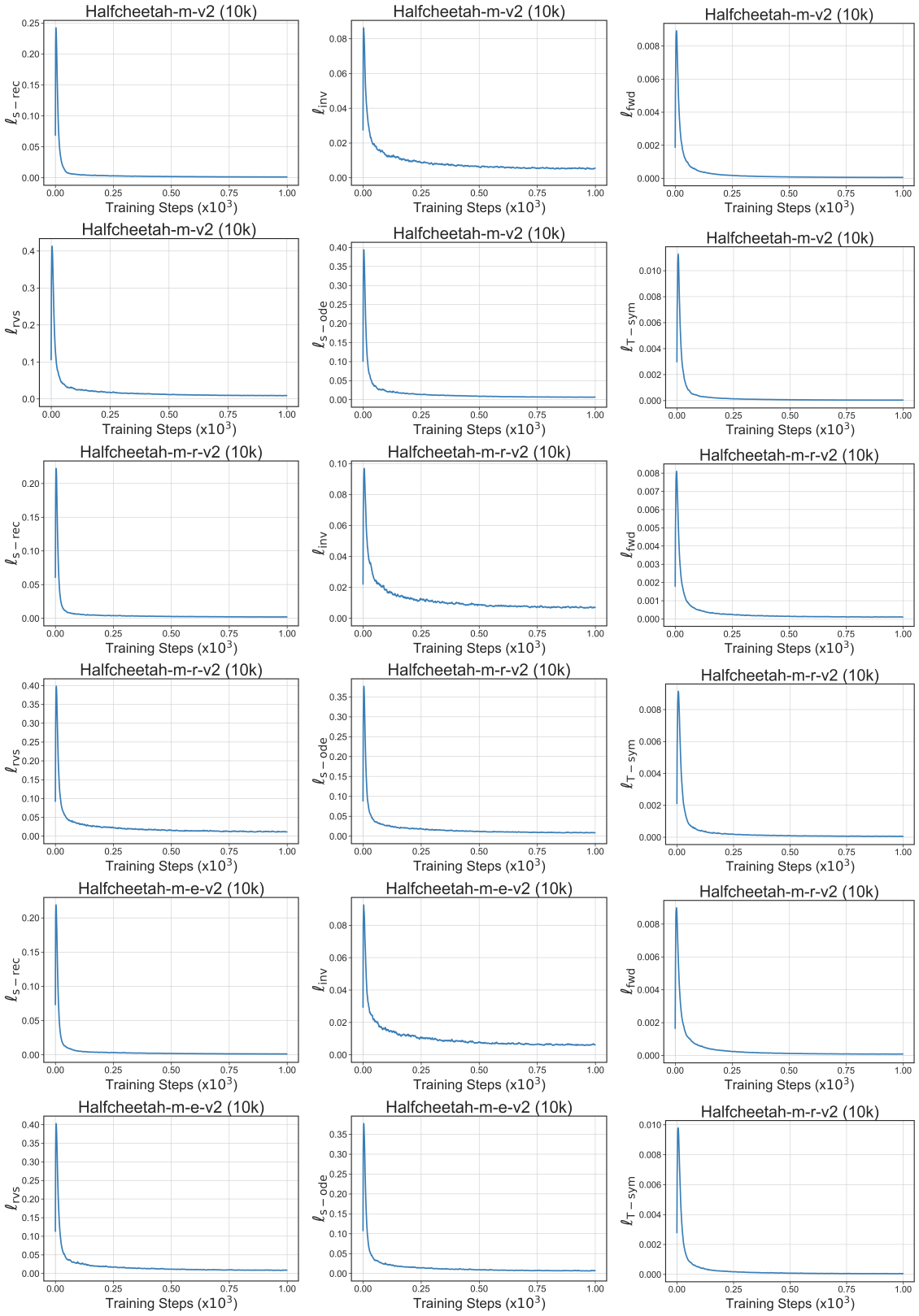


Figure 13: Learning curves of the overall and each individual loss terms in TS-IDM for Halfcheetah tasks.

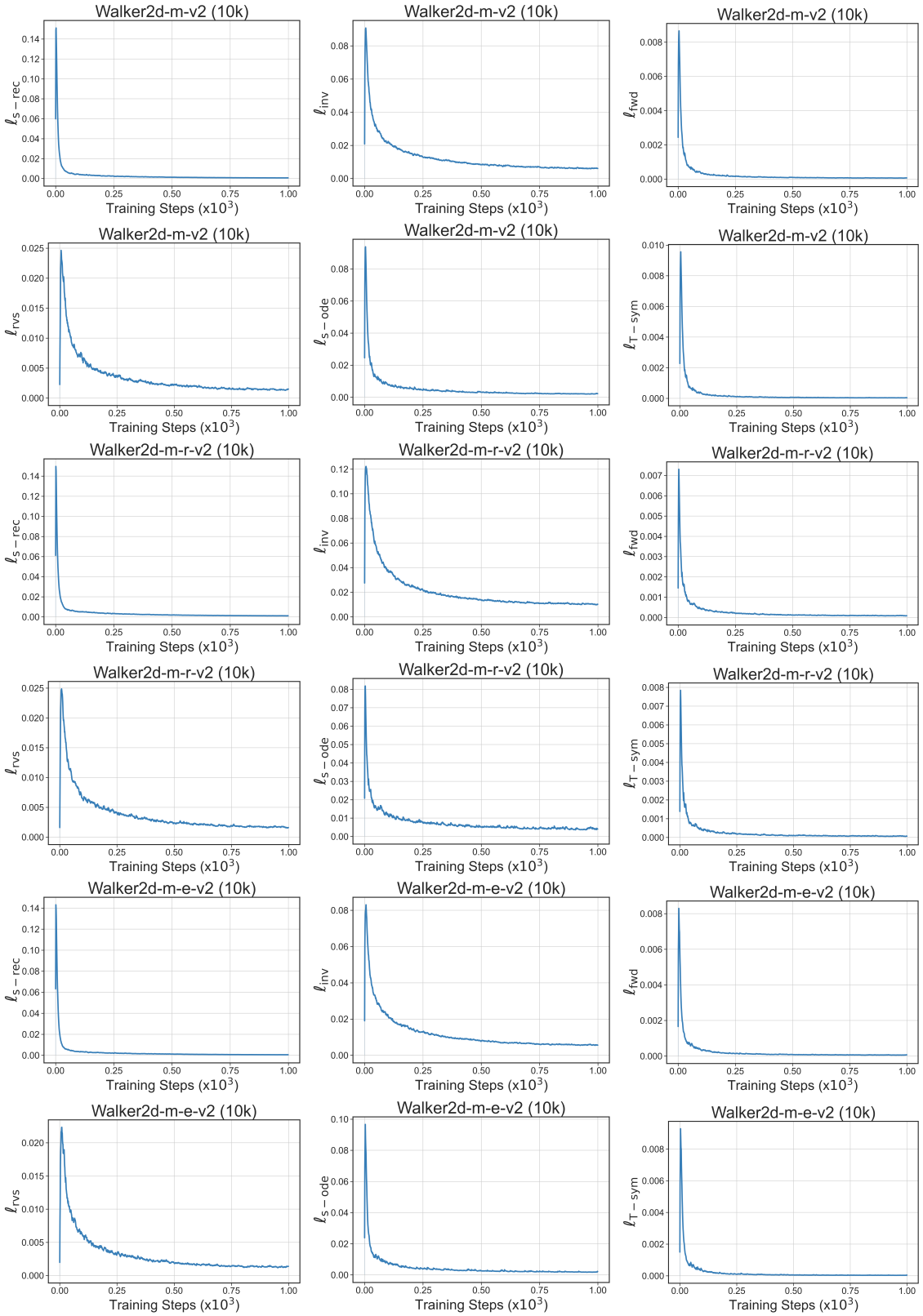


Figure 14: Learning curves of the overall and each individual loss terms in TS-IDM for Walker2d tasks.

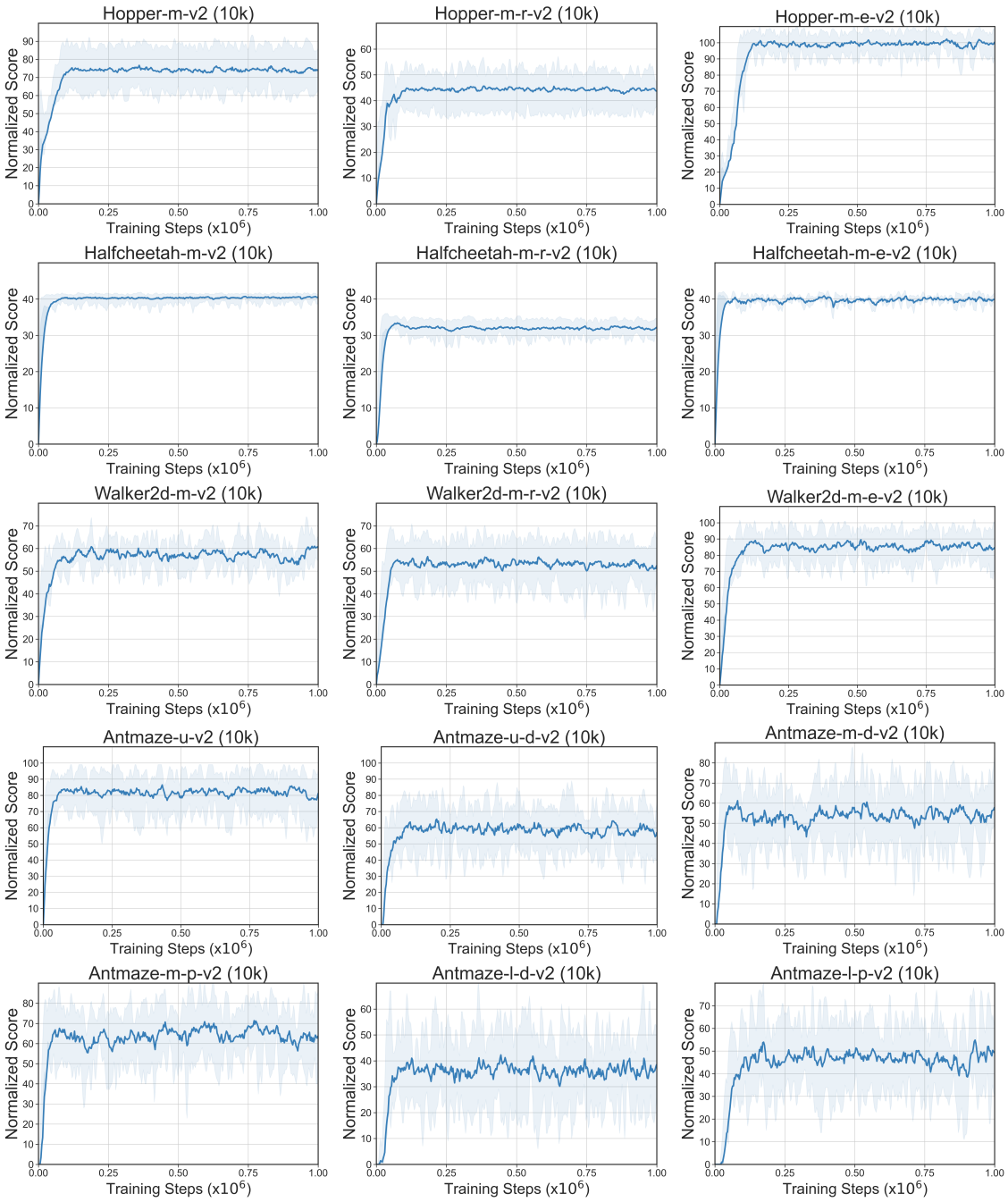


Figure 15: Learning curves of policy optimization in TELS for D4RL MuJoCo and Antmaze tasks with reduced-size datasets. We evaluate the policy within 10 episodes over 5 random seeds.