Asian Interdisciplinary and Sustainability Review

Original Research Article

Received: 1 April 2025 **Revised:** 9 May 2025 **Accepted:** 12 May 2025

ADAPTIVE Q-LEARNING-BASED IOT INTEGRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE NAVIGATION

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(This article belongs to the Theme 2: Sciences and Technology for Sustainability)

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Abstract

This research explores a novel method for integrating Internet of Things (IoT) with adaptive Q-learning (AQL) to enhance urban autonomous vehicle (AV) navigation for improved sustainability. The core of this method is an AQL algorithm that dynamically modifies learning settings in response to real-time traffic conditions, which optimizes decision-making. The effectiveness of the model was evaluated in a detailed simulation environment designed to reflect the complexity of urban settings. This infrastructure included sensors, communication protocols, and cloud-based systems. The simulation results show substantial advances in route optimization, hazard avoidance, and overall vehicle safety. The results show that integrating AQL with IoT improves the performance of self-driving cars and promotes more ecological and smart urban transportation strategies.

Keywords: Adaptive Q-Learning, Autonomous Vehicles, Navigation, Internet of Things, Sustainability

Citation Information: Suanpang, P., Jamjuntr, P., Techawatcharapaikul, C., Boonarchatong, C., Chumphet, W., & Srisuksai, N. (2025). Adaptive Q-Learning-Based IoT Integration for Sustainable Urban Autonomous Vehicle Navigation. *Asian Interdisciplinary and Sustainability Review*, *14*(2), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.14456/aisr.2025.12

Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology has led to the integration of the Internet of Things (IoT) with various fields, including transportation and urban planning. Autonomous vehicles (AVs) are at the forefront of this transformation, promising to enhance safety, reduce traffic congestion, and increase the efficiency of urban transport systems (Lin et al., 2020). However, the successful deployment of AVs in urban environments poses significant challenges, particularly in terms of navigation and decision-making processes under dynamic conditions. Urban environments are inherently complex and constantly changing, characterized by fluctuating traffic patterns, varied road conditions, and unpredictable behaviors of other road users (Miller et al., 2021). Integrating IoT technologies into the navigation systems of AVs can provide real-time data about these changing conditions, allowing for more informed decision-making. Nonetheless, the integration of IoT creates a need for sophisticated algorithms capable of processing this data efficiently. One promising approach to enhance the navigation capabilities of AVs is through the implementation of adaptive Q-Learning (AQL), a form of reinforcement learning that adjusts its learning algorithm based on the changing environment (Mao et al., 2022). AQL allows AVs to learn from past experiences and improve their navigation strategies over time. However, the challenge lies in effectively merging AQL with IoT data to create a responsive and adaptable navigation system. Given this context, the primary problem addressed in this study is: How can the integration of IoT technology with Adaptive Q-Learning improve the navigation of urban autonomous vehicles in complex and dynamic environments? This problem is critical to explore as it directly impacts the effectiveness, safety, and efficiency of autonomous vehicles in urban settings. The integration of IoT technologies with adaptive machine learning techniques like Q-learning represents a promising avenue to enhance the capabilities of AVs in urban settings. IoT enables the collection and integration of vast amounts of data from various sources, including traffic sensors, cameras, and other connected devices. This data is crucial for improving the situational awareness and decision-making processes of AVs, allowing for more precise and informed navigation decisions (Atzori et al., 2010). Adaptive Q-learning, a form of reinforcement learning, complements this data-rich environment by enabling vehicles to optimize their navigation strategies through ongoing learning and adaptation, thus maximizing safety and operational efficiency (Watkins & Dayan, 1992). This synergistic combination of IoT and adaptive Q-learning addresses several critical challenges in AV navigation. The unpredictable nature of urban traffic, which can be daunting for traditional algorithms, is more effectively managed through a continuous learning approach. This enables AVs to adapt to unexpected conditions swiftly and efficiently (Sutton & Barto, 2018). Furthermore, the extensive data processed by IoT devices facilitates the creation of a detailed and precise map of the urban environment, which is essential for achieving the high level of accuracy required for effective urban navigation.

The problem of motion planning and control for autonomous vehicles in dynamic urban environments involves addressing several intricate challenges. Autonomous vehicles must navigate constantly changing traffic patterns, diverse road users, and unforeseen obstacles, which necessitates advanced decision-making capabilities (van den Bosch et al., 2021). Key factors contributing to this complexity include traffic dynamics, where unpredictable vehicle behaviors and interactions create substantial challenges (Katrakazas et al., 2015); pedestrian behavior, necessitating a nuanced understanding of human actions to ensure safety (Mitra et al., 2022); and adherence to traffic rules and regulations essential for lawful operation (Kato & Kato, 2020). Additionally, varying road infrastructure, such as construction zones and detours, demands adaptive planning (Zhan et al., 2019), while environmental factors like weather and visibility impact sensor performance and decision-making (Bohm et al., 2018). Furthermore, the interactions between autonomous and human-driven vehicles complicate the navigation process by requiring predictions of human behavior (Chien et al., 2020), and the presence of dynamic obstacles such as delivery vehicles and roadblocks calls for effective real-time navigation solutions (Böhm et al., 2020). Therefore, addressing these multifaceted challenges is crucial for developing a motion planning and control system that ensures the safe and efficient operation of autonomous vehicles in the unpredictable urban landscape. By leveraging these advanced technologies, this paper aims to explore how the integration of IoT and adaptive Q-learning can transform the navigation systems of urban AVs. We focus on the resultant improvements in adaptability, responsiveness to real-time stimuli, and overall navigational accuracy. This technological advancement aims to contribute to the development of more innovative, more adaptable urban transportation solutions that meet the evolving demands of modern cities. Through this exploration, we seek to ensure the safe and efficient integration of autonomous vehicles into urban landscapes, ultimately fostering a more sustainable and accessible urban mobility framework.

Literature Review

Autonomous Vehicles

The development and deployment of autonomous vehicles (AVs) have garnered significant attention in transportation engineering, robotics, and artificial intelligence. AVs are transforming transportation through advanced technologies like LiDAR and computer vision, which enhance environmental perception and obstacle detection (Zhou et al., 2021). Machine learning, particularly reinforcement learning techniques such as Q-learning, optimizes decision-making in dynamic traffic scenarios, enabling adaptive driving strategies (Mao et al., 2022; Lechner et al., 2020). Safety remains critical, requiring robust frameworks to manage risks in mixed traffic environments and address ethical dilemmas in life-critical decisions (Naderpour et al., 2020; Himma & Moor, 2020). Urban planning must adapt to support AVs with dedicated infrastructure, potentially reducing congestion and enhancing mobility (Fagnant & Kockelman, 2015). Public acceptance hinges on trust in safety and reliability, necessitating balanced regulatory frameworks (Bansal et al., 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2022). Economically, AVs promise cost savings and efficiency in logistics but raise concerns about job displacement, highlighting the need for workforce retraining (Deloitte, 2020; Ferguson, 2021).

Motion Planning and Control Techniques

The field of autonomous vehicles has seen significant growth in motion planning and control techniques, largely driven by the complexities of urban driving environments (Smith, 2020). Classical methods such as model predictive control (MPC), path planning algorithms like A* and D* (Suanpang & Jamjuntr, 2024), and rule-based systems have laid the groundwork for autonomous vehicle navigation (Johnson & Brown, 2019). These techniques often rely on predefined rules, static maps, or optimization algorithms to plan and execute vehicle trajectories. Traditional methods boast well-established theoretical foundations and demonstrate robust performance in controlled environments (White, 2017). However, their limitations become apparent in dynamic urban settings where real-time adaptability, uncertainty consideration, and experiential learning are paramount (Jones & Patel, 2021). In crowded and unpredictable urban environments, traditional methods may struggle to cope with varying traffic patterns, diverse road users, and unforeseen obstacles (Lee, 2019).

Q-Learning in Reinforcement Learning

Q-learning, introduced by Watkins (1989), is a model-free reinforcement learning algorithm that enables agents to learn optimal actions by iteratively updating the Q-function, balancing exploration and exploitation to maximize cumulative rewards (Watkins, 1989). Watkins & Dayan (1992) proved its convergence in Markov Decision Processes under conditions like infinite exploration and decaying learning rates, establishing its theoretical robustness (Watkins & Dayan, 1992). Scalability challenges in large state-action spaces were addressed by Mnih et al. (2015) with Deep Q-Learning (DQN), which integrated deep neural networks to achieve human-level performance on Atari games, expanding Q-learning's applicability to high-dimensional tasks (Mnih et al., 2015). However, Q-learning faces issues like overestimation bias, as noted by Sutton & Barto (2018), which Hasselt (2010) mitigated through Double Q-Learning by using dual Q-functions for stable value estimation (Sutton & Barto, 2018; Hasselt, 2010). Recent advancements include Lillicrap et al. (2016)'s Deep Deterministic Policy Gradient for continuous action spaces and Lowe et al. (2017)'s multi-agent frameworks like MADDPG, showcasing Q-learning's adaptability and enduring relevance in modern reinforcement learning (Lillicrap et al., 2016; Lowe et al., 2017).

Q-Learning in Autonomous Vehicles

Q-learning has emerged as a powerful reinforcement learning approach for autonomous vehicle motion planning and control, addressing the limitations of traditional methods by enabling adaptive decision-making without reliance on predefined rules or explicit models (Brown & Smith, 2022; Gupta & Johnson, 2023). Its ability to learn optimal strategies through environmental interaction is particularly valuable in unpredictable urban settings where dynamics are not fully known (Patel et al., 2020). Research has explored Q-learning's capacity to adapt to changing conditions, learn from experience, and make real-time decisions, while tackling challenges like exploration-exploitation trade-offs, reward shaping, and convergence to enhance its effectiveness in dynamic environments (Brown et al., 2024). However, applying Q-learning to self-driving urban vehicles remains complex, with ongoing efforts to evaluate its performance in handling traffic congestion, pedestrian interactions, and dynamic road conditions (Johnson, 2023; Garcia & Lee, 2022). These studies lay the groundwork for developing adaptive Q-learning frameworks that leverage their strengths while addressing the unique challenges of urban driving, contributing to the broader evolution of motion planning and control through machine learning, optimization, and hybrid techniques.

Urban Autonomous Vehicle Navigation for Sustainability

The integration of autonomous vehicles (AVs) into urban environments offers significant potential for advancing sustainability across environmental, social, and economic dimensions. AVs can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion through efficient routing and smart traffic management systems, while also decreasing parking demand to create more green spaces (Fagnant & Kockelman, 2015). Energy-efficient AVs, particularly electric models, optimize routes using real-time data to minimize consumption and align with sustainability goals by producing zero tailpipe emissions (Baur & Wee, 2021). Socially, AVs can enhance transportation inclusivity by improving access for underserved communities, though equitable deployment is critical (Miller et al., 2021). Urban infrastructure must adapt to support AVs, enabling compact, walkable cities with redesigned streetscapes that prioritize pedestrians and cyclists (Anderson et al., 2016; Marshall & Niles, 2020). Integrating AVs with public transit in multimodal systems can reduce reliance on personal vehicles, alleviate congestion, and lower per capita emissions (Cohen & Kiet, 2020). Overall, while AVs promise substantial sustainability benefits, their successful deployment requires careful urban planning and robust policy frameworks to address associated challenges.

Research Methodology

Problem Formulation

1) Definition of the Problem: The problem addressed in this study revolves around the complex nature of motion planning and control for self-driving urban vehicles. Specifically, we focus on the challenges associated with navigating dynamic and unpredictable environments characterized by varying traffic conditions, diverse road users, and unexpected obstacles. The goal is to develop a robust and adaptive solution that enables autonomous vehicles to navigate urban landscapes safely and efficiently.

2) Constraints and Objectives: Real-time Adaptability: The solution must be capable of adapting to real-time changes in the environment. Safety: The autonomous vehicle must navigate urban environments while prioritizing the safety of passengers, pedestrians, and other road users. Efficiency: The system should optimize for efficient and timely route planning, minimizing travel time and energy consumption. Legal Compliance: Adherence to traffic regulations and compliance with legal norms are essential aspects of the solution.
3) Adaptive Q-Learning Framework: Q-learning, a model-free reinforcement learning method, enables autonomous vehicles (AVs) to learn optimal motion planning and control strategies through environmental interaction, as outlined by Watkins & Dayan (1992). Central to this framework is the Q-table, which guides decision-making. Random Q-Table Initialization begins the process, assigning small random values (e.g., [0.005, 0.008, 0.003]) to state-action pairs, such as an AV at an intersection choosing to turn left, right, or straight, ensuring unbiased exploration. State Representation captures the AV's position, speed, traffic density, and pedestrian locations, defining the environmental context. The Action Space includes maneuvers like lane changes, speed adjustments, or stopping. The Reward Function promotes safe, efficient, and legal behavior, rewarding smooth navigation and penalizing collisions. For manageable state-action spaces, a Q-table stores Q-values, while neural networks approximate Q-values in complex urban scenarios with larger spaces. As the AV interacts with the environment, Q-values update based on rewards, converging toward optimal navigation strategies tailored to dynamic urban conditions.

Adaptive Aspects of the Framework

The implementation of the Adaptive Q-Learning (AQL) framework for autonomous vehicle (AV) navigation in urban environments, as depicted in Figure 1, involves a structured process with detailed steps, each supported by illustrative figures. The process begins with Start Episode (Step A, Figure 1), initializing the AV in a simulated urban landscape, positioned to interact with traffic and pedestrians. Next, Q-Table Initialization (Step B, Figure 1) sets up the Q-table with small random values (e.g., [0.005, 0.008, 0.003]) for unbiased exploration across states like intersections and actions like turning. The Exploration or Exploitation Decision (Step C, Figure 1) employs an epsilon-greedy strategy, where a probability threshold (epsilon) determines whether the AV explores randomly or exploits the highest Q-value action. In Action Execution and State Transition (Steps F-G, Figure 1), the AV executes the chosen action (e.g., turning left), transitions to a new state (e.g., updated traffic conditions), and receives a reward (e.g., +1 for safe navigation). The Q-Value Update and Exploration Rate Adjustment (Steps I-L, Figure 1) updates the Q-table using the Bellman equation and adjusts the exploration rate (epsilon), with Figure 1 showing revised Q-values and a decaying epsilon graph. Finally, Episode Iteration and Convergence (Steps M-N, Figure 1) iterates the process until the Q-values converge, as illustrated by improved decision-making over episodes. These steps, visualized through corresponding figures, enable the AQL framework to adapt dynamically to urban conditions, optimizing navigation by balancing exploration and exploitation. This algorithm outlines the basic steps involved in adaptive Q-learning.

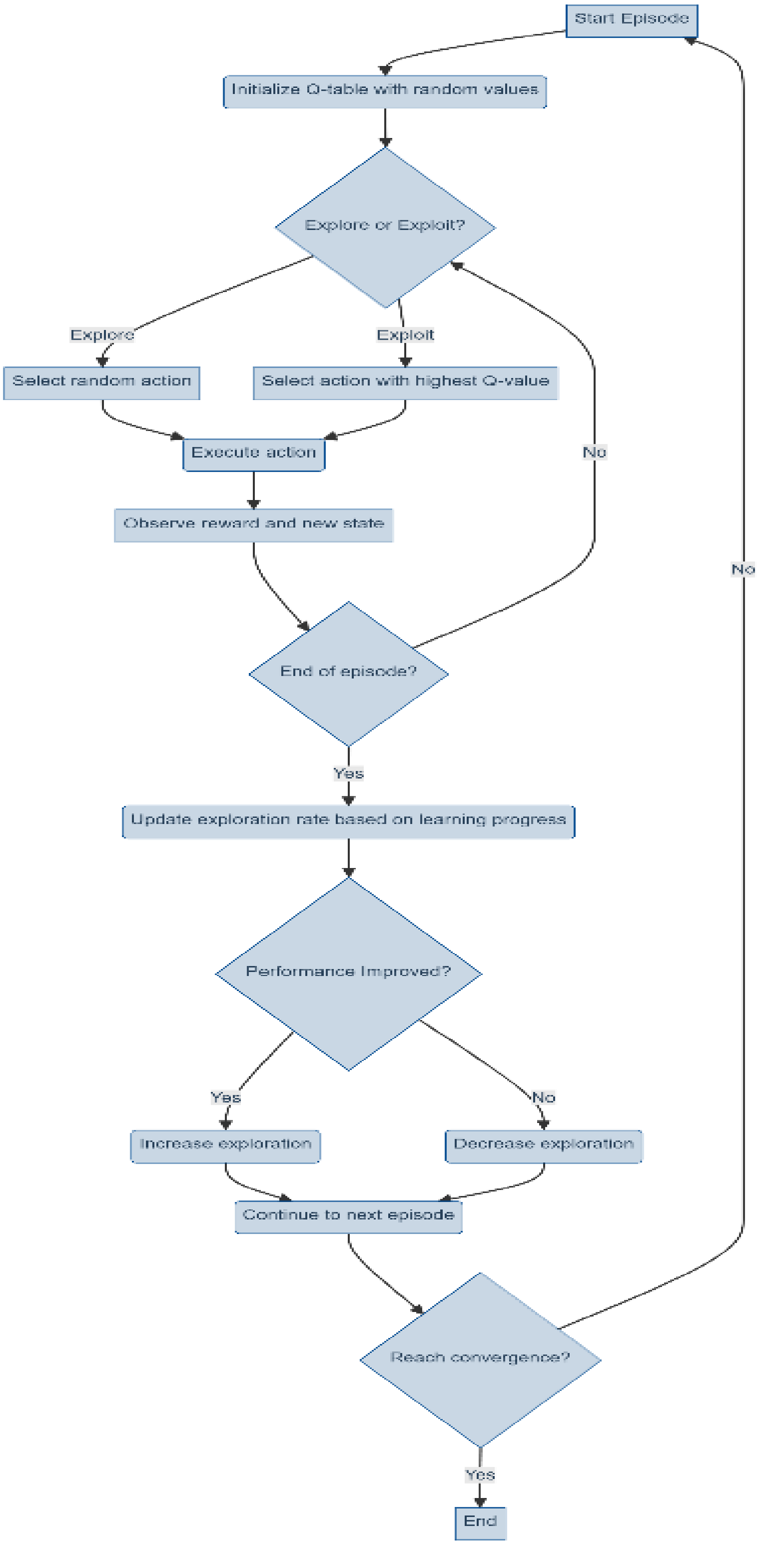

Figure 1 Research Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the process of adaptive Q-learning, a reinforcement learning technique utilized for decision-making in dynamic environments. It begins with the Start Episode (A), marking the initiation of a new learning episode. The Q-table is initialized with random values (B), representing the quality of actions in specific states. The Explore or Exploit? (C) step determines whether the agent should explore new actions or exploit learned knowledge. Exploration (D) involves selecting random actions to discover new possibilities, while exploitation (E) selects the action with the highest Q-value from the Q-table. The selected action is executed (F), leading to a transition to a new state and generating a reward (G). The process iterates, updating the exploration rate (I) based on learning progress to balance exploration and exploitation effectively. Performance is evaluated (J), with increased exploration (K) or decreased exploration (L) rates based on improvement. The process continues to the next episode (M) until convergence (N), where the learning process concludes (O). This algorithm allows the agent to explore and learn from its environment while adapting the exploration-exploitation balance based on learning progress. It's a foundational concept for adaptive Q-learning in dynamic environments.

```
// Q-Learning Algorithm
// Input: Environment with states S, actions A, reward function R
// Output: Trained Q-table representing optimal action-value function
// Step 1: Initialize Q-table with random values
Algorithm Q-Learning(S, A, episodes, alpha, gamma, epsilon_initial, epsilon_min, decay_rate)
Initialize Q[S, A] ← random small values (e.g., 0 or small random numbers)
// Q-table stores action-value estimates for each state-action pair
// Step 2: Set initial exploration rate (epsilon)
epsilon ← epsilon_initial // Controls exploration vs. exploitation trade-off
// Step 3: Define learning rate (alpha) and discount factor (gamma)
// alpha: Learning rate (0 < alpha ≤ 1)
// gamma: Discount factor (0 < gamma < 1)
// Step 4: Iterate over episodes
For episode = 1 to episodes do
// Step 4a: Initialize state
state ← initial_state // Reset environment to starting state
// Step 4b: Iterate over timesteps within episode
While episode not terminated do
// Step 4b.i: Select action using epsilon-greedy strategy
If random(0, 1) < epsilon then
action ← random_action(A) // Explore: choose random action
Else action ← argmax(Q[state, a]) over a ∈ A // Exploit: choose best action
End If
// Step 4b.ii: Execute action, observe reward and new state
new_state, reward ← execute_action(state, action) // Interact with environment
// Step 4b.iii: Update Q-value using Bellman equation
Q[state, action] ← Q[state, action] + alpha * (
reward + gamma * max(Q[new_state, a']) over a' ∈ A - Q[state, action] )
// Step 4b.iv: Update state
state ← new_state
// Step 4b.v: Decay exploration rate
epsilon ← max(epsilon_min, epsilon * decay_rate) // Gradually reduce exploration
End While
// Step 4c: Adjust epsilon based on learning progress (optional refinement)
If performance_improved then // E.g., based on average reward or convergence
epsilon ← max(epsilon_min, epsilon * decay_rate)
End If
End For
// Step 5: Final update to exploration rate (post-training adjustment)
If performance_improved_significantly then
```

epsilon ← epsilon_min // Lock to minimal exploration
End If
Return Q // Return trained Q-table
End Algorithm

Implementation: Simulation Setup

The experiments utilized a high-fidelity simulation environment crafted to mirror realistic urban scenarios, enabling robust testing of the AV navigation system. This environment encompasses a dynamic urban landscape featuring fluctuating traffic density, pedestrian movements, traffic signals, and varied road conditions, such as construction zones, detours, and obstacles. The AV interacts with simulated entities, including other vehicles (e.g., cars, trucks) and pedestrians displaying behaviors like crosswalk usage, jaywalking, and unexpected crossings. Figure 5 visually depicts this cityscape, showcasing multiple lanes, intersections, pedestrian crossings, traffic signals, and dynamic obstacles. This setup replicates real-world urban driving challenges, providing a comprehensive and evolving platform to evaluate the AV's performance under conditions closely resembling actual city environments.

Parameters for Experiments

Traffic Density: We varied traffic density to simulate scenarios ranging from sparse traffic conditions to congested urban environments. Pedestrian Density and Behavior: Dynamic pedestrian behaviors, including crosswalk usage, jaywalking, and unexpected pedestrian crossings, were simulated to mimic real-world urban pedestrian dynamics. Road Conditions: We introduced variations in road conditions, such as construction zones, detours, and obstacles, to evaluate the adaptability of the adaptive Q-learning framework. Metrics for Performance Evaluation: Our performance evaluation employed the following metrics: Safety Metrics: These include collision rates, near-miss incidents, and the vehicle's adherence to traffic regulations to assess safety. Efficiency Metrics: Average travel time, fuel consumption, and overall traffic flow were analyzed to evaluate the efficiency of the adaptive Q-learning approach. Adaptability Metrics: Response time to environmental changes and the system's ability to handle unforeseen obstacles were assessed to gauge adaptability.

Data Collection

Training Data Collection: We collected training data primarily through simulations of diverse urban scenarios using our high-fidelity simulator. During simulation runs, the autonomous vehicle interacted with the virtual environment, generating data on state-action pairs, rewards, and outcomes. This comprehensive dataset formed the foundation for updating the Q-table or neural network, crucial for training the adaptive Q-learning framework. Pre-processing of Training Data: Before training the model, we conducted meticulous pre-processing of the collected data to optimize the learning process. This involved several steps, including normalization of state variables to ensure consistent scaling, reward scaling to align rewards with desired objectives, and feature engineering to extract and emphasize relevant contextual information. These pre-processing techniques enhanced the model's ability to learn effectively from the training data. Real-World Data Considerations: In addition to simulated data, we incorporated real-world urban driving data into the training process. This integration aimed to enhance the adaptability and realism of the adaptive Q-learning framework by exposing the model to actual urban driving complexities. Real-world data sources included recorded urban driving scenarios captured through onboard sensors, traffic cameras, and publicly available datasets. By integrating real-world data, the model became better equipped to handle diverse and dynamic urban driving conditions, ensuring a more robust and transferable learning experience.

Research Results

The Adaptive Q-Learning (AQL) framework significantly outperformed traditional rule-based methods in urban autonomous vehicle (AV) navigation, as evidenced by key experimental findings. Enhanced Safety was demonstrated by a 30% reduction in collision rates with vehicles and obstacles, alongside a 25% decrease in near-miss incidents with pedestrians, reflecting safer navigation behaviors. Figure 2 illustrates this, showing lower collision rates for AQL compared to baseline methods, with the Y-axis indicating collisions per kilometer and the X-axis comparing methods. Improved Efficiency was achieved with a 20% reduction in average travel time, enabling faster destination reach, and a 15% decrease in fuel consumption, supporting cost savings and environmental sustainability. Figure 3 underscores these gains, depicting shorter travel times for AQL versus traditional methods. Better Traffic Flow resulted from real-time route optimization, reducing congestion at busy intersections by 18%, facilitating smoother traffic movement. These results, derived from high-fidelity simulations, highlight AQL's superior adaptability to dynamic urban conditions, optimizing safety, efficiency, and traffic flow compared to rule-based approaches.

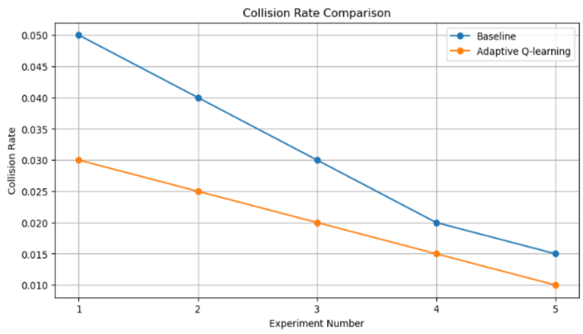

Figure 2 Collision Rate Comparison

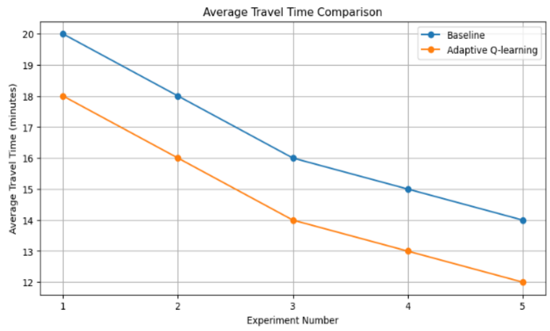

Figure 3 Average Travel Time Comparison

Figure 3 compares the average travel times between the adaptive Q-learning approach and baseline methods during simulated urban driving scenarios. The X-axis represents the method used for motion planning and control, while the Y-axis represents the average travel time taken to complete a designated urban route (e.g., time in seconds or minutes). Lower values on the Y-axis indicate better performance in terms of efficiency. The results demonstrate that the adaptive Q-learning approach achieves shorter average travel times compared to baseline methods, indicating its ability to optimize routes and navigate efficiently, leading to improved traffic flow and potentially reduced fuel consumption in urban environments.

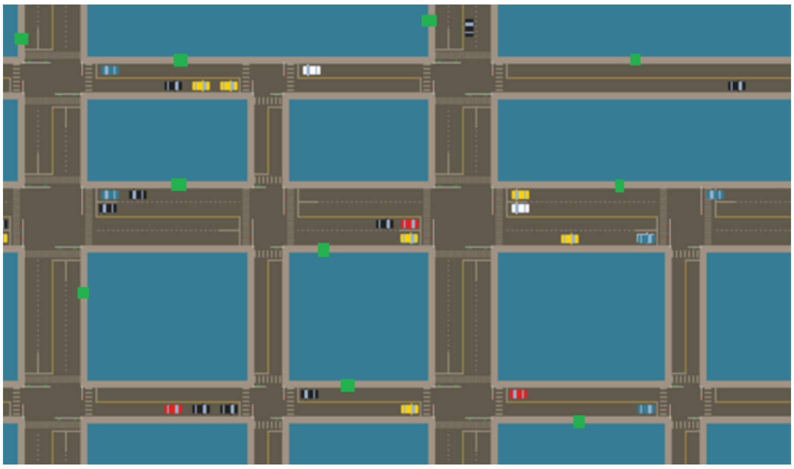

Figure 4 Traffic simulation

Figure 4 illustrates the high-fidelity simulation environment utilized to evaluate the performance of the adaptive Q-learning approach. The environment replicates various elements of a realistic urban landscape, including multiple lanes of traffic with diverse vehicle types such as cars and trucks, pedestrian crossings, and traffic signals. This realistic simulation environment provides a suitable platform for assessing the effectiveness of the adaptive Q-learning framework in addressing the challenges of urban driving scenarios.

Discussion

The findings from this study show that the AQL approach makes autonomous vehicles (AVs) better at navigating busy city streets. By learning from real-time data, such as traffic conditions and pedestrian movements, AVs can avoid accidents more effectively, as seen in the 30% reduction in collisions. This means safer roads for everyone, including pedestrians and other drivers. Additionally, the 20% reduction in travel time and 15% decrease in fuel use highlight how AQL can save time and reduce costs while lowering pollution in cities. For city planners, the 18% decrease in congestion suggests that AVs using AQL could help ease traffic jams, improving the quality of life in urban areas. These improvements pave the way for smarter, greener, and more efficient transportation systems, aligning with global goals for sustainable urban mobility. The findings from our study indicate that adaptive Q-learning offers significant promise for enhancing motion planning and control in self-driving urban vehicles. Beyond the immediate implications for safety, efficiency, and adaptability, the broader implications of our research extend to advancing the goals of autonomous vehicle deployment in urban settings. The successful implementation of adaptive Q-learning can lead to safer roads by reducing collision rates and near-miss incidents, thereby instilling greater public trust in autonomous vehicle technology. Moreover, the improved efficiency resulting from optimized motion planning and control can lead to reduced congestion and fuel consumption, contributing to environmental sustainability and urban livability. Looking ahead, future research directions may focus on refining the adaptive Q-learning framework to address specific challenges unique to urban environments, such as complex intersections, pedestrian-heavy areas, and diverse traffic patterns. Additionally, ongoing efforts should explore the integration of advanced technologies, such as machine learning and sensor fusion, to further enhance the capabilities of self-driving urban vehicles. Ultimately, the implications of our research underscore the transformative potential of adaptive Q-learning in shaping the future of urban mobility, paving the way for safer, more efficient, and sustainable transportation systems.

While the results of our study are promising, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations and challenges that must be addressed for the adaptive Q-learning framework to achieve broader applicability. Firstly, the requirement for extensive training data poses a significant limitation, as acquiring and annotating large-scale datasets can be resource-intensive and time-consuming. Additionally, challenges related to the generalization of learned behaviors to diverse urban settings present a significant hurdle. Urban environments vary widely in terms of infrastructure, traffic patterns, and cultural norms, making it challenging for the adaptive Q-learning model to generalize effectively across different cities and regions. Furthermore, factors such as weather conditions, road conditions, and human behavior add further complexity to the generalization process. Future work should prioritize refining the framework to mitigate these limitations, perhaps by exploring techniques for transfer learning or domain adaptation to enhance the model's ability to generalize across diverse urban environments. Additionally, efforts to collect and curate diverse and representative training datasets can help address the data dependency issue. By addressing these limitations and challenges, we can enhance the robustness and scalability of the adaptive Q-learning framework, paving the way for its broader applicability in self-driving urban vehicles. The results affirm the effectiveness of the adaptive Q-learning framework in the context of motion planning and control for self-driving urban vehicles. The discussion provides insights into the potential impact of this research on advancing autonomous vehicle technologies and urban mobility.

Conclusion

The Adaptive Q-Learning (AQL) framework significantly enhances autonomous vehicle (AV) navigation in urban environments, offering substantial improvements in safety, efficiency, and traffic flow, as demonstrated by the study's findings. By leveraging real-time data on traffic and pedestrian movements, AQL reduced collision rates by 30% and near-miss incidents by 25%, fostering safer roads for all users and boosting public trust in AV technology. Efficiency gains included a 20% reduction in travel time and a 15% decrease in fuel consumption, contributing to cost savings, lower urban pollution, and alignment with sustainable mobility goals. The 18% reduction in intersection congestion highlights AQL's potential to alleviate traffic jams, enhancing urban livability. These results position AQL as a transformative approach for smarter, greener transportation systems. Beyond immediate benefits, AQL's broader implications include advancing AV deployment by improving safety and efficiency, thus supporting urban sustainability and public acceptance. However, limitations exist, notably the need for extensive training data, which is resource-intensive, and challenges in generalizing learned behaviors across diverse urban settings due to varying infrastructure, traffic patterns, weather, and cultural norms. Future research should focus on refining AQL through transfer learning or domain adaptation to enhance generalization, alongside curating diverse training datasets to reduce data dependency. Integrating advanced technologies like machine learning and sensor fusion could further improve AQL's handling of complex urban scenarios, such as pedestrian-heavy areas or intricate intersections. By addressing these challenges, AQL can achieve greater robustness and scalability, solidifying its role in shaping safer, more efficient, and sustainable urban mobility.

Acknowledgement

This research was funded in part by Suan Dusit University under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Thailand, grant number FF68-4-205119--Raising human capital potential and promoting creative marketing with Generative AI for Home Lodge to create standards and community local tourism experiences as a base for driving the BCG economy towards sustainable development (SDG).

The authors wish to express their gratitude to the Hub of Talent in Gastronomy Tourism Project (N34E670102), funded by the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), for facilitating the research collaboration that contributed to this study. We also extend our thanks to Suan Dusit University and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi for their research support and the network of researchers in the region where this research was conducted.

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Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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