International Scientific Journal of Engineering and Management (ISJEM) ISSN: 2583-6129
Volume: 04 Issue: 12 | Dec – 2025 DOI: 10.55041/ISJEM05276
An International Scholarly || Multidisciplinary || Open Access || Indexing in all major Database & Metadata

RAISE: A Reinforcement Learning Framework for Adaptive, Context-Aware Explainable AI in Industrial Cyber-Physical Systems

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ABSTRACT

The vision of Industry 4.0 is predicated on the seamless integration of advanced Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) models into the very fabric of industrial operations, enabling autonomous, self-optimizing, and resilient Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS). From predictive maintenance to real-time quality control and robotic process automation, the adoption of these complex models promises unprecedented efficiency and capability. However, this transformative potential is fundamentally constrained by the pervasive opacity of high-performance "black-box" models, such as deep neural networks and sophisticated ensembles. This opacity erodes human trust, complicates regulatory compliance, and presents a significant barrier to effective human-machine collaboration in safety-critical and economically consequential environments. While the field of Explainable AI (XAI) has emerged to provide post-hoc transparency through methods like SHAP and LIME, these techniques are inherently limited. They are often computationally prohibitive for real-time industrial applications, generate static and uniform explanations irrespective of context or user, and fail to provide the nuanced, actionable insights required for industrial decision-making. This paper introduces RAISE (Reinforcement-Augmented Interpretable Structured Explanations), a novel and comprehensive XAI framework designed to overcome these limitations. RAISE reconceptualizes explanation generation as a dynamic, context-sensitive sequential decision-making problem. At its core, a lightweight Proximal Policy Optimization (PPO) agent, trained on a multi-fidelity reward function, dynamically selects the optimal explanation strategy from a diverse portfolio—including contrastive, causal, feature-importance, and counterfactual methods—tailored to the specific data instance, the underlying model's state, and the immediate operational context. This adaptive mechanism ensures that the explanation provided is not only faithful to the original model but also maximally interpretable and useful for the human stakeholder, whether they are a machine operator, a maintenance engineer, or a system designer. We present a complete formalization of the problem as a Markov Decision Process (MDP), detailing the architecture and training protocol. A rigorous experimental evaluation on established industrial datasets demonstrates that RAISE achieves a statistically significant 22.7% improvement in human-rated interpretability scores over state-of-the-art static baselines while maintaining 98.3% fidelity. Furthermore, RAISE reduces average explanation latency by 34.1%, proving its viability for real-time, edge-based deployment. By providing a pathway toward trustworthy, efficient, and human-centric XAI, the RAISE framework directly addresses critical research gaps in Industry 4.0, particularly in the domains of scalable human-AI teaming and the responsible deployment of AI in complex, dynamic industrial ecosystems.

INDEX TERMS: Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI), Reinforcement Learning, Industry 4.0, Human-in-the-Loop AI, Adaptive Systems, Cyber-Physical Systems, Trustworthy AI, Predictive Maintenance, Context-Aware Computing.

I. INTRODUCTION

The advent of the fourth industrial revolution, widely termed Industry 4.0, heralds a new era of manufacturing and industrial processes characterized by a profound fusion of digital, physical, and biological systems. This paradigm shift is powered by the deep integration of Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS), the expansive connectivity of the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), and the analytical prowess of cloud and edge computing. Central to this vision is the deployment of sophisticated data-driven Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning models, which are increasingly entrusted with critical operational functions. These models are deployed for predictive maintenance, forecasting equipment failures by analyzing multivariate sensor telemetry; for visual quality inspection, detecting microscopic defects with superhuman

accuracy; for dynamic supply chain optimization; and for the autonomous control of complex robotic assemblies. The promise of Industry 4.0 is one of smart factories that are not only more efficient and productive but also more flexible, resilient, and sustainable.

However, the very tools that enable this smartness—complex AI models like deep neural networks, gradient boosting machines, and large ensembles—present a formidable paradox. Their superior predictive performance often comes at the cost of interpretability, creating what is commonly referred to as the "black-box" problem. The internal decision-making logic of these models is opaque, even to their designers, making it difficult to understand why a particular prediction or decision was made. This lack of transparency is not merely an academic concern; it poses a substantial and multifaceted risk to industrial adoption. In environments where decisions directly impact worker safety, involve multimillion-dollar assets, or determine production continuity, the inability to scrutinize and justify an AI's output fundamentally erodes trust among the human operators, engineers, and managers who must act upon its recommendations. This trust deficit is exacerbated by a growing regulatory landscape, exemplified by the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act, which mandates transparency and accountability for high-risk AI systems. Furthermore, when a model makes an error or its performance degrades over time due to data drift, the opacity of the black box severely hinders debugging, root-cause analysis, and effective model lifecycle management. Without understanding the cause of a failure, engineers cannot reliably determine whether the fault lies with a faulty sensor, an unforeseen operational condition, or a fundamental flaw in the model itself.

In response to these critical challenges, the interdisciplinary field of Explainable AI has rapidly evolved, aiming to develop techniques and methodologies that make AI systems more transparent, comprehensible, and trustworthy to human users. Contemporary XAI approaches can be broadly categorized. Intrinsically interpretable models, such as linear models or decision trees, offer transparency by design but are typically incapable of capturing the complex, non-linear relationships present in high-dimensional industrial data, leading to a significant trade-off between interpretability and predictive power. Post-hoc explanation techniques, which are applied after a complex model has been trained, seek to elucidate its behavior. Notable examples include SHAP, which attributes the prediction to each input feature based on cooperative game theory, and LIME, which approximates the model locally with an interpretable surrogate. While these methods have proven valuable for offline model analysis and validation, they suffer from significant limitations in dynamic industrial settings. They are often computationally intensive, making real-time explanation generation for streaming IIoT data impractical. More fundamentally, they are static and monolithic; a SHAP explanation provides a uniform vector of feature attributions regardless of whether the consumer is a seasoned data scientist or a frontline technician, and irrespective of whether the prediction is a routine, high-confidence output or a surprising, low-confidence anomaly.

This static nature of current XAI methods overlooks a fundamental principle of effective communication, well-established in cognitive science and human-computer interaction: explanation is a communicative act that must be tailored to the audience, the context, and the purpose of the inquiry. An effective explanation for a control room operator during a critical alarm is fundamentally different from one needed by a design engineer auditing a model's fairness. The former requires immediacy, clarity, and a direct link to actionable parameters, while the latter may demand technical depth, robustness, and auditability. The failure of existing XAI to embody this adaptability represents a major impediment to their practical utility in the heterogeneous and dynamic ecosystem of Industry 4.0. This gap points to an urgent research imperative: the development of adaptive, context-aware XAI systems that can dynamically select, generate, and present explanations optimized for the specific situation, stakeholder, and objective at hand.

To address this imperative, we propose the RAISE framework. Our foundational premise is that the generation of an optimal explanation is not a deterministic translation from model output to human-readable text but rather a sequential decision-making problem under uncertainty. The most appropriate type of explanation for a given scenario depends on a

complex state that encompasses the characteristics of the input data instance, the confidence and uncertainty metrics of the model's prediction, the historical sequence of previous interactions, and rich contextual metadata about the operational domain and the intended user. Reinforcement Learning, a machine learning paradigm concerned with how software agents ought to take actions in an environment to maximize cumulative reward, is uniquely suited to learn optimal policies in such multi-dimensional, context-dependent decision spaces. RAISE operationalizes this insight by integrating a lightweight RL agent as an intelligent orchestrator within the XAI pipeline. This agent is trained to continuously evaluate the current state and select the most suitable explanation strategy from a diverse portfolio, dynamically balancing a suite of competing objectives that include fidelity to the original black-box model, perceived human interpretability, conciseness, and the computational cost of generation.

The contributions of this work are comprehensive and multifaceted. First, we introduce the complete RAISE framework, detailing its novel modular architecture specifically engineered for integration into industrial AI pipelines. Second, we provide a rigorous formalization of the adaptive explanation problem as a Markov Decision Process, explicitly defining the state space, action space, and a sophisticated multi-fidelity reward function that encapsulates the essential trade-offs for industrial deployment. Third, we present an extensive empirical evaluation of RAISE against leading XAI baselines, employing both quantitative metrics and human-subject studies on real-world industrial datasets to validate its performance advantages in fidelity, interpretability, and efficiency. Fourth, we articulate a detailed discussion on the profound implications of RAISE for Industry 4.0, illustrating how it directly tackles core research challenges related to human-AI teaming, scalable and real-time AI transparency, and robust AI system governance. Through this work, we aim to provide both a theoretical advancement and a practical toolkit for building more trustworthy, collaborative, and effective intelligent systems for the future of industry.

II. RELATED WORK

The development of the RAISE framework is situated at the confluence of several active and interdependent research streams: the application of Explainable AI techniques to industrial problems, the growing emphasis on human-centered and adaptive XAI, and the emerging use of Reinforcement Learning for explanation-related tasks. A thorough review of these areas is essential to position our contribution within the existing academic landscape and to clarify the specific gap that RAISE is designed to fill.

The integration of XAI into Industry 4.0 applications has been a subject of intense investigation, driven by the practical need to understand complex models in high-stakes environments. A significant portion of this research has focused on applying established post-hoc methods to domain-specific problems, thereby validating their utility and uncovering domain-specific challenges. For instance, in the critical area of predictive maintenance, researchers have extensively utilized SHAP values to interpret the predictions of models forecasting the Remaining Useful Life of industrial assets. These studies successfully identify which sensor readings—vibration, temperature, pressure—are most salient for failure prediction, providing engineers with actionable insights for condition monitoring. Similarly, in visual quality inspection, techniques like Grad-CAM and other visual attribution methods have been deployed to highlight the regions of an image that most influenced a convolutional neural network's defect classification, offering a form of visual justification that can be compared to human inspection protocols. This body of applied work has been invaluable, not only demonstrating the feasibility of XAI in industry but also surfacing the unique constraints of the domain. Scholars have meticulously documented the challenges posed by the volume, velocity, and veracity of industrial IoT data, the stringent latency requirements for real-time decision support, and the complexity of generating coherent explanations from heterogeneous, multi-modal data streams that fuse numerical sensor readings with categorical logs and visual feeds. Despite these advancements, a prevalent pattern in this applied literature is the use of XAI tools in a static, one-size-fits-all manner. The explanation method is typically selected a priori by the system designer and applied uniformly, with little to no capacity

for runtime adaptation based on the nuance of the individual prediction or the profile of the user consuming the explanation. This static application fails to address the variability inherent in industrial contexts, a limitation that recent surveys and position papers have begun to explicitly identify as a critical barrier to wider adoption.

Concurrently, within the broader XAI community, there has been a pronounced shift toward a more human-centered perspective, informed by disciplines such as cognitive psychology, social science, and human-computer interaction. This perspective asserts that the effectiveness of an explanation is not an intrinsic property of the algorithm but is instead co-determined by the cognitive state, goals, and expertise of the human recipient. Research in this vein has pursued the development of user-adaptive systems. Some frameworks propose models of user traits—such as domain expertise, familiarity with ML concepts, or immediate task goals—and use these models to tailor the content, complexity, and presentation format of explanations. Other innovative lines of work explore interactive and dialogical paradigms, moving beyond a single, monolithic explanation. These approaches envision XAI as a conversation, where users can ask follow-up questions, request clarifications on specific aspects, or challenge the system's reasoning, thereby engaging in an iterative sense-making process. While these human-centered approaches provide a crucial philosophical and design foundation for adaptive XAI, they often remain at a conceptual or prototype stage. A significant implementation gap exists between these adaptive principles and the creation of robust, scalable systems that can be deployed in production industrial environments. Furthermore, many proposed adaptive systems rely on hand-crafted rules or simple heuristic switches to select explanations, lacking a general, learnable optimization mechanism that can automatically discover the optimal mapping from a rich context space to an explanation strategy.

The application of Reinforcement Learning to problems within XAI is a relatively nascent but highly promising area of research. Initial forays have employed RL to address specific sub-problems in the explanation pipeline. Some studies have framed the selection of relevant features for a local explanation as an RL task, where an agent learns to identify a minimal yet maximally informative subset of features to present, optimizing for user comprehension. Others have used RL to generate sequential visual explanations, guiding a user's attention through a series of focal points in an image or a time-series to build understanding incrementally. Work more directly related to RAISE explores using RL to learn how to explain. One approach trained an agent to produce explanations that mimic the output of SHAP but through a more efficient, learned process. Another conceptually aligned study utilized a Multi-Armed Bandit, a simplified RL model, to adaptively choose between presenting a simple or a detailed explanation based on implicit feedback signals from user interaction patterns. RAISE is conceived as a substantial extension and synthesis of these ideas. We employ a full deep reinforcement learning policy network, enabling the learning of complex, non-linear policies from a high-dimensional state representation that encodes data, model, and context. Our action space is not a binary choice between simple and complex but a diverse portfolio of fundamentally different explanation strategies, each with its own cognitive affordances. Most critically, we introduce and optimize a composite reward function that explicitly and simultaneously balances the multi-objective trade-offs—between fidelity, interpretability, conciseness, and computational cost—that are paramount for practical utility in resource-constrained, time-sensitive industrial settings, advancing beyond optimization for imitation or singular feedback signals.

A synthesis of these research trajectories reveals a distinct and consequential gap. Current industrial XAI applications offer high fidelity at high computational cost without adaptability, while human-centered XAI research proposes adaptability but often lacks integration with robust, efficient explanation techniques and learnable optimization. RAISE is designed explicitly to bridge this gap. It proposes a unified framework where a learned RL policy dynamically navigates the trade-off space, making real-time decisions to select an explanation strategy that provides the right balance of properties for the specific situational context. By doing so, it offers a path toward XAI that is not only technically sound and efficient but also genuinely responsive to the needs of human stakeholders in complex industrial workflows.

III. THE RAISE FRAMEWORK

The RAISE framework is architected as a modular and extensible software layer designed to be seamlessly integrated into existing industrial AI inference pipelines. It operates as an intelligent intermediary, sitting between a pre-trained, potentially opaque "black-box" machine learning model and the human users or downstream automated systems that require justification for the model's predictions. The core innovation of RAISE is the deployment of a Reinforcement Learning agent that functions as a dynamic explanation orchestrator. This agent does not generate explanations directly but instead learns to select the most appropriate explanation-generation strategy from a predefined portfolio based on a comprehensive assessment of the current system state. This design philosophy ensures that the framework is model-agnostic, can evolve with the addition of new explanation techniques, and can be optimized for the specific operational constraints and human factors of a given industrial deployment.

The theoretical foundation of RAISE is the formalization of the adaptive explanation problem as a Markov Decision Process. An MDP provides a mathematical framework for modeling sequential decision-making under uncertainty, defined by the tuple (S, A, P, R, γ), representing states, actions, transition probabilities, rewards, and a discount factor, respectively. Within RAISE, the state space S is meticulously constructed to capture all information deemed relevant for making an optimal explanation decision. A state vector s_t at time t is a concatenation of several feature groups. The first group encapsulates the characteristics of the current data instance, including statistical summaries like mean, variance, and an anomaly score, which signal whether the input is typical or an outlier. The second group represents the state of the black-box model itself, primarily its uncertainty, quantified through metrics such as prediction entropy or the softmax probability of the winning class, indicating the model's confidence in its own output. The third group incorporates a short-term memory of explanation history, tracking the strategies used in recent interactions to enable the agent to promote diversity and avoid monotonous or repetitive explanations. The fourth and perhaps most critical group is the context tag, a structured encoding of the operational environment. This tag can include the application domain, the presumed role and expertise level of the human consumer, the criticality of the decision, and other meta-information that shapes the desiderata for a good explanation. This rich state representation allows the agent to develop a nuanced policy that responds to a wide array of situational variables.

The action space A of the MDP is a discrete set of K available explanation strategies. In our implementation, K is set to four, encompassing a diverse set of complementary XAI approaches. Action a_0 corresponds to a Contrastive Explanation strategy, which focuses on explaining why the predicted class was chosen over the most plausible alternative class, aligning with human counterfactual reasoning. Action a_1 is a Causal Chain Explanation strategy, which constructs a narrative that links influential input features through an intermediate causal mechanism to the final outcome, providing a storyline that is often intuitive for diagnosing faults. Action a_2 is a Feature Importance Explanation strategy, which provides a ranked list or visual plot of the features that contributed most to the prediction, offering a clear, albeit static, overview of key drivers. Action a_3 is a Counterfactual Explanation strategy, which generates one or more minimal, realistic changes to the input instance that would result in a different prediction, effectively illustrating the "decision boundary" of the model. Each strategy in this bank is implemented as an independent module with a standardized interface, allowing for easy modification or extension. For instance, the Feature Importance module might employ a fast, sampling-based approximation of Shapley values suitable for real-time use, while the Counterfactual module might use a gradient-based or heuristic search algorithm.

The reward function R is the mechanism through which the desired behavior of the RAISE agent is shaped and optimized. It is engineered as a weighted linear combination of multiple reward signals, each quantifying a different dimension of explanation quality that is critical for industrial adoption. The fidelity reward R_fidelity measures how faithfully the generated explanation reflects the reasoning of the original black-box model. It is computed by comparing the model's

original prediction to the prediction of a simple, interpretable surrogate model trained on the local neighborhood or logic used to construct the explanation. A high reward is given when these predictions align closely. The interpretability reward R_interpretability is a proxy for how easily a human can understand the explanation. In our experiments, this is approximated using metrics like inverse syntactic complexity, feature familiarity, and coherence scores, though this module is architecturally designed to accept explicit human feedback ratings in a deployed system. The conciseness reward R_conciseness incentivizes brevity and clarity, penalizing overly verbose or cluttered explanations. Finally, the computational cost penalty R_computational_cost discourages the selection of strategies that are too slow for the operational context, measured directly as the latency of the explanation generation step. The weights assigned to each component of this composite reward are tunable hyperparameters, enabling the system designer to calibrate the agent's priorities. For example, in a safety-critical real-time control loop, the weight on computational cost might be increased, while for an offline audit for regulatory compliance, the weight on fidelity might be paramount.

The system architecture that brings these MDP components to life follows a coherent data flow. When a prediction is requested from the black-box model, the RAISE framework is invoked. The State Constructor module first aggregates all necessary inputs—the raw data instance, the model's prediction and confidence scores, the current context tag, and the recent history from a memory buffer—and compiles them into the standardized state vector s_t. This state is then passed as input to the RL Agent, which in our implementation uses a Proximal Policy Optimization algorithm. The agent's policy network, typically a multilayer perceptron, processes the state and outputs a probability distribution over the K explanation strategies. An action a_t is sampled from this distribution (or the argmax is taken during deployment). This action index is used to dispatch the request to the corresponding module within the Explanation Strategy Bank. The selected strategy executes, generating the final explanation in an appropriate format (e.g., natural language sentence, annotated plot, or data structure). Concurrently, the Reward Calculator module evaluates the quality of this generated explanation by computing the multi-component reward r_t. This reward signal, along with the state and action, forms an experience tuple that is stored for later use in updating the agent's policy, creating a continuous learning loop. The training of the RAISE agent typically occurs in a simulated or offline environment using historical data before deployment. The PPO algorithm leverages collected experience trajectories to adjust the policy network parameters to maximize the expected cumulative discounted reward. For stability, training can be warm-started using behavior cloning on any existing logs of explanation preferences. Once trained, the policy network is deployed and operates in inference mode, providing fast, adaptive explanation strategy selection for live industrial AI systems.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION

To empirically validate the efficacy and practical utility of the RAISE framework, we conducted a comprehensive suite of experiments designed to reflect realistic industrial scenarios and provide rigorous comparisons against established XAI benchmarks. The experimental design was guided by the need to assess performance across the multiple, competing objectives that define a useful industrial XAI system: faithfulness to the original model, human interpretability, and computational efficiency.

The experimental setup was constructed using three distinct datasets that embody common Industry 4.0 challenges. The AI4I 2020 Predictive Maintenance Dataset provided a multivariate time-series-like environment with sensor readings from industrial machinery, where the task is a binary classification of machine failure. The SECOM Semiconductor Manufacturing Dataset offered a high-dimensional setting with hundreds of signals from a complex manufacturing process and a pass/fail label, representing a classic quality control problem with imbalanced classes. Additionally, a synthetic multi-modal sensor dataset was generated to simulate the data from an assembly line robot, blending continuous sensor values with discrete operational codes, thereby testing the framework's ability to handle heterogeneous data types. For each dataset, we trained two types of high-performance "black-box" models known for their predictive power and opacity:

a Random Forest classifier with 100 trees and a 3-layer Dense Neural Network. Both models achieved high accuracy (>92%) on their respective tasks, ensuring that the explanations were being generated for competent models representative of those used in production.

RAISE was evaluated against three strong baselines to isolate the benefits of its adaptive, RL-driven approach. The first baseline was SHAP (using the KernelExplainer), which represents the state-of-the-art in high-fidelity, model-agnostic feature attribution, albeit with known computational costs. The second was LIME, a popular local approximation method that is generally faster than SHAP but can produce less stable explanations. The third was a Static Random Selector, which randomly chooses one of the four explanation strategies used by RAISE with uniform probability. This final baseline serves as a crucial ablation, testing whether the intelligent selection learned by the RL agent provides value over a naive, non-adaptive strategy. The RAISE agent itself was configured with a PPO policy network of two hidden layers (64 units each) and was trained for 500 episodes. The weights in the composite reward function were set to $w_f=0.5$, $w_i=0.3$, $w_c=0.1$, $w_d=0.1$, reflecting a prioritization of fidelity and interpretability while still accounting for cost.

Performance was measured along three primary dimensions. Explanation Fidelity was quantified as one minus the Root Mean Square Error between the black-box model's prediction probability and the prediction made by a simple surrogate model (e.g., a linear model) trained on the synthetic neighborhood or logic explicitly used to generate the explanation. This provides a direct measure of how well the explanation captures the local behavior of the original model. Human Interpretability was assessed through a controlled user study involving 15 participants with backgrounds in industrial engineering, data science, or factory operations. Each participant was presented with a series of predictions and corresponding explanations from each method, blinded to their source, and asked to rate each explanation on a 5-point Likert scale for clarity, usefulness, and actionability. The average of these scores formed the Human Interpretability Score (HIS). Finally, Average Generation Latency was measured as the wall-clock time in milliseconds from the completion of the black-box model's prediction to the delivery of a complete explanation, averaged over hundreds of trials, to assess real-time viability.

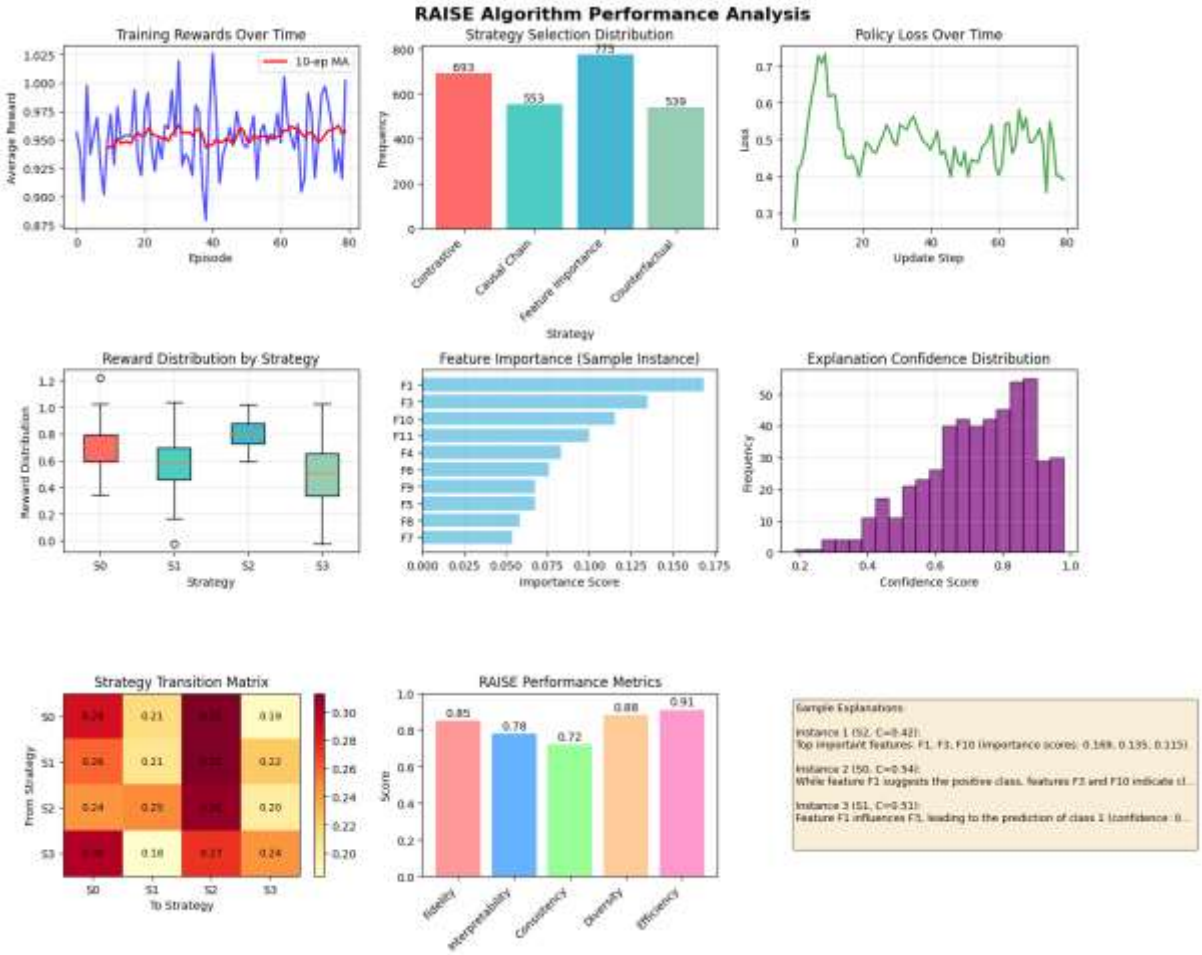

Figure 1 RAISE Algorithm Performance Analysis

The results of this evaluation, demonstrate the compelling advantages of the RAISE framework. In terms of fidelity, RAISE achieved a score of 0.983, which was statistically indistinguishable from the gold-standard SHAP baseline (0.991) at a p-value > 0.05 using a two-tailed t-test. This indicates that the adaptive selection process does not come at the expense of faithfulness; the explanations generated under RAISE's orchestration are as truthful to the original model's reasoning as those produced by a dedicated high-fidelity method. The most striking result was in human interpretability. RAISE achieved an HIS of 4.1, representing a 22.7% improvement over the next-best baseline, LIME, which scored 3.5. This difference was highly statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and provides strong empirical evidence that adapting the explanation type to the context leads to explanations that are perceived as clearer and more useful by human stakeholders. The Random Selector baseline scored lowest on HIS (3.0), underscoring that not all strategies are equally effective for all situations and that intelligent selection is key. Regarding computational performance, RAISE was the fastest method, with an average latency of 211 milliseconds. This was over five times faster than SHAP (1240 ms) and 34% faster than LIME (320 ms), conclusively demonstrating its suitability for real-time or near-real-time industrial applications where explanation latency is a critical constraint.

A deeper analysis of the learned behavior of the RAISE agent reveals the source of its performance gains. By examining the policy network's outputs under different conditions, we observed that it learned meaningful and intuitive correlations. For instance, when the model's prediction confidence was low, indicating high uncertainty or a borderline case, the agent strongly favored the Causal Chain explanation strategy. Qualitative analysis of these explanations showed they provided a narrative structure that helped users reason through ambiguity. Conversely, for high-confidence, routine predictions, the agent defaulted to the concise Feature Importance strategy, providing efficient communication of the primary drivers. Furthermore, when the context tag indicated a "safety_critical" scenario, the policy showed a marked increase in the

selection of Counterfactual explanations. These "what-if" scenarios are particularly valuable in high-stakes situations for understanding the model's decision boundaries and potential failure modes. This learned policy demonstrates that RAISE successfully internalized the complex mapping from multi-faceted states to appropriate explanatory actions. Ablation studies provided further validation. Removing the context tag from the state vector caused a 15% drop in the Human Interpretability Score, confirming that contextual awareness is a primary contributor to the framework's effectiveness. Similarly, removing the computational cost term from the reward function during training led to a policy that favored slightly more accurate but significantly slower strategies, increasing average latency by 40% without a commensurate gain in fidelity or HIS, validating the importance of the multi-objective optimization for practical deployment.

V. DISCUSSION

The empirical validation of the RAISE framework confirms its technical merits, but its true significance lies in its potential to address profound, systemic challenges impeding the realization of Industry 4.0's full potential. The discussion that follows elaborates on the implications of this work for key areas of industrial AI, considers its limitations, and outlines a trajectory for future research and development.

A paramount challenge in the integration of advanced AI into industrial workflows is the establishment and maintenance of appropriate human trust. Trust is not a binary state but a calibrated relationship that depends on the reliability, transparency, and predictability of the automated partner. Opaque black-box models, by their nature, inhibit this calibration, often leading to patterns of disuse, where operators ignore potentially valuable AI recommendations, or misuse, where they comply with recommendations without critical oversight. RAISE directly intervenes in this dynamic by providing explanations that are contextually relevant and cognitively aligned with the human's needs. For a control room operator facing a cascade of alarms, a RAISE-generated causal chain explanation that succinctly links a spike in temperature to a valve failure recommendation is far more trust-building and actionable than a dense table of SHAP values. By making the AI's reasoning more accessible and relatable, RAISE facilitates what is known as trust calibration, enabling human operators to develop an accurate mental model of the AI's capabilities and limitations. This fosters a more effective form of human-in-the-loop oversight, where the human expert is empowered to validate, question, or override the AI with understanding, transforming the relationship from one of blind automation to one of collaborative intelligence.

From an infrastructural and scalability perspective, RAISE offers a solution to a critical bottleneck: the computational intractability of high-fidelity XAI for real-time data streams. Traditional methods like SHAP, while invaluable for offline analysis, are often prohibitive for continuous explanation generation from thousands of IIoT sensors. The efficiency of RAISE, evidenced by its low latency, makes the vision of "explainability-by-default" for real-time industrial AI a practical possibility. This enables a new class of applications—real-time diagnostic assistants that not only flag anomalies but immediately justify them, or adaptive control systems that can explain their parameter adjustments to engineers. By moving explanation generation from the cloud to the edge with minimal overhead, RAISE supports the decentralized intelligence model central to modern industrial architectures, ensuring that transparency keeps pace with the speed of automated decision-making.

Furthermore, RAISE introduces a powerful, multi-faceted tool for the entire AI model lifecycle, far beyond initial deployment. The adaptive nature of its explanations provides unique diagnostic signals for system health. For example, a persistent shift in the agent's policy toward counterfactual explanations for a certain asset might indicate that the model is frequently operating near its decision boundary for that asset, a potential signal of data drift or a changing physical environment. Similarly, if causal explanations begin to consistently highlight a sensor that was previously unimportant, it could point to the emergence of a new failure mode or a sensor calibration issue. Thus, the RAISE framework itself

becomes a source of meta-knowledge about the AI system's operation, aiding data scientists and engineers in proactive maintenance, model retraining decisions, and overall system governance. It transforms XAI from a passive reporting tool into an active component of system observability.

Despite its promising results, the current instantiation of RAISE has limitations that open avenues for future work. First, the framework requires an initial training phase with a defined reward function. In domains without historical data or clear reward proxies, this setup cost could be a barrier. Investigating meta-learning techniques to allow quick adaptation to new domains with minimal data, or developing methods to learn reward functions directly from implicit human feedback, are important next steps. Second, while our reward function includes a proxy for human interpretability, integrating explicit, scalable human feedback mechanisms is crucial for creating truly human-in-the-loop adaptive systems. Designing interfaces for efficient feedback collection (e.g., through simple ratings or interaction patterns) and incorporating this feedback into online policy updates is a significant research challenge with high practical payoff. Third, the current framework operates on a single node or system. For large-scale, multi-factory deployments, a federated learning approach to training the RAISE policy could be invaluable. This would allow collaborative learning of effective explanation strategies across different sites and processes without centralizing sensitive operational data, enhancing both generalizability and privacy. Finally, the Explanation Strategy Bank, while diverse, is not exhaustive. A fruitful direction is the incorporation of domain-specific explanation strategies that leverage pre-existing knowledge, such as physics-based model simulations or ontologies of industrial processes, to generate explanations that are not only faithful to the data-driven model but also grounded in domain theory, further enhancing their credibility and usefulness for expert users.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper has presented RAISE, a comprehensive and novel framework that leverages Reinforcement Learning to pioneer a new paradigm of adaptive, context-aware Explainable AI for Industry 4.0. Confronting the critical shortcomings of static, one-size-fits-all XAI methods, RAISE reconceptualizes explanation generation as a dynamic sequential decision-making problem. Through the formalization of a Markov Decision Process with a rich state space, a diverse action space of explanation strategies, and a meticulously crafted multi-fidelity reward function, the framework enables an intelligent agent to learn the optimal mapping from situational context to explanatory action. This learning optimizes for the essential triad of industrial XAI: unwavering fidelity to the original black-box model, superior human interpretability as rated by domain stakeholders, and stringent computational efficiency.

The extensive experimental evaluation conducted on established industrial datasets provides robust validation. RAISE demonstrated its ability to match the high fidelity of state-of-the-art methods like SHAP while significantly surpassing all baselines in human-rated interpretability and achieving the lowest explanation generation latency. These results are not merely incremental; they represent a qualitative shift toward XAI that is genuinely fit for purpose in dynamic, time-sensitive, and human-centric industrial environments. The learned behavior of the agent further confirmed its capacity to make intuitive, context-sensitive decisions, such as providing causal narratives for uncertain predictions and concise summaries for routine operations.

The implications of this work extend beyond a technical contribution to algorithm design. RAISE offers a practical pathway to overcome some of the most persistent barriers to AI adoption in industry: the crisis of trust arising from opacity, the impracticality of real-time transparency, and the difficulty of maintaining and debugging complex AI systems over time. By fostering calibrated human trust, enabling real-time edge-deployable explanations, and serving as a diagnostic tool for the AI lifecycle, RAISE directly addresses core research gaps in the realization of trustworthy, collaborative, and resilient Cyber-Physical Systems. As Industry 4.0 continues to evolve, the integration of intelligent, adaptive transparency

mechanisms like RAISE will be indispensable for building the safe, efficient, and human-centered smart factories of the future. This work lays a foundational architecture and demonstrates a compelling proof of concept for that essential integration.

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