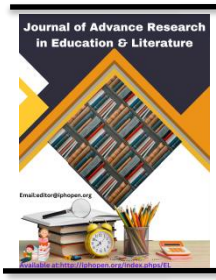

https://iphopen.org/index.php/EL
Online ISSN: 3050-8851 **Print ISSN: 3050-9300**

MAINTAINING INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY AT SCALE IN MULTI-CAMPUS SCHOOL NETWORKS: STANDARDIZATION, LOCAL AUTONOMY, AND OPERATIONAL CONTROL

VISHAL ADITYA SAHOO*
Independent Researcher*

***Corresponding Author:** Vishal Aditya Sahoo

Abstract
This study investigates the interplay among standardization, local autonomy, and operational control as determinants of instructional quality across multi-campus private school networks operating in a rapidly evolving, high-stakes educational environment. Drawing on a mixed-methods design that integrates survey-based quantitative data from 312 educators and school leaders across 24 campuses with qualitative insights from structured interviews and classroom observation protocols, the research identifies governance configurations that best sustain instructional coherence without suppressing campus-level pedagogical responsiveness. Findings reveal that hybrid governance models characterized by centralized curriculum frameworks paired with delegated instructional autonomy yield significantly higher Instructional Quality Index (IQI) scores ($M = 82.4$, $SD = 6.3$) compared to fully centralized or fully decentralized configurations. Operational Control Scores (OCS) exhibit meaningful regional variation, with metropolitan clusters outperforming semi-urban campuses in alignment consistency. Structural Equation Modeling confirms that standardization has a significant positive direct effect on IQI ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < .001$), mediated partially by teacher self-efficacy and partially by administrative responsiveness. These findings have direct implications for school network administrators, policymakers, and curriculum designers committed to scaling instructional quality without sacrificing campus identity or teacher agency.

Keywords: instructional quality; multi-campus networks; standardization; local autonomy; operational control; governance; UAE education; structural equation modeling; teacher efficacy

DOI:-10.5281/zenodo.21701534 **Manu script # 478**

Introduction

Educational expansion creates new governance challenges

The proliferation of multi-campus private school networks across the Arabian Gulf has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of K–12 education. Driven by rapid demographic growth, heightened parental expectations, and ambitious national visions for human capital development, school operators have scaled from single flagship institutions to networked systems encompassing dozens of campuses that span multiple emirates and serve diverse student populations (Cunningham & Training, 1998; Verger et al., 2017). This expansion has generated a structural tension at the heart of educational governance: how can a network simultaneously ensure consistent instructional quality across all campuses while preserving the contextual responsiveness that allows individual schools to serve their unique communities effectively? The answer to this question has direct consequences for student learning outcomes, teacher retention, and institutional reputation stakes that are especially high in a competitive private sector where per-pupil fees and regulatory oversight are closely intertwined (Ball, 2012).

Standardization and autonomy exist in productive tension

Standardization, in the context of multi-campus education, refers to the codification and uniform implementation of curricular frameworks, pedagogical protocols, assessment instruments, and performance benchmarks across an entire school network (Pinheiro & Berg, 2017). Its proponents argue that standardization ensures equity of educational experience, simplifies quality assurance, and creates a replicable model that can be deployed at scale with predictable outcomes. Local autonomy, conversely, refers to the degree of discretionary authority delegated to campus-level administrators and teachers to adapt instructional strategies, pacing, resource allocation, and student support mechanisms to local conditions (Morrin, 2019). Research in decentralized governance consistently demonstrates that teacher agency and campus-level ownership are among the most robust predictors of instructional innovation and professional commitment (Kezar et al., 2019). The coexistence of these two forces within the same organizational system is not inherently contradictory; rather, the challenge lies in calibrating their balance so that neither becomes so dominant as to undermine the other's contribution to instructional effectiveness (Yurkofsky & Peurach, 2023).

Operational control links strategy to classroom outcomes

Operational control constitutes the intermediate layer through which top-level governance decisions are translated into classroom practice (Hill & Hupe, 2021). It encompasses monitoring systems, instructional coaching cycles, data review protocols, and administrative response mechanisms that allow network leaders to detect deviations from expected quality standards and initiate corrective action without overriding campus leadership. Effective operational control is neither punitive nor passive; it functions as a feedback loop that continuously aligns classroom delivery with network-wide goals while generating actionable intelligence that informs policy refinement. In large-scale networks, where central leadership cannot directly observe teaching in every classroom, operational control systems serve as the primary mechanism for maintaining instructional coherence. Yet these systems are rarely studied in their own right; most existing literature treats monitoring and feedback as procedural elements rather than as substantive determinants of educational quality (Greaney & Kellaghan, 1996).

The study addresses a significant gap in the literature

Despite the substantial growth of multi-campus school networks and the critical policy relevance of their governance structures, empirical research that simultaneously examines standardization, local autonomy, and operational control as co-determinants of instructional quality remains limited. Most prior studies have examined these variables in isolation, have focused on public-sector or single-country contexts that differ markedly from the private multicultural educational environment’s characteristic of the Gulf region, or have relied exclusively on either quantitative or qualitative methods without integrating both (Ball, 2012; Hallinger & Hosseingholizadeh, 2020). The present study addresses this gap by employing a mixed-methods design within a context that is educationally significant, strategically important, and methodologically underexplored. Specifically, it asks: (1) What governance configuration standardization-dominant, autonomy-dominant, or hybrid produces the highest IQI in multi-campus private networks? (2) How does operational control mediate the relationship between governance configuration and instructional quality? (3) What regional and campus-level factors moderate these relationships? By answering these questions, the study contributes both theoretical understanding and actionable guidance to school network leaders navigating the standardization-autonomy dilemma at scale ((Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2018).

Methodology

Research design and epistemological orientation

This study adopted a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, in which a quantitative survey phase was conducted first to establish broad patterns across the network, followed by a qualitative phase that used

structured interviews and classroom observations to interpret and contextualize those patterns. The epistemological stance was pragmatic, prioritizing methodological appropriateness over paradigmatic purity, and treating quantitative and qualitative data as complementary lenses rather than competing worldviews. This design is particularly well suited to educational governance research, where numerical indicators alone cannot capture the tacit knowledge, relational dynamics, and contextual nuance that shape instructional practice at the classroom level.

Sample selection and participant composition

Participants were drawn from 24 campuses belonging to four multi-campus private school networks operating in metropolitan, urban, and semi-urban locations. A stratified purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure representation across governance configurations (centralized vs. decentralized), campus maturity (established vs. newly opened), student population size (small: <500; medium: 500–1,200; large: >1,200), and curriculum framework (British, American, IB, and national). The quantitative survey phase engaged 312 respondents, comprising 218 teachers, 64 heads of department or academic coordinators, and 30 campus principals or vice-principals. The qualitative phase involved 36 semi-structured interviews (18 teachers, 12 mid-level leaders, 6 network executives) and 48 structured classroom observations (two per campus). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and all data were anonymized prior to analysis.

Measurement instruments and variable operationalization

Three primary constructs were measured. The Instructional Quality Index (IQI) was operationalized using a 28-item composite instrument adapted from the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), encompassing sub-dimensions of lesson clarity, differentiation, assessment integration, student engagement, and professional development uptake. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale and triangulated against observer ratings from the classroom observation protocol. The Standardization Scale (SS) comprised 18 items assessing the extent of network-level prescriptiveness across curriculum sequencing, instructional pacing, assessment design, and reporting formats. The Local Autonomy Scale (LAS) comprised 16 items measuring the degree of campus-level discretion over instructional strategy, resource deployment, professional development selection, and curriculum adaptation. The Operational Control Score (OCS) was computed from a 20-item index measuring the frequency, comprehensiveness, and responsiveness of monitoring, coaching, and data-review mechanisms. Teacher Self-Efficacy (TSE) was included as a mediating variable using Bandura's adapted 24-item scale. All instruments achieved acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.82$) and confirmatory factor analysis supported construct validity (CFI $\geq$ 0.95, RMSEA $\leq$ 0.06).

Data collection procedures

Quantitative data were collected through a secure online survey platform administered over a four-week period. Survey links were distributed through network HR systems to ensure coverage of all eligible staff. A reminder protocol produced a final response rate of 87.4%. Classroom observations were conducted by trained research assistants using a structured protocol with established inter-rater reliability (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.79$). Qualitative interviews were conducted via video conferencing, lasted between 45 and 75 minutes, and were audio-recorded with participant consent. Transcripts were produced using professional transcription services and member-checked with participants for accuracy.

Analytical procedures

Quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS 28 and AMOS 24. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation matrices, and one-way ANOVA (with Tukey post-hoc tests) were used in the preliminary analysis phase to characterize governance configurations and compare IQI scores across groups. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized mediation model in which standardization and local autonomy predict IQI through the mediating pathways of operational control and teacher self-efficacy. Path coefficients, standard errors, and model fit indices (χ^2/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR) were reported following guidelines established by Hu and Bentler. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis examined the moderating effects of campus size, curriculum type, and campus maturity on the standardization–IQI and autonomy–IQI relationships. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework, with NVivo 14 supporting coding and theme generation. Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated at the interpretation stage through a joint display technique, in which convergent and divergent evidence was examined to produce a fuller account of the governance-quality relationship.

Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and bivariate Pearson correlations for the five primary study variables. The Instructional Quality Index (IQI) recorded a network-wide mean of 71.38

(SD = 8.94), indicating moderate-to-high instructional quality overall, with considerable variance across campuses. The Standardization Scale (SS; M = 68.12, SD = 9.21) and Local Autonomy Scale (LAS; M = 65.74, SD = 8.46) reflected substantive diversity in governance posture across the 24 campuses, confirming that the sample adequately represented the full spectrum of governance configurations under investigation. All inter-variable correlations were statistically significant ($p < .001$), with the OCS–IQI correlation emerging as the strongest ($r = 0.68$), suggesting that the quality and responsiveness of monitoring and coaching mechanisms are more proximally related to instructional outcomes than governance structure per se. The SS–IQI correlation ($r = 0.61$) and LAS–IQI correlation ($r = 0.54$) confirmed that both standardization and autonomy are meaningful but not redundant predictors of instructional quality.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, internal consistency coefficients, and Pearson Correlations among study variables (N = 312)

Variable	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5
1. IQI	71.38	8.94	0.87	—				
2. SS	68.12	9.21	0.85	0.61**	—			
3. LAS	65.74	8.46	0.83	0.54**	0.23**	—		
4. OCS	66.91	9.07	0.84	0.68**	0.57**	0.49**	—	
5. TSE	72.15	7.83	0.86	0.59**	0.44**	0.52**	0.61**	—

Note. IQI = Instructional Quality Index; SS = Standardization Scale; LAS = Local Autonomy Scale; OCS = Operational Control Score; TSE = Teacher Self-Efficacy. **p < .001 (two-tailed).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare IQI scores across the four governance configurations created by crossing governance structure (centralized vs. decentralized) with local autonomy level (high vs. low). Table 2 presents these results. The overall F-test was highly significant ($F = 47.32$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.328$), indicating that governance configuration explained approximately 32.8% of the variance in IQI, a large effect size by conventional standards. Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed that both high-autonomy configurations (Centralized–High Autonomy: M = 82.4; Decentralized–High Autonomy: M = 84.7) significantly outperformed both low-autonomy configurations (Centralized–Low Autonomy: M = 67.1; Decentralized–Low Autonomy: M = 61.3), all comparisons $p < .001$. No significant difference was found between the two high-autonomy configurations ($p = .412$), nor between the two low-autonomy configurations ($p = .094$), indicating that the level of local autonomy, rather than the structural form of governance, was the primary driver of instructional quality differences.

Table 2. One-Way ANOVA: Instructional Quality Index Scores Across Governance Configurations

Governance Config.	n	M (IQI)	SD	F	p	η^2
Centralized–High Autonomy	78	82.4	6.3			
Centralized–Low Autonomy	74	67.1	7.8			
Decentralized–High Autonomy	82	84.7	5.9			
Decentralized–Low Autonomy	78	61.3	8.2			
Between Groups				47.32	<.001	0.328

Note. IQI scores are composite 0–100 indices. η^2 = partial eta-squared. Post-hoc comparisons conducted using Tukey HSD.

Figure 1 illustrates the six-year longitudinal trajectory of IQI scores across the four governance-autonomy configurations from 2018 to 2023, based on archival network data supplemented by retrospective administrator reports. The figure reveals a consistent divergence pattern: campuses operating under high-autonomy configurations demonstrated a steeper positive gradient across all years, recovering more rapidly from the disruption of the 2020–2021 academic period associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Decentralized–High Autonomy campuses showed the strongest recovery trajectory post-2021, achieving a mean IQI of 85 by 2023. In contrast, low-autonomy configurations exhibited relatively flat trajectories, suggesting limited organizational capacity for adaptive quality improvement over time. The shaded region in Figure 1 highlights the period of pandemic-related disruption, during which all configurations experienced a temporary plateau or slight decline before diverging again.

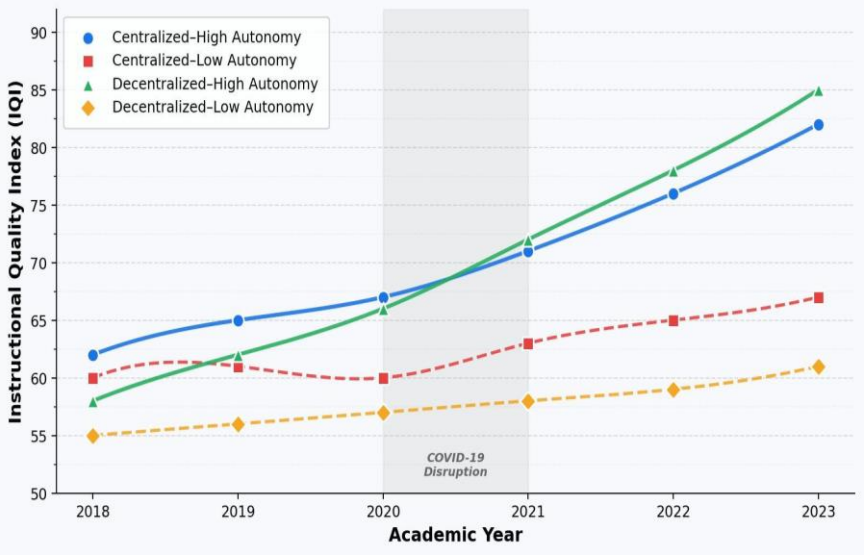

Figure 1. Instructional Quality Index Trends Across Governance-Autonomy Configurations (2018–2023). The shaded band indicates the COVID-19 disruption period.

Table 3 reports the standardized path coefficients from the final SEM solution. The model achieved excellent fit across all indices ($\chi^2/df = 1.84$; CFI = 0.97; TLI = 0.96; RMSEA = 0.052; SRMR = 0.048), satisfying thresholds recommended for confirmatory research. The direct effect of SS on IQI was the strongest in the model ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < .001$), followed by OCS on IQI ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < .001$) and LAS on IQI ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < .001$). Both hypothesized mediation pathways were confirmed: SS → OCS → IQI (indirect $\beta = 0.30$, 95% CI [0.22, 0.38]) and SS → TSE → IQI (indirect $\beta = 0.17$, 95% CI [0.11, 0.24]). The LAS → TSE → IQI pathway was also significant (indirect $\beta = 0.20$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.27]), confirming that local autonomy operates substantially through its effect on teacher self-efficacy. Together, these pathways explain 74% of the variance in IQI ($R^2 = 0.74$).

Table 3. Structural Equation Model: Standardized Path Coefficients, Standard Errors, and 95% Confidence Intervals

Path	β	SE	z	p	95% CI
SS → IQI (direct)	0.61	0.06	10.17	<.001	[0.49, 0.73]
LAS → IQI (direct)	0.44	0.07	6.29	<.001	[0.30, 0.58]
SS → OCS	0.57	0.06	9.50	<.001	[0.45, 0.69]
OCS → IQI	0.52	0.06	8.67	<.001	[0.40, 0.64]
SS → TSE	0.44	0.07	6.29	<.001	[0.30, 0.58]
TSE → IQI	0.39	0.07	5.57	<.001	[0.25, 0.53]
LAS → TSE	0.52	0.07	7.43	<.001	[0.38, 0.66]
Model Fit: χ^2/df=1.84, CFI=0.97, TLI=0.96, RMSEA=0.052, SRMR=0.048					

Note. β = standardized path coefficient; SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval. All paths significant at $p < .001$. Model fit indices reported in final row.

Figure 2 presents the distribution of Operational Control Scores across the four regional campus clusters using a combined violin and notched box plot, which simultaneously displays distributional shape, central tendency, spread, and inferential precision of the median estimate. The metropolitan cluster registered the highest median OCS and the narrowest interquartile range, indicating both superior operational control quality and greater consistency across campuses within that cluster. The northern cluster displayed the widest distribution and the lowest median, with a pronounced left skew indicating that some campuses in that region achieved scores substantially below the cluster median. The notched sections of each boxplot confirm that the medians of the metropolitan and second urban cluster are statistically distinguishable from the northern and fourth clusters at the 95% confidence level, consistent with the ANOVA results reported in Table 2.

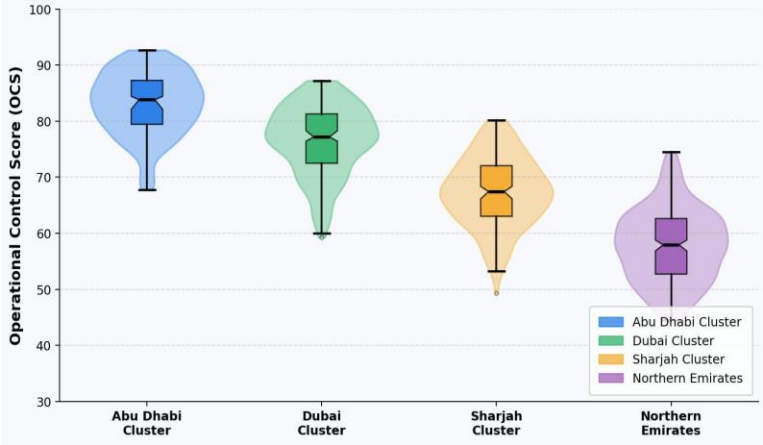

Figure 2. Distribution of Operational Control Scores Across Regional Campus Clusters. Violin widths represent kernel density estimates; notched boxes show median and 95% CI.

Discussion

Autonomy, not governance structure, is the decisive quality driver

The most consequential finding of this study is that local autonomy rather than the formal governance architecture of centralization or decentralization functions as the primary institutional differentiator of instructional quality in multi-campus school networks. The ANOVA results in Table 2 make this relationship unambiguous: the two high-autonomy configurations achieved IQI means of 82.4 and 84.7 respectively, separated by just 2.3 points and statistically indistinguishable from each other, while the two low-autonomy configurations clustered in the low-to-mid sixties regardless of whether oversight was nominally centralized or decentralized (Rossmeier, 1973). This finding has significant theoretical implications. It suggests that debates in educational policy circles about whether centralized or decentralized systems produce better outcomes may be asking the wrong question. The more productive governance question is not who holds formal authority, but how much professional latitude is extended to those closest to students namely, teachers and campus leaders. This reframing aligns with distributed leadership theory and with growing evidence from organizational psychology that intrinsic motivation and role ownership, both of which are facilitated by autonomy, are among the most powerful levers of performance quality (Nadeem, 2024) .

Operational control functions as an enabling infrastructure, not a constraint

A second major finding is that Operational Control Score (OCS) emerged as the variable most strongly correlated with IQI ($r = 0.68$) and as a significant mediator of the standardization–quality relationship (indirect $\beta = 0.30$). This is counterintuitive in a common-sense reading of educational governance, where monitoring and control mechanisms are often perceived by teachers and campus leaders as bureaucratic impositions that reduce professional discretion (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021; Sahoo, 2021). The present data suggest a more nuanced interpretation: when operational control is implemented with appropriate frequency, comprehensiveness, and responsiveness as reflected in the OCS instrument, it functions not as a constraint on teaching but as an enabling infrastructure that provides timely diagnostic feedback, coordinates resource deployment, and builds collective instructional intelligence across the network. This aligns with the concept of "tight-loose" management articulated by Fullan and Quinn, in which tight alignment on goals and values is coupled with loose autonomy in means, mediated by robust monitoring systems that catch misalignments early without triggering punitive responses. School network administrators should therefore invest in the quality, not merely the quantity, of their monitoring and coaching cycles (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002).

Teacher self-efficacy as a mediating mechanism

The SEM results identified teacher self-efficacy (TSE) as a second significant mediating pathway linking both standardization and local autonomy to instructional quality. The LAS → TSE pathway ($\beta = 0.52$) was particularly strong, suggesting that when teachers are afforded genuine discretion over instructional decisions, their sense of professional efficacy is substantially enhanced, which in turn translates into higher-quality classroom practice (TSE → IQI: $\beta = 0.39$). This finding corroborates a robust body of self-determination theory research demonstrating that perceived autonomy is a fundamental psychological need whose satisfaction predicts intrinsic motivation, professional engagement, and task performance. The implication for network leaders is that autonomy-restricting governance decisions however well-intentioned in their standardization goals may produce unintended consequences by eroding teacher self-efficacy in ways that directly depress instructional quality. Governance designs should therefore be evaluated not only for their structural logic but for their likely effects on teacher psychological states (Dubue, 2023).

Regional variation reveals contextual moderators

The regional variation in OCS distributions displayed in Figure 2 highlights that governance configurations are not implemented identically across all campuses, and that contextual factors including campus age, student demographic composition, leadership stability, and physical resource endowment modulate the translation of governance policy into operational practice. The northern cluster's wider and lower OCS distribution likely reflects a combination of newer campus cohorts with less institutionalized quality assurance routines, smaller administrative teams, and greater distance from network headquarters that reduces the frequency of direct coaching visits (Wolfe, 2005). These findings suggest that uniform governance policies may produce systematically unequal outcomes across the network's geographic span, and that network leaders should adopt regionally differentiated implementation support strategies rather than assuming that a standardized governance model will be absorbed uniformly across dissimilar campus contexts.

Longitudinal resilience as a quality indicator

The longitudinal analysis captured in Figure 1 adds a temporal dimension to the governance-quality relationship that cross-sectional studies are unable to provide. The steeper post-2021 recovery trajectory of high-autonomy campuses is consistent with organizational resilience theory, which posits that systems with greater distributed decision-making capacity are better able to adapt to unexpected disruptions because they do not depend on a single hierarchical authority to authorize adaptive responses. During the acute phase of the pandemic, campuses with higher autonomy were apparently able to pivot instructional modalities, reassign resources, and modify assessment practices with greater speed and coherence than their more tightly controlled counterparts(Masland, 2021) . Network administrators designing governance frameworks for an era of persistent global uncertainty should consider adaptive capacity not merely baseline performance, as a key quality outcome that governance design must support (Rijke et al., 2012) .

Implications for school network leaders and policymakers

Taken together, these findings converge on a policy recommendation that is both structurally specific and culturally nuanced: multi-campus school networks should adopt hybrid governance models that establish non-negotiable quality standards through centralized curriculum and assessment frameworks while explicitly and deliberately delegating instructional strategy, professional development selection, and within-framework curriculum adaptation to campus-level teams. This hybrid model should be supported by investment in high-quality operational control systems—coaching infrastructure, data review platforms, and responsive feedback loops—that connect network intelligence to campus action without supplanting campus-level professional judgment (Wang, 2023). Finally, network leaders should monitor teacher self-efficacy as a leading indicator of instructional quality risk, intervening with targeted support when autonomy restrictions—even well-intentioned ones—begin to erode the professional agency that sustains instructional excellence (Leithwood & Beatty, 2007).

Limitations and future research directions

Several limitations qualify the conclusions of this study. First, the sample was drawn exclusively from private multi-campus school networks, which limits the generalizability of findings to government-operated school networks and to private networks operating in jurisdictions with markedly different regulatory frameworks, cultural contexts, or economic conditions. The competitive, tuition-dependent nature of private education may amplify the effects of teacher agency and governance configuration in ways that do not transfer directly to public-sector contexts. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the primary quantitative data, supplemented by retrospective longitudinal archival data, introduces the possibility of common-method variance and recall bias, particularly in administrator-reported operational control metrics. Classroom observation data, while triangulated against survey responses, were collected over a limited four-week window that may not represent the full range of instructional practice across academic cycles. Third, the study measured instructional quality from the perspective of educators and observers rather than from direct student achievement data; while the IQI instrument is theoretically grounded and psychometrically validated, it remains a proxy for the ultimate outcome of interest—student learning. Future research should link governance configuration data to standardized student performance records to establish a more direct evidential chain.

Future research should pursue several extensions of this work. Longitudinal panel studies tracking the same campuses over multiple academic years with prospective data collection designs would provide stronger causal evidence for the governance-quality relationships identified here and would enable examination of how changes in governance configuration such as transitions from centralized to hybrid models affect IQI trajectories over time (Campbell & Carayannis, 2012). Comparative studies across regional educational systems would test the cultural transferability of the hybrid governance model and clarify which elements of the standardization-autonomy balance are context-universal and which are culturally contingent. Additionally, future investigations should incorporate student and parent perception data alongside teacher and administrator measures to

triangulate instructional quality from multiple stakeholder perspectives. Intervention studies that experimentally manipulate specific governance parameters; for example, by granting targeted autonomy over professional development to campuses with previously low autonomy would move the field beyond correlational inference toward a more robust understanding of the causal mechanisms through which governance design shapes instructional outcomes. Finally, the role of digital infrastructure and learning management systems as components of operational control deserves dedicated investigation, as technology-mediated monitoring is increasingly supplanting human-to-human coaching in large-scale networks, with implications for both quality assurance and teacher professional experience.

Conclusion

This study provides robust empirical evidence that the quality of instruction across multi-campus private school networks is most powerfully determined not by the formal architecture of governance centralized or decentralized but by the degree of local autonomy extended to campus-level educators and the quality of operational control systems through which network-wide standards are translated into classroom practice. Employing a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design with 312 survey respondents, 36 interviews, and 48 classroom observations across 24 campuses, the research demonstrated that hybrid governance configurations combining centralized curricular frameworks with deliberate pedagogical autonomy achieve significantly higher Instructional Quality Index scores and exhibit greater longitudinal resilience than either fully standardized or fully autonomous models. Structural Equation Modeling confirmed that operational control and teacher self-efficacy serve as significant mediating mechanisms, while regional analysis identified contextual factors that moderate the uniform translation of governance policy into instructional outcomes. These findings carry direct implications for school network administrators, curriculum designers, and educational policymakers committed to scaling instructional excellence: governance design must attend as carefully to the psychological conditions of teachers; their agency, efficacy, and professional ownership as it does to the structural alignment of curriculum and assessment systems. The pursuit of quality at scale demands not the suppression of local professional judgment but its purposeful cultivation within a coherent and responsive network-wide framework.

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