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Posted Date: 25 December 2025

doi: 10.20944/preprints202512.2272.v1

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Yamabe-Type Equations Under Tensorial Perturbations of the Conformal Class on Closed Riemannian Manifolds

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Abstract

We establish a perturbative stability result for the Yamabe problem under genuinely non-conformal tensorial deformations on closed Riemannian manifolds (M^n, g), $n \geq 3$, incorporating small symmetric perturbations $T \in C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$ beyond classical conformal rescalings. By introducing a tensorial correction $E[T, \nabla T]$ in the scalar curvature functional, we define a perturbed variational problem whose critical points satisfy the modified Euler–Lagrange equation $-a\Delta_g\Omega + (R_g + E[T, \nabla T])\Omega = \lambda\,\Omega^p, \quad p = \frac{n+2}{n-2}$. Using precise linearization of Ricci and scalar curvatures, we derive quantitative estimates for the trace-free Ricci contributions and prove a rigidity theorem on Einstein backgrounds: sufficiently small perturbations T cannot generate a nontrivial trace-free Ricci component. Moreover, we establish perturbative existence and uniqueness of solutions Ω_T in the perturbed conformal class $\mathcal{C}(g, T)$, with explicit control $\|\Omega_T - \Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \leq C\,\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$. Our analysis provides a rigorous framework connecting classical Yamabe theory to tensorial deformations, yielding sharp stability estimates, bounds on linear and higher-order contributions, and explicit conditions under which Einstein metrics remain locally rigid. These results form a foundation for future investigations on higher-order curvature operators, large perturbations, and bifurcation phenomena in generalized Yamabe-type problems.

Keywords: Yamabe problem; tensorial perturbations; non-conformal deformations; Riemannian manifolds; Einstein metrics; perturbative stability; bifurcation analysis; linearized Ricci operator; scalar curvature functional; Euler–Lagrange equation

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Introduction

The classical Yamabe problem studies the existence of metrics of constant scalar curvature within a conformal class on a closed Riemannian manifold (M^n, g), $n \geq 3$ [1–5]. It is well-known that the Yamabe functional

$$Y_g[\Omega] = \frac{\int_M a|\nabla\Omega|^2 + R_g\Omega^2\,d\mu_g}{\left(\int_M \Omega^q\,d\mu_g\right)^{(n-2)/n}}, \quad a = \frac{4(n-1)}{n-2}, \quad q = \frac{2n}{n-2},$$

admits critical points corresponding to metrics of constant scalar curvature in the conformal class $[g]$, with $g_\Omega = \Omega^{4/(n-2)}g$. The problem has been extensively studied, revealing phenomena such as multiplicity of solutions on spheres [3], optimal Sobolev constants [4], and critical functions associated with best constants in Sobolev embeddings [5].

Recent developments in conformal geometry and scalar curvature rigidity have extended classical results by establishing optimal pinching inequalities on Einstein manifolds and refined rigidity criteria for scalar curvature under volume-preserving deformations [6–10]. In addition, detailed analysis of blow-up phenomena and bubble formation in low dimensions [11–15] has provided a rigorous understanding of noncompactness issues and multiplicity in the Yamabe problem, which motivates the careful treatment of perturbations in generalized settings.

 doi:10.20944/preprints202512.2272.v1

In this work, we investigate a generalized Yamabe problem in which the classical conformal class is perturbed by adding a symmetric $(0,2)$-tensor $T \in C^{k,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$, $k \geq 2$, $0 < \alpha < 1$, representing geometric deformations beyond conformal rescaling. Specifically, we define the perturbed conformal class

$$\mathcal{C}(g,T) = \left\{\hat{g} : \hat{g} = \Omega^{4/(n-2)}g + \Phi(T),\ \Omega \in C^{k,\alpha}(M),\ \Omega > 0\right\},$$

where Φ is a linear or smooth map constructed from g, covariant derivatives, and algebraic operations such as trace and symmetrization. This framework allows the incorporation of deformations that cannot be captured by classical conformal changes, while retaining the variational structure of the Yamabe functional.

Correspondingly, we introduce the generalized Yamabe functional

$$Y_{g,T}[\Omega] = \frac{\int_M \left(a|\nabla\Omega|^2 + (R_g + E[T,\nabla T])\Omega^2\right) d\mu_g}{\left(\int_M \Omega^q \, d\mu_g\right)^{(n-2)/n}}, \tag{0.1}$$

where $E : C^{k,\alpha}(S^2T^*M) \to C^{0,\alpha}(M)$ is a C^1 map near 0, vanishing at $T = 0$. The generalized Yamabe invariant is defined as

$$Y(g,T) = \inf_{\Omega>0} Y_{g,T}[\Omega].$$

Our goal is to analyze the persistence of Yamabe-type solutions under this perturbation, study the rigidity of solutions on Einstein backgrounds, and characterize the effect of the tensorial perturbation on the variational structure. In particular, we assume that T and $E[T,\nabla T]$ satisfy:

(H1) $T \in C^{2,\alpha}$ and E is C^1 near 0;

(H2) the linearization $D_T E(0)$ does not lie in the conformal subspace arising from infinitesimal conformal transformations.

This formulation interpolates smoothly between the classical Yamabe problem (when $T \equiv 0$) and the fully perturbed scenario, allowing one to derive variational equations, linearized curvature expressions, and stability criteria. The linearization of the Ricci and scalar curvatures in this context leads naturally to correction terms in the Euler–Lagrange equations for Ω, and the analytical machinery developed here provides a rigorous pathway from classical results [16–18] to recent studies on scalar curvature perturbations and geometric analysis [6,7,10]. By proceeding in this structured, stepwise manner, we can track contributions from T and its derivatives systematically, yielding explicit conditions under which Yamabe solutions persist or exhibit rigidity under geometric perturbations.

1. Definitions and Hypotheses

Let (M^n, g) be a smooth compact Riemannian manifold, $n \geq 3$. Denote by Ric_g, $R(g)$ the Ricci tensor and scalar curvature of g. Let

$$a := \frac{4(n-1)}{n-2}, \qquad p := \frac{n+2}{n-2}, \qquad q := \frac{2n}{n-2}.$$

Definition 1.1. *Let $T \in C^{k,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$, $k \geq 2$, $0 < \alpha < 1$. Let $\Phi : C^{k,\alpha}(S^2T^*M) \to C^{k,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$ be a linear (or smooth) map built from g, covariant derivatives and algebraic operations (trace, symmetrization). The* modified conformal class *is*

$$\mathcal{C}(g,T) := \left\{\ \hat{g}\ :\ \hat{g} = \Omega^{\frac{4}{n-2}}\, g + \Phi(T) \quad \textit{with}\ \ \Omega \in C^{k,\alpha}(M),\ \Omega > 0\right\}.$$

Fix a map $E : C^{k,\alpha}(S^2T^*M) \to C^{0,\alpha}(M)$, $E(0) = 0$, of class C^1 near 0. Assume E is built tensorially from T and its covariant derivatives .

Definition 1.2. *For $\Omega \in C^{2,\alpha}(M)$, $\Omega > 0$, define*

$$\mathcal{Y}_{g,T}[\Omega] \;:=\; \frac{\int_M \left(a\,|\nabla\Omega|^2 + (R(g) + E[T,\nabla T])\,\Omega^2\right) d\mu_g}{\left(\int_M \Omega^q \, d\mu_g\right)^{\frac{n-2}{n}}}. \tag{1.1}$$

The generalized Yamabe invariant is

$$Y(g,T) := \inf_{\Omega \in C^{2,\alpha},\, \Omega > 0} \mathcal{Y}_{g,T}[\Omega].$$

Remark 1.3. *Typical models we will have in mind:*

$$E[T,\nabla T] = \beta_1 \langle \mathrm{Ric}_g, T\rangle_g + \beta_2 \,\mathrm{div}\,\mathrm{div}\, T + \beta_3 |T|_g^2 + \beta_4\, \mathrm{tr}_g(\nabla^2 T) + \cdots,$$

or the canonical linearization $E[T] = DR_g[T]$, the linear part of the scalar curvature variation in direction T. The hypotheses below will only need that E is C^1 near 0 and its linearization is not purely conformal.

To exclude the tautological situation where E is just the scalar effect of a conformal change, we impose a linear non-triviality assumption.

(H1) $T \in C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$ and $E \in C^1$ near 0.
(H2) Let $D_T E(0) : C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M) \to C^{0,\alpha}(M)$ denote the Fréchet derivative at 0. We require that the image of $D_T E(0)$ is *not* contained in the subspace

$$\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{conf}} := \left\{ \mathcal{C}_g(\phi) := -\tfrac{4(n-1)}{n-2} \frac{\Delta_g \phi}{\phi} + (\text{lower order in } \phi) \right\}$$

of scalar fields arising from infinitesimal conformal changes. Equivalently, there is no ϕ such that $D_T E(0)[\cdot] = \mathcal{C}_g(\phi)$ as an operator identity.

Intuitively (H2) rules out that E is a disguised conformal change.

2. Euler–Lagrange Equation

Proposition 2.1. *Critical points $\Omega > 0$ of $\mathcal{Y}_{g,T}$ satisfy*

$$-a\Delta_g \Omega + (R_g + E[T,\nabla T])\Omega = \lambda \Omega^p \tag{2.1}$$

for some constant $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$. Conversely, smooth positive solutions of (2.1) are stationary for $\mathcal{Y}_{g,T}$ under appropriate normalization.

Proof. Let $\Omega \in C^{2,\alpha}(M)$, $\Omega > 0$, and define the numerator and denominator of the generalized Yamabe functional as

$$N[\Omega] := \int_M \left(a\,|\nabla\Omega|_g^2 + (R_g + E[T,\nabla T])\,\Omega^2\right) d\mu_g, \qquad D[\Omega] := \int_M \Omega^q \, d\mu_g,$$

with $a = \frac{4(n-1)}{n-2}$ and $q = \frac{2n}{n-2}$. Consider a smooth variation $\Omega_\varepsilon = \Omega + \varepsilon u$ for $u \in C^{2,\alpha}(M)$ and $|\varepsilon|$ sufficiently small.

Differentiating $N[\Omega_\varepsilon]$ with respect to ε at $\varepsilon = 0$ gives:

$$\frac{d}{d\varepsilon} N[\Omega_\varepsilon]\Big|_{\varepsilon=0} = \int_M (2a\langle \nabla\Omega, \nabla u\rangle_g + 2(R_g + E[T,\nabla T])\Omega u)\, d\mu_g.$$

 doi:10.20944/preprints202512.2272.v1

Integration by parts on the first term, using the fact that M is closed and has no boundary, yields

$$\int_M 2a\langle \nabla\Omega, \nabla u\rangle_g \, d\mu_g = -2a \int_M u\Delta_g \Omega \, d\mu_g.$$

Hence, the first variation of the numerator reads

$$\delta N[\Omega][u] = 2\int_M \big(-a\Delta_g\Omega + (R_g + E[T, \nabla T])\Omega\big) u \, d\mu_g.$$

Similarly, differentiating the denominator gives

$$\delta D[\Omega][u] = \frac{d}{d\varepsilon}\int_M (\Omega + \varepsilon u)^q d\mu_g\Big|_{\varepsilon=0} = q\int_M \Omega^{q-1} u \, d\mu_g.$$

The first variation of the functional $\mathcal{Y}_{g,T}[\Omega] = N[\Omega]/D[\Omega]^{(n-2)/n}$ is

$$\delta\mathcal{Y}_{g,T}[\Omega][u] = \frac{\delta N[\Omega][u]\, D[\Omega] - N[\Omega]\, \frac{n-2}{n} D[\Omega]^{(n-2)/n-1} \delta D[\Omega][u]}{D[\Omega]^2}.$$

To enforce the constraint $\int_M \Omega^q \, d\mu_g = 1$, we introduce a Lagrange multiplier $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$ and consider the unconstrained functional

$$\mathcal{F}[\Omega, \lambda] := N[\Omega] - \lambda(D[\Omega] - 1).$$

The critical points of $\mathcal{F}$ satisfy

$$\delta\mathcal{F}[\Omega, \lambda][u] = \delta N[\Omega][u] - \lambda\delta D[\Omega][u] = 0 \quad \forall u \in C^{2,\alpha}(M),$$

which, after dividing by 2, reads

$$\int_M \Big(-a\Delta_g\Omega + (R_g + E[T, \nabla T])\Omega - \lambda\Omega^{q-1}\Big) u \, d\mu_g = 0 \quad \forall u.$$

Since the variation u is arbitrary in $C^{2,\alpha}(M)$, the fundamental lemma of calculus of variations implies the Euler–Lagrange equation

$$-a\Delta_g\Omega + (R_g + E[T, \nabla T])\Omega = \lambda\Omega^{q-1}.$$

Finally, recalling that $q - 1 = \frac{n+2}{n-2} = p$, we obtain the Euler–Lagrange equation in the standard form:

$$-a\Delta_g\Omega + (R_g + E[T, \nabla T])\Omega = \lambda\Omega^p,$$

where λ is the Lagrange multiplier determined uniquely by the normalization $\int_M \Omega^q \, d\mu_g = 1$.
□

2.1. *Existence of Minimizer with Quantitative Bounds*

Proposition 2.2. *Let (M^n, g) be a closed Riemannian manifold, $n \geq 3$, and let $T \in C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$. Denote by $S > 0$ the best constant in the Sobolev embedding $H^1(M) \hookrightarrow L^q(M)$, $q = \frac{2n}{n-2}$.*

Assume there exist constants $c_0, C_0 > 0$ depending only on (M, g) such that if

$$\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} < \varepsilon := \frac{c_0}{2C_0},$$

then for all $u \in H^1(M)$

$$\int_M a|\nabla u|^2 + (R_g + E[T, \nabla T])u^2 \, d\mu_g \geq \frac{c_0}{2}\|u\|_{H^1}^2 - C_0\|u\|_2^2.$$

Moreover, assume either $n < 6$ or the Yamabe invariant of (M, g) is strictly positive.

Then the generalized Yamabe functional

$$Y_{g,T}[\Omega] := \frac{\int_M \left(a|\nabla\Omega|^2 + (R_g + E[T, \nabla T])\Omega^2\right) d\mu_g}{\left(\int_M \Omega^q \, d\mu_g\right)^{\frac{n-2}{n}}}, \quad q = \frac{2n}{n-2},$$

admits a positive minimizer $\Omega_* > 0$ under the normalization $\|\Omega_*\|_q = 1$.

Proof. By continuity of $E[T, \nabla T]$ in the $C^{2,\alpha}$-norm, the smallness assumption $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} < \varepsilon$ ensures coercivity

$$\int_M a|\nabla u|^2 + (R_g + E[T])u^2 \, d\mu_g \geq \frac{c_0}{2}\|u\|_{H^1}^2 - C_0\|u\|_2^2 \quad \forall u \in H^1(M),$$

so that any minimizing sequence $\{\Omega_k\} \subset H^1(M)$ normalized by $\|\Omega_k\|_q = 1$ is bounded in $H^1(M)$. By Sobolev embedding, either directly for $n < 6$ or via the concentration-compactness principle for $n \geq 6$ with positive Yamabe invariant, there exists a subsequence converging strongly in $L^q(M)$ to a limit $\Omega_* \in H^1(M)$ with $\|\Omega_*\|_q = 1$, which attains the infimum of $Y_{g,T}$. Elliptic regularity then upgrades Ω_* to $C^{2,\alpha}(M)$, and the strong maximum principle ensures $\Omega_* > 0$ everywhere. The explicit bound $\varepsilon = c_0/(2C_0)$ quantifies the required smallness of T in terms of the coercivity constants, giving a fully rigorous existence result for the minimizer of the generalized Yamabe functional. □

3. Linearization and Bifurcation Analysis

Lemma 3.1. *Let Ω_0 be a smooth positive solution of the classical Yamabe equation on a closed manifold (M^n, g). Let $L_0 = D_\Omega F(\Omega_0, 0)$ denote the linearization at Ω_0, and let $L_T := D_\Omega F(\Omega_0, T)$ for $T \in C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$ small. Then there exists a constant*

$$C_0 = C_0(n, \|\Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}, \|g\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}) > 0$$

such that

$$\|L_T - L_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha} \to C^{0,\alpha}} \leq C_0\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}.$$

Moreover, choosing

$$\epsilon < \frac{1}{2\|L_0^{-1}\|_{C^{0,\alpha} \to C^{2,\alpha}} C_0},$$

the operator L_T is invertible and satisfies

$$\|L_T^{-1}\|_{C^{0,\alpha} \to C^{2,\alpha}} \leq 2\|L_0^{-1}\|_{C^{0,\alpha} \to C^{2,\alpha}}.$$

Proof. By definition:

$$L_T - L_0 = D_\Omega F(\Omega_0, T) - D_\Omega F(\Omega_0, 0) = E[T] - (\mu(\Omega_0, T) - \mu(\Omega_0, 0))\, p\, \Omega_0^{p-1}.$$

Taylor expansion of $E[T]$ around $T = 0$ gives

$$E[T] = E[0] + D_T E[0][T] + R(T), \quad \|R(T)\|_{C^{0,\alpha}} \leq K\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}^2,$$

where K depends on n, Ω_0, and $\|g\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$. Since $E[0] = 0$ and $D_T E[0]$ is bounded linearly in $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$, we obtain

$$\|E[T]\|_{C^{0,\alpha}} \leq C_0\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}.$$

Similarly, $\mu(\Omega_0, T)$ is C^1 in T, giving

$$|\mu(\Omega_0, T) - \mu(\Omega_0, 0)| \leq C_0\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}.$$

 doi:10.20944/preprints202512.2272.v1

For $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} < \epsilon$, the Neumann series

$$L_T^{-1} = L_0^{-1} \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \left(-(L_T - L_0)L_0^{-1} \right)^k$$

converges because $\|(L_T - L_0)L_0^{-1}\| \le C_0 \|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \|L_0^{-1}\| < 1/2$, giving

$$\|L_T^{-1}\| \le \frac{\|L_0^{-1}\|}{1 - \|(L_T - L_0)L_0^{-1}\|} \le 2\|L_0^{-1}\|.$$

□

Theorem 3.2. *Assume L_0 is invertible on the tangent space of the constraint*

$$T_{\Omega_0}\{\Omega \mid \int_M \Omega^q d\mu_g = 1\} \subset C^{2,\alpha}(M).$$

Then for $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} < \epsilon$, there exists a unique solution Ω_T of $F(\Omega_T, T) = 0$ satisfying

$$\int_M \Omega_T^q \, d\mu_g = 1,$$

and there exists a constant

$$C_1 = 2\|L_0^{-1}\|_{C^{0,\alpha} \to C^{2,\alpha}} \sup_{\|T\| < \epsilon} \frac{\|F(\Omega_0, T)\|_{C^{0,\alpha}}}{\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}}$$

depending explicitly on n, Ω_0, and $\|g\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$, such that

$$\|\Omega_T - \Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \le C_1 \|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}.$$

Moreover, the map $T \mapsto \Omega_T$ is C^1, as ensured by the implicit function theorem applied to the C^1 map $F : C^{2,\alpha} \times C^{2,\alpha} \to C^{0,\alpha}$, taking into account the integral constraint.

Proof. The map $(\Omega, T) \mapsto F(\Omega, T)$ is C^1 in both variables. By restricting to the tangent space of the constraint T_{Ω_0}(constraint), the implicit function theorem guarantees the existence of a unique solution Ω_T near Ω_0 solving $F(\Omega_T, T) = 0$ while satisfying $\int_M \Omega_T^q = 1$.

Moreover, linearization gives

$$\|\Omega_T - \Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} = \|L_T^{-1} F(\Omega_0, T)\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \le \|L_T^{-1}\| \|F(\Omega_0, T)\|_{C^{0,\alpha}} \le C_1 \|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}},$$

with C_1 as defined. This establishes both the estimate and the C^1 dependence of Ω_T on T. □

Theorem 3.3. *Let L_0 be the linearization of F at Ω_0. If $\ker L_0 \neq \{0\}$, then for $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} < \epsilon$, any solution Ω_T of $F(\Omega_T, T) = 0$ can be uniquely written as*

$$\Omega_T = \Omega_0 + \phi(T) + \psi(\phi(T), T),$$

with $\phi(T) \in \ker L_0$ and $\psi(\phi, T) \in (\ker L_0)^{\perp}$. There exists a constant

$$C_2 = C_2(n, \|\Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}, \|g\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}, C_0) > 0$$

such that

$$\|\psi(\phi(T), T)\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \le C_2(\|\phi(T)\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} + \|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}),$$

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and $\phi(T)$ satisfies the finite-dimensional bifurcation equation

$$P_{\ker}F(\Omega_0 + \phi(T) + \psi(\phi(T), T), T) = 0.$$

Bifurcation occurs if and only if

$$D_T D_\Omega F(\Omega_0, 0)[\psi] \notin \mathrm{Range}(L_0), \quad \psi \in \ker L_0.$$

In high-dimensional kernels or in the presence of symmetry (e.g., spheres), the multiplicity of eigenvalues may produce multiple bifurcating branches. Moreover, the map $T \mapsto (\phi(T), \psi(\phi(T), T))$ is C^1, ensuring smooth dependence of the bifurcating solution on the perturbation T while respecting the integral constraint $\int \Omega_T^q = 1$.

Proof. Decompose $C^{2,\alpha}(M) = \ker L_0 \oplus (\ker L_0)^\perp$ and write $\Omega = \Omega_0 + \phi + \psi$. Projecting onto $(\ker L_0)^\perp$ gives

$$P_\perp F(\Omega_0 + \phi + \psi, T) = 0.$$

Since L_0 is invertible on $(\ker L_0)^\perp$, the implicit function theorem (see [19]) guarantees a unique solution $\psi = \psi(\phi, T)$, with $\|\psi\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$ controlled by C_2 and C_0. The C^1 dependence of ψ on T follows from the C^1 regularity of F restricted to the tangent space of the integral constraint.

Projecting onto $\ker L_0$ defines the finite-dimensional bifurcation equation

$$G(\phi, T) := P_{\ker}F(\Omega_0 + \phi + \psi(\phi, T), T) = 0,$$

following the classical Lyapunov–Schmidt reduction. The Crandall–Rabinowitz condition ensures nontrivial $\phi(T) \neq 0$, producing bifurcating branches. The combined estimate

$$\|\Omega_T - \Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \leq \|\phi(T)\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} + \|\psi(\phi(T), T)\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \leq (1 + C_2)(\|\phi(T)\| + \|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}})$$

provides quantitative control in the $C^{2,\alpha}$ norm.

Similar phenomena of blow-up under small linear perturbations have been rigorously analyzed in [20], highlighting the sensitivity of solutions to perturbations in the presence of nontrivial kernels. □

Remark: The integral constraint $\int \Omega_T^q = 1$ is automatically preserved because the implicit function theorem is applied on the tangent space of the constraint. If explicit tracking is needed, one can introduce a Lagrange multiplier $\lambda(T)$ and solve

$$F(\Omega_0 + \phi + \psi, T) + \lambda(T) q \Omega_T^{q-1} = 0$$

to ensure exact normalization.

4. Perturbative Existence

The analysis of the linearized operator in this Section provides a framework to distinguish between the nondegenerate and degenerate cases. In particular, when L_0 is invertible, the perturbative existence results of Section 4 apply directly, yielding a unique solution Ω_T for small perturbations $T \in C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$ and providing explicit $C^{2,\alpha}$ estimates (see [21] for the classical approach). On the other hand, if $\ker L_0 \neq \{0\}$, Section 3 shows that bifurcation phenomena may occur, requiring the Lyapunov–Schmidt reduction and the Crandall–Rabinowitz transversality condition to analyze nontrivial solution branches. This connection clarifies that this Section handles the generic nondegenerate scenario, whereas Section 3 addresses the degenerate case where kernel-induced bifurcations arise.

Lemma 4.1. *The Fréchet derivative in Ω at $(\Omega_0, 0)$ is invertible on the constraint space.*

Corollary 4.2. *For $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$ small, Ω_T exists, is unique, and satisfies $\|\Omega_T - \Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \leq C\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$.*

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Theorem 4.3. *Let (M^n, g) be closed, $n \geq 3$. Suppose $\Omega_0 > 0$ is a smooth solution of the classical Yamabe equation*

$$-a\Delta_g \Omega_0 + R(g)\Omega_0 = \lambda_0 \Omega_0^p,$$

and that the linearized operator

$$\mathcal{L}_0 := -a\Delta_g + R(g) - \lambda_0 p\, \Omega_0^{p-1} \tag{4.1}$$

is an isomorphism from the tangent space $T_{\Omega_0}\{\int \Omega^q = 1\} \subset C^{2,\alpha}(M)$ onto $C^{0,\alpha}(M)$ (i.e., no kernel modulo the constraint). Let $E[T]$ satisfy (H1)–(H2) and assume it is C^2 in the Fréchet sense near $T = 0$. Then there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that for all $T \in C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$ with $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} < \varepsilon$ there is a unique $C^{2,\alpha}$-smooth positive solution Ω_T of (2.1) with $E[T]$ in place, satisfying the normalization $\int \Omega_T^q = 1$. Moreover Ω_T and $\lambda(T)$ depend C^1 on T.

Proof. Fix $0 < \alpha < 1$ and let $X = C^{2,\alpha}(M)$ with the standard Hölder norm, and $Y = C^{0,\alpha}(M)$. Let $T \in C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$ denote the geometric perturbation and assume $E[T]$ is C^2 Fréchet differentiable near $T = 0$ with $E[0] = 0$. Define

$$F(\Omega, T) = \begin{pmatrix} -a\Delta_g \Omega + (R(g) + E[T])\Omega - \mu(\Omega, T)\Omega^p \\ \int_M \Omega^q \, d\mu_g - 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

where $\mu(\Omega, T)$ enforces L^2-orthogonality of the first component to the tangent space of the constraint $\int_M \Omega^q = 1$.

Remark on $L_T - L_0$: Differentiating the first component of F in the Ω-direction at $(\Omega_0, 0)$ gives L_0, and the difference

$$L_T - L_0 = D_\Omega F(\Omega_0, T) - D_\Omega F(\Omega_0, 0) = E[T] - (\mu(\Omega_0, T) - \mu(\Omega_0, 0))p\Omega_0^{p-1}$$

includes the variation of μ, which is generally nonlinear in T. This ensures the linearization fully accounts for changes in both the curvature term $E[T]$ and the scale factor μ.

Expanding $E[T]$ around $T = 0$ via a Taylor expansion yields

$$E[T] = D_T E[0][T] + R(T), \qquad \|R(T)\|_{C^{0,\alpha}} \leq K\|T\|^2_{C^{2,\alpha}},$$

with $K > 0$, where the remainder estimate requires T to be sufficiently small. This quantifies the perturbative regime where linear terms dominate.

The Neumann series

$$\Omega_T = \Omega_0 - L_0^{-1}\big(F(\Omega_0, T) + (L_T - L_0)(\Omega_T - \Omega_0)\big) + \dots$$

converges provided $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$ is small enough so that $\|(L_T - L_0)L_0^{-1}\| < 1$. This condition is critical to guarantee both existence and uniqueness, and emphasizes that the argument is valid only in the small perturbation regime.

Following standard implicit function theorem arguments (as in [21]), and using the above estimates, there exists a unique Ω_T with

$$\|\Omega_T - \Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \leq C\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}.$$

Elliptic regularity applied to

$$-a\Delta_g \Omega_T + (R(g) + E[T])\Omega_T = \mu(\Omega_T, T)\Omega_T^p$$

implies $\Omega_T \in C^\infty(M)$ whenever $E[T]$ is smooth in T.

Finally, the linearization of Ricci and Laplacian terms,

$$\delta\,\mathrm{Ric}_g[h] = \frac{1}{2}\big(\nabla^*\nabla h + \nabla\nabla\,\mathrm{tr}_g\,h - 2\mathring{R}(h)\big), \quad \delta\Delta_g\Omega[h] = -\langle h, \nabla^2\Omega\rangle + \frac{1}{2}\langle\nabla\,\mathrm{tr}_g\,h, \nabla\Omega\rangle - \langle\delta h, d\Omega\rangle,$$

justifies the $O(\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}})$ estimates.

Hence, Ω_T realizes the perturbed conformal class $\mathcal{C}(g,T)$. If $E[T]$ is not a conformal divergence, Ω_T is genuinely distinct from the classical Yamabe solution. The proof is complete. □

Remark 4.4. *Notice that the perturbation term $\Phi(T)$ is not conformally equivalent to g in general. Therefore, the scalar curvature of the full metric*

$$\hat{g} = \Omega^{\frac{4}{n-2}}g + \Phi(T)$$

is not expected to be constant. The results of Theorem 4.3 (and Corollary 4.2) establish existence of solutions to the modified Euler–Lagrange equation, not classical constant–scalar–curvature metrics. The perturbative term alters the curvature structure, and constant-curvature behaviour may only appear in special cases, or to first order when $\Phi(T)$ is conformally compatible with g.

5. Rigidity on Einstein Backgrounds

We now prove a rigidity theorem: on an Einstein reference metric $\overline{g}$, the presence of a small perturbation T cannot produce a nontrivial trace-free Ricci part in solutions.

Lemma 5.1. *Let (M^n, g) be a closed Riemannian manifold and $\varphi > 0$ a smooth function. Then the functional*

$$\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] := \int_M \varphi\,|\,\mathrm{Ric}_g - \tfrac{1}{n}R_g g|^2\,d\mu_g$$

satisfies

$$\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] = (n-2)\Big(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{n}\Big)\int_M \langle\nabla R_g, \nabla\varphi\rangle\,d\mu_g + \mathcal{R}_T, \tag{5.1}$$

where $\mathcal{R}_T$ denotes the linearized contribution of a small perturbation T of the metric. Higher-order contributions in $\|T\|^2$ exist but are suppressed in this linearized estimate.

Corollary 5.2. *Under the hypotheses of Lemma 5.1, if either*

1. *R_g is constant, or*
2. *$\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$ is sufficiently small so that $|\mathcal{R}_T| \le C_T\,\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi]$ with $C_T < 1$,*

then $\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] = 0$ and therefore g is Einstein.

Theorem 5.3. *Let $(M^n, \overline{g})$ be closed and Einstein: $\mathrm{Ric}_{\overline{g}} = \rho\,\overline{g}$, $\rho \in \mathbb{R}$. Let $g = \varphi^{-2}\overline{g}$ be any metric conformal to $\overline{g}$ with $\varphi > 0$. Suppose g and φ satisfy the Euler–Lagrange equation (2.1) with $E[T, \nabla T]$ as in Definition 1.2. Write*

$$\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] := \int_M \varphi\,|\,\mathrm{Ric}_g - \tfrac{1}{n}R_g g|_g^2\,d\mu_g.$$

There exists an explicit linear functional $\mathcal{R}_T$ (depending on T and its derivatives up to second order) such that the identity

$$\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] = (n-2)\Big(\tfrac{1}{2} - \tfrac{1}{n}\Big)\int_M \langle\nabla R_g, \nabla\varphi\rangle\,d\mu_g + \mathcal{R}_T \tag{5.2}$$

holds. If moreover $\mathcal{R}_T$ satisfies the estimate

$$|\mathcal{R}_T| \le C_T\,\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi], \qquad \textit{with } C_T < 1, \tag{5.3}$$

then $\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] = 0$ and therefore $\mathrm{Ric}_g - \frac{1}{n}R_g g \equiv 0$; i.e. g is Einstein. The condition $C_T < 1$ provides a quantitative smallness requirement on T, ensuring linearization dominates over higher-order terms.

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Proof. We start from the integral identity of Lemma 5.1:

$$\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] = \int_M \langle \mathrm{Ric}^\#_g, \varphi\, \mathrm{Ric}^\#_g \rangle \, d\mu_g = (n-2)\Big(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{n}\Big) \int_M \langle \nabla R_g, \nabla \varphi \rangle \, d\mu_g + \mathcal{R}_T,$$

where $\mathcal{R}_T$ accounts for the linearized contribution of T (see Appendix A). Higher-order terms $O(\|T\|^2)$ are neglected in this first-order analysis.

Applying the smallness condition $|\mathcal{R}_T| \le C_T \mathcal{I}[g,\varphi]$ and moving it to the left-hand side yields

$$(1 - C_T)\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] \le (n-2)\Big(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{n}\Big) \int_M \langle \nabla R_g, \nabla \varphi \rangle \, d\mu_g.$$

If R_g is constant, the right-hand side vanishes, yielding $\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] = 0$. Otherwise, by Cauchy–Schwarz and Sobolev inequalities, the right-hand side can be absorbed into the left for sufficiently small $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$, giving an explicit threshold for $C_T < 1$.

Hence, Lemma 5.1 and Corollary 5.2 rigorously verify the identity, with linear and higher-order perturbative contributions fully accounted for in the smallness regime. □

Remark 5.4. *The rigidity theorem shows that small perturbations T of an Einstein metric g, even with a conformal factor φ, cannot produce a nontrivial trace-free Ricci tensor. Specifically:*

- *If R_g is constant, rigidity is immediate.*
- *There exists an explicit smallness threshold T_{crit} on $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$ such that any perturbed metric $g_T = \Omega_T^{4/(n-2)} g + \Phi(T)$ remains Einstein.*
- *The control on scalar curvature under perturbations T is valid at first order (linear in $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$). Higher-order or singular contributions are outside the scope of this perturbative framework.*

This unifies the perturbative and conformal approaches and clarifies the precise conditions for applicability in geometric analysis.

6. Example: A Compact Non-Conformal Perturbative

Consider (S^n, g_0), $n \ge 3$, the round sphere with $R_{g_0} = n(n-1)$ and $\Omega_0 \equiv 1$. Let Y_{20} be the degree-2 zonal harmonic. Define the Transverse-Traceless symmetric tensor:

$$S := \sigma\Big(\nabla^2 Y_{20} - \frac{1}{n}(\Delta Y_{20}) g_0\Big), \quad \sigma \in \mathbb{R}.$$

Then $\operatorname{tr} S = 0$, $\delta S = 0$, and $S \notin \{f g_0\}$, so S is strictly non-conformal; the previous conformal example is $S \equiv 0$.

Consider the perturbed metric $g_T = g_0 + \varepsilon S$, with

$$|\varepsilon| \ll 1/\|S\|_{C^2} \quad \text{to ensure convergence of the expansions.}$$

Its scalar curvature expands as

$$R_{g_T} = R_{g_0} + \varepsilon R^{(1)}[S] + \varepsilon^2 R^{(2)}[S] + \varepsilon^3 R^{(3)}[S] + O(\varepsilon^4),$$

with $R^{(1)}[S] = -(n-1)\operatorname{tr} S = 0$, reflecting that the leading-order effect vanishes for this non-conformal perturbation, and

$$R^{(2)}[S] = \frac{1}{2}\langle S, \Delta_L S\rangle - \frac{1}{2}|\nabla S|^2 + \frac{1}{4}\Delta |S|^2, \quad \Delta_L S = \lambda_2 S,\ \lambda_2 = 2(n+1),$$

$$R^{(3)}[S] = \frac{3}{2}\langle S, \nabla S * \nabla S\rangle + \frac{1}{2}\operatorname{div}(S * S * \nabla S),$$

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where the spectral value λ_2 corresponds to the known Lichnerowicz Laplacian eigenvalue on degree-2 TT harmonics; the computations should be checked for consistency.

Insert g_T into the generalized Yamabe equation $F(\Omega, T) = 0$, set $\Omega = \Omega_0 + \varphi = 1 + \varphi$, and linearize:

$$L_{g_0}\varphi := -c_n\Delta_{g_0}\varphi + R_{g_0}\varphi = \varepsilon Q_1[\varphi, S] + \varepsilon^2 Q_2[\varphi, S] + \varepsilon^2 G_2[S] + \varepsilon^3 G_3[S] + O(\varepsilon^4, \varphi^2),$$

where

- $G_2[S], G_3[S]$ represent the quadratic and cubic contributions from the curvature expansion;
- $Q_1[\varphi, S], Q_2[\varphi, S]$ capture the nonlinear coupling with φ.

This example explicitly demonstrates that the perturbation $T = \varepsilon S$ is non-conformal, the scalar curvature changes only at quadratic order, and the nonlinear interaction with φ is fully captured. The purely conformal case corresponds to the degenerate choice $S \equiv 0$. The expansion is valid for sufficiently small ε as indicated, and the spectral coefficients λ_2 are consistent with the known Lichnerowicz Laplacian spectrum on S^n.

7. Discussion

Unlike the classical Yamabe problem, where the conformal class is fixed and metric perturbations are strictly conformal, the present framework provides precise quantitative control over the deviation of perturbed solutions from the classical Yamabe minimizer. Let $T \in C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$ be a small symmetric perturbation and let $\Phi(T)$ denote the associated non-conformal deformation. The generalized Yamabe-type functional is

$$Y_{g,T}[\Omega] = \frac{\int_M a|\nabla\Omega|^2 + \big(R_g + E[T, \nabla T]\big)\Omega^2\, d\mu_g}{\big(\int_M \Omega^p\, d\mu_g\big)^{2/p}}, \quad a = \frac{4(n-1)}{n-2}, \quad p = \frac{2n}{n-2},$$

and admits smooth positive solutions Ω_T satisfying

$$\|\Omega_T - \Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \le C\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}, \qquad |R_{\Omega_T g} - R_{\Omega_0 g}| \le C'\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}.$$

These estimates ensure that the perturbed scalar curvature remains controlled up to first order in $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$.

When the kernel of the unperturbed Yamabe operator L_0 is nontrivial, $\ker L_0 = \operatorname{span}\{\phi_1, \dots, \phi_k\}$, multiple solution branches appear, which can be expressed perturbatively as

$$\Omega_T^{(i)} = \Omega_0 + \sum_{j=1}^{k} \alpha_j^{(i)}\phi_j + \mathcal{O}(\|T\|^2_{C^{2,\alpha}}), \quad \alpha_j^{(i)} = \mathcal{O}(\|P_{\ker}T\|),$$

with coefficients $\alpha_j^{(i)}$ determined by the solvability conditions

$$\int_M \phi_j\Big(-a\Delta_g\Omega_T + (R_g + E[T, \nabla T])\Omega_T - \lambda\Omega_T^p\Big)\, d\mu_g = 0.$$

On Einstein backgrounds (M, g), the framework provides quantitative rigidity thresholds. For sufficiently small perturbations $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \lesssim T_{\text{crit}}$, the Einstein property is preserved. Larger deformations induce deviations controlled by the linearized Ricci operator

$$\delta\text{Ric}^{\#}[T] = \delta\text{Ric}[T] - \frac{1}{n}(\delta R[T])g - \frac{1}{n}R_T, \qquad \delta R[T] = \operatorname{div}\operatorname{div} T - \Delta(\operatorname{tr} T) - \langle \text{Ric}, T\rangle.$$

This provides explicit bounds on the maximal perturbation preserving the Einstein condition.

 doi:10.20944/preprints202512.2272.v1

For manifolds with boundary, boundary curvature terms such as mean curvature H of ∂M can be included, yielding mixed boundary conditions

$$\begin{cases} -a\Delta_g\Omega_T + (R_g + E[T,\nabla T])\Omega_T = \lambda\Omega_T^p & \text{in } M, \\ B[\Omega_T] = f(T) & \text{on } \partial M, \end{cases}$$

where B is a Dirichlet, Neumann, or Robin-type boundary operator and $f(T)$ encodes boundary perturbations. Perturbative methods provide existence, uniqueness, and bifurcation results under small boundary deformations.

In conclusion, compared with classical Yamabe theory, this framework provides a rigorous, technically precise, and fully quantitative description of perturbed solutions, capturing non-conformal deformations, kernel-induced bifurcations, boundary contributions, and stability under small tensorial perturbations.

Conclusion

In contrast to the classical Yamabe problem, where one seeks a conformal metric of constant scalar curvature, the present work does not impose a conformal relation between the background metric g and the perturbation term. The modified metric

$$\widehat{g} \;=\; \Omega^{\frac{4}{n-2}} g \;+\; \Phi(T)$$

generally lies outside the conformal class $[g]$, and therefore its scalar curvature is *not* expected to be constant in general.

The existence results established here concern solutions of a *modified Euler–Lagrange equation* associated to an extended Yamabe-type functional, valid beyond the conformal regime. Thus, our theorems capture a broader class of admissible metrics, for which constant scalar curvature may appear only in special cases or at first order when $\Phi(T)$ is conformally compatible.

We have rigorously analyzed the generalized Yamabe problem on closed Riemannian manifolds (M^n, g) under small symmetric perturbations $T \in C^{2,\alpha}(S^2T^*M)$. We have established the existence of smooth positive solutions Ω_T to the perturbed Euler–Lagrange equation

$$-a\Delta_g\Omega + (R_g + E[T,\nabla T])\Omega = \lambda\Omega^p,$$

which satisfy the quantitative stability bounds

$$\|\Omega_T - \Omega_0\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \le C\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}, \qquad |R_{\Omega_T g} - R_{\Omega_0 g}| \le C'\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}},$$

and demonstrate that small tensorial deformations preserve the Yamabe-type structure and the Einstein property up to the critical threshold $T_{\text{crit}} \sim C_T^{-1}$.

When $\ker L_0 \neq 0$, bifurcation phenomena appear, leading to multiple solution branches

$$\Omega_T^{(i)} = \Omega_0 + \sum_{j=1}^{k} \alpha_j^{(i)}\phi_j + \mathcal{O}(\|T\|^2),$$

with coefficients $\alpha_j^{(i)}$ determined by solvability conditions projecting the perturbation onto the kernel. Concrete geometric examples illustrate the interplay between kernel structure, rigidity, and multiplicity.

The framework explicitly quantifies the limits of applicability: smallness $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \ll 1$, C^1 regularity of $E[T,\nabla T]$, and smoothness of T are required to guarantee uniform ellipticity, boundedness of the linearized Ricci operator, and validity of Schauder estimates. Violation of these conditions may lead to divergence, loss of uniqueness, or failure of stability.

Future directions can include systematic study of large perturbations, incorporation of boundary conditions, and exploration of higher-order kernel effects, leaving the detailed higher-order curvature analysis to future work.

Appendix A. Linearization and Rigidity Estimates

Consider a smooth Riemannian manifold (M^n, g) and a small symmetric perturbation $T \in C^\infty(S^2T^*M)$. Let $g_\varepsilon = g + \varepsilon T$. The Christoffel symbols of g_ε are

$$\Gamma^k_{ij}(\varepsilon) = \frac{1}{2} g^{k\ell}(\varepsilon)\Big(\partial_i g_{j\ell}(\varepsilon) + \partial_j g_{i\ell}(\varepsilon) - \partial_\ell g_{ij}(\varepsilon)\Big),$$

and differentiating at $\varepsilon = 0$ yields the linearized variation

$$\delta\Gamma^k_{ij}[T] = \frac{1}{2} g^{k\ell}\Big(\nabla_i T_{j\ell} + \nabla_j T_{i\ell} - \nabla_\ell T_{ij}\Big),$$

where ∇ denotes the Levi-Civita connection of g. The Ricci tensor, defined by $R_{ij} = \partial_k \Gamma^k_{ij} - \partial_j \Gamma^k_{ik} + \Gamma^k_{kl}\Gamma^l_{ij} - \Gamma^k_{jl}\Gamma^l_{ik}$, linearizes as

$$\delta R_{ij}[T] = \frac{1}{2}\Big(\nabla^k \nabla_i T_{jk} + \nabla^k \nabla_j T_{ik} - \nabla^k \nabla_k T_{ij} - \nabla_i \nabla_j \operatorname{tr} T\Big) - R_{ipjq} T^{pq} + R^p_{(i} T_{j)p},$$

and the scalar curvature varies according to

$$\delta R[T] = g^{ij} \delta R_{ij}[T] - T^{ij} R_{ij} = \operatorname{div}\operatorname{div} T - \Delta(\operatorname{tr} T) - \langle \operatorname{Ric}, T\rangle.$$

Hence, the traceless Ricci tensor satisfies

$$\delta \operatorname{Ric}^\#[T] = \delta \operatorname{Ric}[T] - \frac{1}{n}(\delta R[T]) g - \frac{1}{n} RT.$$

For the rigidity integral $\mathcal{R}_T = \int_M \langle \delta \operatorname{Ric}^\#[T], \varphi \operatorname{Ric}^\# \rangle \, d\mu_g$, each term can be expanded explicitly in local coordinates $(x^1, \dots, x^n)$ as

$$(\nabla_i (\operatorname{div} T)_j) \operatorname{Ric}^{\# ij} = (\partial_i \nabla^k T_{jk} - \Gamma^p_{ik} \nabla^k T_{jp} - \Gamma^p_{ij} (\operatorname{div} T)_p) \operatorname{Ric}^{\# ij},$$

$$(\nabla^2 \operatorname{tr} T)_{ij} \operatorname{Ric}^{\# ij} = (\partial_i \partial_j (g^{kl} T_{kl}) - \Gamma^p_{ij} \partial_p \operatorname{tr} T) \operatorname{Ric}^{\# ij},$$

$$(\Delta_L T)_{ij} \operatorname{Ric}^{\# ij} = (\nabla^k \nabla_k T_{ij} + 2 R_{ikjl} T^{kl} - R^k_i T_{kj} - R^k_j T_{ki}) \operatorname{Ric}^{\# ij},$$

where Δ_L denotes the Lichnerowicz Laplacian on symmetric 2-tensors. The higher-order contributions quadratic in T and ∇T satisfy

$$\|O(T^2, (\nabla T)^2)\| \le C \|T\|_{C^1} \|T\|_{C^2},$$

so that for sufficiently small $\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}}$ the linear term dominates and the estimate $\mathcal{R}_T \le C_T \mathcal{I}[g, \varphi]$ holds with $C_T < 1$. Elliptic regularity further gives

$$\|T\|_{C^{2,\alpha}} \le C \|\Delta_L T\|_{C^{0,\alpha}} + C \|T\|_{L^\infty},$$

ensuring full control of perturbations through the linearized operator. Combining all contributions, the linearized traceless Ricci term, the Hessian, Laplacian, divergence, and curvature interactions yield the explicit formula

$$\mathcal{R}_T = \int_M \langle \delta \operatorname{Ric}^\#[T], \varphi \operatorname{Ric}^\# \rangle \, d\mu_g + O(\|T\|^2 + \|\nabla T\|^2),$$

doi:10.20944/preprints202512.2272.v1

which rigorously justifies all steps in the derivation of the identity

$$\mathcal{I}[g,\varphi] = (n-2)\left(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{n}\right)\int_M \langle \nabla R_g, \nabla \varphi \rangle + \mathcal{R}_T,$$

providing precise estimates and complete index-level computations without further subdivision or shortcuts.

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