REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES OF HEAD TEACHERS: ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF ELCC STANDARDS

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ABSTRACT
The main objective of this study was to examine elementary school head teachers' leadership capacities as perceived by their teachers. Precisely, leadership capacities of head teachers were analyzed in six key areas of internal and external leadership related to ELCC (2002) standards. This study also examined differences in participants' perceptions, when grouped by their demographic variables and internal-external division. This quantitative study applied survey design to achieve the objectives. A 28-items Principals' Leadership Capacities Questionnaire (PLCQ), designed by Naijar (2006), was adapted and administered to randomly selected sample of 1115 teachers from 363 elementary schools in two districts of the Southern Punjab (Pakistan) and finally 876 (78.6%) responded. The factor analysis, descriptive statistics, and a range of inferential statistical tests were applied to analyze the data. Factor analysis (Principal Components Analysis) found that the leadership capacities of head teachers can be measured separately in the subsequent two dimensions i.e., internal leadership capacities and external leadership capacities. Findings of the descriptive statistics suggest that school teachers perceive their head teachers' both internal and external leadership capacities as more positive than negative. Inferential analyses found that teachers perceive that their head teachers have significantly better external leadership capacities than internal ones, though both capacities are just above average. Likewise, significant differences were found in teachers' views about their head teachers leadership capacities based on their various demographic variables. This study will inform the middle and top-level management in school education to design and organize capacity building programs for elementary school head teachers to develop their leadership capabilities.
Keywords: Leadership capacities, Head teachers, Elementary schools, Teachers' perspective, ELCC standards.

INTRODUCTION
Changing social scenarios have steered modern school systems to reexamine their school goals and functions and placed emphasis on the significance of the school leadership. Several researchers asserted that dynamic school leadership substantially affects teaching-learning process, students' academic attainment and experiences, and school climate (Al-Mahdy et al., 2018; Alnawasreh, et al., 2019; Hallinger et al., 2017; Truong & Hallinger, 2017). Dynamic school leaders take on diverse leadership styles to reform the school corresponding to school goals and objectives, to improve teachers' motivation and students' success (Arar & Abu Nasra, 2019; Bellibas & Liu, 2018); as well as to optimize character-building strengthening programs in school environment (Effendi et

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al., 2020). Along the same lines, Kin et al. (2014) asserted that dynamic leadership, with an extensive repertoire of competencies, is essential for initiating real change process in schools.

Most recently, the role of school leadership has been studied more extensively with regard to school improvement and school effectiveness (Higgs & Rowland, 2000; Salfi, 2011; Shakeda et al., 2018; Owan et al., 2020). Scholars and experts from the area of school improvement, worldwide, have continuously emphasized significant contribution of schools' leadership for improvement of schools (Arop et al., 2019). Many scholars identified that dynamic leadership plays a central role in school improvement, institutional effectiveness, staff development, improvement of teachers' job satisfaction level and sustainable educational reforms (Nordin et al., 2020; Tentama et al., 2019; Walker & Kwan, 2009). The other researchers (e.g., Cheng & Townsend, 2000; Kin et al., 2014) have further connected the success and effectiveness of school with leadership capacities of school heads. Cheng & Townsend (2000), for example, suggest that the role of principal and/or head teacher is often decisive for school success, educational change, and effectiveness. Similarly, Brenninkmeyer & Spillane (2008) proclaim that school principals evidently affect students' learning experiences and their achievement.

Other worldwide studies from various school systems have found that leadership skills have a substantial impact on school progress (Brenninkmeyer & Spillane, 2008; Hopkins, 2001). The head teacher creates a quality culture that permeates to smallest components, processes and finally to the entire structure of educational institutions (Sharma et al., 2016). Successful leaders, according to Sergiovanni (1995), set directions and model practices and values in line with the school vision and mission to ensure that the distinct purposes become integrated. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2012) declared that the effective leaders seek required assistance proactively and cultivate a school culture and instructional program beneficial for enhancing students' learning and teachers' professional development.

Furthermore, Hallinger (2018) asserted that proficient leader positively influences individual teacher self-efficacy along with students' self-efficacy (Alnawasreh, et al., 2019) and further facilitates collaborative culture in school with emphasis on improving students' learning (El-Kassem, 2019; Zheng et al., 2019). A school head teacher, with his/her influential position, also has deep effect in guiding their colleagues' attention towards solving practical problems and in opening the doors for the reflective discussion (Qian et al., 2017). Also, Borko (2004) argues that dynamic school leaders help their teachers in establishing trust and in developing communication norms. This is likely to initiate critical dialogue in issues related to teaching and learning by maintaining balance between critical analysis of issues and community.

Similarly, numerous scholars consider school leadership as the most powerful and vital factor for improving students' learning outcomes (Arar & Abu Nasra, 2019; Day et al., 2009; (El-Kassem, 2019; Robinson et al., 2009; Owan et al., 2020). Research suggests that leadership is another most significant intra-school factor in improving students' academic outcomes after teachers' instructions (Day et al., 2009). Owan et al. (2020) asserted that leadership behaviors of school principals also significantly predict students' attitude towards practicum exercises and their attitude increases with improvement of principals' leadership behaviors. Leithwood et al. (2019) further clarified that effective leaders' performance of a common repertoire of capacities mostly influence students' learning outcomes. Leadership capacities of school head teachers influence teachers' classroom performance, and hence, have good indirect impact on students' learning outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2006). Although the literature discusses many standards for measuring leadership capacities among educational leaders globally, American Educational Leadership Constituent Council [ELCC] (2002) standards are more relevant and comprehensive in the context of education (Saleh & McBride, 2005).

Leadership capacity, in this study, refers to a combination of dispositions, knowledge and skills as stated in the American ELCC (2002) standards. These dispositions, knowledge and skills belong to all the stakeholders along with organizational dimensions (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Mullen et al., 2002). The ELCC (2002) standards provide comprehensive description about key areas of head teachers/principals leadership, and therefore, served as a framework (Figure 1) of this research to examine teachers' views about their head teachers' leadership capacities. A number of experts (Murphy & Shipman, 1998; Murphy et al., 2000) proclaim that these ELCC standards can serve as a basis for planning school leadership programs along with as an instrument for the professional development of school heads. The ELCC standards classify the school head teachers' leadership

capacities into six key dimensions i.e., vision, culture and instruction, organization, collaborative partnership, moral perspective, and larger-context politics.

First standard of ELCC framework focuses on head teachers' leadership capacities and skills in developing school vision and confirms that school head teachers and leaders should have knowledge and understanding to develop a broad vision and mission for supporting change in school. Equally, they must have knowledge about developing trust as a prerequisite in shared school vision and an improvement. Second standard focuses on the head teachers' leadership capacities and skills in promoting positive school culture and endorses that an educational leader must be aware of principles required to develop, support and sustain school culture and varied instructional programs that contribute to students' learning and professional growth of teachers. Likewise, third standard of ELCC framework confirms that head teacher must be well-informed about best practices related to school management, organization, processes and resources for developing an effective, efficient, and safe learning environment.

The fourth standard of ELCC framework focuses on head teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills for building collaboration with their teachers and community, awareness about the diverse needs and interests of the community, and knowledge about best practices to mobilize the resources of the community. The fifth standard expects that school head teachers must act with fairness, honesty, integrity, and be engaged in ethical practices. Finally, sixth standard of ELCC framework confirms that a school head teacher must be well-informed about state-legislated policies, rules, and regulations for responding to various political, economic, social, cultural, and legal context within their schools. These six standards of ELCC framework are further split into three internal and external leadership capacities as shown in Figure 1.

This theoretical background provided methodological basis to achieve the objective as well as for addressing all research questions of study. Research objectives and questions were tested in the context of six standards of ELCC framework to determine how much these questions are aligned with ELCC framework. Likewise, selection of research tool for obtaining teachers' perceptions of their head teachers' leadership capacities was done in alignment with ELCC framework to analyze their internal and external leadership capacities. Finally, this theoretical framework guided the research methodology used in this study.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study
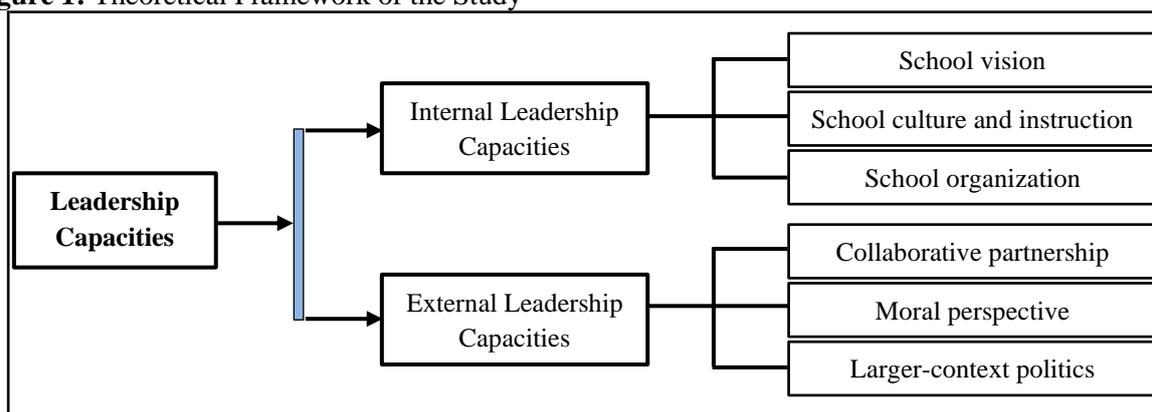
Present Study

In recent years, Pakistani education system remained under increased public pressure and the debate in relation to its capacity to effectively preparing graduates to meet the challenges of 21st century. It is also generally perceived that education system does not develop higher order cognitive skills (i.e., creative learning, contextualizing knowledge, reflective thinking, justice, respecting others' rights, peace, and equity) in youth (Government of Pakistan, 2009). Consequently, article 25-A of Constitution of Pakistan was introduced in 2010, which clearly obligates Government of Pakistan to ensure the provision of free and mandatory education to all children, between 5-16 years, within a minimum time frame. Moreover, there are revived commitments of Government of Pakistan for extending quality education for all in relation to attain Sustainable Development Goals 2015 of the UN and Government of Pakistan Vision 2025. The provincial governments have developed roadmaps

to deliver these commitments and prepared school education sector plans (Government of Pakistan, 2017). The education system in Pakistan, specifically school education sector, has, therefore, entered an intensive period of reforms.

The task of implementing reforms effectively, however, requires multidimensional set of leadership capacities especially on the part of school leaders. Unless school leaders, mainly head teachers, are equipped with these leadership capacities, and execute the reform process competently, school reform program will ultimately fail to achieve the ambitious targets set forth by government. This background suggests that leadership capacities of head teachers are critically important for realization of set targets and success of school reform program. In Pakistani education context, however, a comprehensive study has not yet been conducted particularly to examine leadership capacities of elementary school head teachers.

Considering the comprehensiveness of ELCC standards and their fit with research questions of this study, this research, therefore, examines elementary school teachers' perceptions about their head teachers' leadership capacities. This study further examines differences between the internal and external leadership capacities of head teachers, if exist. This study further analyzed significant differences in elementary school teachers' perceptions about their head teachers' leadership capacities when grouped by the demographic variables. The results of this study will provide research-based evidence to understand Pakistani elementary school head teachers' leadership capacities in comparison with the American educational leadership program standards. Following three specific research questions guided this study.

1. What are the leadership capacities of head teachers as perceived by elementary school teachers in six key areas of internal and external leadership standards of ELCC i.e., vision, culture and instruction, organization, collaboration, moral perspective as well as larger-context politics?
2. Are head teachers' internal and external leadership capacities different as perceived by elementary school teachers?
3. Are there any differences in the elementary school teachers' perceptions of their head teachers' leadership capacities based on teachers' gender, designation, district, school area, age and years of teaching experience?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Design and Participants
This quantitative survey design study examined the perceptions of elementary school teachers about leadership capacities of their head teachers from two districts of the Southern Punjab, namely Multan and Lodhran. All the elementary school teachers currently working in 363 government elementary schools of these two districts served as population for the present study. Considering the diverse nature of population, stratified random technique was applied for selection of sample, guided by sample size table developed by Krejcie & Morgan (1970). Consequently, 1115 teachers were selected as a sample taking into consideration their varied representation district-wise, gender-wise and designation-wise.

Instrument, Data Collection and Response Rate
The data collection tool for this research was 28-items Principals' Leadership Capacities Questionnaire (PLCQ) adapted from Naijar (2006). The PLCQ measures internal and external leadership capacities of school principals with six subscales based on six standards of ELCC (2002). The internal leadership capacity dimension (items 1-19) contains three subscales and deals with the first three ELCC standards: school vision (three items); school culture and instruction (six items) and school organization (ten items). Likewise, the external leadership capacity dimension (items 20-28) also comprises three subscales and deals with the last three ELCC standards: collaborative partnership (three items); moral perspectives (four items) and larger context-politics (two items).

The PLCQ was used with minor modifications. It was converted on six-point Likert scale. Furthermore, the word "My principal" was replaced with the word "My head teacher" considering the nomenclature of post used for elementary school heads in Pakistani context. The scale was translated into national language Urdu and validated consulting two experts on subject matter and two experts on language. This panel of four experts established the content and the face validity of the Urdu

version of the instrument. All the experts evaluated the Urdu translation of PLCQ independently and recorded their comments. Inappropriate Urdu translation was improved in view of the suggestions of the experts. The Urdu translation was retained after obtaining 100% approval from all the experts.

The Urdu (language) version of the tool was pilot tested at a small sample of 30 elementary school teachers to make further improvement. The results of pilot testing led to some further modifications. A section asking for personal information was also added in the beginning of the final questionnaire. The values of the Cronbach's alpha for entire scale and its sub-scales was between .64 and .87. The questionnaire was finally administered to sample participants in both the English and the Urdu versions. Elementary school teachers were asked to rate the leadership capacities of their head teachers by indicating their opinions against each item of the 28 on the six-point Likert scale, ranging from "having excellent capacity" to "having no capacity".

After seeking permission from the respective Chief Executive Officers [CEOs] and school heads, the researchers distributed and administered the questionnaire in paper format to all 1115 sample participants in their respective schools. Finally, 876 valid questionnaires were received back, resulting in a response rate of 78.6%.

DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Three types of statistical tests were performed for data analysis, using the statistical package for social sciences [SPSS]. First, factor analysis using Varimax rotation method with Kaiser Normalization was executed to examine the construct validity of the PLCQ. Second, various measures of descriptive statistics were calculated to examine participants' perceptions about internal and external leadership capacities of their head teachers. Finally, the Paired-samples t-test, the Independent-samples t-test, and One-way between-groups ANOVA were used to examine the significance of differences between internal and external leadership capacities of head teachers, and teachers' perceptions of their head teachers' leadership capacities based on diverse demographic variables. Results are displayed in subsequent sections.

Factor Analysis

To examine the construct validity of the scale, 28 items of Principals' Leadership Capacities Questionnaire (PLCQ) were subjected to principal components analysis (PCA) followed by Varimax rotation. The fitness of data for factor analysis was gauged before conducting PCA. The inspection of the correlation matrix indicated that many coefficients were .30 or higher (Pallant, 2011). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .90, higher than recommended value i.e., .60 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistical significant (p=0.000). High communality values (i.e. above .3) indicated that all the items fit well with other items in their respective component. These initial findings supported the factorability of the correlation matrix. These findings are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Scree Plot Graph showing the factors of the PLCQ Scale
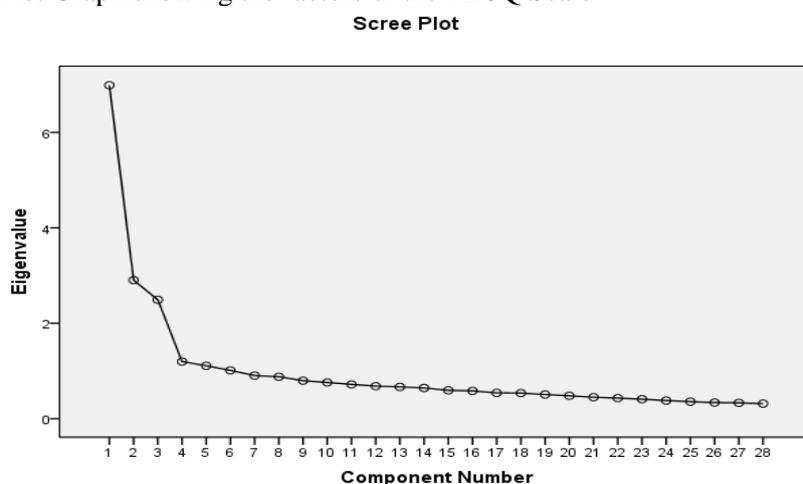
Principal component analysis displayed six components with eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 34.9%, 10.4%, 5.1%, 4.3%, 3.9% and 3.6% of variance, respectively. A vigilant scrutiny of the scree plot (Figure 2) indicated clear break after the second component. A two-component solution was, therefore, considered suitable for this data set. The two components identified by the

PCA had eigenvalues of 8.99 and 2.90 respectively and accounted for more than 45.33% of the common variance with 34.9% contributed by component 1 and 10.4% by component 2.

The cutoff value for factor loading used in analysis was .50. Five items with factor loadings of above .50 on more than one component were assigned to the component with the bigger loading. The interpretation of two components was in line with preceding findings (Naijar, 2006) on the PLCQ Scale, with internal leadership capacity dimension items (i.e., 1-19) loading strongly on Component 1 and external leadership capacity dimension items (i.e., 20-28) loading strongly on the Component 2. Results of PCA, therefore, supported the use of PLCQ Scale as valid to separately examine head teachers' internal leadership capacities and external leadership capacities.

The content validity of the instrument was more than 80% while convergent validity was unusually lower at 63%. All the correlations among the PLCQ subscales were statistically significant. Therefore, calculation of discriminant validity of the instrument was impossible. Reliability of the scale and its subscales was between .64 and .87. These findings, therefore, provided strong support for soundness of PLCQ items for examining perceptions of teachers about internal and external leadership capacities of their head teachers.

Teachers' Perceptions about Head Teachers' Internal and External Leadership Capacities

Teachers' viewpoints about their head teachers' leadership capacities in six key areas of internal and external were analyzed. The analysis was done by computing descriptive statistics i.e., percentage, mean score and SD. The percentage of participants' responses was separately calculated within each category of response options. For ease of analysis and better understanding, responses from 0–1 points (having no capacity and having little capacity) were combined together into one option to indicate category of 'little capacity' perceptions. Likewise, the responses from 3–4 points (having somewhat capacity and having the moderate capacity) were treated as category of 'moderate capacity' perceptions and responses from 5–6 points (with ratings of strong capacity and excellent capacity) were considered as category of 'strong capacity' perceptions. These results are shown in the Table 1 and Table 2.

Table No. 1 Teachers' perspective of head teachers' internal leadership capacities (N = 876)

Core Area	Strong capacity %	Moderate capacity %	Little capacity %	Mean	SD
School Vision	53.9	7.0	39.1	3.16	1.39
School culture and instruction	56.2	13.4	30.4	3.38	1.29
School organization	51.2	11.4	37.4	3.17	1.38
Overall Internal Leadership	53.8	10.6	35.6	3.24	1.35

The results of Table 1 revealed that teachers felt their head teachers as having either strong capacities, moderate capacities, or little capacities in all three areas of internal leadership. For ease of analysis, items in Table 1 and Table 2 were classified into two groups, considering their mean scores and the percentage of responses on each group i.e., moderate to strong capacities (Mean above 3.00) and moderate to little capacities (Mean below 3.00) and, thus, interpreted separately in following manner.

It is evident from Table 1 that teachers rated their head teachers' internal leadership capacities as moderate to strong (Overall mean=3.24). Specifically, teachers rated their head teachers as having the highest internal leadership capacities in school culture and instruction (Mean=3.38) followed by school organization (Mean=3.17) while leadership capacities in the area of school vision took the lowest place (Mean=3.16). It is, hence, concluded that overall elementary school teachers view their head teachers' internal leadership capacities as more positive than negative.

Table No. 2 Teachers' perspective of head teachers' external leadership capacities (N = 876)

Core Area	Strong capacity %	Moderate capacity %	Little capacity %	Mean	SD
Collaborative partnership	52.5	13.7	33.8	3.37	1.33
Moral perspective	64.4	6.4	29.2	3.56	1.33
Larger-context politics	42.9	9.1	48.0	2.87	1.44
Overall External Leadership	53.3	9.7	37.0	3.27	1.36

Results in Table 2 reveal that teachers perceived their head teachers as having either strong, or moderate, or little capacities in all three areas of external leadership. It is evident from Table 2 that teachers rated their head teachers' external leadership capacities as moderate to strong (Overall mean=3.27). Specifically, teachers rated their head teachers as having highest external leadership capacities in the area of moral perspective (Mean=3.56) followed by area of collaborative partnership (Mean=3.37), while leadership capacities of the head teachers in the larger-context politics took the lowest place (Mean=2.87). It can, therefore, be concluded in overall, that elementary school teachers perceived their head teachers' external leadership capacities as the more positive than negative.

Differences between Teachers' Perceptions about Head Teachers' Internal and External Leadership Capacities

The Paired-samples t-test was used to examine the significance of differences between the perceptions of elementary teachers about internal and external leadership capacities of their head teachers. These results are shown in Table 3.

Table No. 3 Paired-samples t-test for internal and external leadership capacities

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig.	Eta squared
Leadership Capacities	Internal	876	3.24	0.70	875	-2.002	.046	.004
	External	876	3.27	0.72				

Table 3 reveals that significant differences were found in teachers' perceptions about their head teachers' internal and external leadership capacities (p=.046, two-tailed). It is clear from results that teachers perceive that their head teachers have significantly more external leadership capacities than internal leadership capacities, despite the fact that both capacities are just above average. In view of guidelines suggested by Cohen (1988), the value of eta squared (i.e., .004), however, indicate that the size of the differences in mean scores was very small. The value of eta squared further indicates that the distribution of scores for internal leadership capacities of head teachers overlaps mostly with distribution of scores for external leadership capacities, and there is 0.4% of no overlap.

Differences between Teachers' Demographic-Based Perceptions about Head Teachers' Leadership Capacities

The independent-samples t-tests and one-way between-groups ANOVA were used to examine significance of differences between teachers' demographic-based perceptions about their head teachers' leadership capacities. These results are shown in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table No. 4 Independent-samples t-test based on diverse demographic variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig.	Eta squared
Gender	Male	429	87.0	14.8	874	-6.08	.000	0.04
	Female	447	94.6	21.4				
Designation	PST	393	86.6	15.2	874	-6.21	.000	0.04
	EST	483	94.4	20.8				
District	Multan	432	96.3	18.1	874	8.64	.000	0.08
	Lodhran	444	85.7	18.1				
Area	Urban	439	93.2	20.6	874	3.56	.000	0.01
	Rural	437	88.6	16.5				

An independent-samples t-test was performed to compare teachers' perception scores based on their gender, designation, school district and area. Table 4 shows that the significant differences were found in mean scores for all the sample groups of teachers (p = .000, two-tailed). Relatively higher mean values of female teachers (i.e. 94.6), elementary level teachers (i.e., 94.4), teachers from Multan district (i.e., 96.3) and urban areas (i.e., 93.2) is indicative of their more positive perceptions as compared to their counter parts. In view of guidelines suggested by Cohen (1988), the values of eta squared (i.e., .01 to .08), however, indicate that the magnitude of the differences in mean values of all sample groups was small to medium.

A one-way ANOVA with age of the teachers as between groups variable (4 levels: 1, 2, 3, 4) and total perceived score as within groups variable (1 level: teachers' perception about leadership capacities of head teachers) was performed to note between groups and within groups variation. The results are presented in Figure 3 and Table 4.

Figure 3 Line Chart of the Means Showing Variation in Teachers' Age-based Views
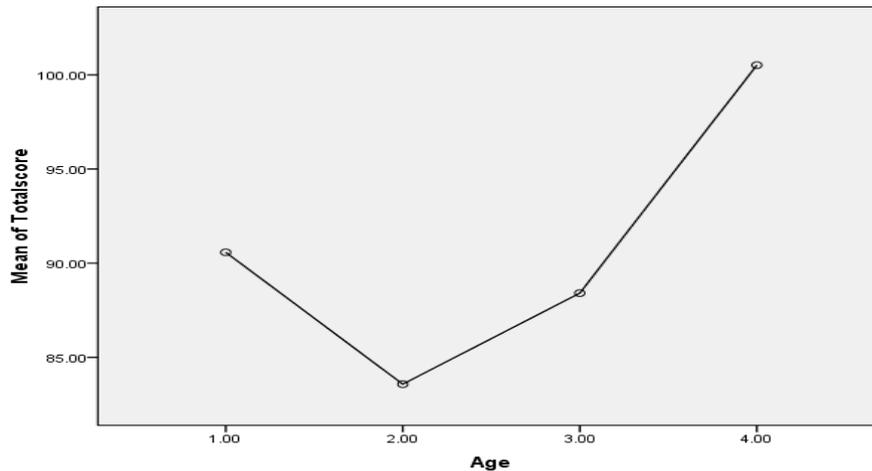
Variation in teachers' age-based perceptions of their head teachers' leadership capacities is statistically significant, $F (3, 872) = 41.66$, p=.000. The eta squared was used to calculate the effect size, and it was 0.13, which confirms that actual difference between the mean values of groups was medium (Cohen, 1988). To indicate the direction of differences among teachers' perceptions based on their age, Tucky's Post-hoc Test was performed, and results are shown in Table 5.

Table No. 5 Tucky's Post-hoc Test indicating direction of differences with regard to age

Age (I)	Mean (I)	Age (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
21-30 years	90.58	31- 40 (Years)	7.00*	.001
		41-50 (Years)	2.17	.664
		51-60 (Years)	-9.94*	.000
31- 40 years	83.57	21-30 (Years)	-7.00*	.001
		41-50 (Years)	-4.83*	.016
		51-60 (Years)	-16.94*	.000
41-50 years	88.40	21-30 (Years)	-2.17	.001
		31- 40 (Years)	4.83*	.664
		51-60 (Years)	-12.11*	.000
51-60 years	100.51	21-30 (Years)	9.94*	.000
		31- 40 (Years)	16.94*	.000
		41-50 (Years)	12.11*	.000

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The calculations of post hoc Tukey's HSD test in Table 4 demonstrate that elementary school teachers in age group 51-60 perceived their head teachers' leadership capacities significantly positive than teachers in other three age groups i.e., age group 21-30 (MD = 9.94), age group 31-40 (MD = 16.94) and age group 41-50 (MD = 12.1). The results in Table 4 also show that teachers in age group 21-30 perceived their head teachers' leadership capacities significantly positive than teachers in age group 31-40 (MD = 7.00).

Furthermore, a one-way ANOVA with teaching experience of teachers as between groups variable (4 levels: 1, 2, 3, 4) and total perceived score as within groups variable (1 level: teachers' perception about leadership capacities of head teachers) was performed to note between groups and within groups variation. The results are presented in Figure 4 and Table 5.

Figure 4: Line Chart of the Means Showing Variation in Teachers' Views Based on their Experience
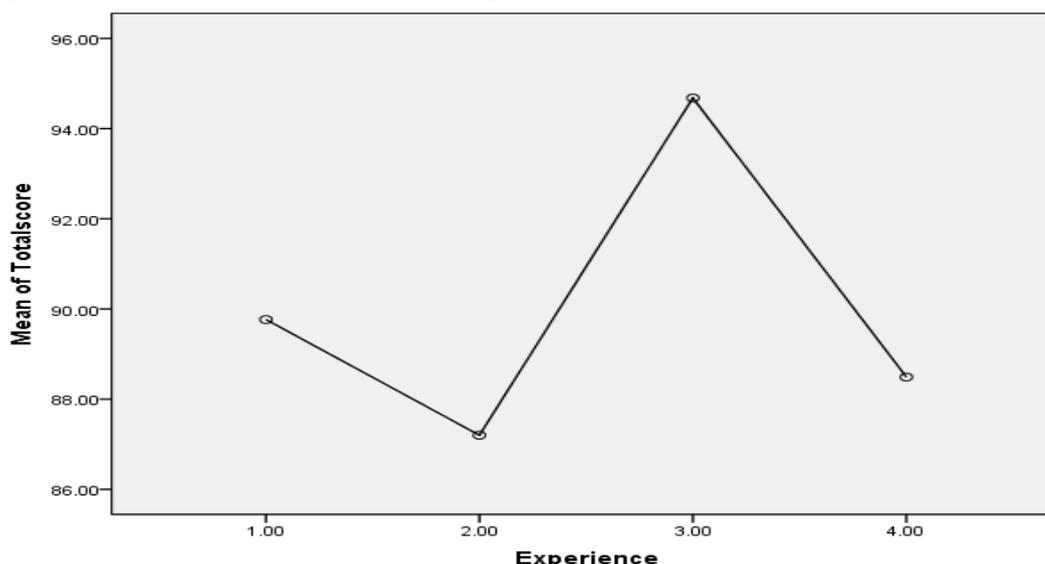
Variation in teachers' perceptions based on their teaching experience of head teachers' leadership capacities is statistically significant, $F_{(8, 872)} = 8.84$, p=.000. Effect size was calculated by using the eta squared, and it was 0.03, which confirms that the actual difference between the mean values of groups was small (Cohen, 1988). To indicate the direction of the differences among teachers' perceptions based on their age, Tucky's Post-hoc Test was used, and results are given in Table 6.

Table No. 6 Tucky's Post-hoc Test indicating direction of differences regarding experience

Experience (I)	Mean (I)	Experience (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
		6 -10 years	2.56	.650
0-5 years	89.76	11-15 years	-4.91	.072
		16 years & above	1.28	.937
		0-5 years	-2.56	.650
6 -10 years	87.20	11-15 years	-7.48*	.000
		16 years & above	-1.29	.898
		0-5 years	4.91	.072
11-15 years	94.68	6 -10 years	7.47*	.000
		16 years & above	6.19*	.001
		0-5 years	-1.28	.937
16 years & above	88.49	6 -10 years	1.29	.898
		11-15 years	-6.19*	.001

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The post hoc Tukey's HSD test as in Table 5 reveals that elementary school teachers between 11-15 years of teaching experience perceived their head teachers' leadership capacities are significantly positive than teachers with teaching experience between 6-10 years (MD = 7.47) and between 16 years and above (MD=6.19). The results in Table 5 further demonstrate that there is not a significant difference in teachers' views about their head teachers' leadership capacities in all the other groups based on their length of teaching experience.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this quantitative study was to examine how elementary school teachers in Pakistan perceive leadership capacities of their head teachers. Prior researchers had offered divergent findings, with some studies concluding teachers' positive perceptions of their head teachers' leadership capacities (Akpan, 2016; Cerit, 2009; Sharma, 2010) and others inverse (Chang et al., 2008; Fook, 2009; Naijar, 2006; Morefields, 2009). This study although found that elementary school teachers perceive their head teachers' internal and external leadership capacities as more positive than

negative, but at above average level. This can be, therefore, concluded that the findings of this research are more consistent with the findings of earlier researchers, who found more positive impact (Akpan, 2016; Cerit, 2009; Sharma, 2010).

This study confirms the findings of prior researches (i.e., Akpan, 2016; Cerit, 2009; Sharma, 2010; Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003), who found that the teachers perceive their head teachers' leadership capacities as positive, not the inverse. This may not be surprising from the context of study because majority of head teachers generally had a minimum of ten years of administrative experience at elementary school level with minimum of a B. Ed. and/or an M.Ed. degree. This combination of higher academic qualification, professional qualification, and experience of head teachers enables them to be competent and efficient enough to lead their schools. The level of leadership capacities is, however, just above average, which is of concern. The findings of this study, however, are in contradiction of several other researchers who have worked to explore school teachers' views about leadership capacities of their head teachers (Chang et al., 2008; Fook, 2009; Khan et al., 2009; Naijar, 2006; Morefields, 2009). They found that teachers perceive their head teachers and principals as ineffective and their leadership capacities as moderately negative and/or negative.

This study further found that teachers perceive that their head teachers have significantly bit more external leadership capacities than the internal leadership capacities, even though both capacities are little more than above average. The leadership capacity is generally defined as a combination of dispositions, knowledge, and skills as stated in American ELCC (2002) standards. The knowledge, dispositions, and skills belong to all the stakeholders along with organizational dimensions (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Mullen et al., 2002). The ELCC (2002) standards can thus be used as a basis for preparing school leadership programs along with the professional development of head teachers (Murphy & Shipman, 1998; Murphy et al., 2000). The ELCC standards classify school head teachers' leadership capacities into six key aspects of vision, culture and instruction, organization, collaborative partnership, moral perspective, and larger-context politics. These six standards of ELCC are further split into three internal and external leadership capacities, and demand balance in both aspects. This study, however, found that teachers perceive that their head teachers have significantly bit more external leadership capacities than the internal leadership capacities. It is, therefore, highly important for head teachers to keep balance in both internal and external leadership capacities while working in their schools.

In depth analysis of school head teachers' leadership capacities into six key aspects of vision, culture and instruction, organization, collaborative partnership, moral perspective, and larger-context politics revealed that head teachers' leadership capacities in two dimensions of internal and the one dimension of external leadership are of most concern. This study found that the school vision and school organization are the least focused internal leadership capacities by the elementary school head teachers. It is, therefore, highly important to train head teachers in these two areas of internal leadership. Likewise, this study found that larger-context politics is the least focused external leadership capacities by elementary school head teachers. It is, therefore, highly important to train head teachers in larger-context politics as an external leadership capacity.

This study further revealed the significant differences in teachers' views based on their varied demographic variables such as gender, school area and teaching experience. Teachers serving in urban area schools perceived their head teachers' leadership capacities significantly higher in comparison with the teachers serving in rural area schools. These findings are in alignment with numerous other researchers (Collard, 2001; Kuku and Taylor, 2002; Luo 2004; Naijar, 2006; Menon & Saitis, 2006). Collard (2001) found that gender differences in the leadership capacities were due to head teachers' school location and system. The difference in teachers' perceptions in more favor of the urban head teachers' leadership capacities than rural head teachers' leadership capacities has many implications for the middle- and the top-level school management in Pakistan. First, this reveals that the leadership capacity building of rural head teachers is less focused by the management than the urban elementary head teachers. Second, there is the possibility that environment in the urban school is more supportive for exercising leadership capacities than environment in rural area schools.

The findings of this study regarding gender differences, however, are incompatible with that of Naijar (2006) and Sharma et al., (2012). They concluded that the gender had no significant influence on teachers' perceptions. This study found that female teachers perceive that their head teachers possesses more leadership than the male teachers' leadership capacities. This gender

difference needs further exploration in the context of Pakistan. This reason behind this may be that female teachers are generally more focused in performing their jobs than male school teachers. It would be, however, useful for management to work on the leadership capacities of male head teachers in elementary schools of southern Punjab, Pakistan.

Another noteworthy finding was that experienced teachers in age group 51-60 perceived their head teachers' leadership capacities significantly higher than the other three age groups. This finding is in line with several other scholars (i.e., Kuku & Taylor, 2002; Naijar, 2006; Menon & Saitis, 2006). This finding implies that when teachers spend more years in teaching and working with their head teachers, they seem to consider head teachers implement policies in positive way. Another implication is that experienced teachers generally give more weightage to their head teachers' leadership capacities than their counterpart less experienced teachers.

CONCLUSION

This research study evidently suggest that elementary school teachers perceive that leadership capacities of their head teachers more as positive but just above average. Teachers also showed negative perceptions regarding some aspects of internal and external leadership capacities of head teachers i.e., in the areas of school vision and larger-context politics. This study found that teachers perceive that their head teachers have significantly more external leadership capacities than internal leadership capacities, despite the fact that both capacities are just above average. Furthermore, teachers rated their head teachers' internal and external leadership capacities as moderate to strong. Moreover, significant differences were found in teachers' views based on their gender, designation, district, school area, and age.

This study recommends for middle and top level management in school education to organize capacity building programs for elementary school head teachers to develop their leadership capabilities with particular focus on strengthening them in areas of school vision and larger-context politics. Additionally, it is not sufficient to strengthen leadership capacities in head teachers in isolation. In Pakistan elementary head teachers are expected to coordinate with the several stakeholders i.e., teachers, parents, politicians, and the whole community in exercise of the leadership capacities. It is, therefore, recommended that educational policies should also arrange training programs for the top-leadership at broader level and not only for head teacher alone, as it has usually been done in Pakistan.

LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD

This study was quantitative in nature. The qualitative exploration in some of the dimensions of leadership capacities may provide useful insight for head teachers and for managers. This study was restricted to only public-sector elementary schools of two school districts managed by Punjab School Education Department; privately managed schools with differing context and school settings were not included. The findings of this study, therefore, may be ideally generalized to the teachers, serving in elementary schools of southern Punjab. These findings, however, cannot be ideally generalized to head teachers, serving in private sector elementary schools of southern Punjab. Future studies may be conducted on head teachers, serving in the private sector elementary schools and comparison may also be made between the perceptions of public and private school teachers.

Furthermore, future similar studies would be useful to be conducted in a nationwide scope to explore wide-ranging perceptions of teachers about their head teachers' leadership capacities. Likewise, the future researchers may also conduct research at other school levels. Finally, it is suggested that triangulation of teachers' and head teachers' opinions about head teachers' leadership capacities may provide very useful results.

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