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Managing Energy as Experienced by Female Federal Senior Managers

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MSA, Central Michigan University, 1989

BA, University of Alabama, 1982

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

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Abstract

Senior managers experience a drain on personal energy while trying to meet the demands of work. The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore how female senior managers describe lived experiences of managing and renewing personal energy while at work. The theoretical framework included conservation of resources theory and effort recovery theory. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews with 14 female senior managers who experienced managing and renewing their personal energy at work. Data analysis involved coding to capture the essence of the experiences and to identify common themes. Findings indicated that insufficient energy affected participants' mental and emotional capacities. Managers normally recognized the lack when energy was depleted. Strategies for reenergizing included interacting with others, delegating work, isolating themselves, taking a brief walk, or moving to a different task. Findings may be used by managers and administration to highlight the need to manage and renew energy at work to meet work demands.

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Dedication

I first give honor to God for giving me the opportunity and strength to undertake this journey. His grace sustained me and kept me when times were hard. I dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends. My husband Dennis encouraged me in my struggles, cheered my milestones, and loved me through the process. I want to thank Kelsey and Louis for their patience and support. Between school, work, and ministry work, I often neglected them and their needs. I want to thank Dennis and Jasmyne for their encouragement and love. I pray my children know I completed this journey, in part, for them. I always want them to know you are never too old to pursue a dream no matter how hard it seems—never give up! My parents helped me to be the person I am today. I thank them for their sacrifices, support, and love. I thank my sisters for their prayers, encouragement, and faith in my ability to complete this journey. I thank my prayer warriors, especially Carole who provided constant prayer and encouragement. For all who prayed for me and with me, encouraged me, checked in for status, and cheered me on, I say thank you. I count you all as blessings. Philippians 4:13 states, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Again, I thank God for giving me the strength to press through.

Acknowledgments

Completing this dissertation at this stage in my life was indeed a challenging journey. It took a host of individuals to help make this journey a success. I thank Dr. Kelley Conrad, my committee chair, for his guidance and support as we navigated this process. I also acknowledge and thank Dr. Rachel Gallardo for her support in this doctoral process. Dr. Jonathan Cabiria provided an exhaustive review of my dissertation. I thank him for helping me improve my dissertation to ensure it was a quality document.

I want to give a special thank you and acknowledgement to my mentor Dr. Gloria J. Edwards. She encouraged me to pursue this journey and provided immeasurable support, encouragement, and friendship along the way. She promised to be there for me. She kept her word. I truly can't thank her enough. To my friend Charlene, I say thank you for listening to me, encouraging me, and being willing to review and edit documents. You were a gem. I also want to acknowledge family and friends for the kind words and prayers during this doctoral journey. To the phenomenal women who were willing to give of themselves and their time to participate in my study, I say thank you. I was inspired by your leadership and experiences.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Senior managers need to have energy to meet the demands of work (Berman, 2005; Cranley, Cunningham, & Panda, 2016; Fritz, Lam, & Spritzer, 2011; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003; Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014). The nature of work and the workplace are rapidly changing (Cranley et al., 2016; Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014). Increased demands in a high-paced work environment increase stress in senior managers and drain personal energy (Buffone et al., 2017; Perry, Nicholls, Duffield, & Gallagher, 2017; Saliba & Barden, 2017). Research has shown that women experience stress differently than men (Stafyla, Kaltsidou, & Spyridis, 2013). When encountering stress, women may face additional or different challenges in establishing a balance between the expenditure of and replenishment of energy resources (Cranley et al., 2016; Stafyla et al., 2013). To combat the negative effects of stress and prevent energy loss, senior managers must devise ways to manage and renew their energy resources during the workday to perform at optimal levels, stay engaged, and promote well-being. Managers must first be able to recognize when their energy level is low or insufficient to successfully complete work and handle the challenges of work (Kinnunen, Feldt, de Bloom, & Korpela, 2015).

Energy is the quantity of vigor and stamina needed to complete a task or engage in an activity (Berman, 2005). Having low energy may be adequate in the short term; however, sustained performance and engagement require solid energy reserves (Berman, 2005). Senior managers need to have effective methods for managing and renewing energy while at work (Berman, 2005; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Berman (2005) posited that individuals require mental, physical, and emotional capacities to perform and engage

in given tasks. Loehr and Schwartz (2003) identified four dimensions of energy: mental, emotional, spiritual, or physical. Senior managers should be aware of the factors affecting energy stores at work and balance the expenditure of energy with intermittent replenishment (Berman, 2005; Schwartz, 2007).

Organizations have focused on economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Although leaders understand that the success of an organization depends on human resources, leaders have not always paid attention to human sustainability (Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2017). Human sustainability is the growth, maintenance, and renewal of personnel resources. Organizational leaders are starting to recognize the importance of human sustainability for improving performance, fostering engagement, and promoting wellness (Buffone et al., 2017; Saliba & Barden, 2017). Supporting practices to develop energy resources of personnel fosters human sustainability (Romanelli, 2018).

Senior managers are expected to handle organizational requirements and workforce challenges. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM, date) identified employee health and wellness as a workforce priority. OPM (2019b) promulgated policies and programs to help personnel develop competencies for managing stress and energy. Increased energy may contribute to optimal performance and may increase productivity in organizations (Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014; Perry et al., 2017; Pink-Harper & Rauhaus, 2017).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and gain an understanding of the lived experiences of female senior managers trying to manage and replenish energy

while at work. As executive leaders understand the strategies senior managers use to manage energy, they may promote and provide resources to assist managers (Agosti, Bringsen, & Andersson, 2017; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This study added to the current body of literature on processes and strategies for managing energy.

Chapter 1 includes the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of this study, and the research questions. The theoretical framework included the conservation of resources and effort recovery theories. The chapter includes the nature and significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, and a summary.

Background of the Study

Energy management is critical to performance, engagement, and well-being. Senior managers lose energy because of work demands and other workplace stressors. These stressors may also affect an individual's ability to complete work. Plieger et al. (2017) suggested it is unclear how stress interacts with cognitive functioning and the ability to complete tasks. How an individual appraises work tasks and responds to events in the work environment affects cognitive task load. The combination of an individual's work content, cognitive load actions, and emotional state may affect the person's work performance (Plieger et al., 2017). Determining how to match cognitive functioning with the work demand may mitigate the loss of energy. When senior managers face mental or emotional demands of work, energy resources are taxed (Berman, 2005; Kersh, 2018; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015).

Workplaces are changing at record paces. The demographics of the workforce are more diverse. The number of women in the workforce continues to grow, and women are

seeking greater roles and leadership positions. Women occupied 52% of job positions in 2016 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). Women continue to make strides but still face barriers of unequal pay, discriminatory practices, marginalization, and role insufficiency (Kersh, 2018). These barriers, combined with role strain, role overload, and work-life balance, create stress and drain energy (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016; Manuel, Howansky, Chang, & Sanchez, 2017).

Studies suggested that women experience stress differently than male counterparts. Women may be vulnerable to the negative impacts of stress due to societal identities and stereotypes (Buffone et al., 2017). Consequently, female senior managers may approach energy management differently (Devonish, 2017; Kersh, 2018). Compared to male counterparts, women have a better understanding of the need to employ coping and recovery strategies to preserve energy (Kersh, 2018).

Organizations have promoted time management as a method for increasing productivity and performance in the workplace (Cranley et al., 2016; Schwartz, 2010). Organizations have also invested resources on training designed to teach the principles of time management. Although organizing tasks and goals may be helpful for prioritization, this strategy does not address the impact of work demands on the energy levels of senior managers (Cranley et al., 2016). Very little attention has been given to managing energy to mitigate the deleterious impact of stress and to improve performance at work (Berman, 2005).

Energy capacity diminishes with expenditure (Berman, 2005; Schwartz, 2007). The totality of energy consists of dimensions of mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual

energy. These sources are separate and significant; however, each source may interact and influence the others to provide the greatest benefit (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Building capacity requires balancing energy use with intermittent replenishment (Berman, 2005). Recovery of energy is critical for reducing the harmful impact of stress.

At the most basic level, humans are guided by rhythmic patterns of activity and rest throughout the day (Kinnunen et al., 2015). This oscillation builds capacity for optimal performance, full engagement, and well-being (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Senior managers seek positive outcomes and try to avoid negative outcomes. Throughout the day, senior managers may rely on mental, emotional, spiritual, or physical energy stores to perform. Mental energy equips managers to concentrate, show resiliency, and be flexible in the performance of duties and responsibilities (Berman, 2005). Mental energy fuels cognitive engagement, preparation, vision, creativity, and positivity (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Emotional energy provides the capacity to manage feelings and sentiments. Emotional energy powers self-regulation, interpersonal skills, and self-confidence (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Spiritual energy derives from belief in higher sources of power. Spiritual energy drives character and commitment (Bickerton, Miner, Dowson, & Griffin, 2014; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Physical energy is the primary source for vigor and alertness. Physical energy encompasses nutrition, fitness, quality of sleep, and intermittent recovery. Physical energy yields mental acuity, emotional equilibrium, and endurance to manage aspects of life (Kinnunen et al., 2015). Integrating any of these energy sources may help senior managers achieve a high degree of energy. It

is beneficial for senior managers to be mentally focused, emotionally connected, spiritually aligned, and physically revitalized to attain goals.

Problem Statement

The absence of energy affects work performance, engagement, and overall well-being (Berman, 2005; Fritz et al., 2011). Throughout the day, stress in the workplace depletes energy and impacts performance (Fritz et al., 2011). Studies showed stress reveals itself differently in women. Women face unique challenges in managing energy (Stafyla et al., 2013). Work-life balance presents challenges for maintaining a positive balance between the use and recovery of energy. Senior female managers should build regular recovery into routines to manage and replenish energy (Atler, Moravec, Sample, & Fruhaur, 2017; Bennett, Gabriel, Calderwood, Dahling, & Trougakos, 2016; Cranley et al., 2016; De Bloom et al., 2017; Hunter & Wu, 2016).

Researchers have documented the negative effect of stress on well-being (Buffone et al., 2017; Fritz et al., 2011; Perry et al., 2017; Saliba & Barden, 2017; Savaneviciene, & Stankeviciute, 2017). Researchers have also examined strategies for managing energy through recovery during the evening and weekends; however, a review of contemporary literature revealed research gaps related to strategies for female senior managers managing energy at work (Barnett et al., 2012; Hunter & Wu, 2016; Park & Lee, 2015; Ragsdale, Hoover, & Wood, 2016; Sonnentag, Arbeus, Mahn, & Fritz, 2014; Zijlstra, Cropley, & Rydstedt, 2014). To narrow the gap in current research, I explored how female senior managers manage and replenish energy to achieve and maintain optimal performance. This study of these lived experiences may enhance awareness of strategies

for continuous management of energy at work. The study addressed the challenges managers face while balancing energy needs with the demands of others and the organization. The results may provide practical applications to assist managers and employees at all levels.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and gain an understanding of the lived experiences of female senior managers trying to manage and replenish energy while at work. I employed a hermeneutic phenomenological design to explore the strategies senior managers used to manage energy drained by stress in the workplace. The target population for this study included female senior managers working in the federal agencies in the National Capital Region (NCR) of the United States. Mangers had held their current positions for a minimum of 1 year. The NCR encompasses the District of Columbia and jurisdictions in Virginia and Maryland (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2018). Purposeful selection is an appropriate methodological approach to select a sample population who can share relevant experiences in managing energy at work (Creswell, 2014). Other researchers used purposeful selection to examine the relevant experiences of specific groups or individuals regarding a particular phenomenon (Szymanski & Lewis, 2016). However, the literature on employees in the public sector trying to manage and replenish energy was scant (Pink-Harper & Rauhaus, 2017; Rogers, Li, & Ellis, 1994). Pink-Harper and Rauhaus (2017) noted that organizations should expand policies and practices to address employee resiliency challenges as the numbers of women increase in the workforce.

Studies showed that continued exposure to stress and the failure to manage energy may be harmful to the performance, health, and well-being of female managers (Pink-Harper & Rauhaus, 2017; Xanthopoulou San-Vergel, & Demerouti, 2014). There is abundant research on strategies for managing and replenishing energy during nonwork hours; however, there is minimal research on managing and replenishing energy while at work (Dababneh, Swanson, & Shell, 2001; Sonnentag, Venz, & Casper, 2017; Taylor, 2005; Xanthopoulou et al., 2014). Participants in the current study were asked to describe their experiences of maintaining and renewing energy and to share the challenges they faced in doing so while at work. This provided a greater understanding of ways to improve energy levels.

Organizational leaders want managers to perform at high levels (Judge, Weiss, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Hulin, 2017; Mroz & Kaleta, 2016; Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2017). It would benefit leaders to understand how effective energy management can assist senior managers. Results from the current study provided practical application for leaders, senior managers, and line employees. This exploratory study narrowed the gap and contributed to the current literature on energy management for senior managers in the public sector.

Nature of the Study

I used a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of female senior managers trying to manage and replenish energy while at work. Qualitative methodology offers various approaches for gaining an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the study participants (Yin, 2011). A phenomenological design is used to

obtain rich descriptions of the participants' feelings, perceptions of experiences, and sense making of a particular phenomenon (Patton, 2015). This design is used to explore common or shared experiences of participants (Creswell, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The phenomenological design is appropriate for conducting hermeneutic and descriptive analyses of the lived experiences of a selected population (Patton, 2015).

Numerous qualitative designs were considered for the current study, including case study, narrative, and ethnographic (see Simon & Goes, 2013). The phenomenological design emerged as the most appropriate design to answer the study's research questions. Creswell (2014) noted that in a phenomenological study, participants share unique perceptions and understanding of the topic or phenomenon. Giorgi (2009) stated a descriptive analysis is used to describe an experience, not to interpret it. The current study was beneficial because it gave participants the opportunity to describe experiences of trying to manage, sustain, and replenish energy while at work.

Many studies have focused on time management in the workplace; however, few have focused on energy management (Berman, 2005). The central phenomenon in the current study was energy management. The study focused on describing how female senior managers within the public sector manage and replenish energy during the workday to achieve optimal performance. The participants included a purposive sample of female senior managers who had held their current positions for at least 1 year. I used semistructured interviews to gather data on the lived experiences of female senior managers trying to manage and replenish energy during the workday. Data were collected using an interview protocol (see Appendix A). Sloan and Bowe (2014) stated that the use

of open-ended questions in an interview setting allows the researcher to observe participants while capturing descriptive and in-depth responses. This method also gives participants the opportunity to share perceptions of the world and gives voice to their experiences.

Research Questions

Senior managers perform at higher levels when they have sufficient energy (Berman, 2005; Schwartz, 2007). To manage and replenish energy, managers need mental, emotional, spiritual, or physical energy. The research questions (RQs) focused on exploring and understanding the lived experiences of senior managers seeking to manage and replenish energy:

RQ1: What is it like to experience trying to manage energy while at work?

RQ2: What is it like to experience trying to replenish energy while at work?

RQ3: What are the perceived challenges to successfully managing energy at work?

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks provide structure in a research study by helping to explain or understand a phenomenon. A theoretical framework may also extend existing information and knowledge on the topic. I employed two theories: the conservation of resources (COR) and the effort recovery (ER). Hobfoll's COR theory (as cited in Barnett et al., 2012) provides a resource-oriented framework for examining stress, burnout, and exhaustion. The ER theory suggests individuals expend effort and energy to meet work

demands (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). The extent of the effort used will partially determine the amount of effort available for future expenditures (Cranley et al., 2016).

Conservation of Resources Theory

The conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) provided a resource-oriented approach for examining how individuals manage personal resources. This approach posits that resources help an individual recover and return to the physical, mental, or psychological state before the onset of stress or stress-inducing events. These resources include objects, personal characteristics, conditions, and energies (Hobfoll, 2001). These valuable resources are conduits for preserving and reclaiming other valued resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Hobfoll (1989) suggested that individuals strive to minimize stress in their lives. Individuals protect, store, and replenish resources to mitigate the loss or perceived loss of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Individuals perform better and stay more engaged when there is balance between resources and demands (Barnett et al., 2012; Binnewies, Sonnentag, & Mojza, 2009).

Like Hobfoll, other theorists have suggested individuals have a limited supply of resources (Trougakos, Hideg, Cheng, & Beal, 2014). It is important to replenish resources that have been depleted. The ego depletion theory posits that individuals possess a limited pool of resources for use in regulating behavior and actions (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Each time a person exhibits behaviors requiring self-regulation such as suppressing emotions or focusing attention, resources are depleted (Trougakos et al., 2014). The job demands-resources theory considers the relationship between job demands and job resources (Huang, Wang, & You, 2016). The physical and emotional

demands of work are risk factors for stress and job burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Resources of control, job autonomy, and social support alleviate stress and mitigate loss of energy (Demerouti, Bakker, Nahreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). The job demands-resources theory posits resources help individuals manage the stress of job demands and facilitate performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Energy is a vital prerequisite for accomplishing work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Effering, Pereira, & Gross, 2016).

Effort Recovery Theory

The primary focus of many occupational health theories is the relationship between burnout, job demands, and available job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). There has been considerably less focus on the daily physiological and psychological processes, which may contribute to poor well-being and burnout (Kim, Park, & Niu, 2017). Meijman and Mulder (1998) recognized the deficiency in thought and highlighted the notion that individuals must invest effort and energy to complete work-related goals. Meijman and Mulder suggested as individuals exert effort, there may be physiological, psychological, or behavioral responses. These negative responses, or *load reactions,* may accumulate and manifest into more severe reactions such as chronic tension and stress, insomnia, prolonged fatigue, burnout, and other physical illnesses (Cranley et al., 2016). Effective recovery is required to repair the adverse effects and strain caused by work demands (Meijman & Mulder, 1998).

The ER theory purports there are physiological and physical costs associated with achieving goals and completing work (Kim et al., 2017; Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014). Stress results in the release of cortisol. The release is a coping mechanism for dealing

with the stressor. Continued exposure to stressors and activation of the potentially harmful stress process without intermittent recovery may have harmful impacts on the body and wellness (Kim et al., 2017).

Sustained efforts of work drain energy resources needed to complete tasks and manage work demands (Ragsdale & Beehr, 2016). The exertion of effort and the loss of energy resources necessitates the need for some form of recovery period or event (Dettmers, Vahle-Hinz, Bamberg, Freidrich, & Keller, 2016; Fritz et al., 2011). The process of recovery allows an individual to return to the prestressor baseline (Ragsdale et al., 2016; Zijlstra et al., 2014). Through the process of recovery, managers can manage and renew personal energy. This study addressed the lived experiences of senior managers trying to manage and replenish energy while at work. I also explored the challenges managers face in doing so.

Definition of Terms

Burnout: The inability to compete tasks or actions due to the collapse or diminishment of physical, mental, or emotional abilities (Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014).

Emotional energy: The capacity to manage emotions in the conduct of performance (Berman, 2005).

Energy: The vigor and stamina required to complete a task or activity (Berman, 2005; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003).

Energy management: A deliberate and conscious effort to balance the expenditure and restoration of energy (Berman, 2005; Schwartz, 2007).

Federal senior manager: An employee in a Federal Government General Schedule (GS)-15 or GS-14 pay grade. The GS pay scale consists of 15 grades ranging from GS-1 to GS-15. Approximately 1% of the federal workforce are in the grade of GS-15, and 13% are in the grade of GS-14. The senior manager is responsible for planning, organizing, managing, and evaluating assignments for personnel. The senior manager is responsible for the overall execution and management of programs (OPM, 2018).

Mental energy: The capacity for managers to concentrate, show resiliency, and be flexible in the performance of responsibilities and duties (Berman, 2005).

Physical energy: The primary source of vigor and alertness and the fundamental source for mental acuity, emotional equilibrium, strength, and endurance. Nutrition, fitness, quality of sleep, and intermittent recovery determine the degree of physical energy (Kinnunen et al., 2015; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003).

Recovery: A dynamic process designed to replenish and manage energy to allow an individual to accomplish personal requirements and demands (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015; Zijlstra et al., 2014). Recovery is achieved through strategies such as relaxation, control, mastery of experiences, or psychological detachment (Bennett et al., 2016; Ragsdale & Beehr, 2016; Sonnentag et al., 2017; Xanthopoulou et al., 2014).

Spiritual energy: A personal set of values motivating and guiding performance, actions, and behaviors. Spiritual energy drives commitment (Bickerton et al., 2014).

Stress: An unfavorable situation characterized by tension, emotional strain, and mental strain (Johnson, Holdsworth, Hoel, & Zapf, 2013; Kersh, 2018).

Stressors: Actions or events causing stress or the perception of the onset of a stressful situation. Stressors may be mental, physical, or emotional demands (Bono et al., 2013).

Assumptions

This study included several assumptions. An assumption is an assertion believed to be true by the researcher (Patton, 2015; Simon & Goes, 2013). The first assumption was participants would understand energy is depleted consciously or subconsciously during the course of the day. The amount of energy determines the level of performance. I also assumed participants had a general understanding of the concept of energy. Another assumption was the participants would understand the relationship between energy resources and performance. I also assumed that the senior managers would accurately describe how the lack of energy negatively affected their performance and engagement in the workplace.

Limitations

Participants were asked to self-report. This was a limitation in that participants were asked to rely on memory and personal recall to describe personal experiences of managing and replenishing energy. Senior managers recalled challenges in the workplace but did not connect the lack of energy as the reason for the challenges. For example, having a high of level emotional energy may result in a better outcome when resolving issues of employees' performance or attitude. Another limitation was the study addressed only the experiences of senior managers in the NCR region. Regions outside the NCR may have different work environments, resources, support, or understanding about

energy management. A small sample size was another limitation. The findings from this study were not generalizable to a larger population.

Delimitations

The researcher determines the scope of the study, makes specific choices, and sets boundaries about how to conduct a study (Simon & Goes, 2013). One parameter of the current study was the requirement for participants to be female senior managers working in the public sector in the NCR. The NCR was purposefully selected because there were numerous federal agencies in this area. Each participant had at least 1 year of tenure in the current position. The purpose of the study was to understand how this population managed and renewed energy during the course of the workday. The participants were asked to describe perceptions of any challenges hindering their ability to manage energy. The COR theory and ER theory provided the framework for the study.

Significance of the Study

Personal energy is fundamental for work and optimal performance (Berman, 2005; Judge et al., 2017). This study on energy management may be significant for senior managers, organizational practices and policies, advancement of the knowledge and literature of the discipline, and social change. Energy includes mental, emotional, spiritual, or physical capacities and is required to accomplish a task or specific activity (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Energy helps individuals regulate emotions and behaviors allowing participation in activities and compliance with group and organizational expectations and norms. Energy is not a limitless resource. Individuals must find methods to manage and restore energy on a regular basis (Fritz et al, 2011; Sonnentag et al., 2017).

Senior managers are expected to perform jobs at high levels. Numerous factors contribute to the drain of energy for managers. Directing multiple projects or programs, prioritizing resources, meeting organizational, motivating employees, and interacting with others daily deplete energy sources (Lussier & Achua, 2016; Pinder, 2008). Additionally, senior managers are accountable for subordinates (Ertas, 2015). This drain on energy may affect work performance, engagement, or the overall quality of life for managers. (Berman, 2005; Judge et al., 2017).

Senior managers face many challenges. The OPM (2018) established new workforce priorities to meet the requirements of the 2018 Workforce Priorities Report, which directed the federal government to establish a plan to address contemporary and emerging workforce challenges. Senior managers are tasked with implementing long-term plans to address changing priorities, shifting demographics, and workforce reform. Senior managers are expected to maintain performance and produce the same quality output with fewer personnel and resources. The drain or perceived drain of energy may impair the performance and well-being of senior managers (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003).

Senior executive service leaders provide long-term strategic leadership and effective governance of federal agencies and programs (OPM, 2019a). Executive leaders rely on senior managers to execute the mission, goals, and vision for federal agencies. It is important for executive leaders to recognize how increased work demands and fewer resources, for an extended period of time, drain energy and harm the well-being of senior managers and the workforce (Pink-Harper & Rauhaus, 2017; Kontoghiorghes, 2016; Mroz & Kaleta, 2016; Soyoung & Sunghan, 2018). Gaining insight into the strategies

female senior managers employ to manage and replenish energy may inform decisions for leaders on cultivating sustainability of personnel.

A review of the literature revealed a lack of study on managing energy at work (Berman, 2005; Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2012; Kinnunen et al., 2015; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003; Schwartz, 2010; Sonnentag & Kuehnel, 2016). Senior managers need vigor and enthusiasm to perform optimally at work (Fritz et al, 2011; Sonnentag, 2001). Managers should develop recovery strategies for managing and replenishing energy. Recovery is a process designed to help an individual retain or gain sufficient energy to meet personal demands (Barnett et al., 2012; Hunter & Wu, 2016; Sonnentag et al., 2014; Zilstra et al., 2014). Recovery includes strategies of psychological detachment, relaxation, control, or mastery of experiences (Bennett et al., 2016; Ragsdale & Beehr, 2016; Sonnentag et al., 2017; Xanthopoulou et al., 2014). Although returning to work in a recovered state increases the likelihood of having energy to perform, work demands will eventually deplete these energy reserves throughout the workday (Bennett et al., 2016; de Bloom et al., 2017). Senior managers may experience fatigue, difficulty in concentrating, and negative emotions as energy is depleted (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003).

The current study has implications for positive social change. Increasing awareness on the importance of energy may assist organizations with efforts for human sustainability. Creating a culture promoting and valuing energy management could result in higher productivity, greater job satisfaction, and increased engagement (Judge et al., 2017; Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2017).

Summary and Transition

The capacity to perform at high levels requires sufficient energy. Increasing work demands often exacerbate the stress of senior managers. Often managers are stretched beyond their capacity to achieve at an optimal level. They become mentally, emotionally, spiritually, or physically exhausted, impairing their performance, judgment, and engagement (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Current literature did not address the role of energy in performance at work. The current phenomenological study contributed to the literature by addressing the lived experiences of female senior managers in replenishing energy at work.

This study was guided by three questions: What is it like to experience trying to manage energy while at work, what is it like trying to replenish energy while at work, and what are the perceived challenges to successfully managing energy? These questions aided in the examination of the phenomenon of energy management in female senior managers in the public sector. Senior managers are expected to perform at high levels and guide the performance and production of others in accomplishing organizational goals (OPM, 2018). The theoretical frameworks of COR theory and ER theory provided the lens for examining how senior managers manage and replenish energy.

The first chapter addressed why it is important for senior managers to effectively manage and replenish energy. Chapter 2 provides an extensive overview of the relevant literature and the theoretical frameworks guiding the study. Chapter 3 includes the methodological approach for exploring the experiences of managing and replenishing

energy. Chapters 4 and 5 include findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter includes an examination of the relevant literature on the phenomenon of energy management. The study was an exploration of the lived experiences of female senior managers in the public sector trying to manage and replenish energy at work. The study highlighted the challenges managers perceive as barriers to managing energy. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and gain insight into how managing energy facilitates optimal performance and positive well-being.

With qualitative research, a researcher collects data on a phenomenon by talking to or observing individuals in their natural settings (Creswell, 2014; Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). For the current study, I interviewed participants and documented verbal and nonverbal responses (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Yin, 2011). Saldana (2016) suggested that organizing data by themes or categories helps the researcher discern different meanings and experiences. A qualitative research approach yielded practical applications for senior managers to help increase energy. The results helped inform practices and policies for enhancing organizational citizenship behaviors such as increased job performance, satisfaction, and engagement (see Judge et al., 2017).

The existence of overwhelming work demands has serious implications for managing levels of energy. Managers are expected to produce positive organizational outcomes (Berman, 2005). A motivated and competent manager may survive on insufficient or low levels of energy for a short period of time; however, in the long run, the manager will need to manage energy for optimal performance during the workday (Fritz et al., 2011; Hildenbrand, Sacremento, & Binnewies, 2018). The constant mental,

emotional, and physical demands placed on the manager deplete energy stores and resources. Managers should recognize the drain and implement practices or measures for preservation of energy. Managing and renewing personal energy daily will improve performance and effectiveness both on and off the job (Binnewies et al., 2009; Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014).

The current study was guided by a focus on energy management. The aspects of energy management under exploration included (a) what it is like to experience trying to manage and replenish energy while at work and (b) the perceived challenges to successfully managing energy. Major sections in Chapter 2 include the literature search strategy, theoretical frameworks, energy management, women and stress, strategies for recovery, gaps in the literature, and a summary.

Literature Search Strategy

The primary focus of this study included an examination of how senior managers sustained and renewed energy at work. I examined the perceived challenges of successfully managing personal energy. The population for the study included female senior managers employed with federal agencies in the NCR. The study included a review of the relevant literature describing how this group of public sector employees managed and renewed energy. Managers within the public sector experience unique challenges of governance, bureaucracy, and changing priorities (OPM, 2018).

A literature review is a conventional step in conducting empirical research. The review of existing literature helps inform new studies (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Yin (2011) identified two phases for engaging in a literature review. A *selective* review of the

literature includes an examination of research and studies appearing to resemble the particular phenomenon under study. This step identifies potential gaps in the focus area. A *comprehensive* literature review allows a researcher to complete a more exhaustive review of what is known about the topic (Yin, 2011).

The current literature review represented the examination of over 270 scholarly peer-reviewed articles, academic journals, published dissertations, and books. The review included a review of government websites and publications. The primary sources for the literature searches were the Library of Congress and the Walden University library databases. Literature was reviewed and accessed through relevant databases including Thoreau, ProQuest Dissertations, PsycINFO, ABI Inform, PsycArticles, and Academic Search Complete. The literature review continued throughout each phase of the research process in this study of energy management.

Initial searches using the key word *personal energy* yielded very few applicable results. Searches with the word *energy* yielded a wide spectrum of results, but most were not relevant to a study of personal energy. A review of related components of the key word *energy* yielded more results. This review included the key words *physical energy*, *vigor*, and *burnout*. Although there was limited literature on personal energy management, the related key words of *stress*, *well-being*, and *recovery* provided numerous results. A review of theories on managing resources resulted in relevant literature on conservation of resources, effort recovery, job demands, and stress theory.

The initial search included combinations of key words. Examples of searches conducted included Boolean search phrases of *personal energy* AND *women*, *stress* AND

well-being AND *workplace*, and *personal energy* AND *recovery* AND *females*. Table 1 provides a list of the key words used within the various search domains.

Table 1

Literature Search Key Words

Energy	Psychological detachment	Women
Personal energy	Mastery	Gender
Energy renewal	Control	DoD employees
Mental energy	Relaxation	Government employees
Psychological energy	Meditation	
Physical energy		
Spiritual energy		
Emotional energy		
Stress		
Performance		
Well-being		
Conservation of resources		
Effort recovery		
Job demands		
Resources		
Vigor		
Vitality		
Workplace		

The literature review addressed questions regarding the definition of personal energy management and types of personal energy. The initial review of the literature considered a range of topics related to energy, stress, and recovery without regard to a specific time frame. This initial broad search was important to capture seminal and historical research on the phenomenon. In subsequent searches, the time frame was narrowed to capture current and relevant literature published within the last 5 years from the start of this study. Much of the literature highlighted the impact of stress and burnout on the occupational health of employees (Bono et al., 2013; Pignata, Winefield, & Provis,

2017; Rani & Yadapadithava, 2018). During the review of this literature, the process of recovery emerged as a useful practice for mitigating harmful effects of stress and burnout (Hobfoll, 2001; Park & Lee, 2015). There was an abundance of literature focused on the use of recovery outside of the workday (Bennett et al., 2016; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Ragsdale & Beehr, 2016; Sonnentag & Kuehnel, 2016). There was considerably less current research on the use of recovery while at work (Formanoy et al., 2016; Hunter & Wu, 2016; Kim et al., 2017; Kinnunen et al., 2015). Literature from searches using the key words *personal energy management* or *personal energy* was scarce, resulting in the need to consider literature outside the ideal 5-year timeframe.

Theoretical Framework

Effort is exerted to achieve work goals. This effort precipitates physical, mental, and physiological costs for a manager's energy (Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014). Researchers have not examined how managers can combat these costs and develop, retain, and manage their energy resources at work. To facilitate the exploration of the phenomenon of personal energy management, the current study was informed by resource theories. These theoretical frameworks provided a lens to examine what it was like for senior managers to manage and renew energy. Resource theories suggest that as environmental circumstances deplete or threaten resources, individuals strive to acquire, store, and renew resources. Resources may be objects, energies, or personal characteristics. These resources have value and help create additional value (Hobfoll, 1989).

Because energies are used to achieve work-related goals, it is necessary to replenish energies to support future work requirements (Hobfoll, 1989; Kim et al., 2017; Meijman & Mulder, 1998). The resource theories suggest energy resources are depleted as demands are placed on an individual throughout the day. To understand how senior managers managed and renewed their energy at work, I used the COR and ER theories.

Conservation of Resources Theory

COR theory is a widely used framework for studies on stress and resources. Hobfoll (1989) developed the COR theory to address the issues of stress. Stress creates an imbalance between the demands placed on an individual and the resources available to handle the demands. The actual threat or perceived threat of an imbalance precipitates stress (Bono et al., 2013; Pignata et al., 2017). Although the COR theory is recognizable in research on stress in the workplace, this theory was one of several theories considered for use in the current study of recovery and its application in personal energy management. The premise of the COR theory is individuals work to retain, develop, and protect their valued resources in a stressful environment (Hobfoll, 1989).

Hobfoll (1989) suggested that stress is linked to physical and mental health. Hobfoll claimed stress is a response to an event or the environment, and also asserted that stress is a stimulus. The relationship between an individual and the environment becomes strained, and the individual views the strain or stress as a danger to their well-being (Hobfoll, 1989). When confronted with stressful situations, an individual seeks to minimize the depletion of valuable resources. Conversely, in a stress-free environment, the person cultivates surplus resources to offset future loss of resources (Hobfoll, 1989).

According to Hobfoll (1989), the COR bridges the divide between cognitive and environmental viewpoints on stress. Hobfoll suggested Bandura's social learning theory was germane to this discussion because this theory highlights the need for an individual to engage with their environment to produce positive outcomes (Bandura, 2001; Hobfoll, 1989; Pinder, 2008). The social learning theory posits that individuals play an active role in shaping their work environment. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to influence and control aspects of the environment to achieve a goal or obtain an object. Within the context of work, self-efficacy expands the perception of favorable opportunities and decreases the perception of threats to resources or the environment. Self-efficacy is an antecedent for managing and balancing work demands and resources and equips a person to avoid or mitigate the loss of resources (Consiglio, Borgogni, Alessandri, & Schaufeli, 2013; Hobfoll, 1989).

Hobfoll (1989) identified four types of resources whose gain or loss could cause stress and affect well-being: (a) conditions such as job seniority, (b) valuable objects such as a home, (c) energies cultivating additional resources, or (d) personal characteristics aiding stress resistance. These valuable resources are conduits for preserving current resources or for acquiring new ones (Hobfoll, 1989; Trougakos et al., 2014). The resource of energies was the primary focus of the current study. Hobfoll posited that energies include knowledge, time, or money. Intrinsically, one type of energy facilitates the acquisition of other types of resources (Hobfoll, 1989; Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2017). Berman (2005) described energy as the degree of vigor or stamina required to complete a task or engage in work. Energy provides the capacity to meet the

physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual demands of work (Berman, 2005; Loeher & Schwartz, 2003). Maintaining a balance between demands and personal energy resources facilitates better performance (Barnett et al., 2012; Hobfoll, 1989).

Hobfoll (2001) stated that the loss or threat of loss of resources exacerbates stress. Loss spirals develop when an individual lacks the necessary resources to offset these losses. The loss of one resource may lead to further losses of other resources as an individual strives to cope with diminishing resources. The efforts may produce short-term benefits or negative long-term consequences (Hobfoll, 2001). Individuals assess potential losses, examine the consequences of expending additional resources, and consider offsetting losses in determining when to employ appropriate coping strategies (Hobfoll, 1989). Inadequate energy resources and the lack of effective coping strategies affect performance, engagement, and well-being (Berman, 2005).

Effort Recovery Theory

Individuals expend some level of effort to accomplish tasks or meet the demands of work. When energy resources are used, individuals need to replenish resources to prepare for future energy requirements (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Meijman and Mulder (1998) recognized the need to examine a recovery process from a physiological and a psychological perspective.

The ER theory states expenditure of work results in unavoidable load reactions. Load reactions are physiological, behavioral, and emotional responses to the demands of work (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). These responses fluctuate during the workday based on the existence of stressors (van Hoof, Flaxman, Soderberg, Stride, & Guerts, 2018). The

responses are temporary. When the demands disappear, the load reactions are released allowing the person to return to the prestressor baseline level (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Individuals need to recover psychological, emotional, and physical energy (Siu, Cooper, & Phillips, 2014). Recovery requirements will vary between individuals (Berman, 2005; Cranley et al., 2016). Failure to achieve recovery may harm work performance (Debus, Sonnentag, Deutsch, & Nussbeck, 2014; Dettmers et al., 2016). If stress-inducing work demands persist without recovery opportunities, load reactions may manifest. The outcomes may be chronic stress, exhaustion, insomnia, burnout, and other illnesses (Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014; Sianoja, Kinnunen, Makikangas, Tolvanen, 2016).

The ER model encompasses key assumptions (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). To meet the responsibilities and requirements of everyday life, individuals must exert effort. Meijman and Mulder (1998) described the tasks as *allostatic load*. A person's efforts result in psychological and physiological bodily changes. A series of interrelated neurochemical processes occur in the brain producing cortisol and adrenalin (Dettmers et al., 2016; Meijman & Mulder, 1998). These changes are temporary and reversible. Exposure to positive conditions and participation in recovery restores depleted resources and reverse the negative consequences of the allostatic load (Meijman & Mulder, 1998; van Hoof et al., 2018). Finally, if recovery is inhibited or is subpar, well-being and work performance may be harmed (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Insufficient opportunities for recovery may result in spillover and cumulative load reactions (Smit, 2016).

Meijman and Mulder (1998) posited the effects of demanding work affect wellbeing. The anxiety caused by the inability to complete work creates stress and drains

mental energy (Berman, 2005). Mental energy helps regulate emotional energy influencing behavior (Boekhorst, Singh, & Burke, 2017; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003).

Personal Energy Management

Personal energy helps an individual translate potential into action (Berman, 2005). In this current study, I examined the concepts of personal energy, women and stress, and recovery. I considered potential strategies for managing and renewing energy at work.

Concept of Personal Energy

Personal energy is managed consciously and unconsciously and is the primary source for human work (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). The concept of personal energy is examined within the context of biological or psychological human functioning (Cole et al., 2012; Zacher, Brailsford, & Parker, 2014). Recently, researchers have explored personal energy in the context of work and performance (Berman, 2005; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003; Pfeiffer, 2010). Oerleamans and Bakker (2014) characterized energy as physical vigor, an affective energetic state in which individuals feel physically strong and alert enough to be creative and resilient. Interest has mounted in human sustainability in the workplace (Kinnunen et al., 2015; Pfeiffer, 2010; Pluta & Rudawska, 2016; Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2017).

There were inconsistencies in the literature regarding a definition for personal energy. Berman (2005) and Sianoja et al. (2016) described *energy* as the amount of vigor or stamina required to engage in work. Berman (2005) also described energy as emotional, intellectual and physical energy. Others described energy as an affective mood or experience that moves a person to act or engage (Anaza, Nowlin, & Wu, 2016; Fritz et

al., 2011). Jonge and Peeters (2019) suggested vitality influences actions and promotes thriving at work. Other researchers described the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of energy (Cole et al., 2012; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Sufficient emotional and physical energy cultivate mental clarity and focus (Berman, 2005). Spiritual energy reflects values, provides purpose, and gives direction (Berman, 2005; Cole et al. 2012). Physical energy is derived from breathing patterns, nutrition, adequate sleep, fitness, and rest or recovery (Berman, 2005). The physical dimension yields the vigor and alertness to influence emotional energy which controls behavior (Clinton, Sturges, & Conway, 2017). Similarly, Fritz et al. (2011) viewed energy through the lens of vitality and fatigue and identified physical, relational, mental, and spiritual tactics for facilitating vitality and reducing fatigue. Physical energy is finite and needs to be replenished (Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). See Figure 1. for descriptions of energy.

Figure 1. Descriptions of personal energy.

Although there was a lack of consistency in defining personal energy, there was agreement regarding the consequences of failing to manage energy (Berman, 2005; Loehr

& Schwartz, 2003). Having insufficient energy stores have physical and emotional consequences for the individual (Ziljstra et al, 2014). Energy resources help individuals manage stressful situations (Boehhorst et al., 2014; Sonnentag, Mojza, & Binneweiss, 2010; Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). Outcomes for the workplace include absenteeism, disengagement, and lackluster performance (Anaza et al., 2016; Els, Mostert, & De Beer, 2015; Sonnentag et al., 2010). Kim and Hyun (2017) and McGrath, Cooper-Thomas, Garrosa, San-Vergel and Cheung (2014) found improving the quality of sleep and facilitating positive interactions at work increased employee engagement and decreased turnover intentions.

Managing energy is an individualized phenomenon. Individuals will manage and renew energy differently and may not recognize the lack of sufficient energy to complete a task (Cole et al., 2012; Pluta & Rudawska, 2016; Schwartz, 2007). It is easier to cultivate new energy when current energy is high (Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). This phenomenological study may fill a gap in the literature on managing energy in the workplace.

Women and Stress

Stress is an actual or perceived threat to a person's psychological or physiological state (Dettmers et al., 2016). Stress impairs an individual's ability to manage and protect personal resources. Trougakos and Hideg (2009) suggested individuals perceive the impact of stress on their personal resources differently. Research studies show women perceive and experience stress differently than their male counterparts (Buffone et al., 2017; Rogers et al., 1994; Stafyla et al., 2013). There may also be cultural differences in

managing stress (Verma, Balhara, & Gupta, 2011). Eastern collectivistic cultures view stress as the lack of inner peace (Mansour & Tremblay, 2016). Individualistic cultures in the West associate stress with a lack of control (Shavitt, Cho, Johnson, Jiang, Holbrook, & Stavrak, 2016; Verma et al., 2011).

Women are sometimes subjected to stereotypes and societal expectations regarding their roles (Buffone et al., 2017). This is especially true in the workplace (Kausar, 2017). These societal labels and expectations place undue psychological stress on women causing an additional drain on personal resources (Kersh, 2018; Stafyla et al., 2013). These environmental demands are labeled as *stress appraisal (*Woods-Giscombe & Lobel, 2008).

I found that some studies suggest stress is compounded for minority women, especially African American women. African American women may have lower paying jobs, fewer benefits, and less opportunity for advancement compared to their White counterparts (Mays, 1995; Woods-Giscombe & Lobel, 2008). The intersectionality of sex and race, combined with cultural and occupational stereotypes, contribute to challenges to their authority and identity (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017).

Women may experience physiological consequences because of stressful job demands (Buffone et al., 2017). Physical manifestations for women include depression, hypertension, obesity, anxiety, and loss of energy (Rogers et al., 1994; Stafyla et al., 2013; Woods-Giscombe & Lobel, 2008). Men also experience hypertension but are also more susceptible to drug abuse and displays of aggressive behavior (Verma et al., 2011).

These gender differences may affect coping skills and recovery efforts (Rubino, Volpone, & Avery, 2013). Coping with stress requires behavioral and cognitive endeavors. An individual must appraise the stressor, develop and implement strategies to cope with the stress, and then evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the chosen strategies (Kausar, 2017).

Recovery

Recovery is a process that occurs when stressors are removed and a person feels psychologically and physically capable of continuing work (Dettmers et al., 2016; Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008). Recovery restores performance capability (Zoupanou, Cropley, & Rydstedt, 2013). Sonnentag and Niessen (2008) linked the trait of *vigor* to the recovery process. Vigor is characterized by subjective feelings of mental, emotional, and physical energy (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003. Studies suggested daily recovery efforts increased levels of physical and mental vigor during the workday (Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014; Trougakos et al., 2014; Zacher et al., 2014). The phenomenon of recovery has many facets. Recovery may be viewed as a setting, a process, or an outcome (Sonnentag & Geurts, 2009).

Recovery is perceived as a temporal event. Examples include work breaks, vacations, or free evenings after work. Studies have examined the effectiveness of recovery in various situational settings (Zacher et al., 2014). Lunch and micro-break recovery settings were useful for decreasing fatigue and preventing further accumulation of stress or strain. These breaks provided short-term positive effects for helping individuals manage energy and regain valuable resources for the remainder of the

workday (Sianoja et al., 2016; Zacher et al., 2014). Breaks may be beneficial in energy recovery, but autonomy moderates the benefits (Trougakos et al., 2014). Although vacations may aid in recovery, the positive effects fade in a short period of time (Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). Vacation fade out occurs about two weeks after returning to work (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005). In another study, the results revealed detachment from work was not solely sufficient for achieving recovery. To achieve serenity and positive affect, it is important to engage in recovery strategies such as relaxation and mastery experiences (Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2008).

Engaging in recovery helps individuals restore personal resources (Bennett et al., 2016; Sonnentag et al., 2017). Researchers have examined the recovery activities of reading, sleeping or engaging in social activities that replenish energy resources (De Bloom et al., 2017; Rhee & Kim, 2016; Sonnentag, 2001; Trougakos et al. 2008).

Recovery as an outcome may be positive or negative (Sonnentag & Geurts, 2009). A positive outcome results in having the vigor and vitality to meet current and future demands. Recovery may be deficient if mechanisms or processes are not in place to manage and renew energy **(**Els et al., 2015). Measurable recovery outcomes include behavioral, psychological, and physiological outcomes (Sonnentag & Geurts, 2009). Work performance and employee engagement are examples of behavioral outcomes. Sonnentag and Niessen (2008) found vigor stimulated proactive and creative work behaviors. The evidence of vigor was deemed essential to performance and work engagement in organizations (Brouer, Gallagher, & Badawy, 2016). Smit (2016) found vigor fluctuated during the day based on available of resources. Burnout is an example of

a psychological outcome. Vandevala et al. (2017) found the use of mindfulness meditation and relaxation helped reduce burnout for intensive care unit health professionals. Sonnentag, Kuttler and Fritz (2010) examined the impact of high workloads and job stressors on psychological detachment. To prevent emotional exhaustion, a person needs to psychologically detach from work after leaving the work setting (Sharp-Donahoo, Siegrist, & Garrett-Wright, 2018; Sonnentag et al., 2010).

A physiological outcome may be the excretion of cortisol. The stress hormone cortisol is excreted to help an individual handle stress or stressors **(**Buffone et al., 2017; Dettmers et al., 2016). When the excretion levels remain high for extended periods of time, recovery is needed (Dettmers et al., 2016). Sonnentag and Fritz (2015) used the stressor-detachment model to examine detachment. Continued exposure to stressors impedes detachment, increases the likelihood of chronic stress, and affects overall well-being (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015).

To manage demands of work, senior managers need to manage their energy (Berman, 2005). Energy use is cyclic and is diminished incrementally (Sianoja et al., 2016). Recovery is a mechanism that allows a person to manage, build, and replenish energy resources (Sianoja et al., 2016; Sonnentag & Geurts, 2009). The COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the ER theory (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) are among the most influential frameworks for examining recovery.

The COR theory postulates individuals need to gain, store, and replenish personal resources of personal characteristics, objects, conditions, and personal energy (Hobfoll, 1989). The COR theory was developed as an alternative to other stress models (Hobfoll,

1989). Hobfoll (1989) asserted people vigorously seek to create environments that are pleasurable and replete with resources. In the context of work, individuals work to minimize the loss of their resources (Hobfoll, 2001).

In a study of health emergency services employee, researchers examined the effect of weekend recovery experiences for restoring lost resources (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005). Employees engaged in respite experiences to replenish resources and mitigate exhaustion and burnout (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005). Sonnentag & Niessen (2008) found extended periods of recovery increased levels of vigor. Investing time and resources in positive experiences may help rebuild lost energy resources and increase recovery (see Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Continued exposure to stress hinders the ability to achieve recovery (Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008).

The ER framework posits recovery is achieved using a passive approach (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). The effort expended in work results in unavoidable load reactions including behavioral, physiological, and subjective responses (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Over extended periods of time, these load reactions may accumulate and cause chronic reactions (Sonnentag, 2001). It is important for a person to have confidence in the ability to complete work tasks. This sense of control generates resources of self-efficacy aiding in recovery (Consiglio at al., 2013). Researchers labeled this belief in ability as *recovery-related self-efficacy* (RSE). Individuals expect to achieve recovery (Park & Lee, 2015).

An important tenet of the ER model is effects of stress and strain are reversible. When the stressors are suspended, recovery can commence (Sonnentag & Guerts, 2009).

If recovery is achieved, the individual has the capacity to continue work efforts. Incomplete recovery hinders future work efforts (Zoupanou et al., 2013). The results of a study found it was more difficult for workaholics to suspend work-related activities and recover (Van Wijhe, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Ouweneel, 2013). Smit (2016) found psychological detachment from work-related activities alone, was insufficient for recovery the following day. Engagement in physical activities and other non-work related activities enhanced recovery and increased engagement at work the next day (Van Wijhe et al., 2013).

Considerations for Energy Management

Individuals often do not consider the need to manage energy until their supply of energy is depleted. Feelings of irritability, lack of patience, emotional exhaustion, and a feeling of fatigue impair performance (Berman, 2005). Individuals may find it challenging to unwind and recover during leisure time (Els et al., 2015). Consequently, the person returns to work feeling fatigued (Gauche, De Beer, & Brink, 2017). In today's dynamic and demanding workplace, managers require energy to lead and manage a diverse workforce (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Recovery may be difficult because of *extended availability*. Managers find it difficult to disengage psychologically because of supervisory functions, high workloads, and the inherent responsibility that accompanies the management role (Dettmers et al., 2016). Female managers have competing roles and multiple responsibilities. The demands of professional and personal responsibilities, combined with societal expectations and stereotypes, may cause undue stress (Schueller-Weidkamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012).

The interface between work life and family life impacts the mental and emotional health of female managers. Stress from work may spill over into family life and deplete energy resources (Liang, 2015; Pereira, Gross, & Elfering, 2016). Recovery experiences may moderate this relationship between job stressors and family life (Liang, 2015). Molino, Cortese, Bakker, and Ghislieri (2015) examined work-family conflict and found recovery experiences provided opportunities for individual to replenish lost resources. Laba and Geldenhuys (2018) suggested work and family domains are essential realms of working adults. Negative work experiences may carry over into the family and other non-work domains (Laba & Geldenhuys, 2018).

Using the COR as a framework, Liang (2015) found inter-role conflict creates psychological strain and emotional exhaustion. Liang (2015) found women in management positions experience additional challenges when balancing the domains of work and family. These challenges create a greater need to cultivate energy capacity through recovery efforts (Agosti et al., 2017; Schueller-Weidekamm, & Kautzky-Willer, 2012).

Strategies for Renewing Personal Energy

The demands of work lead to psychological and physical strain and exhaustion. It is important to undo the stress or strain caused by work demands (Boekhorst et al., 2017). Recovery experiences provide a process for replenishing energy. Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) suggested psychological detachment, relaxation, control, and mastery experiences contribute to recovery (Bennett et al., 2016; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). When an individual mentally disengages from job-related thoughts, the individual may stop the

drain of resources (Boekhorst et al., 2017; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). After a period of mental disengagement, an employee may return to work the next day feeling more refreshed and invigorated (Sonnentag & Kuhnel, 2016). The failure to detach for an extended timeframe may adversely impact overall well-being (Sianoja et al., 2018; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2010). Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) suggested refraining from thinking about work aids in recovery. In another study, Sonnentag (2018) noted a paradox in achieving recovery. Employees experience significant work stress during the day, and they disengage less because higher work demands require them to work harder to meet these demands (Sonnentag, 2018). The inability to engage in physical activity or relaxation exercises exacerbates the energy deficit causing fatigue and exhaustion (Sonnentag, 2018; Van Hoof et al., 2018; Watanabe et al., 2016).

Low-effort activities such as reading, watching television, or socializing with friends provide beneficial relaxation (Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014). Meditation, relaxation exercises, or exposure to green space during park walks may also facilitate recovery (De Bloom et al., 2017; Hulsherger et al., 2015; Randler, Luffer, & Muller, 2015). These experiences reduce tension and regenerate new physical, emotional, and psychological resources (Hoolahan, Hoffman, Greenhouse, & Lehman, 2012; Xanthopoulou et al., 2018). Having control over work and free time throughout the day fulfills basic human needs and contributes to well-being (Tuisk, Virtanen, de Bloom, & Kinnunen, 2016). When demands of work are high and job control is low, employees experience greater stress (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2016). When the employee has greater job control, the need for recovery decreases (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2016). The experience of work-related flow

during the workday positively affected the level of energy resources at the end of the day (Demerouti et al., 2012). Learning new skills and undertaking new challenges through mastery experiences may be instrumental in restoring energy resources (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Clark et al. (2014) suggested trying new exercise classes or participating in other types of physical activities reduce stress and restore energy. Goswami and Burnell (2016) examined the mastery experiences of yoga and reflexology as strategies for creating renewing energy.

Considerable research has been conducted examining strategies for recovery during non-work time in the evenings and during the weekend (Clinton et al., 2017; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Sonnentag et al., 2014). This type of recovery is referred to as *external recovery* (Ragsdale et al., 2016). A review of current literature revealed fewer studies on recovery during the workday (Dababneh et al., 2001; Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). Recovery at work is referred to as *internal recovery* (Clark et al., 2014; Dababneh et al., 2001; De Bloom et al., 2017; Derks, Van Mierlo, & Schmitz, 2014; Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). Employees spend up to half their day at work (Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). Psychological and emotional resources will be used predicting the need for recovery before the end of the workday (Berman, 2005; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003; Trougakos & Hideg, 2009).

The need for recovery is cyclic (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). The degree of engagement in activities determines the level of energy available. Although individuals may experience great stress at work, a single day of stress may not drain all energy (Bakker, San-Vergel, Rodriguez-Munoz, & Orlemans, 2015). Individuals have a reservoir

of personal energy resources (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). The level of vigor and energy will fluctuate within a day and over the course of several days (Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008). It is important to maintain a sustainable level of energy to facilitate optimal performance (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). The goal is to increase capacity of energy for the long run. Implementing behavioral changes helps preserve and bolster energy levels (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Berman (2005) suggested different strategies are required to address the mental, emotional, spiritual or physical aspects of personal energy. Senior managers should explore and consider a range of strategies to determine the most effective ones for their particular energy needs (Berman, 2005; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). In this current study, I sought to gain an understanding of the strategies senior managers employed to manage and restore their energy. Based upon this literature review, the following seven strategies may be useful in managing energy.

Employ flow. Creating flow in the workplace is beneficial. It allows an individual to develop skills and increase resources. Flow is a short-term positive experience characterized by intrinsic motivation, absorption in a task, and enjoyment in one's job (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006). Demerouti et al. (2012) suggested flow is a holistic sensation individuals experience when they have feelings of pleasure and self-control regarding their job. Cultivating flow increases job control and decreases the need for recovery (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006). A positive state of flow increases resiliency in stressful situations and builds mental, physical, psychological, and social resources (Demerouti et al., 2012).

Garner organizational support for job crafting and job design. When an employee has the autonomy to craft and design their job and work characteristics, they are motivated to excel in performance (Karatepe & Eslamlou, 2017). Demerouti, Bakker, and Gevers (2015) identified dimensions for successful job crafting. Altering a job's physical task boundaries allows a person to redesign tasks to align with personal skill sets (Jalonen, Kinnunen, Pulkkinen, & Kokko, 2015). Altering the job's cognitive task boundaries influences the individual's perception of the job (Bruning & Campion, 2018). Altering the relational boundaries provides permission to determine whom the person must interact with in the course of completing work (Demerouti et al., 2015). Having the autonomy creates a spiral of resources to meet job demands (Gordon et al., 2018; Karatepe & Eslamlou, 2017).

Practice meditation and mindfulness. Reduce stress levels by incorporating meditation and mindfulness practices into the workday (Hulsheger, Lang, Depenbrock, Fehrmann, Ziljstra, & Alberts, 2014). Meditation may help an individual to clear their mind of clutter and develop resiliency (Webb & Rosenbaum, 2019). Meditation may help an individual reach a state of calmness in the midst of a stressful environment (Heckenberg, Eddy, Kent, & Wright, 2018; Webb & Rosenbaum, 2019). In another study, researchers examined the effects of mindfulness on the relationship between hope and stress. Hope is a prominent psychological state helping a person build resiliency, gain confidence in abilities, and achieve recovery during times of stress and high job demands (Munoz et al., 2018). With mindfulness, a person intentionally focuses on the current moment without judgment (Keating & Heslin, 2015; Sharp-Donahoo et al, 2018). This

practice promotes psychological detachment facilitating recovery (Hulsheger et al., 2014).

Work the body. Engaging in physical activity lowers stress and decreases the need for recovery (Formanoy et al., 2016). Continued exposure to stress in the workplace, without intermittent recovery, may lead to long-term health concerns and may result in suboptimal work performance. Exercising in the evening does contribute to vigor for the start of the next workday (see Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Sonnentag et al., 2008; Watanabe et al., 2016). Individuals who routinely incorporate exercise into their daily rituals have higher cardiorespiratory fitness allowing them to cope with workplace stress (Ginoux, Isoard-Gautheur, & Sarazin, 2019; Taylor et al., 2013). Having vigor and energy increases the likelihood of establishing and maintaining an exercise routine (Watanabe et al., 2016). Yoga, walking, and studio cycling may boost energy levels (Cocchiara et al., 2019; Formanoy et al., 2016; Goswami & Burnell, 2016).

Seek green space. Seeking green space during the workday may be beneficial. Outdoor green spaces provide a place for relieving stress. Taking a walk, smelling the flora in gardens, or relaxing in a park may improve an individual's mood (De Bloom et al., 2017). Access to green space encourages physical exercise, increases opportunities for social interaction, and improves mental well-being (De Bloom et al., 2017). Both outdoor and indoor exposure to green space may contribute to psychological restoration (Lee, Williams, Sargent, Williams, & Johnson, 2015). The exposure influences emotions by creating a space for calm and reflection (Lee et al., 2015). The green space produces a buffer between work-family stress and overall health (Kaplan, 1995; Lee et al., 2015).

Plants within the office space and nature views from the office may increase creativity (Colley, Brown, & Montarzino, 2017; Korpela, De Bloom, & Kinnunen, 2015).

Cultivate spirituality and embrace positivity. Cultivating spirituality aids the discovery of what is meaningful in one's life (Afsar & Badir, 2017). Focusing on the most important things and placing less focus on less valuable things may help alleviate stress (Afsar & Badir, 2017). The concept of *spirituality* has numerous meanings. Spirituality may be prayer, a set of moral principles, or the belief in a sovereign higher power (Sharp-Donahoo et al, 2018). It serves as the basis for determining the significance of one's life (Long & Driscoll, 2015). For others, spirituality may be a connection with nature or other sources (Guillen, Ferrero, & Hoffman, 2015). Spiritual resources may enhance personal resiliency and increase belief in the ability to influence the environment (Altaf & Awan, 2011; Bickerton et al., 2015). Geue (2018) suggested there is a link between overall health and positivity. Positive thinking may improve psychological well-being and help lower stress hormones (Becker et al., 2016; Dettmers et al., 2016). Engaging in positive self-talk, embracing an affirmation, and socializing with positive-minded people are effective strategies for enhancing positivity (Keating & Heslin, 2015). A positive mindset is a critical resource in managing stress and unleashing positive organizational behaviors such as engagement and performance (Keating & Heslin, 2015).

Take a break. When demands in the office are high, taking a short break may help reduce stress and restore energy resources (Zacher et al., 2014). Meditating, socializing with friends, or engaging in creative activities may boost energy levels (Rhee & Kim, 2016; Trougakos & Hideg, 2009; Zacher et al., 2014). A break that is ill-timed or

not controlled by the individual, may further drain energy resources (Trougakos et al., 2014). Recovery is possible when stress demands cease, and the length of the break is long enough to provide recovery.

Gaps in the Literature

Researchers have spent considerable time examining how individuals manage tasks, time, and resources to achieve optimal performance (Anaza et al., 2016; Berman, 2005; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Much of the contemporary literature fails to examine personal energy as a resource. The scant research on energy management addresses replenishing energy outside of the workplace (Berman, 2005; Kinnunen et al., 2015). The demands of work suggest there is a need to understand how individuals manage and restore energy at work (Cole et al., 2012; Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008). Research on energy management may fill this gap and provide useful insight on how to recognize the predictors of energy loss and the subsequent consequences for not managing and recovering the lost energy. In this current study, I addressed this gap by examining the experiences of female senior managers trying to manage and replenish energy.

Summary and Conclusions

The resource of energy is necessary to perform work at an optimal level (Berman, 2005). Work demands deplete energy of employees during the workday (Berman, 2005; Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008). In this study, I examined how federal senior managers managed their energy. Energy is not a limitless resource. Individuals must recognize the factors contributing to energy loss. They should develop strategies to mitigate the losses and prepare for future requirements. Managing energy increases vitality and helps

regulate behaviors and emotions in the workplace (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Having sufficient energy helps an individual increase the capacity to perform (Berman, 2005).

Managers face additional challenges in the workplace. Public sector managers face changing priorities, reduced resources, and fewer personnel to accomplish the same amount of work requirements (OPM, 2019b). This current study has practical implications for organizations. As organizational leaders promulgate strategies to promote and achieve economic, environmental, and social sustainability, they are beginning to understand the importance of creating strategies for human sustainability (Stan, 2018). Developing a workforce focused on protecting and preserving the vital energy resource may help improve productivity, proficiency, and the occupational health and well-being of employees at all levels (Berman, 2005; Pluta & Rudawska, 2016; Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2017).

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how senior managers in the public sector manage their energy while at work. Energy is the amount of vigor or vitality a person has to accomplish work (Berman, 2005). In the current study, energy was mental, emotional, spiritual, or physical domains. Having insufficient stores of any of these domains may negatively impair or affect another. For example, low physical energy may affect behaviors regulating emotional intelligence or mental capacity (Boekhorst et al., 2017; Ju, Qin, Xu, & DiRenzo, 2016; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). This chapter includes information on the qualitative research design and the rationale for the selection of this approach for the study. Using a phenomenological design, I explored the experiences of senior managers regulating their energy at work. Participants were asked to share their perspectives and lived experiences of the phenomenon of personal energy management. Additionally, participants were asked to describe their challenges in managing and restoring their energy while meeting the demands of work. Interviews were conducted to collect data describing the phenomenon.

This chapter includes a description of the role of the researcher. It also provides a discussion of the methodology including the participant selection process, data collection and analysis process, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness. I used a hermeneutic phenomenological design to explore participants' lived experiences of managing energy.

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this study was to examine how senior managers in the public sector managed their mental, emotional, spiritual, or physical energy while at work. I

examined what it was like for senior managers to experience trying to manage and restore energy while at work. A review of contemporary literature revealed a sparse amount of research on the topic of managing and restoring personal energy during the course of the workday. As work is completed, personal energy is depleted necessitating the need to restore and replenish energy for the next task or demand (Derks et al., 2014; Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). I used a hermeneutic phenomenological design to examine the phenomenon of personal energy management. The study was guided by three questions:

RQ1: What is it like to experience trying to manage energy while at work?

RQ2: What is it like to experience trying to replenish energy while at work?

RQ3: What are the perceived challenges to successfully managing energy at work?

Research Design

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of female senior managers trying to manage and renew energy while at work. A hermeneutic phenomenological design was appropriate to explore the meaning of lived experiences and personal perspectives of senior managers seeking to manage energy. As an inductive research paradigm, the qualitative approach allows a researcher to examine a phenomenon by illuminating experiences and capturing personal stories of those who have lived the phenomenon under study (Crowther, Ironside, Spense, & Smythe, 2017). A hermeneutic approach is used to understand how individuals view the meaning of the lived experience of the phenomenon in their lives. The researcher may converse with and observe participants in natural settings instead of

in a laboratory setting (Yin, 2011). The events and experiences emerging from the study represent the values and meanings for a pool of participants with diverse experiences. Use of a phenomenological approach is intended to uncover the contextual conditions under which the participants experienced the phenomenon (Yin, 2011). A phenomenological design focuses on the meaning of the phenomenon for the participants, not the meaning to the individual conducting the research (Maxwell, 2013).

Rationale for the Design

In qualitative studies, a researcher might use various designs including phenomenological, case study, narrative, ethnographic, or grounded theory (Creswell, 2014). The phenomenological approach is used to capture the essence of experiences of a selected phenomenon (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). A hermeneutic phenomenological approach helps the researcher capture the uniqueness of participants' experiences (Yin, 2011). In the current study, interviews were used to explore and gain insight into the lived experiences of women managing energy in the public sector. Literature on experiences of managing energy in the workplace was scant. A phenomenological study was conducted to capture the experiences and perspectives of senior managers (see Sloan & Bowe, 2014).

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative studies, the researcher is a key instrument. Unlike quantitative research, which relies on questionnaires or inventories for data, qualitative research relies on the researcher to serve as a human instrument (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The researcher collects, analyzes, and interprets data to gain an understanding of views, experiences, and

perspectives of study participants (Yin, 2011). With a hermeneutic approach, a researcher delves deeper by considering the complexities of the phenomenon and varying perspectives and experiences of individuals. My role as this instrument was to inform readers of my biases, experiences, assumptions, or expectations regarding the phenomenon. Sharing this information demonstrated my qualifications and abilities to conduct the study as an objective viewer.

My role as the researcher was to access the feelings, perspectives, and thoughts of the participants regarding managing their energy. I did this by conducting semistructured interviews. Participants selected the interview setting. This ensured their comfort and confidence in the process (Bahn & Weatherill, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I asked questions to understand the experiences of participants in trying to manage and restore their energy. Asking probing questions encouraged and facilitated deeper conversation about their experiences and views on the topic.

I used an interview protocol during the interview process. Creswell (2014) described the interview protocol as a useful guide for conducting interviews. Interview questions can be arranged to help participants feel comfortable with the process and open up more as the session progresses (see Appendix A). The interview questions were informed by the study's research questions. Well-conceived research questions give shape and provide direction for phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). I used a journal to record participants' responses. I observed and annotated their behavior, voice tones, and body language during the interview. During recruitment, I provided information on the topic of energy management. I provided interview questions

in advance of the interview. I sought permission from the participants to use an audio recorder during the interview.

Researchers should avoid selecting participants from their orbit of influence or association (Patton, 2015). I did not recruit participants from my office and did not recruit participants with whom I have a personal or professional relationship. Prior to conducting interviews, I shared my background with the participants. I am currently not a supervisor. I have 20 years of experience supervising in previous organizations while serving in the military. Although I shared a common background of supervising, I respected the fact that participants' experiences and interpretations of energy management were unique. Moustakas (1994) suggested that researchers should set aside any preconceived notions or predispositions regarding the phenomenon under examination. I adhered to this epoche process by bracketing my personal experiences and considering fresh perspectives (see Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Senior managers are responsible for the day-to-day operations and execution of agency policies. As the environment changes, requirements and priorities shift. In phenomenological research, a researcher gathers information on the lived experiences of participants regarding a specific phenomenon (Yin, 2011). I used this approach to understand the essence of senior managers' experiences of trying to manage energy at work. Researcher's conducting phenomenological studies consider a range of sampling techniques (Creswell, 2014). I used purposeful sampling to recruit participants. Yin

(2011) emphasized that this strategy meets the intent of qualitative research in gaining insight into specific rather than generalized experiences.

In qualitative research, it is essential to have a unit of study or analysis to examine a phenomenon (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2011). This study included the recruitment of female senior managers working in the public sector in the NCR. The population included senior managers who had held their current supervisory positions for a minimum of 1 year.

Sampling Strategy

Female senior managers were selected through purposeful sampling based on these criteria: (a) held current position in the NCR for a minimum of 1 year, (b) had a supervisory position, (c) worked in a GS-14 or GS-15 position, and (d) had a general understanding of the concept of energy as described in the recruitment letter (see Appendix B). Creswell (2014) suggested the sample size in qualitative research should be based on the study's intent of obtaining the broadest range of perspectives. The goal was to have a sample of seven to 15 female senior managers; however, the sample size would be adjusted based on reaching a suitable level of saturation. Patton (2015) suggested using a small sample size allows a researcher to gather extensive detail on a phenomenon via access to contextual data of the experiences of the participants. Yin (2011) suggested researchers should be able to exercise discretion in determining an appropriate sample size for a given study. Researchers gather sufficient data to inform the study. A researcher achieves data saturation when they deem all new information on the topic is exhausted and the addition of more information may not enhance the findings (Creswell, 2014). Giorgi (2009) emphasized examining the viewpoint of consciousness of each

participant in the study to help understand what meaning the participant ascribed to the phenomenon and how the meaning was given.

Instrumentation, Pilot Study, and Data Collection

In phenomenological research, the researcher is the instrument responsible for collecting the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The researcher determines the best interview approach to obtain the data supporting and informing the study (Yin, 2011). For the current study, a semistructured interview was used to collect data about the meaning of phenomenon for each participant. It is important to examine the story behind the experiences (Patton, 2015).

A pilot study can be helpful in designing research studies and instruments. Researchers may use pilot studies to test and refine the instruments for a study. A pilot study may take a variety of forms. For example, the pilot study may include testing research instruments such as the study's interview questionnaire. The pilot study may include assessing a research design to determine the appropriateness of the approach for a study (Yin, 2011). Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested a pilot study helps establish content validity by ensuring the interview questions support the study's overarching research questions and topic of study. Testing the interview questions provides an opportunity for a researcher to refine the questions or add new questions that will elicit richer data for the study.

A pilot study is a small-scale version of an intended study. The participants of a pilot study are required to meet the same study criteria as outlined for the final study. Participants for the pilot study met the following criteria: (a) female supervisors in the

grade of GS-14 or GS15, (b) employed for a minimum of 1 year in a current position in a federal agency within the NCR, and (c) had a general understanding of the concept of energy as described in the recruitment letter (see Appendix B). Purposeful sampling of participants aids the researcher in eliciting answers to interview questions addressing the research problem and answering the research questions.

For the pilot study, I interviewed two participants meeting the criteria of the study. I recruited potential participants using a recruitment letter (see Appendix B). Interested volunteers received the informed consent form via email and were asked to sign the form acknowledging the purpose and plan for the study. I conducted face-to-face interviews to help refine the research instruments. I used the modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method to facilitate data analysis (see Moustakas, 1994).

To ensure quality in the study, the researcher should organize all aspects of the data collection process (see Patton, 2015). The structure helps a researcher keep the study focused. Creswell (2014) categorized essential data into the areas of (a) interviews, (b) observations, (c) documents, and (d) audiovisual materials. In this study, I used a combination of these tools to collect data. This structured format included the development of an interview protocol (see Appendix A). The interview protocol contained the interview details and protocol actions, a brief set of demographic questions, and a series of open-ended questions.

A review of current literature on energy management formed the basis for research instrument. Using the study's three overarching research questions, I developed a set of open-ended interview questions to guide the discussion of the meaning of the

phenomenon of energy management (see Appendix A). Open-ended questions are beneficial for examining an unfamiliar or understudied phenomenon or topic (Rubin, H. & Rubin, I, 2012). The preferred method for the interview was face-to-face interviews.

During interviews, a researcher has the flexibility to probe and follow topic-related trajectories occurring during the interview (Patton, 2015). This flexibility in the process gives participants the freedom and latitude to share the meaning of their experiences. The anticipated length of the interviews in this current study was 45 to 60 minutes. A researcher may need to follow up with participants to get clarification on data provided (Rubin, H. & Rubin, I., 2012). In this current study, participants had the opportunity to provide clarification or additional information. This process of member checking adds credibility and internal validity in the process (Simon & Goes, 2013).

I used journaling and audio recordings in the data collection process. During interviews, researchers can observe participants. The researcher may gain valuable information from observing nonverbal communication and documenting in the journal (Patton, 2015). I used an audio recorder to record interviews and employed the use of an IRB-approved transcriptionist to transcribe the interview content. To protect the privacy of the participants and the data, the transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement.

I received permission from the IRB prior to recruiting participants and commencing the data collection process. I sought participants through professional and social networking. As potential participants expressed interest, I forwarded an invitation letter via email (see Appendix B). Upon accepting the invitation to participate, the participant signed a consent form confirming the intent to participate. A researcher has a

responsibility to protect the privacy of participants during the data collection process (Patton, 2015). I also signed a confidentiality form attesting to the commitment to protect participants' privacy and the data. Protecting the privacy of the participants and the data helps mitigate harm or potential risks to participants. During the collection process, I used codes such as Participant 01 to identify each manager. The goal was to have between 7 and 15 participants. If I had failed to receive a desired number of participants from the initial invitation, I planned to conduct another round of invitations.

Data Analysis Plan

Qualitative research uses non-numerical data to describe the experiences of participants regarding a specific phenomenon (Patton, 2015). In this, I generated a voluminous amount of data describing feelings, experiences, characteristics, and perspectives on the phenomenon. Use of an interview protocol facilitates the collection of data from interviews, notes, and recordings (Yin, 2011). In this study, I analyzed data by coding and identifying categories and themes in the data (see Saldaña, 2016). During the initial open coding, I reviewed data and created broad labels for the various experiences or meanings that emerged in the data. It is appropriate for the researcher to make note of any discrepant data that appears outside of other similar emerging patterns in the research (see Yin, 2011).

Computer-assisted data analysis software is available for use in qualitative data analysis. This data analysis software aids in organizing data and data analysis. I used NVivo to assist with comparing and contrasting participants' responses and to assist with noting themes or patterns. Using the software helped me extract a deeper-level analysis of

the data. Axial coding allows a researcher to examine data by identifying relationships between the open codes (Saldaña, 2016). I used a modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen (SCK) method described by Moustakas (1994) for use in phenomenological data analysis. The SCK technique incorporates several steps:

1. Researcher articulates personal experiences with the study's phenomenon.
2. Create a list of significant statements from participant's experiences.
3. Develop thematic categories of the significant statements.
4. Compose a textual description of *what* participants experienced with the phenomenon.
5. Compose a structural description of *how* participants experienced the phenomenon.
6. Compose a composite narrative describing the integration of the textual and structural descriptions of the phenomenon.

Qualitative research design conveys a linkage between a study's research questions and the study's interview questions (Yin, 2011). This study conveyed the following linkages between data collection method and interview questions.

RQ1: What is it like to experience trying to manage energy while at work?

- Tell me about your typical day.
- How do you define energy in relation to performing the job?
- Describe your level of vigor when you arrive at work.
- How do you recognize and gauge your energy levels?

- What is it like to experience a state of high energy? How is that expressed in your work?
- What is it like to experience a state of low energy? How is that expressed in your work?
- When your energy is high, what is it like to manage it to ensure you have personal energy to continue to perform and meet future work demands?
- What is it like to handle aspects of your position as a senior manager when experiencing high energy?
- What is it like to match energy output with your stores of energy?
- What does it mean to you to experience feelings of vigor and vitality while at work?

RQ2: What is it like to experience trying to replenish energy while at work?

- When your energy is low, what is it like to restore it to ensure you have personal energy to meet future work demands?
- What is it like to handle aspects of your position as a senior manager when experiencing low energy?
- How often during the workday do you take actions to renew your energy, and what types of activities, strategies, or experiences do you engage in to renew energy?
- If you have a strategy which helps to restore energy, what is that strategy? Why does this strategy work?

RQ3: What are the perceived challenges to successfully managing energy while at work?

- What is your perception of the challenges or obstacles you may face in trying to manage or replenish your energy while at work?

Issues of Trustworthiness

It is important for a researcher to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research that relies on numerical data, qualitative research addresses trustworthiness through other validity measures and reliability (Yin, 2011). The criteria used to establish trustworthiness includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Shenton, 2004).

Credibility

Credibility is the most critical criterion for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Simon & Goes, 2013). Credibility is satisfied when the researcher clearly shows evidence of alignment between the findings of a study and reality (Simon & Goes, 2013). Establishing credibility ensures the study has internal validity (Simon & Goes, 2013). A researcher should identify methods to protect a study from potential threats to validity. A researcher may consider numerous techniques and strategies to promote confidence in the study. Shenton (2004) highlighted the importance of providing a rich, detailed description of the study's phenomenon. This strategy adds credibility by conveying actual contextual experiences under investigation. It is important for a researcher to note reflective commentary as the study evolves (Shenton, 2004). This strategy adds to the credibility of the study.

Yin (2011) noted the use and adoption of clear research methods aid in confirming credibility. Following established qualitative methods using an interview protocol and a method for data analysis lends itself to confirming credibility (Shenton, 2004). The strategy of triangulation helps confirm credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2013). Member checking is critical for bolstering the credibility in a study (Yin, 2011). Participants may make adjustments or provide clarification when reviewing their interview (Creswell, 2014).

Transferability

External validity or transferability describes the extent to which a study's findings are applicable to other situations, contexts, or populations (Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative studies usually involve a small number of participants, situations, or environments relative to a specific phenomenon. Conventional generalizability is difficult to achieve. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggested a researcher does not have the responsibility to furnish an index of transferability. The researcher's responsibility is to produce a collection of data results that facilitate the transfer of judgements of the meaning of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability

Dependability is a counterpart to reliability in quantitative research. The researcher collects evidence to promulgate the claim that, if repeated, a similar study would yield similar results. A researcher should employ several strategies to assist with establishing dependability. Keeping an audit trail during the process is important. I maintained a journal to capture notes, data, personal reflections, and the rationale for

methodological decisions in my study. Triangulation also supports dependability. Triangulation uses different methods of data collection, cross checking of data, and the use of multiple theoretical frameworks. I used triangulation to help assess the validity of this current study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is akin to objectivity in quantitative research. Confirmability is the researcher's attempt to control biases and remain neutral (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I maintained objectivity through personal reflection throughout the process. Other strategies to establish confirmability are triangulation and reflexivity. Reflexivity describes the attitude a researcher adopts in research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I considered my personal thoughts and feelings about the phenomenon to mitigate bias. I annotated personal reflections, challenges, notes on the process, and the reasoning behind my decisions during the study see (Maxwell, 2013).

Researchers should not lead participants to preconceived conclusions. My role was to understand their experiences and not interject my personal views. I used a transcriptionist to accurately capture data and facilitate inter-coder reliability. The strategy of confirmability verifies findings and results.

Ethical Procedures

In human science research, the researcher has ethical responsibilities. Adherence to ethical standards promotes knowledge and truth in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). The nature of the researcher-participant relationship presents potential ethical concerns. It is appropriate to seek guidance and gain approval of an Institutional Review

Board (IRB). The IRB assesses potential risks to the psychological, social, legal, and physical harm to human participants. I sought approval to commence with participant recruitment and data collection from the IRB at Walden University. This current study was designed and conducted based upon the several ethical considerations.

Informed Consent

Obtaining voluntary informed consent protects human subjects in research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The researcher obtains informed consent prior to starting data collection. The plan for the study should be straightforward and understandable to potential participants. The researcher should recruit volunteers in a coercive manner. The researcher should not promise extravagant compensation or leverage previous or existing relationships to obtain participants.

I explained the purpose of the study, the nature of the study, the role of participants, and the potential benefits and risks of the study. I informed the participants the purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of experiences of trying to manage and replenish energy. The nature of the study was a qualitative phenomenological study. This design was best for examining the meaning of participants' experiences. Participants were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews to share information on the meaning of experiences with energy management. A participant had the right to refuse to answer any of the questions and could withdraw from the study without bias at any time. A researcher should have a plan to share the study results with participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The interests of the participants should prevail over the interests of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Confidentiality

A researcher has the responsibility to protect the identity of participants and the privacy of their information. The participant pool in qualitative research is normally small, increasing the need to maintain confidentiality in the study. I protected the identity of participants by assigning fictitious names or codes for each participant. I assigned unique codes such as P01 to each participant. Researchers document the intent to protect privacy by signing a confidentiality statement. During the study, the researcher may use professional services to assist with transcribing interviews. The transcriptionist was asked to sign a confidentiality statement. For this current study, I maintained all data collected and research notes in a locked file and in a password-protected computer to ensure security of participant data (see Bahn & Weatherill, 2013). The data will be archived for five years in accordance with the IRB guidelines outlined by Walden University and will be destroyed in the appropriate manner.

Beneficence

Researchers should maximize benefits and minimize psychological, physical, and social risks (Maxwell, 2013). My study was designed and conducted in a manner that minimized any undue risk to participants. A researcher has the responsibility to consider and weigh the benefits of the study with potential risks to the participants. The risks may include privacy, relationship, psychological, physical, or other personal risks that may cause undue stress for participants (Yin, 2011).

IRB Approval

The research study was reviewed by the Walden University IRB for compliance with human research and ethical standards. It was determined to meet institutional standards. Permission to conduct this study was granted by the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB), approval #12-03-19-0660542.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine female senior managers' experiences of trying to manage and replenish energy while at work. I also sought to understand what participants perceived as challenges to managing energy during the course of the workday. A hermeneutic research approach was an appropriate design to study and gain an understanding of the phenomenon of energy management (Creswell, 2014). This design approach enables a researcher to represent participants' views, examine the meaning of participant's lives, and explain and understand events (Yin, 2011).

This chapter described the research design, role of the researcher, participant selection logic, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach aided in examining and interpreting the participants' experiences, perspectives, and meanings of the experiences. I was the instrument in the research process. I proceeded with the study in a planned and measured way by using an interview protocol. After receiving IRB approval to proceed with the study, I recruited volunteers to participate in the study. Criteria for participation in the study were presented in a participant recruitment letter (see Appendix B). Participants had a general understanding of the concept of energy, as outlined in the letter and had a willingness to

share experiences of trying to manage and replenish energy while at work. They were asked to participate in an in-depth semi-structured interview and were asked questions designed to support the study's research questions. To ensure the sufficiency of the questions, I conducted a pilot study. Pilot studies aid in testing and refining a study's instruments, such as the interview questionnaire (see Yin, 2011). I recruited two participants for the pilot study using the same criteria as the final study.

I recruited senior managers from the NCR. The NCR is home to numerous federal agencies making it a favorable locale to find participants who meet the criteria of the study. The current study included 14 participants meeting the criteria of the study. Participants were female managers and had been in the current supervisory position within the NCR for a minimum of one year. The participants were either in the grade of GS-14 or GS-15.

An interview protocol provides structure in a study and facilitates the organization and management of the data (Creswell, 2014). The protocol for this study included a bank of informal, open-ended interview questions supporting the study's research. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed me to collect rich data from participants on experiences of trying to manage and replenish energy. During data analysis, I wrote field notes to aid in understanding and organizing data collected for the study.

The Stevik-Colaizzi-Keen (SCK) method provided a structured approach for data collection (see Moustakas, 1994). The aforementioned research design provided a roadmap for the remaining phases of the research study. Coding, identifying themes,

analyzing data, and interpreting data facilitated the data analysis procedures. I used NVivo 12 software for the data analysis.

Qualitative research design involves human subjects making it important to adhere to ethical guidelines and standards. I followed the informed consent process, maintained confidentiality in the study, and sought to avoid any physical, personal, or psychological harm to participants. The remaining chapters of the current study include discussions on data collection and analysis, findings of the study, results, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of females trying to manage and renew energy while at work. Participants included female managers working in the public sector within the NCR. This qualitative study was guided by three research questions:

RQ1: What is it like to experience trying to manage energy while at work?

RQ2: What is it like to experience trying to replenish energy while at work?

RQ3: What are the perceived challenges to successfully managing energy at work?

These questions were designed to address the phenomenon of trying to manage and replenish energy while still at work by gaining insight into the meaning of the experiences of the participants. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the impact of the pilot study on the main study. The chapter also includes discussion of the setting, participant demographics, and processes used for collecting and analyzing data. Finally, I provide evidence of the trustworthiness of the study, study results, and a summary.

Pilot Study

I used a pilot study to evaluate and refine the instrument for use in the final study. Yin (2011) suggested a pilot study gives a researcher an opportunity to assess the appropriateness of the intended research design. Participants for the pilot study met the same criteria described for use in the final study: (a) female supervisor in the grade of GS-14 or GS-15, (b) worked in their current position for a minimum of 1 year with a federal agency located within the NCR, and (c) have a basic understanding of the concept

of energy as outlined in the participant recruitment letter (see Appendix B). I identified the participants through professional networking. I sent current and former Walden University doctoral students and peers an email with the participant recruitment letter (see Appendix B) informing them I was conducting a qualitative study on managing and replenishing personal energy. This effort resulted in 29 individuals expressing interest in participating. My initial data collection plan included using LinkedIn as the primary source for recruiting participants. LinkedIn is a social media platform used for professional and personal networking. Because the networking effort in the pilot study resulted in an overwhelming interest, I delayed the use of LinkedIn as the primary source. If those showing an initial interest in the study chose not to participate or became unavailable, I would have used LinkedIn.

Two respondents participated in the pilot study. After agreeing to participate, the respondents were provided the interview protocol (see Appendix A), the informed consent form, and a confidentiality statement. I used the codes PS1 and PS2 to identify participants while preserving privacy of the data (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I conducted face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions (see Appendix A). The interviews were transcribed and reviewed to identify emerging themes and to locate segments of information related to a particular research questions.

A pilot study is instrumental in identifying weaknesses or problems with the design of the study (Yin, 2011). My interview questions elicited information supporting the overarching research questions, negating the need to make changes to the design of

the study or interview protocol. The pilot study did not indicate problems or weaknesses in the interview protocol or study design.

Setting

The setting is the conditions or environment of a study. The setting in the current study included organizational or personal conditions that may have influenced participants or their recollection of their experiences of managing and replenishing energy at the time of the interview. The interviews were conducted during the holiday months of December and January, making the scheduling of interviews more challenging. Other personal conditions may have influenced some of the participants. Participants may have responded differently when responding via a teleconference versus a face-to-face setting.

The personal conditions of five participants may have impacted or influenced their experiences of managing and replenishing energy. Participant 12 was preparing to take an administrative leave for 3 years to accompany her spouse to an overseas location. This would have been the first time she would not be working since the start of her career. Participants 1 and 13 experienced divorce and were rearing children alone or in a co-parenting situation. Participant 9 was married to a retired spouse who preferred her to curtail overtime work. This situation sometimes caused stress for the participant as she tried to balance work needs with family expectations. Participant 10 recently moved into a new home. I highlighted these conditions to acknowledge the potential impact or influence on experiences.

Demographics

The demographic information included gender, age, time in current position, years of supervising, and confirmation of employment with a federal agency. The study included 14 participants. The demographic information for participants is in Table 2. Participants ranged in age from 40 to 62. The years of supervision ranged from 2 years to 30 years.

Table 2

Demographic Overview

Participant	Age	Years of supervision
P01	40	10
P02	41	20
P03	43	4
P04	48	12
P05	48	14
P06	50	14
P07	52	7
P08	53	10
P09	53	21
P10	53	28
P11	57	20
P12	58	15
P13	61	2
P14	62	30

Data Collection

In the data collection process, a researcher gathers information to answer the research questions. An interview protocol was the primary method for collecting data (see Appendix A). The protocol included the following information: (a) participant information (last name and identifying code), (b) logistics (date, time, and place of interview), (c) demographic questions, (d) administrative actions (review of informed

consent, study background, interviewer background discussion on audio-taping and member checking, and access to study results), and (e) interview questions. Interviews were scheduled to meet the needs and preferences of each participant. Work schedules, planned holidays, and logistics were the primary factors in scheduling. Face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews were used to collect data from participants. In-person interviews were conducted in the offices of participants. Numerous interviews were conducted via a teleconference to accommodate the participant's preference or for the convenience of the participant. The distance and traffic congestion in the NCR sometimes made it impractical for face-to-face interviews. Seven of the interviews were conducted in person (50%). These included Participants 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 14. Interviews for the remaining 50% of participants were conducted via teleconference. These included Participants 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13. The data collection time for the interviews ranged from 33 minutes to 56 minutes. See Table 3 for information on the duration of interviews and the medium used to collect data.

Table 3

Duration and Collection Medium of Interviews of Study Participants

Participant	Length of interview	Medium
P01	50	F
P02	33	F
P03	34	F
P04	40	T
P05	33	T
P06	45	F
P07	35	F
P08	45	T
P09	43	F
P10	35	T
P11	33	T
P12	46	T
P13	42	T
P14	56	F

Note. F = face-to-face, T = telephone.

Semistructured interviews were used to collect data from each of the participants. Each participant provided a complete response to each of the interview questions. A few of the participants provided succinct responses to the questions, while most expounded on their responses; however, responses from all participants included rich information that was beneficial in capturing their experiences of trying to manage energy. The interviews were recorded using voice memos on my cellular telephone. The audio files were transferred to a hard drive on my personal home computer. Each file was coded with a three-digit code for identification purposes and to protect the identity of the participant. The files were also transferred to a professional transcriptionist via the use of a secure password-protected Dropbox file. After each interview was transcribed, I reviewed the content before forwarding to the participant for member checking. Simon

and Goes (2013) suggested the use of member checking in the data collection process adds internal validity and credibility to the qualitative research process.

The study included one variation in the initial data collection plan. The original plan indicated that LinkedIn would be used as the primary source for recruiting participants and collecting data. Instead, I used personal and professional networking to recruit participants for the pilot study. The networking effort included outreach to current and former Walden University doctoral students and community organizations. I provided the participant recruitment letter (see Appendix B) to these professional and personal contacts. As potential candidates emailed me expressing an interest in participating in the study, I responded to confirm their intention and to confirm they met the selection criteria. The initial interest shown through this process was overwhelming and provided a large pool of interested and qualified potential candidates. Participant referrals through this snowball sampling method yielded 29 potential participants. The final study included 14 participants from each source as follows: Walden University student referrals (five), community organization (two), and study participant referrals/snowball sampling (seven).

I encountered minimal unusual circumstances during the data collection process. The interview with Participant 4 was a telephone interview. About five minutes into the interview, one of her employees interrupted the interview. A few minutes later the call dropped as Participant 4 entered the elevator on her way out of the office. We continued the telephone call during her drive home. A dropped call resulted in a break during the interview with Participant 8. I took field notes for all the interviews. I noted nonverbal

cues during face-to-face interviews and made notes on the tones and inflections in voices of those who interviewed via a teleconference.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process in a qualitative research design involves examining data to gain an understanding of experiences of a phenomenon (Yin, 2011). It is important to us an organized and structured process to analyze the data. I used a modified version of the Moustakas (1994) SCK method for analyzing the data in this phenomenological study. The SCK method provided a useful technique for describing and categorizing data collected in the interviews. The coding process for this study was logical and included inductive and deductive reasoning within three different cyclical phases. Inductive reasoning, a bottom-up process, starts with an observation of units or parts of the whole and finishes with generalizations. Deductive reasoning starts with the generalization and finishes with units or parts of the whole (a top-down review). The phases of coding included open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Open coding is the process for analyzing the textual content of data. The first pass involves line-by-line coding of the data to develop descriptive or illustrative themes and to designate category titles. The first phase also included in vivo coding, which facilitated the selection of specific words and phrases for titling purposes. Axial coding helps a researcher find emerging themes and patterns (see Simon & Goes). In this second phase, I started clustering, merging, retitling, and eliminating some categories (see Simon & Goes, 2013). The third phase is selective coding, which involves the deepest level of the analysis (Maxwell, 2013). I interpreted and synthesized the meaning of the data by

comparing and contrasting themes. The transcribed interviews were uploaded into NVivo 12 software for coding and sorting.

I used the strategy of member checking to provide evidence of credibility. Simon and Goes (2013) noted member checking allows the participant to review the content of the interview transcript to confirm responses and intended meanings. After member checking, I emailed each verified transcript to a professional NVivo consultant. The consultant signed a disclosure agreement before preparing and importing the 14 transcribed interviews into NVivo 12. NVivo 12 was used to organize, compare, and contrast interview responses and to highlight patterns and themes. Refinement of the coding resulted in numerous coding reports for the 14 interviews. The coding resulted in the identification of 17 main nodes with 292 subcategories.

Interview Questions and Associated Notes

Three nodes or categories reflected the demographics of the 14 participants: (a) age, (b) years of supervisory experience, and (c) an assigned interview number. An example of the titling process follows: Age40_10-YrSup_I11. Fifteen node titles were created under the node Interview Questions in NVivo 12 qualitative software to correspond to the various interview questions in the interview protocol (see Appendix A). An additional node title labeled Strategies was created from the literature review. The following nodes were identified in relation to the interview questions.

- Q01: Typical day.
- Q02: Energy and performance.
- Q03: Level of vigor in the morning.

- Q04: Gauging energy levels.
- Q05: Expressing high energy.
- Q06: Expressing low energy.
- Q07: Managing energy for demands.
- Q08: Replenishing energy for demands.
- Q09: Performing job with high energy.
- Q10: Performing job with low energy.
- Q11: Replenishing energy – how.
- Q12: Best strategy to replenish energy.
- Q13: Challenges in managing energy.
- Q14: Matching energy to resources.
- Q15: Feeling vigorous.

The interview protocol (see Appendix A) included 15 interview questions designed to answer the three research questions. The 15 questions and nodes associated with the related research question are depicted in Table 4.

Table 4

Interview Questions, Associated Nodes, and Corresponding Research Question

Interview question	Associated nodes	Corresponding research question
1	Typical day	RQ1
2	Energy and performance	RQ1
3	Level of vigor in the morning	RQ1
4	Gauging energy levels	RQ1
5	Expressing high energy	RQ1
6	Expressing low energy	RQ1
7	Managing energy for demands	RQ1
8	Replenishing energy for demands	RQ2
9	Performing job with high energy	RQ1
10	Performing job with low energy	RQ1
11	Replenishing energy - how	RQ2
12	Best strategy to replenish energy	RQ2
13	Challenges in managing energy	RQ3
14	Matching energy to resources	RQ1
15	Feeling vigorous	RQ1

The initial set of related nodes depicted in Table 4 emerged from a review of the research questions, interview questions, and problem statement. The nodes were used as a foundation for analyzing the data and examining common themes. NVivo 12 and content analysis were used to help identify categories and common themes. After further refinement and merging, the initial set of associated nodes was refined and grouped thematically into five nodes. Table 5 depicts the final set of nodes.

Table 5

Associated Nodes, Refined Node, and Corresponding Research Question

Associated nodes	Refined node	Corresponding research question
1/3	Typical day	RQ1
2/5/6/7/9/10	Energy and performance	RQ1
4/14	Matching energy to resources	RQ1
13	Challenge in managing energy	RQ3
8/11/12/15	Replenishing energy	RQ2

The results section contains detailed responses and common themes from the interview questions.

Discrepant Cases

I did not identify any discrepant cases in this current study. All the participants provided responses to all the questions. Using a hermeneutic design, I pursued a deeper exploration in the phenomenon to gain an understanding of each participant's experiences and perspectives of the phenomenon (see Yin, 2011).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Shenton (2004) noted qualitative research should be credible, plausible, and defensible. Trustworthiness in qualitative research addresses these concerns and provides the validity and reliability in a qualitative research design. Trustworthiness applies to the research design and method, data collection and analysis, and the researcher's role in the study (Shenton, 2004). The criteria describing trustworthiness encompasses the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in the study. A researcher may employ numerous strategies to provide evidence of trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004).

Credibility

The most critical criterion for ensuring trustworthiness is credibility. A researcher meets this requirement by ensuring there is evidence of alignment between the findings and reality (Shenton, 2004). I used several strategies to highlight credibility in the study. As part of the interview protocol (see Appendix A), I shared my personal experiences of understanding and managing my energy in the workplace. I used the strategy of bracketing. Moustakas (1994) noted researchers engage in bracketing to separate personal experiences or beliefs from the experiences of the participant. With bracketing, I attempted to set aside my judgments or experiences regarding managing energy. I kept the focus on the participants' experiences of managing the phenomenon. I used journaling to annotate and reflect on my personal experiences of managing and replenishing energy. This exercise helped me to set aside personal biases or preconceived notions of how energy should be managed (see Moustakas, 1994). Member checking bolsters credibility in qualitative research (Yin, 2011). After each interview was transcribed, I provided a copy to each participant for review. Participants confirmed the content of the data. I was cognizant of the requirement to reach saturation in data collection. Data saturation is reached when there appears to be adequate information and data to address research questions, and new information appears exhausted (Maxwell, 2013). I did not make any changes to the credibility strategy proposed in Chapter 3.

Transferability

Transferability (external validity) is the extent to which the findings in a qualitative study are applicable or generalizable to other populations, contexts, or

situations (Maxwell, 2013). I used a systematic and structured approach in the research study to contribute to the external validity. I used purposeful and criterion sampling to select participants for the study. Although all of the participants were female, the participants varied in age and years of supervisory experience. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted in qualitative research, the researcher has the responsibility to publish a set of results that communicate the meaning and perspectives of the phenomenon for the participants of the particular study. I collected and analyzed the data understanding this principle and acknowledging the data set would not be generalizable to other populations (Maxwell, 2013). I did not make any changes to the transferability strategy proposed in Chapter 3.

Dependability

Dependability is the evidence of consistency within a study. The strategy of dependability in qualitative research mirrors the strategy of reliability in quantitative research (Maxwell, 2013). I used a systematic approach to collect, interpret, analyze, and report the findings to meet this criterion. I used numerous strategies to collect evidence that the execution of a similar study should produce similar results. Audit trails and triangulation are useful strategies for showing dependability. I maintained an audit trail by taking notes during the research process. I used NVivo 12 to produce a record of the interview transcripts, raw data, data codes, and categories. Maxwell (2013) suggested triangulation encompasses different methods of cross-checking information to produce dependability in a study. I conducted interviews allowing participants to share perspectives and the meaning of the phenomenon. I reviewed interview transcripts to

look for emerging themes. I wrote reflections on the process and my personal thoughts. I did not make any changes to the dependability strategy proposed in Chapter 3.

Confirmability

In qualitative studies, researchers bring unique perspectives (Yin, 2011). The strategy of confirmability is used to control biases and to provide evidence the findings are reflective of and shaped by the experiences of the participants. Confirmability is the counterpart to objectivity in quantitative studies (Maxwell, 2013). I used the strategy of reflexivity to ensure confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted confirmability reflects the attitude the researcher adopts during the research process. With each interview, I considered and documented my personal views and experiences. I was intentional in not trying to influence or lead participants to any preconceived conclusions on managing and replenishing energy. I did not make any changes to the confirmability strategy that I proposed in Chapter 3.

Results

The purpose of this current study was to examine the central phenomenon of managing energy. During interviews, participants shared detailed and rich data relating to their experiences of trying to manage and replenish energy while at work. The interview questions helped answer the three research questions. The results section is organized into the three overarching Research Questions 1 - 3. Each subsection identifies corresponding interview questions, refined nodes with prevalent themes, and a summary of findings. Quotes from participants support the findings.

Research Question 1 Findings

The first research question was as follows: What is it like to experience trying to manage energy while at work? The interview questions served as the basis to answer this research question (see Appendix A).

This section includes discussion on the related refined node and prevalent themes regarding the participants' typical day.

Node: Typical day. I identified four themes: mental and emotional energy, relationships, responsibilities, exercise, and spirituality. The following paragraphs will describe the typical day experiences of participants and will include descriptions of how participants described and viewed their normal typical day. Table 6 includes participants' responses to the node and depicts similar shared thoughts or beliefs associated with the themes.

Table 6

Responses to Node Typical Day

Prevalent theme	*n*	% of 14
Mental/emotional energy	14	100
Relationships	13	93
Responsibilities	14	100
Physical energy	9	64
Spirituality	6	43

Note. $N = 14$

Theme: Mental and emotional energy. All 14 participants (100%) shared their mental and emotional feelings regarding what they experienced throughout the day. Participants shared actions and descriptions of their feelings which included commute, family, self, excited, stressful, and work. Following are experiences participants shared

regarding their mental and emotional energy on a typical day. Participant 10 stated “I live in a very over-populated area. My commute is stressful, and I’m happy now that it only takes about 35, 40 minutes” In contrast, “Participant 2 stated “The whole time I’m planning in my head what it is I’m going to do. What’s my first task, and so I have a plan in my mind what I want to accomplish” Participant 1 stated “Once I leave from work, that’s it. I turn it off. I don’t think I make a conscious decision of it being turned off” Participant 8 stated “I’m always excited. But I will say an eight or nine of excitement on a new day, a new opportunity to do things and to hopefully improve on things.”

Theme: Relationships Thirteen out of 14 participants (93%) described how relationships were part of their typical day experiences. Participants 1, 2**,** 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 shared experiences and described relationships as family, friends, pets, employees, and senior management. Following are experiences participants shared regarding their energy and relationships in a typical day. Participant 7 stated “Everyone’s high performing. They want to do well. I have a good group of people that I work with and supervise; my boss is fairly rusting and hands-off” Participant 14 stated “My daughter, she tends to call me every day around the time when I settle it, in the morning before the day gets started. So, we have a very tight relationship” Participant 1 stated “I really love those moments because it is a great opportunity to help people see the best in themselves. I can figure out the best way to really bring out the best in other people.”

Theme: Responsibilities. All 14 participants (100%) shared responsibilities were part of their experiences in a typical day. The participants shared experiences and described responsibilities as home, family members, household tasks, personal, emails,

program management, planning, church or civic responsibilities. Following are experiences participants shared regarding energy and responsibilities in a typical day. Participant 6 stated “A typical day is generally very busy. I’ve got multiple tasks throughout the day. I’m constantly juggling from one assignment to the next” Participant 10 stated “I normally have several meetings a day, so I’m trying to prepare for the meeting. If I have a leading role, it’s a bit more stressful.”

Theme: Physical energy. Nine out of participants (64%) described how various aspects physical energy were part of their typical day experiences. Participants 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 14 shared experiences of managing physical energy such as exercise, nutrition, sleep, caffeine, and errands. Following are experiences participants shared managing their physical energy during a typical day. Participant 14 stated “So one of my must haves is having my coffee and muffin. That’s something I need to mentally prepare me for the day” Participant 10 stated “A lot of what I’m doing during the day is mentally stressful but not physical. I’m sitting down most of the day and only get up to go to a meeting or use the restroom” Participant 11 stated “Because I think that me maintaining a good diet, me exercising, me understanding complexities of projects and people allows me to better manage my energy”.

Theme: Spirituality. Six out of 14 participants (43%) shared the importance or practice of spiritual experiences in their day. Participants 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 13 described spirituality as pray, meditation, children, church, and positivity. Following are experiences participants shared regarding energy and their spirituality experiences during a typical day. Participant 2 stated “I’m in one ministry at church, missionary, so I enjoy

that. So, I'm going to stick with that. Participant 8 stated "I think a source of energy is our spirit, right? So, I have a spirit of hope all the time. If you don't have that spiritual base, then guess what? You can be easily defeated" Participant 13 stated "Well my energy before work, when I wake up at home is a lot higher. I get up with my kids and we pray".

Node: Energy and performance. I identified three themes: motivation, work-level demand, and self-awareness. The following paragraphs describe the experiences of participants managing energy to facilitate performance. Table 7 includes participants' responses to the node and depicts similar shared thoughts or beliefs associated with the themes.

Table 7

Responses to Node Energy and Performance

Prevalent theme	*n*	% of 14
Motivation	11	79
Work-level demand	14	100
Self-awareness	8	57

Note. $N = 14$.

Theme: Motivation. Eleven out of the 14 participants (79%) shared how feelings of motivation described experiences of managing energy in their performance. Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14 described motivation as motivating others, hyper-focused, alert, confident, and competent. Following are experiences of how motivation was associated with energy and performance during the day. For example, Participant 6 stated "As for me, it's a desire and an ambition to do a good job. When I come into work, I feel ready to get the job done, be successful, be productive" Participant

14 stated “I have always been motivated. I never compare myself to other women. I always compare myself to men. It’s not about me as a woman, it’s about me as a valued employee”.

Theme: Work-level demand. All the 14 participants (100%) shared experiences of the relationship between their workload and energy. In describing these experiences, participants used terms productivity, refocus, demanding, stressful, challenging, and satisfying. Following are experiences participants shared regarding the demands of work and their energy. Participant 2 stated “I think it has to do somewhat with your enthusiasm. Do you like your job? Are you looking forward to coming to work? I like what I do” Participant 1 stated “When it comes down to like a deadline or something like that, I kind of have the energy that’s focused on achievement or not letting the team down” Conversely, Participant 11 stated “I feel like I’m feeling dull, I will open up a course. Right now I am taking one on the science of happiness”.

Theme: Self-awareness. Eight of the 14 participants (57%) described their experiences of self-awareness in managing energy for successful performance. Participants 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14 used words such as attitude, self-motivated, thoughtful, self-confidence, productivity, mindfulness, compartmentalize, center, and energy readiness to describe self-awareness. Following are experiences participants shared regarding the relationship of self-awareness and energy. Participant 10 stated “I like a challenge. I like wondering to myself, Oh, my God, can I actually do this? When I’m in that state of mind, it’s like optimum” Conversely, Participant 7 stated “Being full

of energy doesn't necessarily equate to me being on the very top of my game. I overestimate. I should have stepped back and slowed down for a minute".

Node: Matching energy to resources. I identified three themes: prioritizing, focusing, and interacting with others. The following paragraphs describe experiences of matching energy to available resources. Table 8 includes participants' responses to the node matching energy to resources and depicts similar shared thoughts or beliefs associated with the themes.

Table 8

Responses to Node Matching Energy to Resources

Prevalent theme	*n*	% of 14
Prioritizing	11	79
Focusing	14	100
Interacting with others	10	71

Note. $N = 14$.

Theme: Prioritizing. Eleven of the 14 participants (79%) shared experiences of prioritizing work and tasks to match their energy levels. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, and 14 described prioritizing as compartmentalize, pre-plan, checklists, meeting challenge, and productivity. Following were experiences participants shared on prioritizing work to match energy with available resources. Participant 3 stated "The clarity, focus on it, and true intent. I guess for me, I believe I work much better under a deadline or suspense" Participant 5 stated "I think you need that energy to be able to accomplish the mission. The energy doesn't have to be high, but it has to be the appropriate amount to make sure we're all getting to the end goal" Participant 7 stated "I

make lists, and it makes me feel very accomplished when I finish all things on my list. It keeps me on track of what is most important".

Theme: Focusing. All the 14 participants (100%) described experiences of focusing and refocusing energies to match performance requirements. Participants used words such as challenged, charged atmosphere, less attention to detail, thoughtful, considerate, good decisions, and aha moment to describe these experiences. Following are experiences participants shared on the relationship between energy and focusing attention on details and tasks. Participant 13 stated "I would say I'm hyper-focused, and I'm excited about what I am doing" Conversely, Participant 5 stated "I'm just slow to respond, or just don't do it. No, I would call it like *half-doing*. I won't be my best" Participant 6 stated "I am able to plow through. For the most part, I can focus and get it done".

Theme: Interacting with others. Ten of the 14 participants (71%) shared the importance of interacting with others to get energized to meet performance desires and requirements. Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, and 14 described experiences of interacting with others as relationships, delegate, transparent, positive attitude, meet the challenge, alone time, buy-in, and engagement. Following are experiences participants shared regarding interacting with family, subordinates, friends, or peers to manage energy during the day. Participant 6 stated "I always feel good when my team comes to me and asks a question. I feel like a sense of okay, I'm teaching, I'm helping and that makes me feel good" Conversely, Participant 8 stated "I think if the energy is too high, it can be a

detriment too. I mean sometimes people don't see high energy. They see 'Oh she's so passionate about what she's doing and can't hear past what she's doing'.

Research Question 2 Findings

The second research question was: What is it like to experience trying to replenish energy while at work? The following interview questions served as the basis to answer this research question:

- When your energy is *low*, what is it like to restore it to ensure you have personal energy to meet future work demands?
- How often during the workday do you take actions to renew your energy, and what types of activities, strategies, or experiences do you engage in to do so?
- If you have found a strategy which helps to restore energy, what is that strategy? Why does it work?

This section includes discussion on the related refined node and prevalent themes regarding the replenishing energy to meet future work demands.

Node: Replenishing energy. I identified two themes: self-reflection and breaks. The following paragraphs describe the experiences of replenishing energy. Table 9 includes participants' responses to the node replenishing energy and depicts similar shared thoughts or beliefs associated with the themes.

Table 9

Responses to Node Replenishing Energy

Prevalent theme	*n*	% of 14
Self-reflection	8	57
Breaks	14	100

Note. $N = 14$.

Eight of the 14 participants (57%) shared experiences of using self-reflection as a strategy for replenishing energy. Participants 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, and 14 used phrases such as confidence, isolation, mindfulness, attitude, thought leadership, and recognition to describes experiences of self-awareness. Following are experiences participants shared on self-reflection and energy. Participant 14 stated "I'm understanding more about myself. I find when I am alone, my mind is clearer, and I'm not clouded by interferences. I find I'm more productive" Participant 7 stated "I'll try to get out of my environment and remove myself from whatever it is that's dragging me down. I'll try to create a positive feeling that will then feed me some energy".

Theme: Breaks. All 14 participants (100%) shared experiences of taking breaks to replenish energy. The participants described breaks as strategies, exercise, deep breathing, sleep, rest, walking, massages, nutrition, snacks, change of scenery, environmental restoration, listening to music, and social interaction. Following are experiences participants shared on the strategies or breaks used to manage energy. Participant 1 stated "Yes, I do walk around. I go for a walk, or I walk out of the building even if it's freezing to go get a coffee" Participant 3 stated "I play a game on my phone. Something that's very mindless. It just gets you away from whatever at the moment" Participant 2 stated "I read The Economist" Participant 11 stated "If I feel like I'm

feeling dull, then I'll open up a course. I take a couple different online courses" Participant 4 stated "I have never had a day in my year that I've been here that I've been able to take a break and go downstairs and workout" Participant 6 stated "I rarely take lunch. I'll go downstairs and get a salad and eat it at my desk and work at the same time".

Research Question 3 Findings

The third research question was: What are the perceived challenges of successfully managing energy? The following interview question served as the basis to answer this research question:

- What is your perception of the challenges or obstacles you may face in trying to manage or replenish your energy while at work?

This section includes discussion on the related refined node and prevalent themes regarding the challenges and obstacles to managing energy while at work.

Node: Challenges in managing energy. I identified three themes: work demands, work-life balance, and mental exhaustion. The following paragraphs describe participants' experiences with handling the perceived obstacles and challenges preventing energy management. Table 10 includes participants' responses to the node challenges in managing energy and depicts similar shared thoughts with the themes.

Table 10

Responses to Node Challenges in Managing Energy

Prevalent theme	*n*	% of 14
Work demands versus time	5	36
Work-life balance	4	29
Mental exhaustion	5	36

Note. $N = 14$.

Theme: Work demands versus time. Five of the 14 participants (36%) shared challenging experiences of balancing work demands with the time available in the workday. Participants 4, 6, 7, 11, and 13 described experiences of balancing work demands with time as challenging, demanding, delegate, morning planning, demand expectations, and decision-making. Following are experiences participants shared on managing their time to accomplish work demands. Participant 6 stated "I guess I have a higher energy, I'm more motivated to get things done. I guess I enjoy doing the work more when I have more energy" Participant 13 stated "I have to always be prepared and be able to hone that power to get information out. And that's one thing I do at the drop of a hat. I delegate work to everybody" Participant 7 stated "When people come in and intrude on my time, notice I use the word intrude instead of spending social time with me because it feels like an intrusion when I have something to do, and I am stressed about it".

Theme: Work-life balance. Four of the 14 participants (29%) stated experiences of trying to balance work and life presented challenges in managing energy. Participants 4, 9, 12, and 13 described work life balance experiences as family, pressure, and responsibilities. Following are experiences participants shared about trying to balance

work and non-work responsibilities. Participant 12 stated “I’m always on call. I’ll schedule calls late, like 4:30 because I know I’m going to be on the road driving” Participant 11 stated “When I get up, I start my Mom work with my twins to get them ready for school” Similarly, Participant 13 stated “In the morning, I get my daughter ready when she’s with me. In the evening, I have her do homework, I may do some extra work, wash clothes, that kind of stuff” Participant 4 stated “I read over emails, both personal and professional, do any shopping online if I can, then make my lunch, get my husband out the door and get my baby out” Participant 9 stated “I get out of work at 4:00, and my family counts on me being home by 5:00. So, I do have some pressure to make sure that I am home”.

Theme: Mental exhaustion. Five of the 14 participants (36%) cited experiences of mental exhaustion as obstacle to managing energy. Participants 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 described experiences of being mentally exhausted as draining, overwhelmed, deflated, work-life balance, and isolation. Following are experiences participants shared on feeling exhausted during the workday. Participant 6 stated “Low productivity is what happens here. Then a lot of discouragement. I become discouraged and like I said, sometimes no matter what I do, I just can’t get it back” Participant 2 stated “When I have low emotional energy, I’m distracted. I’m just in my thoughts. I’m not present. I’m present physically but not mentally” Participant 8 stated “I think I probably express a little bit of insecurity. I don’t feel like I’m *firing on all pistons*”.

Summary

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of women trying to manage and replenish energy while at work. Chapter 4 included an overall summary of the study. The chapter included discussions on a pilot study, the setting of the study, demographic information, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results of the research study. Responses from the fifteen interview questions were suitable and appropriate for answering the research questions. The study included 14 participants. Each provided detailed and rich data in describing their experiences and thoughts related to managing and replenishing energy while at work. They also shared feelings about the challenges or obstacles preventing them from replenishing energy depleted during the course of the workday.

Research Question 1 was as follows: What is it like to experience trying to manage energy while at work? The associated nodes included typical day, energy and performance, and matching energy to resources. The prevalent themes for the node typical day that emerged were mental and emotional energy, relationships, responsibilities, physical energy and spirituality. The themes for the node energy and performance were motivation, work-level demand, and self- awareness. Finally, the node matching energy to resources included the themes prioritizing, focusing, and interacting with others. The findings revealed the participants shared similar experiences of managing energy. Strong enthusiasm for the job and a desire to work with others to accomplish goals were primary factors in their energy management.

The second research question was as follows: What is it like to experience trying to replenish energy while at work? The associated node was replenishing energy. The prevalent themes were self-reflection and breaks. The findings revealed strategies for replenishing energy varied amongst the participants; however, with maturity and experience, most of the participants had an awareness of the strategies that worked best for them.

The final research question was as follows: What are the perceived challenges of successfully managing energy? The associated node was challenges in managing energy. The prevalent themes included work demands versus time, work-life balance, and mental exhaustion. The findings revealed all the participants experienced a high volume of work but still worked to keep a reasonable balance between the demands of work and family responsibilities.

Findings revealed that the participants still work under the old paradigm of managing their time instead of managing energy. By the end of the interview sessions, all participants acknowledged all actions, behaviors, and thoughts require some level of energy. The participants realized the value in shifting the focus to energy management. Chapter 5 will include discussion on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of trying to manage and replenish energy while at work based on the experiences and perceptions of 14 female supervisors employed within the NCR. The participants ranged in age and years of supervisory experience. The hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted for the purpose of capturing the experiences, successes, and perceived challenges and obstacles to managing and replenishing energy at work and to identify trends or themes during data analysis.

Several themes emerged from the responses the participants provided during the interview process. The themes supported the three research questions. Overall, 16 themes emerged in the data. The themes related to five associated nodes were (a) typical day, (b) energy and performance, (c) matching energy to resources, (d) replenishing energy, and (e) challenges in managing energy.

The three associated nodes that supported RQ 1 were (a) typical day, (b) energy and performance, and (c) matching energy to resources. The five themes related to the node of typical day experiences were (a) mental and emotional energy, (b) relationships, (c) responsibilities, (d) physical energy, and (e) spirituality. The three themes related to the node energy and performance experiences were (a) motivation, (b) work-level demand, and (c) self-awareness. The three themes related to the node matching energy to resources experiences were (a) prioritizing, (b) focusing, and (c) interacting with others.

The node related to RQ 2 was replenishing energy. The two themes related to the node replenishing energy experiences were (a) self-reflection and (b) breaks.

The node related to RQ 3 was challenges in managing energy. The three themes related to the node challenges in managing energy were (a) work demands versus time, (b) work-life balance, and (c) mental exhaustion.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings in the study are consistent with the existing literature on managing energy in the workplace. Work requires some degree of effort and depletes energy. The literature review in Chapter 2 indicated the role of energy in performance in the workplace. Much of the literature addressed the impact of work demands on a manager's stress and overall well-being. The discussion of the findings in the current study is divided into several sections: (a) typical day experiences, (b) energy and performance, (c) matching energy to resources, (d) replenishing energy, and (e) challenges in managing energy.

Typical Day Experiences

Hobfoll (1989) described objects, energies, or personal characteristics as valuable resources. Hobfoll's COR theory suggests resources have value. The current study findings revealed the participants' experiences included numerous things of value. Mental and emotional energy, relationships, responsibilities, physical energy, and spirituality were common resources identified by participants. These common themes confirmed the literature review related to the COR theory regarding the use, retention, and acquisition of resources. The participants recognized the importance of having sufficient stores of all types of energy. The findings revealed 100% of the participants relied on having clarity of mind and purpose throughout the day. Regarding physical

energy, participants valued rest and nutrition, and 64% included physical exercise on the day outside of the workday. Building physical energy resources helps lower stress, decreasing the need for recovery (Formanoy et al., 2016). Only one of the 14 participants took a break during the day to include a structured exercise program. The participants described the importance of maintaining relationships and meeting personal and professional responsibilities. The findings also revealed that spirituality assisted participants in renewing and acquiring energy. Prior studies confirmed that spirituality or spiritual resources may enhance resiliency and increase confidence about influencing or changing the environment to suit a person's needs (Bickerton et al., 2015; Geue, 2018).

Energy and Performance

The associated category of energy and performance aligned with the COR theory, which posits that individuals strive to protect, retain, and create resources of value (Hobfoll, 1989). Hobfoll (1989) noted that energy is a resource required for performance. The findings for energy and performance resulted in themes of motivation, work-level-demand, and self- awareness. There was slight variation in the experiences of these themes among the participants; however, the findings suggested most shared similar views regarding the relationship between energy and performance. Hobfoll contended that individuals require adequate energy resources to perform and complete work. Inadequate resources and coping strategies could affect performance and the well-being of individuals (Berman, 2005; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003).

For the current study participants, an intrinsic motivation to succeed was instrumental for achieving peak performance (see Keating & Heslin, 2015). The findings

revealed that 79% of the participants described themselves as ambitious. The participants shared an internal drive that motivated them to accomplish tasks and responsibilities in an excellent manner. All participants described their roles as demanding and challenging. Participants shared experiences of juggling multiple programs and projects to accomplish the goals of the organization.

The findings suggested most participants claimed to have the skills and competence to meet the requirements of the position. This knowledge yielded the energy to perform, make sound decisions, engage with others, and perform at a high level. Social learning theory highlights the interaction between an individual and the environment (Bandura, 2001). Individuals recognize the need to engage with and shape the environment to produce positive outcomes (Bandura, 2001). Social learning theory's principles of self-efficacy and belief in the ability to control the environment were observed in the experiences of the participants. Of the 14 participants, 57% shared having a strong awareness of self, which gave them the confidence, energy, and attitude to perform at optimal levels. Participants characterized their vigor and energy as typically high. The result of this affective energetic state for the participants was resiliency, determination, and creativity (see Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014).

Matching Energy to Resources

Work requires some degree of effort on the part of individuals in the workplace. Participants in the current study shared experiences of expending energy to perform tasks, interact with others, and prepare for future tasks and responsibilities. ER theory states that as individuals expend energy in the course of performance, they must devise

ways to recover the depleted energy (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Current study participants' experiences of matching energy to resources aligned with ER theory. The findings indicated the participants recognized the energy drain and devised strategies for matching their energy stores with the available resources.

The themes emerging from the findings included prioritizing work, focusing on tasks, and interacting with others to accomplish tasks. Of the 14 participants, 79% used the strategy of prioritization to determine what to accomplish and how to accomplish required projects and tasks. The findings indicated all participants worked within the paradigm of time management. Participants shared experiences of using prioritization as a method for allocating time for various tasks. Participant 7 stated "I make lists, and it makes me feel very accomplished when I finish all the things on my list; it keeps me on track of what's most important."

Hobfoll (1989) posited in the COR theory that individuals place value on their resources. The participants in the current study placed value on their time. The threat of not having sufficient time to complete tasks exacerbated stress. Participants were motivated to minimize the loss of energy resources and found ways to cultivate more. The findings suggested participants recognized and gauged their energy levels. When considering mental energy, 64% emphasized the need to be more hyper-focused on the tasks.

Having the autonomy to engage in job crafting and job design helped participants match energy with resources. Altering the boundaries of the job tasks influenced participants' perceptions of the job tasks. This autonomy allowed participants to adjust

job demands with personal resources creating a spiral of new resources to accomplish responsibilities (see Bruning & Campion, 2018; Gordon et al., 2018). Participants interacted with and extended autonomy to subordinates to meet job demands. Participant 14 stated "What I tend to do is rely on others as I have learned over the years. That it is about empowering your employees and setting expectations with them to do what needs to be done."

Replenishing Energy

The findings in the study confirmed the literature review related to ER theory. Meijman and Mulder (1998) contended that expending work results in load reactions. These reactions are physiological or psychological reactions to exerting effort during work and are reversible through recovery. The findings from the current study revealed participants experienced mental and physical exhaustion during completing work or interacting with others. This loss of energy resources dictates the need to employ recovery to replenish energy (Ragsdale & Beehr, 2016). Participants acknowledged limitations or vulnerabilities when energy was low. This awareness led them to devise various strategies to mitigate the loss. Participant 14 stated "I've learned over time. I have built a level of confidence now, and it's about knowing what you know." Hildenbrand et al. (2018) posited that managers may operate on inadequate levels of energy for short periods of time; however, if the levels remain low for extended periods of time, performance may suffer. The findings from the current study suggested that participants take time for self-reflection. Participant 12 described it as thought leadership: "Sometimes you don't give it all to them because they need to bring something to the

table, so that you can learn, right? You don't always have to be the teacher." Engaging in self-reflection affected attitude and confidence resulting in new energies.

Of the 14 participants, 57% were confident in their ability to recognize changes in performance levels related to inadequate energy resources. Although strategies varied, all participants used breaks as a strategy to replenish energy. Participant 10 stated

> Taking a walk gives me mental clarity and gives me that time to think about what I am going to do. You're not thinking about what you left at your desk but finding something else to focus on. That alone will give you drive, a motivation to get through.

Participant 8 stated

> Sometimes you need to make a human connection because that could be a strategy where maybe you're involving or engaging yourself with something that's not work related to just have a new, fresh perspective so that you can come back to that task that you have to complete.

Challenges in Managing Energy

Managing energy is a deliberate and intentional effort of balancing the expenditure of energy with the replenishment of energy (Berman, 2005; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Of the 14 participants in the current study, 71% described daily experiences of juggling tasks, projects, and staff assignments as exhausting. Of the participants, 36% also struggled with balancing work demands with time and found it difficult to disengage psychologically from work (see Sonnentag & Kuhnel, 2016). Participant 4 stated "I'm on calls. Of course, they are hands free, but I may be setting up

meetings or talking to people. I look at this as an opportunity to get stuff done prior to getting in."

As participants exerted effort to perform work and engage with others in the workplace, they depleted energy sources (see Bono et al., 2013). Continued exposure to stress in the workplace without opportunities for recovery may be detrimental to performance and well-being (Sonnentag et al., 2017; Xanthopoulou et al., 2014). The findings on the associated category of perceived challenges to managing aligned with Hobfoll's COR theory. This resource-oriented theory asserts that individuals strive to create pleasurable and resource-rich environments.

Kersh (2018) asserted that women endure undue psychological stress and additional drain on their resources due to societal expectations and roles. The findings in the current study confirmed the literature review on women and stress. The participants shared experiences of balancing work with home and personal responsibilities. Although all had varying degrees of family responsibilities, most admitted that work spilled over into personal and family life. Only 14% completely separated work from family. Participant 1 stated "Once I leave from work, that's it. I turn it off. I don't think I make a conscious decision; it's just one of those roles you play." Participants described the greatest challenge to be the depletion of emotional energy. Of the 14 participants, 86% stated they experienced a drain on emotional energy. Participant 7 stated "A lot of what I'm doing during the day is mentally stressful." Participant 5 stated "Some of my work, it seems to be an easy task, but it's not truly an easy task. You've really got to think about it. I am not a fast thinker." Participant 6 stated "When you're in an environment where

there's so many different personalities, it can really drain you." In work, environmental circumstances threaten or deplete emotional energy (Boekhorst et al., 2017).

Limitations of the Study

For this current study, I explored participants' lived experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon of managing energy while at work. There were several limitations in the current study. Trustworthiness was a limitation. I attempted to mitigate any personal bias by sharing my experiences of trying to manage my energy in previous supervisory positions. This strategy helped achieve credibility in my study. This study included 14 female supervisors working in the public sector in the NCR. With this small population, it was difficult to achieve generalizability. The findings of the current study are not transferable to other populations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited a researcher is responsible for producing results designed to transfer judgements regarding the phenomenon under study. Confirmability is an attempt to mitigate and control potential biases (Maxwell, 2013). Through reflexivity, I considered and reflected on my personal experiences. My goal was to reduce my personal biases.

In phenomenological studies, a researcher gathers first-hand data from participants (Yin, 2011). In this current study, I relied on self-reported accounts of experiences from the participants. This method of data collection is a limitation because participants may have embellished or exaggerated their experiences or may not have had a clear recollection of past experiences. The data collection method was a limitation. I used semi-structured interviews to gain insight into the various experiences of the participants. This method is useful in that it allows the researcher to ask probing

questions; however, the researcher may not have control the environment in which interviews are conducted (Yin, 2011). I conducted face-to-face interviews as well as teleconferences. For interviews conducted via a telephone, a researcher is unable to gather additional information from non-verbal cues (Yin, 2011). This is a limitation because I was not able to observe body language to assess a participant's comfort with the interview questions or confidence in their response. The mode of the interviews did not influence or affect the quality and content of the data collection.

Snowball sampling is a limitation (see Patton, 2015). I did not identify this method of recruitment and data collection in Chapter 1. Potential participants were identified through personal and professional networking. All the participants met the criteria outlined in the study. I employed these various strategies to limit potential weaknesses in the study.

Recommendations

A review of the literature revealed an opening for further exploration of energy management in the workplace. Literature on the concept of managing one's energy resources for performance was scant (Cole et al., 2012; Hunter & Wu, 2016; Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014. Of the studies addressing recovery and energy management, most focused on strategies occurring during time away from the work environment (Bennett et al., 2016; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005). In this current study, I explored the experiences of managing and replenishing personal energy while at work.

There are many opportunities for future research on the phenomenon of managing energy while at work. The first research question examined the experiences of women

trying to manage their energy while at work. Research shows stress manifests itself differently between genders (Kausar, 2017; Kersch). Men and women may also approach managing energy differently. Future qualitative research could include an exploration and comparison of energy management based on gender.

In the current study, participants shared experiences of feeling overwhelmed when emotional energy resources were low; however, most shared experiences of recognizing the deficiency and using strategies to complete work. The participants delegated work, refrained from making critical work decisions, isolated themselves, or took breaks to refresh and replenish emotional energy. Findings in the current study identified the negative impact of having insufficient emotional energy. Participants expressed feelings of frustration. Emotional intelligence (EI) describes the ability to recognize and manage one's emotions. The components of EI include self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, social skills, and empathy (Rani & Yadapadithaya, 2018). These factors are critical for managing emotional energy and influence how an individual interacts with others in the workplace. Future research could include an exploration of the relationship between emotional energy and EI. A study could provide insight into whether emotional energy is a predictor of EI. Emotions help guide thinking, decision-making, and behavior (Anaza et al., 206; Atler et al., 2017).

The second research question of the current study explored the experiences of trying to replenish energy while at work. Energy loss is temporary, and the loss is reversible through various recovery strategies (Atler et al., 2017; Bennett et al., 2016; Hunter & Wu, 2016; Sonnentag et al., 2014). These strategies allow individuals to

recover energy by managing current resources or by obtaining new ones. Johnson et al. (2013) found that the stress management strategies of older employees were effective in managing emotional energy and exhaustion. Future quantitative research could include an exploration into the unique experiences of replenishing energy from a multigenerational perspective. Contemporary organizations have multigenerational workforces (Johnson et al., 2013). Each generation brings different perspectives, life experiences, values, and styles of communicating (Johnson et al., 2013).

The use of job crafting or design allows employees to design work tasks to fit their skill sets and the work environment (Gordon et al., 2018). As economies move away from manufacturing-based companies to knowledge- and customer-serviced based companies, leadership is collaborating with employees to increase productivity and performance (Gordon et al., 2018). Job roles and responsibilities may be nebulous. Management depends on employees to fill the void between explicit work requirements and expected actions and behaviors (Demerouti et al., 2015). Employees are empowered to make decisions regarding the daily operation of work units (see Demerouti et al., 2015). The literature supports the concept of job-crafting as a mechanism for increasing performance, motivation, and overall well-being (Demerouti et al., 2015; Gordon et al., 2018; Jalonen et al., 2015). Redesigning job demands and resources results in a positive state of mind and increased vigor or energy (Karatepe & Eslamlou, 2017). An exploration into the relationship between job-crafting and personal energy resources might contribute to the literature on energy management, occupational health, and performance.

The third research question considered perceived challenges or obstacles to managing and replenishing energy. The inability to mentally detach from work negatively impacts recovery efforts (Sonnentag & Kuehnel, 2016). Psychological detachment is a key component of recovering energy. (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Dettmers et al. (2014) examined how extended work availability prevents psychological detachment. In the current study, participants shared experiences of being unable to disengage mentally from work responsibilities or thoughts of work demands. Studies show women face additional challenges when trying to balance work and home responsibilities and prevent spillover effects (Kausar, 2017; Kersh, 2018; Laba & Geldenhuys, 2018; Mansour & Tremblay, 2016). Future research could include an exploration of the relationship between extended work availability, work-life balance, and personal energy management.

Implications and Recommendations for Positive Social Change

My intent in this current study was to explore the experiences of female supervisors trying to manage and replenish energy while at work. There was limited current literature on managing personal energy resources during normal work hours. Energy is required to accomplish work. Without sufficient stores of mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual energy, individuals may not be able to perform at optimal levels. The potential impact for positive social change is evident at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. In this section, I focused on the implications and recommendations for practice for the individual and the organization and provided theoretical implications. These implications and recommendations aligned with the literature in this study.

Impact for the Individual

Female supervisors benefit from increased self-awareness of the role of energy in performance and well-being. Individuals do not think about energy resources until they perceive a change in their energy (Berman, 2005). Recognizing the importance of having high energy and understanding the need to manage and replenish it after it is depleted is important (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Studies show engaging in recovery mitigates the loss of energy and helps build new energy sources (Boekhorst et al., 2017; De Bloom et al., 2017; Sonnentag et al., 2014; Zilstra et al., 2014). The dynamic process of recovery is achieved through engaging in strategies of psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery of experiences, and control (Cranley et al., 2016; Ragsdale & Beehr, 2016; Xanthopoulou et al., 2014). The implications for female supervisors are numerous. Having high energy results in vigor and builds resiliency. This resiliency is associated with performance. High energy yields confidence and self-efficacy (Geue, 2018). In this current study, participants stated having high energy motivated them to perform at higher levels and increased the desire to engage with others. Conversely, participants understood having low energy negatively affected decision-making and interpersonal relationships with others in the workplace (see Judge et al., 2017). Managing and replenishing psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual energy contribute to the overall well-being of supervisors and other employees at work (Kim et al., 2017; Kinnunen et al., 2015). Personal energy is required for work. It is important for supervisors to understand that the loss of energy is temporary and reversible. Managing and replenishing energy

help foster high performance, increased engagement, and greater well-being for female supervisors (Kim et al., 2017).

Recommendations for the individual include thinking of energy as a valued resource. Just as a supervisor needs financial resources or personnel to complete the job, the supervisor should consider personal energy as a vital resource for performance. Engaging in recovery to manage energy should occur prior to the loss of energy (Berman, 2005). Supervisors should incorporate intermittent recovery strategies of psychological detachment, control, mastery of experiences, or relaxation into the workday to manage energy while at work (Sonnentag et al., 2014).

Impact for the Organization

Organizations depend on employees to produce and meet organizational goals. There is an impact at the organizational level. In this study, participants shared experiences of trying to manage and replenish energy. Leaders can learn from their successes and challenges. Organizations have an opportunity to develop initiatives encouraging employees to manage energy (Judge et al., 2017. Restructuring work and the work environment may facilitate increased energy management. Collaborating with employees to allow them to design their jobs to meet personal skills empowers employees increasing performance, engagement, and job satisfaction (Hunter & Wu, 2016; Ju et al., 2016; Karatepe & Eslamlou, 2017). It also gives employees the discretion and latitude to incorporate recovery into the workday to manage personal energy (Karatepe & Eslamlou, 2017).

Leaders are now considering the importance of human sustainability (Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2017; Stan, 2018). Corporate leaders have traditionally considered economic, environmental, and corporate social responsibilities for the organization and are discovering a strategy for survival should include the maintenance, development, and regeneration of human resources (Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2017). Human sustainability is dependent upon on employees having sufficient stores of personal energy (Stan, 2018).

Organizational leaders can impact employees by promulgating policies to foster a culture of energy management. Loehr & Schwartz (2003) described the need for a paradigm shift. The traditional paradigm of managing time could be replaced with one focusing on managing energy (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). With a focus on recovery strategies, leaders could implement policies allowing flexible work schedules, telework, and time for physical fitness or other types of breaks (Ginoux et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2013). Insight into the concept of energy management might advance interventions such as resiliency training, mindfulness training, or other employee development programs (Goswami & Burnell, 2016; Munoz et al., 2018; Pluta & Rudawska, 2016). These initiatives promote employee well-being and work-life balance and help foster an organizational culture that values both the workforce and productivity (Agosti et al., 2017; Zacher et al., 2014). These steps signal an organization's intent to create organizational effectiveness and efficiency by helping employees manage, generate, sustain, and match energy output to energy stores. Investment into educating and developing employees on energy management facilitates human sustainability and

strengthens the organization (Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2017). The impact of positive social change at the individual and organizational levels results in positive implications for society.

Theoretical Implications

This current study on energy management was insightful regarding its theoretical implications. The results in the current study help advance theory in the area of managing personal energy. In this this current study, I examined the experiences of female supervisors trying to manage and replenish energy while at work. I considered the problem of supervisors failing to manage or replenish depleted energy while still at work. This research contributes to the current body of knowledge addressing the phenomenon of energy management. There was a gap in the current literature on managing energy during the workday. In this current study, I focused the experiences of females, as studies showed women experience and manifest stress differently than male counterparts (see Kersh, 2018). This difference may result in varying experiences and strategies of trying to manage energy (Kausar, 2017). The results of this current study add to the empirical body of literature related to the COR theory and the ER theory.

Hobfoll's (2001) COR theory is commonly used as a framework in studies for examining the impact of stress on resources. The significance of this theory to this current study is it highlights the importance of developing and maintaining personal resources to mitigate the loss of energy. When supervisors have an awareness and the self-efficacy to influence the environment, they can combat the energy loss and perform at higher levels **(**Bandura, 2001; Kim & Niu, 2017). The ER theory posits doing work

results in unavoidable physiological, emotional, and behavioral responses. These responses can be temporary and reversed through recovery efforts (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). The significance of ER theory to this study is it contextualizes the importance of regulating energy usage with intermittent recovery efforts or experiences. The findings of the current study revealed participants felt overwhelmed when failing to set aside time during the workday to recover (Rhee & Kim, 2016; van Hoof et al., 2018).

Use of these theoretical frameworks in this current study provided an insightful way to explore the importance of having sufficient personal energy resources for work. Individuals perform at higher levels when they have sufficient resources (Berman, 2005). When energy resources are depleted during work, there are psychological, physiological, or emotional responses or consequences (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Intermittent recovery mitigates the loss and lessens the consequences of the loss of energy (Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008; Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). The intersection of the two theories allowed me to approach the problem in a unique way. In this current study, I examined the role of energy in building mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual capacities and the role of recovery in managing and sustaining these capacities (Berman, 2005; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003; Sonnentag et al, 2017).

Conclusion

The central phenomenon of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was energy management. Managing and replenishing personal energy resources are vital to an individual's performance and overall well-being. In this current study, I examined the experiences of female supervisors trying to manage and replenish energy while still at

work. I also explored the participants' perceived challenges to managing energy while still at work. Much of the contemporary literature focused on managing energy outside of the work. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of managing energy in the workplace. As energy is used at work, it is important to find ways to intermittently restore it to prepare for the future work demands (Berman, 2005).

The findings of the study suggest participants found ways to decompress, reenergize, and refocus on their work after experiencing the depletion of energy resources. The types of intermittent breaks varied amongst the participants. The strategies included interacting with others, delegating work, isolating themselves, taking a brief walk, or moving to a different task. Most noted external challenges to managing and replenishing energy at work. These challenges included work overload, work life balance, and the needs of the organization; however, the participants; commitment to excel and the desire to make a difference were driving factors in trying to overcome obstacles.

The results of this current study advance the current body of knowledge regarding energy management. The themes identified in the findings aided in addressing the three research questions. The participants shared similar typical day experiences. These included the using mental and emotional energy, interacting with others, engaging in physical activity, and relying on spirituality. Participants used energy to perform work. Participants' motivation aided completion of work demands. The findings revealed participants developed strategies to match energy output to resources. Focusing on the tasks, prioritizing work, and marshalling the skills of subordinates were important. Participants shared experiences of trying to replenish energy through recovery efforts.

Participants recognized the internal and external factors creating challenges to energy management. Individuals should develop styles and strategies for managing energy at work. Establishing stable and consistent patterns of behavior pertaining to matching personal energy resources to work demands will facilitate a paradigm shift to managing energy.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Details:

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Interview Code Name: _____

Interview Date/Time: _____

Interview Location: _____

Protocol Administrative Actions:

1. Collect signed consent form prior to start of interview.
2. Provide a brief summary and the background of the study.
3. As the researcher, share personal connection or experience with the study.
4. Provide participant a signed and dated copy of confidentiality statement
5. Inform participant the interview will be audio-recorded and professionally transcribed.
6. Inform participant a copy of their transcript will be provided to them prior to data analysis for member checking.
7. If requested, provide a summary of results of the study.

Demographic Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. How long have you worked in your current position?
4. How long have you supervised others?

5. Do you work for a federal agency in the National Capital Region (NCR) which includes the District of Columbia, and jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia? There are numerous federal agencies in the NCR. As such, providing a listing would not be helpful; however, the large number may yield varied experiences with rich data.
6. Do you have a general understanding of the concept of energy as described in the informed consent form?

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your typical day.
2. How do you define energy in relation to performing the job?
3. Describe your level of vigor when you arrive at work.
4. How do you recognize and gauge your energy levels?
5. What is it like to experience a state of *high* energy? How is that expressed in your work?
6. What is it like to experience a state of *low* energy? How is that expressed in your work?
7. When your energy is *high,* what is it like to manage it to ensure you have personal energy to continue to perform and meet future work demands?
8. When your energy is *low*, what is it like to restore it to ensure you have personal energy to meet future work demands?
9. What is it like to handle aspects of your position as a senior manager when experiencing *high* energy?

10. What is it like to handle aspects of your position as a senior manager when experiencing low energy?
11. How often during the workday do you take actions to renew your energy, and what types of activities, strategies, or experiences do you engage in to do so?
12. If you have found a strategy which helps to restore energy, what is that strategy? Why does this strategy work?
13. What is your perception of the challenges or obstacles you may face in trying to manage or replenish your energy while at work?
14. What is it like to match energy output with your stores of energy?
15. What does it mean to you to experience feelings of vigor and vitality while at work?

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Posting Title: Seeking participants for a study on Energy Management

Posting Description: I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University. I am seeking participants for a study entitled, "Managing Energy as Experienced by Female Federal Senior Managers: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study". The Walden University Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the study (IRB # 12-03-19-0660542). It expires in December 2020.

The study seeks to examine the experiences of women trying to manage and replenish personal energy while at work. Your participation in this research study may be instrumental in providing insight regarding the importance of developing a conscious and intentional awareness of the role of personal energy in regulating activities, behaviors, and interactions in the workplace.

I am seeking various points of view from women with diverse backgrounds. If you are interested in participating in this study and meet the following criteria, I welcome your assistance. Thank you for your consideration.

What are the criteria?

- Participant must be a female.
- Participant must be a supervisor.
- Participant must have worked in current position for at least one year.
- Participant must be a supervisor working in a Federal agency in the National Capital Region (Washington District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland

- Participant should have a basic understanding of the concept of energy as defined below.

What is energy?

At its most basic, energy is the amount of vigor or vitality an individual has to do work. Energy may have mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual dimensions. Mental energy describes the capacity for managers to concentrate, show resiliency, and be flexible in the performance of responsibilities and duties. Emotional energy is the capacity to manage emotions in the conduct of performance. Spiritual energy is a personal set of values motivating and guiding performance, actions, and behaviors. Spiritual energy drives commitment. Physical energy is the primary source of vigor and alertness and is the fundamental source for mental acuity, emotional equilibrium, strength, and endurance. Nutrition, fitness, quality of sleep, and intermittent recovery determine the degree of physical energy. Energy management is a deliberate and conscious effort to balance the expenditure and restoration of energy. Work requires the use of energy. As an individual works, mental, emotional, spiritual, or physical energy resources are depleted. To prepare for future work demands, it is important to replenish or restore these depleted resources. Different strategies may be used to restore depleted energy. As an example, restoring physical energy through exercise and proper sleep may provide the energy needed to perform better. The different types of energy have the potential to affect or influence the others and may manifest themselves in an individual's actions and behaviors during the course of the workday.

Upon agreeing to participate,

What is the role of a participant?

Upon agreeing to participate, each participant will be asked to sign an informed consent form. This form outlines the purpose for the study, provides details on the research process, describes the voluntary nature of the study, discusses risk and benefits, describes the confidentiality, and confirms an agreement to participate in the study. Each participant will be asked to take part in a one-on-one informal interview. The interview session will last between 45 – 60 minutes and will take place at a mutually-agreed-upon time and place. The session will be audio-recorded and professionally transcribed. Participants will have the opportunity to review the transcript to validate the content or provide clarification, in needed. If a follow-up interview is needed to clarify information provided during the interview, the participant will be contacted. Participant will be assigned a unique code or name to protect their identities during the course of the study. All transcripts, field notes, and other study materials will be protected and/or locked in container for security of data.