

## **Once Again! What Makes up Work Vitality? Refining the Construct and its Characteristics through a Qualitative Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

*The concept of vitality, particularly work vitality, has been extensively explored in the existing literature, yet a comprehensive conceptualization and definition of this concept is not available. Based on the conservation of resource theory and the concept of salutogenesis, this exploratory study defined and studied the nature of the construct 'work vitality' as a psychological resource. Using a qualitative design, a comprehensive conceptual model of work vitality was developed. Thirty-three semi-structured interactive interviews were conducted. Based on social constructionism, thematic analysis was undertaken using the NVIVO software. The findings revealed that work vitality is a relatively constant, trait-like positive and energetic mindset characterized by the perceptions of aliveness, well-being and functioning at work. Five elements of work vitality, that is, perceptiveness, constancy, accessibility, restorability, and transferability were identified through qualitative empirical evidence. Hence, the current study contributes to the existing literature by explicating the nature of work vitality and identifying its elements. Finally, implications and future directions are discussed.*

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## 1. Introduction

It is crucial to study the positive states, attitudes and behaviors at work because they affect employees' productivity and performance (Nielsen, Hrivnak, & Shaw, [2009](#)). Recent research in the field of positive organizational scholarship (POS) emphasizes positive dynamics such as excellence, thriving, resilience, job crafting, vitality at work (Malik, [2012](#)), meaningfulness and high quality relationships (Carmeli, [2009](#)). Organizations strive for acquiring healthy, energetic, engaged and zealous employees (de Jonge & Peeters, [2019](#)) because they have higher performance (Ahmed, Umrani, Zaman, Rajput, & Aziz, [2020](#)), innovation, creativity and work involvement (Ahmed, [2017](#)) levels. The current research addresses the aforementioned need to study the positive states of employees. It explains the dynamics and nuances of work vitality and answers the question "what makes up work vitality?"

Literature includes the study of similar constructs (Bishwas, [2015](#); Butt, Abid, Arya, & Farooqi, [2020](#); Op den Kamp, Tims, Bakker, & Demerouti, [2018](#); Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, [2005](#)). However, the current study differentiates work vitality from these different but related constructs. Previously, various accounts of work vitality made it difficult to perceive it as a comprehensive concept. Some studies used the term work vitality but did not define it (van Scheppingen et al., [2015](#)). Others applied the vitality scale to measure work vitality (DeJoy, Della, Vandenberg, & Wilson, [2010](#)) or utilized a subset of work engagement scale to measure work vitality (Schaufeli & Bakker, [2003](#); Wohlers, Hartner-Tiefenthaler, & Hertel, [2019](#)). Still others defined it but did not explain its nature (Malik, MacIntosh, & McMaster, [2015](#)).

The objective of the current study is to provide a comprehensive concept of work vitality by explicating its definition, elements and its model. Furthermore, it strives to understand the nature and characteristics of work vitality and presents an overall framework which is inclusive of the current literature and grounded in theory. The current study contributes to the body of knowledge by enhancing work vitality as a distinctive and subjective concept with

different contributing elements. It is also significant because it presents an inclusive model of work vitality that explains the processes happening with employees in an organizational context.

## **2. Literature Review**

POS examines what characterizes the best of human conditions (Cameron & Dutton, [2003](#)). Work vitality indicates the most positive and the finest human state at the workplace. Literature depicts that employees' vitality is a part of POS (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, [2003](#)). Therefore, work vitality as a concept emerges from the POS paradigm.

### **2.1. Vitality**

In the field of psychology, the concept of energy has been a paradox throughout its history. Initially, (Rapaport, [1960](#)) gave the 'economic viewpoint' that everybody has some psychic energy derived from Eros, the life drivers. He suggested that the energy spent in defense exhausts the person's general store of energy which incurs functional costs. Other psychodynamic theorists have developed various energy related constructs. However, despite the differences, they agree on the idea that conflict resolution and integration are associated with increased energy (Ryan & Frederick, [1997](#)).

Energy concepts have been highlighted variously in eastern philosophies, which argue that energy can be catalyzed by spiritual, meditational, and/or physical practices such as zazen, yoga, reiki and acupuncture (Cleary, [1991](#)). These practices are also referred to as 'calm energy' (Thayer, [1996](#)), which is a non-tense state of energy, alertness and vitality (Nix, Ryan, Manly, & Deci, [1999](#)). Moreover, the Chinese concept of 'Chi' characterizes an unlimited source of energy which the individual has to realize within himself (Seitz, Olson, Locke, & Quam, [1990](#)). These perspectives on vitality have received very little attention in empirical studies (Nix et al., [1999](#)). Historically, vitality has been studied mostly in medical science, psychometrics and psychology in relation to the moods and well-being of human beings. For example, (Keyes, [2002](#)) measured mental health as an indicator of vitality and positive functioning in life. Stewart and Ware ([1992](#)) seconded that the subjective feelings of energy are positively related to mental health. Emotional vitality is identified as a sense of energy (Kubzansky & Thurston, [2007](#)),

emotional vigor (Penninx et al., [2000](#)) and positive well-being. It acts as a buffer against adverse health outcomes (Penninx et al., [2000](#)).

Vitality is referred to as a positive and subjective experience of having energy (Nix et al., [1999](#)), feeling alive (Spreitzer et al., [2005](#)), fully functioning and having vigor (McNair, [1971](#); Nix et al., 1999). It is recognized also as having a positive and energetic arousal (Quinn & Dutton, [2005](#); Thayer, [1990](#)). Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor ([1977](#)) argued that vitality can be measured objectively (through actual statistics) and subjectively (through individual perception). Objective / physical vitality is mostly related to medical studies. It is the subjective vitality that concerns social sciences and the current study.

## **2.2. Work Vitality**

Ryan and Frederick ([1997](#)) referred to an individual's vitality as a dynamic phenomenon relevant to the mental and physical aspects of functioning. According to them, a vital person is energetic, feels alive and remains fully functioning. Lavrusheva ([2020](#)) analyzed the existing literature on vitality and concluded that vitality is a positive and fluctuating psychological energy that is subjective to the will of a person who can regulate and harness it. The concept of work vitality is a similar concept except that it is applicable in an organizational and work context.

The concept of work vitality is based on the theory of Salutogenesis (Antonovsky, [1979](#)). This theory is based on a positive ideology and it was introduced in health sciences much earlier than the positive movement of organizational sciences. It emphasizes the factors that bring health ease rather than disease. Pathogenesis concentrates on the 'origin of disease'. However, salutogenesis is concerned with the 'origin of health'. It identifies factors that promote the health and well-being of individuals, especially under challenging circumstances. Similarly, work vitality is concerned with the subjective perception of employees about their health, well-being and energy, that is, how alive, energetic and fully functioning they feel. Thus, the current study posits that work vitality is based on the theoretical grounds of salutogenesis from health sciences.

In organizational studies, the conservation of resource theory (Holmgren, Tirone, Gerhart, & Hobfoll, [2017](#)) appropriately explains the phenomenon of work vitality. It highlights that employees make an effort to access, retain and efficiently utilize those resources they deem valuable (Baruch, Grimland, & Vigoda-Gadot, [2014](#)). They continuously attempt to maximize and maintain resources, while contributing to their positive sense of self, well-being and peace (Hobfoll, [2011](#)). Likewise, work vitality is a valuable psychological resource that employees want to access, retain and maximize as it contributes towards their positive sense of self and well-being.

According to the conservation of resource theory, employees spend resources to gain more resources (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, [2018](#)). Thus, energy is efficiently utilized at work to gain more resources. Employees with a large amount of resources are more capable of resource gain (Hobfoll et al., [2018](#)). Subsequently, employees with greater vitality at work are better able to restore their energy.

Vitality at work was defined previously by (Malik et al., [2015](#)) as the “subjective state of energy and enthusiasm, where individuals perceive themselves as fully functioning, physically and psychologically, and are ready to commit their abilities towards work in a positive and enabling environment” (pg. 702). This primary study theorizes the unique concept of individual vitality at work. Nevertheless, it is an exploratory study and does not explain the nature and characteristics of the said construct.

van Scheppingen et al. ([2015](#)) used the concept of vitality at work in their study. However, the drawback of their study is that it used a subset of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale to measure work vitality. Wohlers et al. ([2019](#)) followed in their footsteps. DeJoy et al. ([2010](#)) only used the term ‘vitality at work’ in their study but considered it as just ‘vitality’ and measured it through the medical vitality scale (Ware Jr & Sherbourne, [1992](#)). ‘Feelings of vitality’ (Carmeli, [2019](#)) is the nearest construct to work vitality. Nevertheless, this study’s drawback is that it considers ‘feelings of vitality’ as just the ‘perception of vitality’. Work vitality, on the other hand, is a much more complex phenomenon and has specific elements. Perception of vitality is just one part of work vitality. Boldt ([2020](#)) qualitatively explained the importance of vitality in

literacy classrooms. However, the current study concentrates on the work vitality of employees in an organizational setting.

### **2.3. How Work Vitality Discriminates from Other Constructs**

Work vitality is a separate construct from vitality, subjective vitality, proactive vitality management, feelings of vitality, thriving at work, professional vitality and organizational vitality. Vitality is the energized, healthy and active state of an individual in any circumstances or environment. Whereas, work vitality specifically corresponds to the organizational context with individuals as employees and the environment as the workplace. Subjective vitality (Ryan & Frederick, [1997](#)) is the subjective evaluation of an individual's well-being and the energy available to the self. On the other hand, work vitality is a construct related to an employee's positive feelings of aliveness, well-being and health, at work in an organizational context.

Proactive vitality management (Op den Kamp et al., [2018](#)) is an individual's proactive and energetic behavior directed towards giving optimal performance at work. It is a one-dimensional construct in which all items are about the behaviors directed towards improving performance. On the contrary, work vitality is a mental state at work, rather than a behavior directed towards work. It is a mindset triggered by positive personality traits and it leads employees towards positive attitudes and behaviors.

Thriving at work is a psychological state that involves a sense of vitality and learning (Spreitzer et al., [2005](#)). Thriving at work includes learning, which is a long-term process. Work vitality does not include learning. Secondly, thriving at work is based on the self-adaptation theory, whereas work vitality is theoretically based on the theory of salutogenesis and POS (Malik et al., [2015](#)). Employees who possess professional vitality consistently perform with passion, vigor, and depict satisfaction at their chosen profession (Harvey, [2002](#)). Professional vitality is long-term and directed towards the employees' career or profession, whereas work vitality is directed towards the current work of the employees. Harvey ([2002](#)) posited that the concept of professional vitality is derived from the career development theory. In contrast, the concept of work vitality is based on POS. Organizational vitality is a collective construct related to an organization's health and growth (Bishwas, [2015](#)). It is

determined by the organization's financial, intellectual and creative growth. Work vitality, instead, is an individual level construct which explains the vitality of a particular employee in the organization.

### **3. Methodology**

The current exploratory research clarifies the construct of work vitality and identifies its elements. The philosophical stance (Creswell, [2013](#)) of social constructionism was used in the current study to understand the experiences of individuals in the society and to establish the meaning of the term 'work vitality' based on how they understood it.

#### **3.1. Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of the study. The sample included professionals whose work related activities involved researching, motivating, promoting, consulting and/or facilitating. These professionals worked in the field of positive attitudes of employees and had prior background knowledge of the subject. They were better able to realize the nuances of work vitality. The individuals selected for the study were found through the internet, published articles, as well as through their ResearchGate and LinkedIn profiles. We requested seventy-four candidates to participate in the study through email and telephone. Forty-one of them replied affirmatively, although some of them could not participate due to time constraints. Finally, thirty-three of them gave interviews.

The sample included thirty-three professionals who taught, did research or dealt with the positive attitudes, states and/or behaviors of employees. The details of the participants are given in the appendix (Table 1). Their designations included professor, lecturer, head of department of business studies, head of bank, CEO, principal and director. Their educational qualifications included PhD, MPhil and Master degrees. Years of experience ranged from two to forty years. The participants' age ranged from twenty-six to sixty-six years. They belonged to countries such as America, China, Australia, Finland, United Arab Emirates, Belarus and Pakistan. Pseudonyms were used for the participants (P1 to P33) to maintain their anonymity and confidentiality. Only the researcher possess the actual information of the participants. The names of the institutes,

countries and places used by the interview participants were also coded for anonymity.

### **3.2. Data Collection**

Semi-structured interactive interviews were used to collect the data. The language of the interviews was English or Urdu, whichever the interviewee preferred. Twenty-two interviews were conducted face to face, nine by telephone and two by email (in written form). Interviews were audio recorded and verbatim transcripts were created while keeping alive the interviewee's expression. The transcriptions translated from Urdu to English were double checked by a professional interpreter to avoid any discrepancies. Transcribed interviews were then re-read and matched with the audio recordings to avoid any errors in the data.

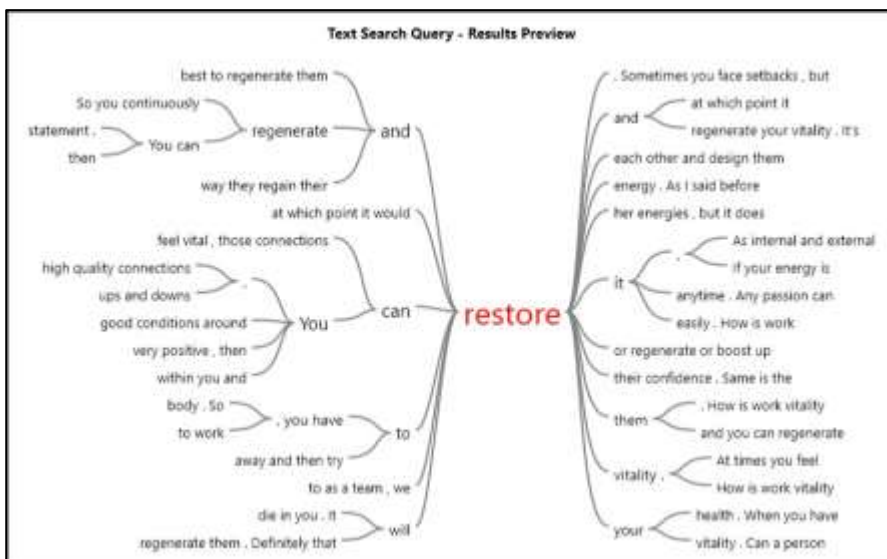
Boddy and Boddy (2016) argued that data saturation helps reach some degree of generalization in qualitative research. It becomes repetitive and exhaustive only when no new information, themes, data, and/or codes appear from the additional participants. In the current study, we tried to reach this thematic exhaustion (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). After the analysis of twenty-two interviews, further interviews were conducted and the data was coded. However, by then data was falling into the already existing codes and any new themes were hardly emerging. Still, we continued with the interviews until achieving the maximum saturation. Ultimately, the study included thirty-three interviews.

### **3.3. Analysis**

Thematic analysis (Miles, Huberman, Huberman, & Huberman, 1994) was done using the NVIVO software. Firstly, all files of the interviews and related files were added to the software. After transcribing the interviews and re-reading the transcriptions, the researcher gained a general idea of the generated themes. Word frequency query (Figure 1) highlighted the frequently occurring words. The researcher created twenty-seven nodes of different themes initially according to the participants' descriptions of work vitality. Through open coding of the interviews, the number of these primary nodes increased to thirty-one. These nodes were linked and clustered together by axial coding. Finally, there were four underlying themes with thirty nodes and sub-nodes.







*Figure 2: Example of Text Search Query used during the Analysis for Restorability Element*

### 3.4. Reliability and Trustworthiness

To increase the reliability of the findings, constructive and evaluative techniques (Bowen, 2008) were used. We used researcher triangulation and debriefing during the analysis (constructive technique) and post hoc (evaluative technique). The supervisor and the fellow researchers were contacted twice during the analysis. Their feedback was incorporated twice which augments the confirmability of the findings of the current study.

Deviant case analysis was done to improve the credibility of the findings. We examined and analyzed the contradictory responses and also explained them in the findings to illustrate how they strengthen our stance. The current study is dependable because of the audio taped interviews and verbatim transcripts. All transcripts were re-read and re-matched with the audio. A professional interpreter checked the translated transcriptions (translated from Urdu to English) to ensure that nothing was lost during translation. The study’s transferability was enhanced by ‘thick descriptions’ of employees’ cognitions, attitudes, behavior and experiences. Resultantly, the findings of the study are rich.

## **4. Findings**

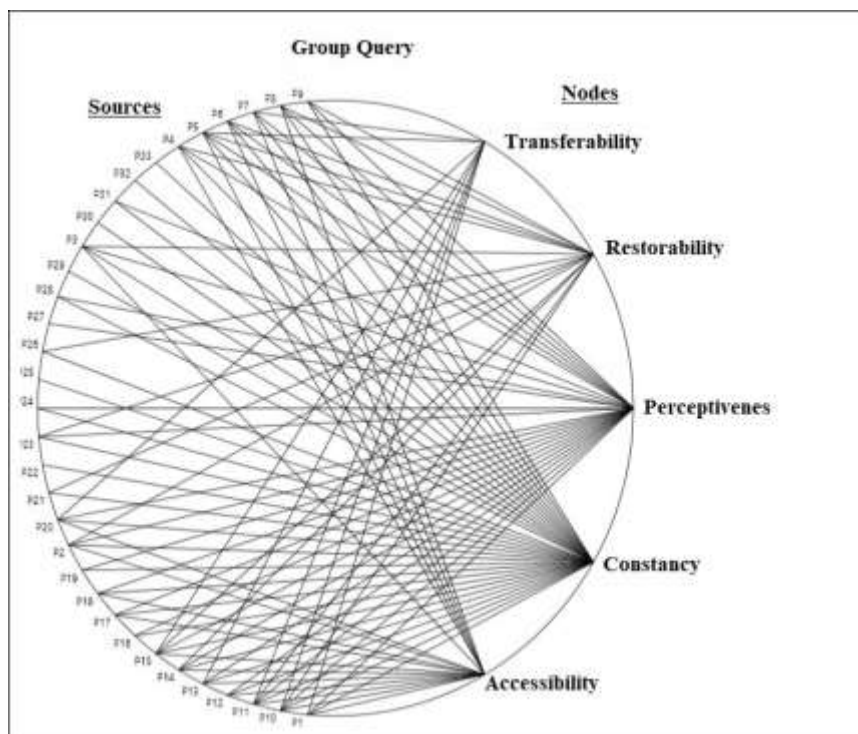
### **4.1. Work Vitality: the Concept**

Vitality is embedded in a socially constructed environment (Spreitzer et al., [2005](#)). Work vitality is considered as an organizational resource in a structured environment, where employees come and do their tasks (Owens, Baker, Sumpter, & Cameron, [2016](#)). There has to be an organizational context where a person should be employed to be studied for work vitality.

Descriptions of the participants of this research about what constitutes work vitality were rich and explicit. They provided us with emphatic and comprehensive arguments regarding work vitality. They identified work vitality using phrases such as the positive state of mind at work, reservoir or sense of energy at the workplace, subjective feeling and vibration of energy, having sustained positive energy (Prem, Ohly, Kubicek, & Korunka, [2017](#)), alive at work (Kark & Carmeli, 2009a; Ryan & Frederick, [1997](#)), working with passion or zeal, working at the highest productive level, and working where a person is totally (mentally and physically) active (Carmeli, Ben-Hador, Waldman, & Rupp, [2009](#); van Scheppingen et al., [2015](#)). de Jonge and Peeters ([2019](#)) argued that vital employees have a “high level of energy, resilience and proactivity.” Vitality is an invisible and intangible reality that emerges from the mind, thus remains a psychological resource. It is a combination of spiritual, mental and emotional energies. When mind, heart and body are all in one tandem -in sync- and there is lesser dissonance (P11).

### **4.2. Elements of Work Vitality**

The various participants' accounts revealed much concordance and conformed to five underlying elements or characteristics of work vitality. These included perceptiveness, constancy, accessibility, restorability and transferability. Figure 3 shows the participants' concordant and complementary responses about each element of work vitality.



**Figure 3.** Elements of Work Vitality (Group Query)

#### 4.2.1. Perceptiveness

Kark and Carmeli (2009a) used the terms ‘vitality’ and ‘perceived energy’ interchangeably. P15 pointed out that perceptions create reality. Employees have work vitality when they perceive themselves to be vital and energetic. Push to work energetically comes from the inside rather than being forced to do so (Nix et al., 1999). Supporting this argument, the participants highlighted that work vitality comes from inside a person when they perceive themselves as energetic. It comes naturally to employees who generally have very positive and energetic personalities. It is frequently and habitually seen in them. According to the participants, being full of energy, passion, and life contributes to maintaining a positive and energetic tempo at the workplace. For example, P9 referred to the last stage cancer survivor who became CEO of a multinational company because of her energetic personality and vitality at work. Secondly, employees experience

work vitality as a mindset, a state of mind, a condition and/or a phase. It is accessible to employees as a positive emotional state (Kark & Carmeli, 2009a) and is cognitively perceived. P8 pointed out that it has a cognitive component and an affective component. Hence, work vitality begins as a trait (P13) and is perceived and accessible as a cognitive and affective state.

Work vitality is a psychological resource that constitutes the feeling of aliveness (Kark & Carmeli, 2009a). According to the participants, mental strength, a sound and coherent mind (van Scheppingen et al., 2015), positive perception and optimism about oneself are indispensable for work vitality. Physical health does not matter; the perception of health matters, similar to the placebo effect (Micozzi, 2018; Robson, 2018). The participants mentioned many real life examples. For instance, P1 discussed a disabled man in a prominent position at a bank who radiated more energy than any average person. P13 talked about an army officer who wanted to participate in the Olympic shooting and, at the last minute, was called on duty. It happened thrice and the third time he lost his hand. However, he kept trying with the left hand and won the Olympic gold medal. Hence, employees having vitality traits perceive work vitality more consistently.

Negative perceptions, negative internal energy and a negative mindset do not let work vitality grow. Afshar Jahanshahi, Brem, and Gholami (2019) supported the claim that negative perceptions negatively impact employee vitality. Freud (1900) argued that if a person spends his energy in resistance, tension, and psychological conflict, it drains the total amount of energy he has. Therefore, “If one’s approach towards the work is pessimistic, then I think that it is impossible to complete a task” (P1). A person’s work vitality would not be persistent “until and unless he wants to get involved in the energy cycle” (P20). The cycle starts with the individuals keeping in view their vitality traits, then moves on to their cognitions, perceptions, mindset and finally, accessibility as a state.

#### **4.2.2. Constancy**

The second element of work vitality identified by the participants is its constancy. According to all responses, work vitality remains relatively constant and keeps evolving. It is not permanent because human energy level does not remain the same. A person’s energy reservoir is not unlimited. When energy is being

utilized in one place, it becomes deficient in another (Hobfoll et al., [2018](#)). Thus, the energy reservoir of employees can affect their work vitality. Moreover, organizational and individual environment is not the same all the time. Mood swings, unpleasant or pleasant news at the workplace, any personal problem, and the supervisor's attitude are some reasons that can influence work vitality. P14 stated that it depends on the employees' perception of what they feel is essential on the job. If they are getting those things, then vitality would be relatively constant.

On the other hand, work vitality is not temporary either. According to the participants, it also has some level of constancy. Vital and energetic personality traits spur work vitality in employees and help them sustain it for extended periods of time. In this case, work vitality has trait-like characteristics and employees can maintain it in the long-run. Moreover, internal focus, internal locus of control, drive and mental vitality also make work vitality last longer. Consequently, work vitality is neither temporary nor permanent. It is relatively constant.

#### **4.2.3. Accessibility**

Vitality is a psychological resource that a person controls and utilizes to perform specific tasks (Ryan & Deci, 2008). Op den Kamp, Bakker, Tims, and Demerouti ([2020](#)) argued that employees are not passive and reactive agents, instead they are active. Similarly, work vitality is always present within a person as an active state and always remains operational (P18). It depends upon their own will and locus of control regarding how much they access vitality and energy reserves within themselves. It only rests upon their perception. P1 said, "Access to work vitality is there; you just need to have the drive to access it."

Employees having an energetic personality are able to energize and vitalize themselves at work, effortlessly and naturally. They have an easier access to work vitality. P1 also said, "If vitality is your trait, you will have an easy access to work vitality and you would want to avail it." Similarly, according to the participants, positive perceptions, belief in oneself, can-do attitude and intrinsic motivation make access to work vitality very undemanding and straightforward. Quinn and Dutton ([2005](#)) argued that a life giving and optimistic person generates positive emotions and vitality.

On the other hand, if one's mind, heart and body are not in synchronization with each other, it becomes challenging to be vital. In this case, employees have to make an effort of will to access work vitality. Similarly, according to the participants, negativity, pessimism, negative attitude, scatter mindedness and apathy also hinder access to work vitality. In these situations, individuals employ different strategies to motivate themselves and to amass work vitality. These include sources like inspirational websites, stimulating movies, motivational videos and/or exercising.

#### **4.2.4. Restorability**

Another element of work vitality is its ability to restore and regenerate itself. According to the conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll et al., [2018](#)), any resource can be preserved, regenerated and restored. P11 said, "One's energy reservoir is from which one continuously derives energy. That reservoir of energy also regenerates and restores itself." According to P14, work vitality is a continuous process that thrives on itself and has a snowball effect.

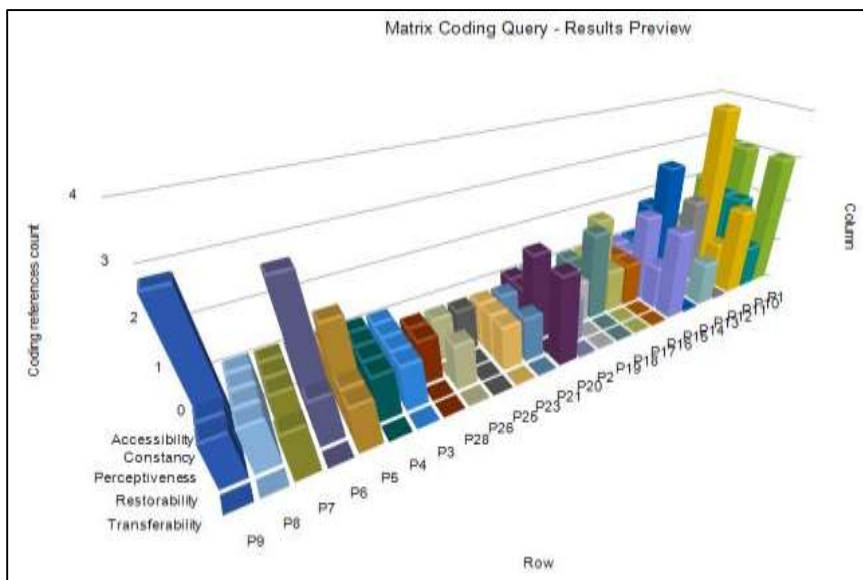
Certain contextual, physical and/or emotional factors can increase or decrease work vitality. According to the participants, positive cognition and will power restore and reinforce work vitality. Work vitality of those employees is easily restored who are appreciated and recognized for the work well done, get a good response from their boss, experience favorable circumstances and events around them and enjoy favorable organizational conditions. The participant's accounts also depict that even when employees face setbacks, work vitality restores itself. Summarizing the point P9 said, "As long as you are living, it is a game of regeneration and restoration."

#### **4.2.5. Transferability**

The last element of work vitality is its ability to transfer itself. Energy is transferable and it has been proven in metaphysics, physical sciences and social sciences. The laws of physics dictate that energy can change its form and transfers from one body to another. Conservation of energy theory asserts that energy transfers and changes form (Hendrich, [2011](#); Hobfoll et al., [2018](#)). Similarly, whether it is positive or negative energy radiated by an employee, surrounding employees are affected by it, whether they want to be or not. Since work vitality is a positive and energetic mindset of an

employee it is also transferable and highly contagious, according to most of the participants. At workplace, it transfers from supervisor to subordinate, from colleague to colleague, from leader to followers and from one group to another. The participants express work vitality as having a trickle down effect, emotional contagion effect and/or ripple effect. P11 and Quinn and Dutton (2005) argued that a life giving and optimistic person generates positive emotions and vitality in others. Thus, work vitality is a psychological resource that is contagious and transferable at the workplace.

The participants' accounts revealed that employees find energy and inspiration to work from their supervisors and other relations at the workplace. Conversely, when intense negative energy is transferred, it reduces work vitality. P11 pointed out, "If you spend a week with three or four negative people, then you would understand." Therefore, work vitality is crucial to sustain a favorable, energetic tempo at the workplace. P13 said, "If I am not energetic enough, then none of my teammates will be energetic." Figure 4 shows how often the participants discussed different elements of work vitality.



**Figure 4:** Elements of Work Vitality Mentioned by the Participants

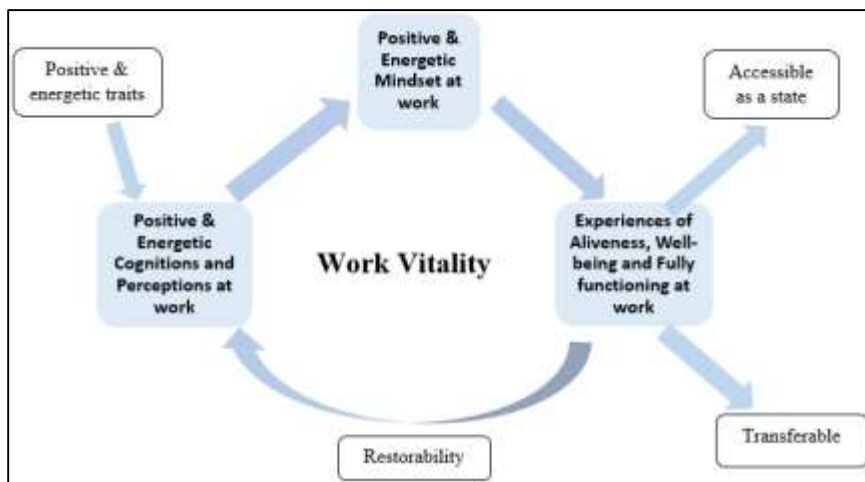


Henceforth, the model of work vitality is explicated that integrates all its elements mentioned above.

### **4.3. Model of Work Vitality**

The development of work vitality starts from the inner drive of employees. Their positive and energetic personality traits will trigger positive and energetic cognitions and perceptions. These cognitions and perceptions lead the employees into a positive and energetic mindset. Here, employees start experiencing aliveness and well-being. They are fully functioning and are aware of their energy and vitality. They access work vitality as a positive and affective state. DiGiuseppe and Froh (2002) support this argument that different cognitions facilitate different states of mind. Avey, Luthans, and Youssef (2010) also argue that positive cognitions of employees facilitate positive work states.

The employees' feelings of vitality, aliveness and well-being at work promote further positive and energetic perceptions and cognitions. Since positive work-related states lead to positive-energetic arousal at the workplace (Kark & Carmeli, 2009b). Therefore, work vitality is restored by employees themselves. Moreover, their positivity and energy are also transferred to other employees in the workplace. Figure 5 shows our resultant model. Pachankis (2007) cognitive-affective behavioral model also gives substance to our model (Figure 5) as he argues that human cognitions and affective states have two-way relationships. Cognitions lead to an affective state and vice versa. Similarly, the work vitality model also argues that positive and energetic cognitions at work enhance the energetic mindset and state of mind and vice versa.



**Figure 5: Model of Work Vitality**

After explaining work vitality model and its elements, a comprehensive definition of work vitality is given below.

#### 4.4. Work Vitality: Definition

“Work vitality refers to a relatively constant, trait-like, positive and energetic mindset with the perceptions of aliveness, well-being and functioning at work and the elements of restorability, transferability and accessibility as an active state.”

#### 5. Conclusion and Discussion

Work vitality of employees is fundamental for productive behaviors at work and safekeeping the interests of the organization. Research has been carried out on work vitality during previous years; however, only a limited number of studies and fewer qualitative researches are available about this construct. Our objective was to clarify the concept of work vitality and identify its elements. We defined work vitality as a relatively constant, trait-like, positive and energetic mindset with the perceptions of aliveness, well-being and fully functioning and the elements of restorability, transferability and accessibility as an active state. Moreover, work vitality model also explains the energy mechanisms going on at the workplace with employees.

### **5.1. Theoretical Contributions**

In literature, few efforts have been made to articulate a comprehensive and widely accepted definition of work vitality which can be used to develop its measure. The current qualitative study is unique and gives an inclusive definition of work vitality embedded in individual experiences, current literature and the theory of salutogenesis. A holistic explanation of the construct is given which explains the elements of work vitality and provides its model. The study advocates the knowledge of context around the construct. Previous studies (van Scheppingen et al., [2015](#); Ware Jr & Sherbourne, [1992](#); Wohlers et al., [2019](#)) have seldom explained the nature of work vitality, how it works, and what its characteristics are.

The current study makes a significant contribution by emphasizing the importance of vitality in an organizational environment. It highlights work vitality as a psychological resource and how it works in an organizational setting by giving an explicit model. Moreover, elements clarify the characteristics of work vitality that were ignored in the previous literature. The study contributes to the body of knowledge by explaining the nature of work vitality as a relatively constant state which regenerates and restores itself and is transferable to others. Previous constructs generally identified it as a behavior that is manifested in various forms (Bakker, Petrou, Op den Kamp, & Tims, [2020](#); Op den Kamp et al., [2018](#)). However, this study conceptualizes work vitality and its elements from a psychological resource perspective which should precede the behavior.

### **5.2. Practical Implications**

The current research demonstrates that work vitality is not just an energy level. It is also a psychological resource and an organizational construct embedded in the context of the workplace. Management can work on the presence of factors that induce work vitality. Hence, work vitality is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored by the organizations. This study will help managers and practitioners to evaluate work vitality along with its essential elements and to measure this psychological resource.

### **5.3. Limitations and Future Research**

Since the study is qualitative in nature, in-depth interviews unearthed massive data with an enormous amount of detail which could take the study in a million directions. However, due to time limitations, the researcher stuck to the study's original objective and extracted the described findings. Moreover, since the researcher's presence was mandatory during the data collection process, this may have resulted in researcher bias.

For future research, an explanatory study is needed to identify the antecedents of work vitality and its consequences. A study can also be conducted to find out the relationship of work vitality with other organizational variables to see how work vitality fits into the tapestry of organizational studies. The personality of an individual also plays a significant role in the work vitality of employees. So, a study can be undertaken to observe how personality traits influence the work vitality of employees.

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## Appendix

**Table 1**  
*Details of Participants*

Participant ID	Age	Gender	Qualification	Designation	Experience (Years)	Country
P1	47	Female	MBA	Area head of Bank	20	Pakistan
P2	32	Female	PhD (HRM) (on going)	Lecturer	9	Pakistan
P3	56	Female	PhD (Management) (On going)	HOD Business studies	8	Pakistan
P4	37	Female	Ms (HRM)	Lecturer	7	Pakistan
P5	30	Female	MBA	Assistant manager employee engagement	8	Pakistan
P6	31	Female	PhD (OB) (On going)	Lecturer	8	Pakistan
P7	35	Female	MPhil (economics)	Associate professor	9	Pakistan
P8	40	Male	PhD (HRM)	Assistant professor	8	Pakistan
P9	54	Female	Executive HRM	Head HR department	28	Pakistan
P10	30	Female	PhD (HRM)	Assistant Professor	5	Pakistan
P11	28	Female	PhD (On going) (HRM)	Lecturer	2.5	Pakistan
P12	29	Female	PhD (on going) (Management)	Lecturer	4	Pakistan
P13	33	Male	Masters in commerce	Lecturer	9	Pakistan
P14	30	Female	M.Phil (HR)	HR training coordinator	5	America
P15	40	Male	PhD (Organizational Behavior)	Associate Professor	13	UAE
P16	60	Female	PhD (Organizational Behavior)	Professor Business administration	36	America
P17	26	Female	M.Phil (international trade)	CEO	4	Pakistan
P18	30	Female	Masters (public administration)	People culture learning officer	4	Sydney
P19	52	Female	PhD Business Administration (OB and HRM)	Professor Business Administration	28	America

P20	37	Male	PhD business administration (HRM) (on going)	Research assistant	10	Pakistan
P21	32	Female	M.Com (Hons)	Principal	7	Pakistan
P22	39	Female	M.Phil (Business Administration)	Director	16	Pakistan
P23	33	Male	PhD (On Going) (HRM)	Lecturer	11	Pakistan
P24	45	Male	BBA	CEO	28	Pakistan
P25	38	Male	MBA (Marketing)	Manager (HR)	12	Pakistan
P26	35	Male	MBA	Director HR	10	Pakistan
P27	37	Male	MBA + Engineering	Senior Manager (HR)	14	Pakistan
P28	40	Male	PhD (Business Management)	Researcher	7	Finland
P29	35	Female	MBA	Manager Sales	11	China
P30	31	Female	Masters (Business studies)	Head of Exhibition events	11	Balarus
P31	38	Male	Masters (Business studies)	CEO	15	China
P32	28	Male	MBA + BS (Engineering)	Director	6	Pakistan
P33	66	Male	MBA	Director	40	Pakistan