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The Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Coping Strategies on Employee Productivity Performance During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: At a period when corona diseases are spreading all over the globe, the output in the US and Europe has declined dramatically by 7.2 percent and 8.2 percent respectively. This is because employees are feeling anxious about the spread of corona viruses. The goal of this research is to identify the level of emotional intelligence and coping strategies on employee productivity performance, to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies toward employee productivity performance and to determine the significant difference in employee productivity performance between local and foreign workers. This research was conducted at a manufacturing company, The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd, located in Penang, Malaysia. A quantitative research method involving an online survey was used in this research. The population consisted of the production line employees and managers. Hence, random sampling was employed. All the data were analyzed through SPSS using different analyses which are descriptive, correlational and t-test analysis. The findings in this research show that emotional intelligence and coping strategies have a positive effect on employee productivity performance. Lastly, the most important contribution of this study is it allows industries to take an earlier step to focus more on emotional intelligence and coping strategies in order to improve worker job performance.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Coping strategies, Employee productivity performance

1. Introduction

Nowadays, in this era of accelerated transition, companies still tend to strive to reach a high degree of profitability and to stay at the top. According to Cresnar (2017), the value of understanding, assessing, and evaluating efficiency is highlighted as a core aspect of the performance and competitive advantage of an enterprise. Companies need performing employees to uplift the organization. In a highly competitive work environment, workers need to take the best actions to

support the organization. Productivity performance is an important factor that needs to be considered in the competitive printing industry. The efficiency level is linked to the activities and success of the enterprise. Employee productivity measures included mainly financial indicators such as profit or sales per employee, growth in revenue or sales over time, quantity over a time span, program enrolment, work hours, expenditure expenses, cross-selling, or performance reviews (Krekel *et al.*, 2019). Several factors affect an organization, such as leadership, skills and competencies, misunderstandings between managers, cultures, and values.

Years ago, emotional intelligence and coping strategies were seen as vital to both the private and the public sectors. With all certificates, diplomas, and degree holders working in their particular sector, job efficiency has not been well organized and has not often been effective as managers have been unable to cope with competition and tension, the staff is not in a position to reach and maintain a high-level performance. Therefore, in order to ease this situation, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies have become crucial factors in organizations, as emotional intelligence will help workers manage stress, control emotions, and ensure good performance even when faced with work complications. Proactive coping is associated with positive work outcomes and proactive workers are more likely to report higher work performance, compared to reactive workers. Individuals with higher proactive coping abilities are considered to have more job-related skills and to adapt better to change.

Emotional intelligence and coping strategies have also been utilized by the organization to hire employees, based on their qualifications related to the position required. However, in order to deal with problems many companies are facing, emotional intelligence and coping strategies are the solutions and they are of the utmost importance for an organization to succeed.

According to the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) Productivity Report 2018/2019, productivity growth contributed 4.7% of the country's gross domestic product, while the employment rate increased by 2.4%. This shows the importance of employee productivity to the Malaysian economy. According to one article (CEICDATA, 2020), productivity in Malaysia dropped by 0.80% in March 2020, compared with the growth of 1.37% in the previous quarter of the year. Besides, according to Ong Kim Huat (Printing Department Manager of The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd), The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd shows a drop in employee productivity performance starting from the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. This study was carried out to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies on employee productivity performance because emotional intelligence (EQ) has a strong link to productivity performance at work.

Employee productivity in the manufacturing industry is still being debated until now. According to Cresnar and Nedelko (2017), employee productivity has been one of the major issues needing further investigation. This is because the manufacturing sector employee productivity has a big impact on company profit and performance. Therefore, based on this, there is a need for further study to investigate the factors that could enhance employee productivity.

Previous studies show that Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is one of the most crucial factors that could enhance employee productivity. This is based on the study by Navas and Vijayakumar (2018). One of the best examples to show the situation is through an article by Fabiano (2020) stating that productivity in the United States plunged 7.2% since in-office work declined. Even US workers had to work an extra 40% of the time (extra 3 hours) daily but this did not seem to improve their productivity. The article also mentioned that in Europe productivity fell 8.2% after employees shifted to remote work. According to Bariso (2020), employees are dealing with major anxiety during the corona virus pandemic. This clearly shows that lack of emotional intelligence brings anxiety to employees and affects their productivity performance. Thus, this proves the importance of EQ during the corona virus pandemic to prevent decreased employee productivity.

So, employee qualifications, as well as EQ, need to form the basis for hiring workers in almost any organization nowadays. Employees have issues such as safety, financial difficulties, and becoming dissatisfied with their particular duties, contributing to absences. Employees face a great deal of pressure such as stress, team pressure, misapprehension between colleagues, no profit in the company, poor communication skills, and little sharing between executives and also the manager. However, in order to address obstacles to productivity, EQ is the ideal approach to be implemented for all workers and companies. Managers and executives who can change their emotions in an efficient way are more successful at work. When employers lack focus on emotional intelligence when hiring employees, employees cannot cope and productivity decreases with the spread of the corona virus.

Previous researchers show different results from their studies. Some research shows emotional intelligence and coping strategies may affect performance, but some studies show no effect or only minor effect of these two variables on performance. So, that is why still many companies faced this problem that may decrease their productivity. This shows that there is still debate on this issue and further investigation on this topic is needed. Hence, in this study, we examine the emotional intelligence and coping strategies of employees in The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd in order to investigate the impact of EQ and coping strategies on manufacturing companies in Malaysia.

Therefore, this research attempts to identify the level of emotional intelligence and coping strategies among employees and their effect on employee productivity performance. Second, this paper also examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies toward employee productivity performance and lastly, it determines whether a significant difference exists between local and foreign workers on the impact of the two studied variables on employee productivity.

2. Literature Review

According to McCombes (2020), a literature review is a study of a specific subject from academic sources. The literature review offers an overview of existing knowledge that allows us to recognize related research hypotheses, processes, and gaps in existing research. In this work, we needed to review the previous studies through articles, websites, and books. After that, we draw out the theoretical framework and develop hypotheses based on the information available.

2.1 Employee Productivity Performance

A simple meaning of the term productivity in the literature is hard to find, rather it is often a topic of misunderstanding. It is equated with an efficiency of labor, or often even strength of labor. Often the term labor force efficiency is used as an example. How researchers describe the idea of employee productivity is an attempt to understand the phenomenon holistically (Cresnar, 2017). According to Altindaga and Kosedagi (2015), performance can be defined as an effective execution and completion effort to achieve a goal or a result of effectively fulfilling a job. Performance is a quantitative and qualitative term, where the individual, group, or company that does the work may achieve the intended destination associated with this work. Performance is also a term that defines how persons can use their own ability or actual knowledge, skills, and capacities to achieve their own goals or expectations. Employee productivity metrics included mainly financial indicators such as revenue or sales per employee, growth in revenue or sales over time, quantity per duration, program attendance, work hours, budget expenses, and cross-selling or performance reviews (Krekel et al., 2019). Job output is the overall expected value for organizing the discrete behavioral episodes a person experiences over a standard time span. In fact, it is an individual product in terms of quality and quantity required from each employee in a specific job, which demonstrates that individual

performance is decided much of the time by their motivation and desire as well as the capacity to do the job (Mohamad & Jais, 2016).

2.2 Coping Strategies

Coping has been described in terms of an individual who constantly changes cognitive and behavioral efforts to handle specific external or internal requirements that are assessed as taxing or exceeding the individual's resources (Martinez *et al*., 2019). Coping strategies have been categorized as strategies for decisive action aimed at removing the causes of job demands and strategies for palliative or avoidance that offer a temporary solution to problems without actually removing the cause (Chaaban & Du, 2017). These strategies are the key components of the psychological illness experiencing cycle, such as stress. Coping strategies include individuals' behavioral and cognitive attempts to address particular internal or external demands that are considered to surpass personal capabilities or resources. In other words, individual coping strategies are process-oriented activities that include mastery, adaptation, or reduction as attempts to meet increasing or overlapping demands with personal resources or capabilities (Fordjour *et al*., 2019). Coping is characterized as the cognitive and behavioral efforts of a person to manage the internal and external demands of a person-environment transaction and is a process through which evaluation and reassessment may take place continuously or on a number of occasions (Eldera *et al*., 2019).

2.3 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is an expansive system of intellectual skills, skills and capabilities that both process and draw from emotions (Thomas *et al*., 2017). EQ definition describes an individual's ability to recognize access and produce emotions to promote decisions. In addition, EQ helps to recognize and control thoughts, emotions, and emotional intelligence to facilitate emotional and intellectual development (Haq *et al*., 2017). Emotional intelligence often describes the capacity to track the thoughts and emotions of one's own and others, to differentiate between them, and use this information to direct one's thought and behavior. The theory proposed that emotions are adaptive to cognitive processes and that individuals should think about emotions rationally (Oriarewo *et al*., 2019). Often important for perioperative professionals may be emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to communicate with and influence others. High EQ has been associated with higher workplace performance, higher job satisfaction, lower turnover intentions, and lower burnout (Beydler, 2017).

2.4 Hypotheses Development

This section will discuss hypothesis development in this research. With reference to the following Figure 1, the hypotheses to be tested are:

H1: Coping strategies have significant positive relation with employee productivity performance.

H2: Emotional Intelligence has significant positive relation with employee productivity performance.
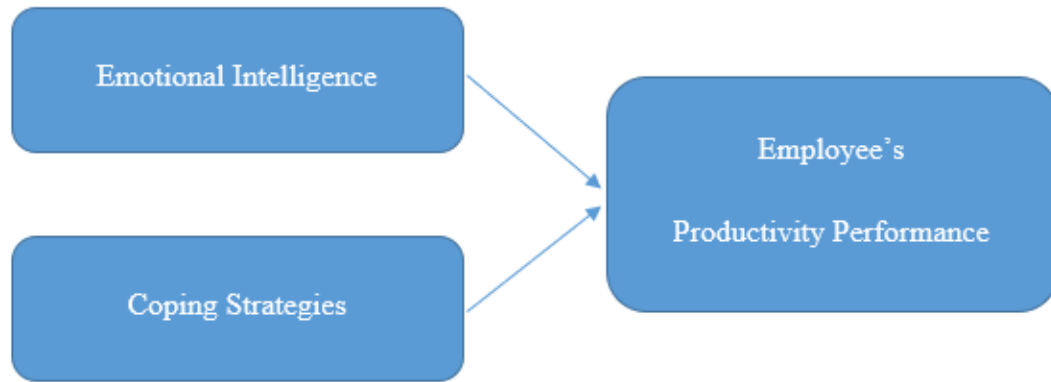
Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the influence of emotional intelligence and coping strategies on employee productivity performance

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research was conducted in order to evaluate emotional intelligence and coping strategies on employee productivity performance among workers in The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd. This research is conducted using a quantitative-based approach with data collected using an online survey form. In this research, operators in The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd were selected to complete the questionnaire in order to collect the data needed. Hence, all the data collected were analyzed using SPSS software.

3.2 Research Process

To ensure the objectives of the study are achievable, we carried out this research based on the research process illustrated in Figure 2. In the research process, we first select an issue as the title to do research. Besides that, we discussed this title and the objective of research for this title. This is to ensure the objectives selected for this topic are able to help employers to solve their problems after this research was carried out. At the same time, we consulted with their supervisor's teacher with the relevant data and information collected to make sure data collected were relevant to the study. The appropriate selection of respondents is also identified and selecting the best methodology in collecting data. The data collected were analyzed and interpreted first, then a written report was done as the result of this research.
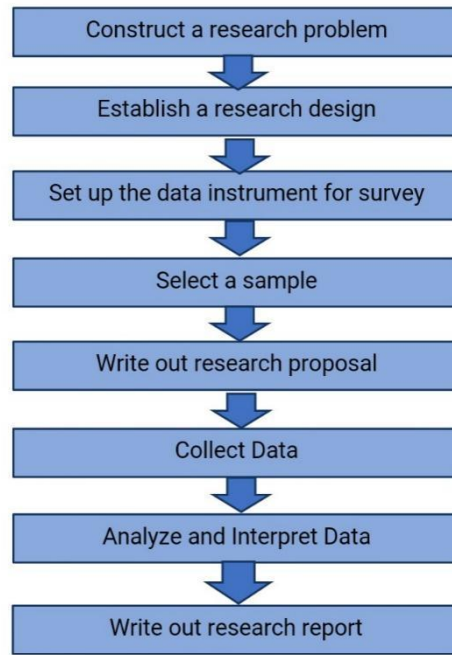
Figure 2: Flowchart of research process

3.3 Population and Sampling Technique

According to the Printing Department Manager (Ong Kim Huat), The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd has a total of 300 employees. So, in this research, only a small group of members will be selected as a sample to represent the population. Depending on the Krejcie and Morgan table (1970), the appropriate sample for the survey numbered 169 respondents out of 300 company employees. But unfortunately, the research only successfully collected 50 out of 169 potential respondents. The location chosen in this study is The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd and the workers there form the population for this study. Besides, a random sampling method was used in this research to select the target respondents. The random sampling method is a component of a sampling procedure in which every sample subject has the same probability of being picked. A randomly selected sample is intended to be an objective reflection of the total population. An online survey form was created and spread out to workers in order to collect the data and information needed for this study.

3.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument is the general term used by investigators for measuring tools such as survey, study, questionnaire, and so forth. Consider that the instrument is the device and instrumentation is the course of action for the creation, testing, and use of the device to help differentiate between the instrument and instrumentation. For instance, the questionnaire is being used in this study. The objective of the questionnaire is to identify how emotional intelligence and coping strategies influence employee productivity performance.

The quantitative method in collecting data for this research is through the online survey using Google Form to get the response from the target respondents. Questions about the influence of emotional intelligence and coping strategies on employee productivity performance will be asked to get the information needed. A descriptive study was carried out using the questionnaire on targeted respondents as the population was only concentrated at Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections (A, B, C, and D). Section A collected demographic data of respondents: gender, age, race, nationality, and their job position. All of these questions were asked in the form of a multiple-choice option. Section B items examined the emotional intelligence of workers in dimensions of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Section C asked about coping strategies. In this section, employees were asked questions about the frequency of using coping strategies and the results to overcome their stress and worries. Lastly, section D asked regarding the effectiveness of coping strategies on employee productivity performance. Besides, this section also examined the relationship between emotional intelligence (EQ) and productivity performance. All the questions in sections B, C, and D were asked in the form of 5- point Likert scale. This means that respondents are able to choose their answer from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

3.5 Data Analysis Method

In this research, different data analysis method was used for achieving each of the objectives. The data analysis method for the first objective (to identify the level of emotional intelligence and coping strategies on employee productivity performance) is the descriptive method. The correlational method was used to analyze data for the second objective (to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies toward employee productivity performance). The last objective (to determine the significant difference in employee productivity performance between local and foreign workers) was analyzed with the t-test method.

4. Results and Discussion

In this research, all the data and information obtained from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). We outlined the demographic data of the respondents in Section A of the questionnaires. The findings in Section B (Emotional Intelligence), Section C (Coping Strategies), and Section D (The Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Coping Strategies on Employee Productivity Performance During Pandemic Covid-19) were examined and discussed. In order to analyze the data gathered, we also carried out a successive evaluation of reliability and normality. Subsequently, the theories were evaluated and analyzed in order to evaluate the association and meaningful influence between independent variables and dependent variables in order to accomplish the aims of this study. Finally, a conclusion was drawn as summarized in the final section of this chapter of the findings analyzed.

4.1 Response Rate

According to the Krejcie and Morgan table (1970), the relevant figures of the sample survey were 169 respondents, of which the cumulative population of workers employed at The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd is 300. Table 1 shows that a total of 50 out of 169 responses from the employees at The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd were all from online surveys using google forms. This online survey was conducted between October to November 2020. As a result, 50 of the relevant samples were used for data processing and constituted a successful response rate of 30 percent. The low response rate was because we were unable to distribute and collect the questionnaire face-to-face due to the Movement Control Order implemented throughout Malaysia at that time. Besides, that was also because of this CMCO our request to visit The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd had been rejected by the company. Next, many of the workers did not answer the online questionnaire even after we kept on following up with this survey. Lastly, in order to make sure that respondents have a better understanding when answering this survey, we created this online questionnaire with multi-language (English and Malay). Unfortunately, we still received some feedback from workers regarding some of them refusing to answer this survey because they did not understand the questions.

Table 1: Questionnaire response rate

Questionnaire	Total
Sample size	169
Number of data collected from online survey	50
Valid Questionnaire	50
Percentage of response rate (%)	30%

4.2 Reliability Test for Actual Study

Appropriate coefficient values for Cronbach's alpha are obtained by researchers after data collection to ensure high reliability in actual research. A total of 50 respondents participated in the actual reliability test to determine the internal consistency of each measurement in this survey. Table 2 shows the results of the actual reliability test as the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value for each variable.

Table 2: Reliability statistics for actual study

Variables	Cronbach's alpha (α)	N of items
Emotional Intelligence	.920	12
Coping Strategies	.735	23
Employees' Productivity Performance	.854	5

From Table 2, we found that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value for each variable was high, exceeding .7 for all variables. It also means that all variables are above the acceptable range. As a result, the internal consistency of each variable among the measurement items was considered to be good and excellent. In detail, the dependent variable "Employee Productivity Performance" got an alpha coefficient value of .854, while the other two independent variables got .920 for emotional intelligence and .735 for coping strategy respectively. Therefore, the internal consistency of emotional intelligence is excellent, acceptable for coping strategies, and good for employee productivity performance.

4.3 Mean Analysis of Employee's Productivity Performance

The following Table 3 shows the average score for employee productivity performance in The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd. The result showed that the majority of respondents are neutral with regard to these statements because most of the average scores are between 3.20 and 3.84. Therefore, the level of central tendency of employee productivity performance was moderate. The range for standard deviation is also quite small from 0.866 to 1.104, indicating that the data is slightly different in spread around the mean.

Table 3: Mean result of employee's productivity performance

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
I do a large amount of work each day	3.50	1.074	Moderate
I accomplish tasks quickly and efficiently	3.84	0.955	High
I have a high standard of task accomplishment	3.54	1.110	Moderate
My work outcomes are of high quality	3.84	0.866	High
I always beat our team targets	3.20	1.030	Moderate

4.4 Mean Analysis of Emotional Intelligence

According to the result presented in Table 4, the majority of respondents agreed with the influence of emotional intelligence toward employee productivity performance during the Covid-19 pandemic because the higher average score obtained is at 4.16 and the central tendency level is high.

Table 4: Mean result of emotional intelligence

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
I understand myself and hold insights into the reasons for my own behaviour.	3.88	0.961	High
I am aware of, understand and appreciate the feelings of others.	4.02	0.845	High
When I am faced with a dilemma, I stop and reflect before acting.	4.06	0.956	High
I have the ability to set high but attainable goals.	3.52	1.129	Moderate
I am able to self-observe, that is I can internally observe my own behaviours, motives and patterns.	3.46	1.110	Moderate
I am sensitive to the feelings, needs and sufferings of others.	3.58	0.883	Moderate
In general, I handle stressful situations without becoming anxious.	3.12	1.304	Moderate
I would describe myself as a "can do" person.	3.86	0.833	High
I accept my strengths and weaknesses as part of who I am.	4.16	0.738	High
I really care what happens to others and I am able to feel empathy for them.	3.52	0.909	Moderate
I view problem situations as "challenges", not as obstacles.	3.36	1.241	Moderate
I am a highly motivated individual.	3.38	1.260	Moderate

At the same time, the lowest mean scores for the rest of the other statements also stand at 3.12 and are considered moderate of central tendency level. For the standard deviation, values ranged from 0.738 to 1.304 suggesting that the distribution of the data points was not concentrated around the mean.

4.5 Mean Analysis of Coping Strategies

The averages and standard deviations for coping strategies were analyzed through SPSS software and the results are shown in Table 5. The mean score of statement for number 20 (2.30 for mean score), number 21 (2.18 for mean score), and number 23 (2.22 for mean score) are lower than other statements and these 3 statements are categorized as having low central tendency levels. The results also show that the mean score of other statements is between 2.42 to 4.34 at moderate to high levels of central tendency. Finally, the standard deviation ranges from 0.996 to 1.231 indicating that the distribution of data points is slightly far from the mean.

Table 5: Mean result of coping strategies

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
I use Internet/ TV/ music to relax.	4.34	0.772	High
I joke with my friends and use humor to take the edge off.	3.26	1.157	Moderate
I seek out friends for conversation and support.	3.28	1.179	Moderate
I try to focus on the things I can control and accept the things I cannot.	3.46	1.297	Moderate
I take a little time to relax, breathe and unwind.	4.06	0.867	High
I maintain a healthy diet.	3.36	1.045	Moderate
I get involved in a hobby or interest that help me unwind and enjoy myself.	4.18	0.851	High
I take some time off and get away from my working life.	3.98	0.769	High
I change my outlook on the problem hand put it in a better perspective.	3.64	1.005	Moderate
I just ignore the problem and hope it will go away.	3.00	1.355	Moderate
I ignore my own needs and just work harder and faster.	3.32	1.203	Moderate

I pray, meditate or enhance my spiritual life.	4.00	1.030	High
I go out shopping and buy something to make myself feel good.	3.48	1.281	Moderate
I confront my source of stress and work to change it.	3.90	0.974	High
I sleep more than I really need to.	2.42	1.213	Moderate
I get irritable and take it out on those around me.	2.90	0.995	Moderate
I withdraw emotionally and just go through the emotions of my day.	2.98	1.059	Moderate
I worry about the problem and am afraid to do something about it.	3.10	1.199	Moderate
I engage in some type of physical exercise.	3.42	1.214	Moderate
I eat more than usual.	2.30	1.266	Low
I take medicine to help me relax or sleep better.	2.18	1.494	Low
I smoke a cigarette or drink a caffeinated beverage.	2.66	1.611	Moderate
I drink more alcohol than usual.	2.22	1.475	Low

4.6 Normality Test

Normality test which is also called probability test is very important for research. It is crucial to check normality through SPSS software in order to reduce statistical errors. According to Frost (2020), the normal distribution is the most important probability distribution in statistics because it is suitable for many natural phenomena. The normal distribution is a probability function that describes how the values of a variable are distributed. It is a symmetrical distribution in which most observations are clustered around the central peak, and the probability of values far away from the mean gradually decreases in both directions equally. Likewise, the minima at both ends of the distribution are unlikely. In addition, the theoretical probability distribution is reflected on the specific normal curve of the standard value Z. For the calculation method of the Z value, divide the skewness and kurtosis statistics by the standard error. Skewness is a measure of asymmetry, and kurtosis is a measure of the tail of a probability distribution. For the normality test results of skewness, kurtosis, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov coefficient, if the score of the Z value is between -2.58 and 2.58, it is considered as the significance of the sample data. However, we found that the Z value of skewness is between 0.142 and 4.478, and the Z value of kurtosis is between -1.213 and 6.005. Therefore, the data set of this study is not considered to be normally distributed. Both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk were tested to examine the hypothesis of sample data obtained from a normally distributed population in a study. The Shapiro-Wilk test is more suitable for small sample sizes less than 50, but it can also process a large number of 2000 samples. Therefore, we used the Shapiro-Wilk test as a numerical method for evaluating normality as the total number of respondents in this research is 50. According to Lipilekha Patnaik (2018), if the Sig. Shapiro-Wilk test value is greater than 0.05, data is normal. If it is less than 0.05, the data deviates significantly from a normal distribution. At the same time, "Sig" was the symbol for the p-value in the Shapiro-Wilk test under the SPSS software. So, in this research, the data are not normal. Some of the "Sig" value is greater than 0.05 such as the 0.327 for emotional intelligence (normal), but some of the data are not normal because the "Sig" value was less than 0.05 like 0.013 (employees' productivity performance) and 0.000 (coping strategies). So, overall results are the data shows not normal in this research. The result of the Shapiro-Wilk test is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Normality test

		Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro-Wilk	
				Statistics	Sig
Employee's Productivity Performance	Statistics	0.347	-0.803	0.940	0.013
	Std. error	0.337	0.662		
	Z value	1.030	-1.213		

Emotional Intelligence	Statistics	0.048	-0.777	0.974	0.327
	Std. error	0.337	0.662		
	Z value	0.142	-1.174		
Coping Strategies	Statistics	1.509	3.975	0.893	0.000
	Std. error	0.337	0.662		
	Z value	4.478	6.005		

4.7 Spearman's Rho Correlation Test

Spearman correlation coefficient is also called Spearman or Spearman's rho ranking correlation, usually denoted by the Greek letter ρ. Like all correlation coefficients, Spearman's rho measures the strength of the correlation between two variables. All bivariate correlation analyzes give the strength of the relationship between two variables in a value between -1 and +1. This value is called the correlation coefficient. The positive correlation coefficient indicates the positive relationship between the two variables (as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variable also increases), while the negative correlation coefficient indicates a negative relationship (as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variable decreases). Zero correlation coefficients indicate that there is no relationship between variables. However, correlation coefficients such as Spearman and Pearson assume a linear relationship between variables. Although the correlation coefficient is zero, nonlinear relationships can exist. According to the results of the Spearman rho correlation test shown in Table 7, we were able to confirm and interpret each hypothesis as follows:

H1: Coping strategies has a significant positive relationship with employees' productivity performance.

The Spearman rho correlation coefficient is shown as 0.475 based on the results in Table 8. These statistics prove there is a positive correlation between overcoming employee productivity strategies and performance. In other words, coping strategies can affect employee productivity performance. Since the p-value is 0.000 it indicates a significant relationship between the variables.

H2: Emotional Intelligence has a significant positive relationship with employees' productivity performance.

Table 7 shows that the Spearman rho correlation coefficient is 0.661; therefore, there is a strong and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee productivity performance. Furthermore, the p-value is 0.000 proving that a significant bivariate relationship between emotional intelligence and performance employee productivity exists. Thus, emotional intelligence will affect employee productivity performance.

Table 7: Spearman's rho correlation analysis

			avgEF1	avgE1	avgC1
Spearman's rho	avgEF1	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.661[**]	.475[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	50	50	50
	avgE1	Correlation Coefficient	.661[**]	1.000	.571[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	50	50	50
	avgC1	Correlation Coefficient	.475[**]	.571[**]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	50	50	50

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.8 T-test Analysis

According to Kenton (2020), the t-test is an inferential statistic used to determine whether there is a significant difference between two sets of means, which may be related to certain characteristics. The t-test is used as a hypothesis testing tool to test the hypothesis applicable to the population. It examines the t-statistic, the value of the t-distribution, and the degrees of freedom for determining statistical significance. To use three or more methods for testing, analysis of variance must be used. In this t-test analysis, the value for Levene's test shows $p > 0.05$ ($p = 0.208$). Hence the variances are not significantly different, so the results for t will be interpreted from the top row. Next, the test shows significant differences (local workers differed with foreign workers) because the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 (0.05). So, there are significant differences between local and foreign workers, $t(48)=2.009$, $p = 0.05$.

Table 8: T-test analysis

	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
avgEF1	Malaysian	45	3.6578	.79729	.050
	Other	5	2.9200	.54037	.033

4.9 Discussions

The objectives of this study were to identify the level of emotional intelligence and coping strategies in employees and to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies toward employee productivity performance, and identify whether local and foreign employees differed in productivity performance. Therefore, we carried out this research to examine whether there is a significant relationship between these two independent variables toward the dependent variables. According to the results, emotional intelligence and coping strategies had a positive relationship with employee productivity performance. So, two hypotheses in this research are all accepted that is emotional intelligence and coping strategies have a positive relationship with employee productivity performance.

After data analysis, the findings on the level and the relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies towards employees' productivity performance will be interpreted as follows.

(a) Emotional Intelligence

The influence of emotional intelligence on employee productivity performance was found to be positively correlated (correlation coefficient = 0.661, $p = 0.327$). Respondents show a low level of the mean value (mean = 3.12) on they can handle a stressful situation without being anxious and this caused the level of central tendency to become low. This also caused the level of agreement to be lower. According to Payne (2020), one of the best ways to increase a person's ability to cope with crises whether in business or personal life is to improve their emotional intelligence (EQ). This means that employees at The Phoenix Press Sdn Bhd are still lacking in EQ. This is also why they cannot handle a difficult situation without being anxious especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, employee productivity will be affected during the pandemic because of low worker EQ.

(b) Coping Strategies

Coping strategies were found to be positively correlated (correlation coefficient = 0.475, $p = 0.000$) with employee productivity performance. Respondents show a low level of the mean value (mean = 2.18) on did not take medicine to help relax or sleep better, resulting in low central tendency

and this brings a slightly low level of agreement. According to Matthews (2016), coping strategies can have a significant influence on adolescent sleep and future research should assess the antecedent-consequent relationships between adaptation, sleep, and stress. According to Kozusnik (2020), depressive symptoms can affect the relationship between coping problems and attention to mood and sleep problems. Lack of sleep negatively impacts work performance, productivity, quality, and work relationships. Without enough sleep, employees have more difficulty concentrating, learning, and communicating, have increased memory loss and poor problem-solving ability. They become depressed, less tolerant of opinions, and are more susceptible to explosive reactions and behaviors that undermine relationships. This may contribute to work inefficiencies and dissatisfaction.

(c) T-test analysis

Significant differences exist between local and foreign workers towards employee productivity performance (t(48)=2.009, p = 0.05). According to Kasika and Bwendo (2015), educational qualifications have a significant relationship with job performance. The higher the level of education, the greater the impact of education and skills on job performance. Therefore, the ability to understand and use advanced technology is determined by education level. Educated employees are more responsive in receiving instructions and performing new tasks and easily using new technologies. which enhances their ability to innovate and improve job performance. Key factors considered to limit the positive impact of educational qualifications on work performance in the workplace include the quality of the work environment, organizational structure, and processes, assigning employees to posts incongruent with their qualifications and lack of incentive systems.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the research highlights the importance of emotional intelligence and coping strategies. It seems that EQ and coping strategies have a greater impact on employee productivity performance. To maintain high performance and competitive advantage, a systematic and consistent approach should be adopted to develop and improve employee emotional intelligence and coping strategies. Therefore, it is recommended that organizations develop training plans to improve the emotional capabilities and coping strategies of managers and workers in the organization. Organizations should recognize the important role of emotional intelligence and coping strategies in developing human capital, which will lead to a high-performance workforce.

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