



Readiness of Coaches for a Future with AI: Insights from the APAC Research Survey 2025

A multi-country analysis of motivators, challenges, and strategic implications for coaching professionals and organizational leaders

Abstract

This research study, titled the APAC Research Survey on Readiness of Coaches for a Future with AI, explores how coaching professionals and HR leaders across the Asia Pacific region perceive, adopt, and respond to the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in coaching. The study conducted during April-June, 2025, collected quantitative and qualitative data from 343 respondents spanning Southeast Asia, Australia-New Zealand, East Asia, and other regions. It highlights the top motivators for AI exploration—improved client outcomes, affordable tools, and strategic implications—alongside deep concerns related to ethics, emotional intelligence, and cultural nuance. This report presents the insights through a segmented lens of role, region, experience, and coaching domain, offering practical recommendations and future-readiness implications.

Terms of Reference

Clusters: include dedicated reports by Region and by Role:

1. Regional Cluster: **(a) ASEAN:** Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand **(b) S Asia:** India **(c) ANZ:** Australia, New Zealand **(d) E Asia:** Japan, S Korea, China, Hong Kong **(e) Others:** Germany, US, UK

2. Role Cluster: Independent Coach, Organizational Leaders

Next Steps & Access to Detailed Reports:

Detailed report including Roles (Independent Coaches and Organizational Leaders) as well as regional cluster responses are available on subscription. Organizations, coaching bodies, and researchers interested in deeper analytics are encouraged to contact APAC website.

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Introduction

The intersection of coaching and technology, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI), is shaping a new frontier for leadership development, personal growth, and organizational learning. In this context, the Asia Pacific Alliance of Coaches (APAC) initiated a research study to explore AI readiness across diverse coaching contexts within the region. As coaching increasingly becomes a strategic lever for people development, the role of AI as an enhancer or disruptor remains a topic of both excitement and concern. This report delves into the lived realities, expectations, and fears of coaches and HR leaders as they navigate this emerging shift.

Key Findings at a Glance

- 57% (197) of 343 respondents are using AI currently for Coaching
- Majority (60%) of respondents are open to exploring AI, especially if tools are client-friendly, affordable, and easy to use.
- Top motivators to induce AI Adoption include improved client outcomes (61%), accessible tools (58%), and training support (51%).
- Cultural sensitivity, ethics, and emotional presence are some of the key concerns among APAC coaches.
- Independent coaches seek ethical guardrails and human-AI boundaries, while internal HRs focus on ROI and integration.
- Regional differences influence readiness: ASEAN and South Asia show greater openness; East Asia emphasizes discretion and structure.
- There is a growing interest in hybrid coaching models blending AI insights with human intuition.

Readiness for AI in Coaching

While the majority of coaches express openness to exploring AI, true readiness remains uneven across experience levels, roles, and regions. Approximately 38% of respondents believe AI can align with cultural values in coaching. However, concerns persist around the skill gap, emotional intelligence, and overdependence. Readiness is highest among ASEAN and South Asia regions, and among coaches with 1–10 years of experience who are more digitally comfortable.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: COACH READINESS FOR AI IN COACHING

AI in coaching enhances process efficiency, unlocks rich client and assessment insights—and enables personalized coaching recommendations—helping coaches scale impact while staying human-centric.

MOTIVATORS FOR AI ADOPTION

61%

Improved client outcomes

58%

Affordable, easy to use tools

49%

Mentor/Peer referral

51%

Competitive relevance

CONCERNS AND IMPLICATIONS



Ethical, cultural and strategic considerations are top issues

AI must complement, not replace, the human

STRATEGIC PERSONAS



Independent Coaches

Seek ethical clarity



Internal HR/L&D

Want integration into dashboards and systems



South Asia

Emphasize affordability and language adaptability



ASEAN

High openness

AI-DRIVEN VALUABLE FEATURES

Predictive analytics to identify areas of improvements

Sentiment analysis for emotional state

- AI-powered goal-setting and action planning

Support Needs and Upskilling

Respondents overwhelmingly called for structured support to navigate AI adoption. The most requested areas include:

- AI literacy and awareness workshops
- Peer-led case studies and demonstrations
- Ethics and cultural sensitivity training
- Access to affordable, user-friendly AI tools
- Ongoing learning communities and coach-specific platforms

Qualitative Themes

- Strong human-AI boundary desired.
- Concerns around ethics, presence, and cultural sensitivity.
- Optimism for support tools like journaling, summaries, diagnostics.
- Preference for hybrid coaching (AI + human).

Strategic Implications for Coaching (Global and APAC)

AI in coaching is not just about tools—it’s about reimagining relationships, ethics, and value delivery. For the global coaching fraternity, this means developing shared ethical frameworks and evolving credentialing to include AI proficiency. For the APAC region, the opportunity lies in building culturally adaptive AI platforms, multilingual access, and peer-led experimentation that balances trust with tech-enabled value.

Author: Research Committee: Iris Kuhnert | Sampada Inamdar | Shyam Malhotra

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