

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Impact of psychological coaching on employee self-efficacy in Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

Psychological coaching is an essential developmental approach that many professionals experience throughout their careers. This study examines the relationship between psychological coaching and self-efficacy among employees in Malaysia. Data were collected through a survey of 242 employees working in corporate governance, selected using random sampling. Employing a quantitative research design, the proposed hypotheses were tested using SmartPLS software. The results indicate that key dimensions of psychological coaching namely motivational reinforcement, trust, and effective communication have a significant positive influence on employee self-efficacy. These findings are particularly valuable for administrators and managers, as they underscore the crucial role of psychological coaching in enhancing employee confidence and capabilities. Furthermore, the study provides practical guidance for organisations in formulating strategies that not only strengthen employee self-efficacy but also enhance overall well-being and productivity in the workplace.

**Keywords:** corporate governance; employee self-efficacy; psychological coaching

## 1. Introduction

Leaders must comprehend not only the specific talents required in their roles but also the broader psychological skills necessary for fostering employee growth and development<sup>[1,2]</sup>. Psychological coaching a strategy in which leaders or managers act as coaches and facilitators of learning involves guiding employees through processes that enable them to learn, grow, and improve their job performance<sup>[3-5]</sup>. According to Ellinger et al.<sup>[4]</sup>, psychological coaching positions leaders as sources of inspiration and facilitators for employees, requiring them to possess strong communication and leadership skills in their daily interactions. This perspective aligns closely with workplace learning practices, as leaders often have direct and frequent engagement with employees, placing them in a fundamental role in enhancing skills, promoting learning, and improving performance<sup>[6,7]</sup>. By adopting psychological coaching, leaders transcend merely monitoring and

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 30 June 2025 | Accepted: 05 August 2025 | Available online: 25 August 2025

### CITATION

Mohamad NI, AS Othman, N Ibrahim, et.al. Impact of psychological coaching on employee self-efficacy in Malaysia. *Environment and Social Psychology* 2025; 10(8): 3855 doi:10.59429/esp.v10i8.3855

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evaluating employee performance; they actively transfer relevant knowledge, skills, and experiences to help employees realise their potential while performing real-world tasks<sup>[8,9]</sup>.

Psychological coaching has long been recognised as a critical human resource (HR) practice in organisations<sup>[10,11]</sup>. This approach is increasingly entrusted to line managers, who are closest to employees, specifically their immediate supervisors<sup>[12,13]</sup>. Within this framework, three key elements of psychological coaching can be identified: motivational reinforcement, trust, and effective communication. In psychological coaching, motivational reinforcement emphasises the leader's role in inspiring and sustaining employees' drive to achieve their goals<sup>[14]</sup>. By providing consistent encouragement, constructive feedback, and recognition of accomplishments, leaders help build confidence and a sense of purpose in their team members. This not only boosts individual performance but also strengthens overall team morale and organisational effectiveness<sup>[15]</sup>. Furthermore, trust serves as a cornerstone of effective psychological coaching, creating a safe and supportive environment where employees feel empowered to share their challenges, seek guidance, and take meaningful risks in their professional growth<sup>[16-18]</sup>. Leaders who cultivate trust establish strong connections with their team members by demonstrating consistency, transparency, and authentic care. This foundation of mutual trust not only facilitates open communication and seamless collaboration but also inspires employees to reach their full potential, ultimately driving superior individual performance and contributing significantly to organisational success. Meanwhile, effective communication serves as another cornerstone of successful psychological coaching, enabling transparent and open exchanges of ideas, feedback, and expectations<sup>[19,20]</sup>. It fosters a supportive environment where employees feel understood, valued, and motivated to engage in their professional development. Leaders who practise effective communication actively listen, provide constructive feedback, and articulate goals with clarity, ensuring alignment between individual and organisational objectives<sup>[19,20]</sup>. This skill not only strengthens relationships and collaboration within teams but also empowers employees to perform at their best, driving both personal growth and organisational success.

Recent studies indicate that a leader's ability to provide psychological coaching to employees within an organisation consistently can enhance self-efficacy<sup>[21,22]</sup>. From an organisational perspective, self-efficacy is defined as the outcome of leadership coaching that acts as a catalyst for employees' expectations of their own abilities<sup>[23,24]</sup>. In the context of managerial coaching, self-efficacy is often defined as an individual's belief and confidence in their ability to manage and perform the tasks assigned to them<sup>[23,24]</sup>. This self-efficacy drives increased confidence and resilience, especially when facing challenging situations in task management. According to Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy is often characterised as an individual's ability to acquire and control their behaviour when facing challenges and achieving desired outcomes within an organisational context<sup>[23]</sup>. In this regard, the enhancement of employee self-efficacy can occur directly through the relationship between leaders and the employees they supervise.

Although numerous previous studies on leaders serve as key references<sup>[21,22]</sup>, these studies have yet to provide a truly holistic and comprehensive theoretical framework regarding the tasks and roles of leaders in organisations. Moreover, discussions in previous studies tend to focus on specific skills in the workplace<sup>[25,26]</sup> but often overlook the significant influence of technological advances and globalisation. A comprehensive approach is essential to address the need for new skills, including the ability to operate in multicultural work environments and make strategic decisions in the increasingly complex context of modern management. Neglecting this aspect not only undermines the effectiveness of individual management but also endangers the productivity and competitiveness of organisations if these skills are not well-mastered. As Podder and Saha<sup>[22]</sup> emphasised, without a deep understanding of the skills required, leaders risk failing to fulfil their

core responsibilities, including coordinating work between departments, providing constructive feedback, and leading teams effectively.

This study makes an essential contribution to the field of behavioural knowledge by examining the impact of psychological coaching on self-efficacy. The findings of this study have the potential to serve as a foundation for developing comprehensive intervention strategies to strengthen more competitive and efficient administrative institutions, while providing valuable guidance to practitioners and policymakers. Therefore, this study aims to assess the role of psychological coaching in enhancing self-efficacy in Malaysia.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Motivational reinforcement**

Motivational reinforcement is a powerful technique for strengthening individuals' internal drive to achieve their goals. Within organisational settings, leaders play a critical role in applying strategies such as encouragement, recognition, rewards, and creating a supportive environment to sustain employee motivation and optimise performance<sup>[14,27]</sup>. Through carefully planned learning activities, leaders can enable employees to complete tasks more efficiently and effectively, thereby enhancing their problem-solving abilities and improving overall work processes. Leaders who possess a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities are better positioned to coordinate tasks systematically and provide accurate guidance to employees<sup>[7,28]</sup>. Core leadership skills are essential for maintaining employee motivation, including the ability to communicate expectations clearly and deliver constructive feedback. Moreover, the provision of appropriate rewards and recognition serves as an essential form of motivational reinforcement<sup>[14,27]</sup>. Incentives such as salary increases, bonuses, public acknowledgement, or other benefits not only enhance employee satisfaction but also encourage sustained effort and commitment towards achieving organisational excellence.

### **2.2. Trust**

In an organisational context, trust in leadership functions as a critical catalyst for strengthening employee motivation and serves as the foundation for building harmonious and productive workplace relationships<sup>[18,20]</sup>. From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, trust represents a core component of the reciprocal relationship between leaders and employees, reflecting the organisation's capacity to foster a work culture grounded in integrity and professionalism. Leaders who demonstrate honesty, decisiveness, and wisdom in the execution of daily tasks reinforce employees' perceptions of their credibility and moral authority<sup>[18,20]</sup>. Such exemplary leadership strengthens organisational trust, which in turn encourages employees to communicate more openly about work-related issues, including matters of rewards, performance evaluation, and organisational challenges, without fear of negative repercussions<sup>[15,18]</sup>. Over time, this trust nurtures a supportive and transparent organisational climate that motivates employees to invest greater effort and dedication in fulfilling their responsibilities. Ultimately, employees who have firm trust in their leaders are more likely to demonstrate heightened organisational commitment, accountability, and a sustained pursuit of excellence.

### **2.3. Effective communication**

The literature on communication leadership highlights two primary forms through which leaders commonly implement effective communication: interpersonal communication and open communication<sup>[29,30]</sup>. Interpersonal communication refers to the exchange of feelings, knowledge, thoughts, and experiences between leaders and employees regarding organisational matters<sup>[29,30]</sup>. This form of communication is widely recognised as a critical factor in fostering strong working relationships, enhancing trust, and improving

leadership effectiveness. In contrast, open communication involves leaders' willingness to communicate transparently, encourage high levels of information sharing, and engage in candid exchanges of ideas, with self-disclosure serving as a central element of such interactions<sup>[31-33]</sup>. According to Arendt et al.<sup>[32]</sup>, open communication enables leaders to uncover employees' authentic talents and hidden potential, transforming these into valuable organisational assets. Together, these two dimensions of communication leadership not only strengthen the quality of leader-employee relationships but also cultivate an organisational culture grounded in trust, transparency, and mutual respect, thereby enhancing overall effectiveness and productivity.

## 2.4. Self-efficacy

The term self-efficacy often refers to an employee's ability to succeed in the various tasks they face, either in general or in specific circumstances<sup>[23]</sup>. Self-efficacy can influence employee feelings, thoughts, and motivation, leading to significant differences in behaviour between individuals with high and low levels of self-efficacy<sup>[34]</sup>. Employees with high self-efficacy tend to have a deep belief in their own abilities. They view challenges as opportunities to be mastered, rather than threats to be avoided<sup>[23]</sup>. Furthermore, they are more committed to carrying out tasks, work diligently, and demonstrate high resilience. This attitude not only improves their personal well-being but also helps reduce stress in the workplace. Conversely, employees with low self-efficacy often doubt their own abilities<sup>[23]</sup>. They are more likely to avoid challenges because they perceive them as threats. Individuals in this category become easily preoccupied with past failures, which ultimately makes it difficult for them to recover and move forward.

## 2.5. Hypothesis development

### 2.5.1. Motivational reinforcement and self-efficacy

The relationship between motivational reinforcement and self-efficacy aligns with the principles of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory<sup>[35]</sup>, which emphasises that an individual's behaviour is greatly influenced by social learning, whereby individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and behaviours through observing others, particularly those regarded as role models. This process of social learning involves four main steps. First, observation of modelled behaviour, where individuals watch how certain behaviours are carried out. Second, retention, which is the process of storing information about the observed behaviour in memory for future reference. Third, reproduction, where individuals repeat the behaviour based on what they have observed, aiming to strengthen and refine the behaviour. Fourth, reinforcement and motivation, where rewards or positive outcomes from the behaviour encourage individuals to continue practising the behaviour in the future. This process not only allows individuals, particularly employees, to improve their skills and work competence but also plays a crucial role in building self-efficacy (an individual's belief in their ability to achieve goals and perform tasks effectively). In the context of modern organisations, this theory is often associated with the concept of self-efficacy (an individual's confidence in their ability to handle work challenges and achieve high performance). For example, an employee who observes their leader demonstrating effective leadership behaviour will be motivated to imitate that behaviour, which can ultimately increase motivation and overall organisational productivity. The application of these theories in contemporary organisational contexts is often referred to as motivational reinforcement. Several empirical studies have found a positive correlation between motivational reinforcement and self-efficacy.

A previous study employed an approach that collected data from 88 SMEs across various sectors in Finland. This approach provides a holistic overview of diverse industries and enables stronger generalisation of the findings. With a large sample size ( $n = 4418$ ), the study provides an in-depth understanding of the impact of managerial coaching (motivational reinforcement) on the dimensions of innovative work behaviour (IWB), taking into account the aspect of employees' self-efficacy in Finnish SMEs. The analysis

found that managerial coaching is positively associated with each dimension of IWB, demonstrating that effective managerial coaching can drive innovative work behaviour among employees [21]. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>1</sub>: Motivational reinforcement is positively associated with self-efficacy.

### 2.5.2. Trust and self-efficacy

The influence of trust on self-efficacy is consistent with the principles of Transformational Leadership Theory<sup>[36]</sup>. This theory suggests that leaders who emphasise integrity and demonstrate commitment to high values through idealised influence not only inspire their followers but also build a deep sense of trust. This trust forms the foundation for followers to emulate the leader's positive behaviours, which in turn strengthens their self-efficacy. Additionally, through inspirational motivation, leaders articulate a meaningful vision and clarify how each individual plays a vital role in achieving organisational goals. When followers understand the value of their work and have trust in their leader, this sense of trust enhances their confidence in their own abilities to perform tasks effectively. This not only boosts intrinsic motivation but also contributes to overall improved job performance. Through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders challenge followers to think creatively and solve problems using innovative approaches. This sense of trust further reinforces their self-efficacy, motivating them to achieve higher levels of accomplishment. The application of these theories in contemporary organisational contexts is often referred to as trust. Several empirical studies have found a positive correlation between trust and self-efficacy.

A previous study involved 83 coaches and instructors from the Professional Golfers' Association. The research aimed to determine whether coaching effectiveness could predict the use of golf technology in training. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of coaching techniques, such as building trust, can lead to an improvement in employees' self-efficacy. Trust plays a crucial role in fostering a positive coaching environment, enhancing individuals' confidence in their abilities, and ultimately encouraging the adoption of innovative tools and practices in training sessions<sup>[37]</sup>. Based on the theory and empirical evidence presented, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>2</sub>: Trust is positively associated with self-efficacy.

### 2.5.3. Effective communication and self-efficacy

The influence of effective communication on self-efficacy is consistent with the principles of the Goals-Plans-Action (GPA) Theory introduced by James Price Dillard <sup>[38]</sup>. This theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals plan and implement communication strategies to achieve their interpersonal goals. In the context of leadership, this theory focuses on the relationship between the goals a leader aims to achieve, the plans developed to reach those goals, and the actions taken to implement those plans. Through this approach, leaders not only function as decision-makers but also as planners of communication strategies, who can motivate and inspire followers to achieve shared objectives. The application of these theories in today's organisational context is often referred to as effective communication. Several empirical studies have found a positive correlation between effective communication and self-efficacy.

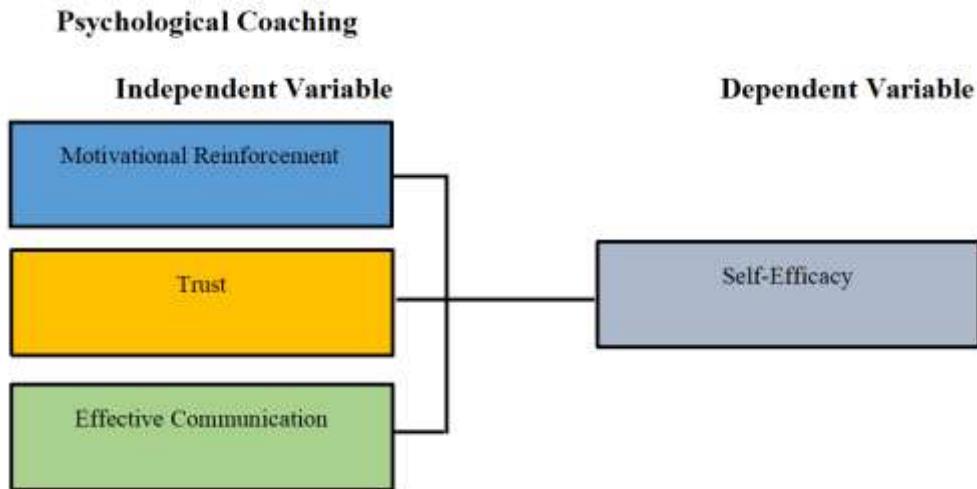
A previous study involved a survey of 311 hotel employees and utilised structural equation modelling to ensure comprehensive and rigorous data analysis. The main findings of the study reveal that effective communication has a significant positive impact on team innovation performance by enhancing self-efficacy. Specifically, the dimensions of effective communication in leadership were identified as key predictors and

critical factors in strengthening self-efficacy among team members [22]. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is formulated:

$H_3$ : Effective communication is positively associated with self-efficacy.

## 2.6. Research framework

Empirical studies and theoretical evidence were used to build this study's framework. **Figure 1** illustrates that psychological coaching is the independent variable, while self-efficacy is the dependent variable. The framework demonstrates that self-efficacy is directly influenced by psychological coaching.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Research design

This study employed a cross-sectional approach, integrating a literature review, pilot study, and questionnaires to collect data from respondents within the organisations studied. This approach enabled the researcher to systematically gather quantitative data, ensuring that the data collected were accurate, relevant, and of high quality while minimising the risk of bias or sampling error. As noted by Creswell<sup>[39]</sup> and Sekaran and Bougie<sup>[40]</sup>, objective data collection methods are fundamental to producing reliable and valid findings. In the first stage, the survey questionnaire was developed based on existing literature on psychological coaching. The questionnaire items were translated into English and Malay using a back-translation method conducted by a bilingual faculty member with expertise in human resource management. Another bilingual faculty member from the same field subsequently re-translated the English version into Malay. Both faculty members carefully compared the English and Malay versions to ensure consistency in item meanings and the overall quality of the instrument<sup>[40,41]</sup>. The pilot study was conducted from 17 to 20 May 2024, involving 70 participants. The researchers prepared a questionnaire that included important information such as demographic data and questions related to psychological coaching and employee self-efficacy. Only items that achieved an outer loading criterion of 0.708 using SmartPLS software were considered for use in the actual study. The pilot study participants ( $n = 70$ ) were excluded from the main study to avoid response contamination. Outer loading and Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs exceeded 0.7, confirming internal consistency reliability.

### **3.2. Research Setting**

This study was conducted within an organisation that plays a critical role in shaping corporate governance ecosystem to be progressive and responsive to global changes. As an agency responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring national education policies, the organisation recognises that strong management skills are key to ensuring operational effectiveness. Through strategic and visionary leadership, the organisation strives to develop a resilient workforce while fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration. Furthermore, leadership guidelines emphasising effective communication, emotional intelligence, and employee motivation are designed to empower leaders to navigate the rapidly evolving digital era. This holistic approach not only enhances individual efficiency within the organisation but also ensures that graduates are well-prepared to meet industry demands. Ultimately, these initiatives make a significant contribution to sustainable and inclusive national progress, aligning with global expectations.

### **3.3. Sampling and sample procedures**

Determining the sample size was a critical step in designing this cross-sectional study. The Raosoft calculator [42] was utilised to determine the optimal sample size. With a population of 650 employees, the calculator recommended a minimum of 242 respondents to ensure an adequate level of accuracy. The unit of analysis in this study comprised employees currently serving in the organisation under investigation. A random sampling technique was employed, whereby 450 questionnaires were distributed to employees across various levels and job categories within different departments or divisions of the organisation. The study adhered to the Declaration of Helsinki and received approval from the Institutional Review Board of the Ethics Committee of University Sains Malaysia (protocol code USM/JEPeM/PP/23090675) for research involving human participants. Written consent was also obtained from the respondents before conducting the study.

The selection of random sampling is essential in research because it gives every individual in the population an equal chance of being selected, thereby reducing systematic bias and ensuring that the sample more accurately reflects the characteristics of the entire population. This representativeness improves the generalisability of the findings, allowing conclusions to be applied with greater confidence to the broader population, unlike non-random approaches such as purposive sampling, which often limit generalisation. Moreover, random selection minimises the risk of over-representing or under-representing specific groups, thus reducing sampling bias and producing more reliable results. In total, 242 complete questionnaires were returned to the researchers. All respondents participated voluntarily, without any coercion or pressure from either the management or the researchers. This ensured full compliance with research ethics, upholding the respondents' freedom to participate throughout the study process.

### **3.4. Measures**

The survey questionnaire in this study comprised four main sections: first, motivational reinforcement was measured using six items; second, trust was assessed through five items; third, effective communication was measured using five items; and fourth, self-efficacy was evaluated using four items. All items were adapted from the literature on coaching management [43,44]. Responses to all items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale, with options ranging from "Strongly Disagree/Not Satisfied" (1) to "Strongly Agree/Satisfied" (7). The demographic characteristics of respondents were used as control variables in this study, as its primary focus was on employee attitudes. The collected data were initially reviewed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to assess data quality. In the second stage, data were analysed using SmartPLS software to evaluate the measurement model, structural model, and test the

research hypotheses formulated<sup>[45]</sup>. This systematic approach ensured that each stage of the analysis met the required standards to produce valid and high-quality findings.

### 3.5. Procedure

The initial analysis of the research data was conducted using SPSS. This step was crucial to ensure that the collected data met quality standards and were suitable for further analysis with high accuracy<sup>[45]</sup>. This process involved several critical procedures, including the detection of outliers to avoid biased results caused by extreme values that might not represent the true population. Additionally, the initial analysis focused on identifying missing data, which could occur due to errors during data collection or incomplete responses from participants. This data cleaning process not only established a solid foundation for analysis but also ensured that the data met all the necessary statistical prerequisites for subsequent analytical steps.

In the second stage, the study proceeded using SmartPLS software to evaluate measurement and structural model structural model developed in this research. SmartPLS was chosen for its suitability in handling complex models and its capability to assess relationships between latent variables using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach. According to Hair et al.<sup>[45]</sup>, SEM offers advantages in testing complex relationships between latent constructs, assessing both direct and indirect effects (mediation/moderation), and simultaneously combining measurement models with structural models. Compared with multiple regression analysis or traditional factor analysis, SEM can provide a more comprehensive understanding and better estimation accuracy. Therefore, the use of SEM in this study enabled the theoretical model to be tested more effectively while minimising the risk of bias due to data constraints or violations of statistical assumptions.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Sample characteristics

**Table 1** presents the sample characteristics based on descriptive statistical analysis. The majority of respondents were aged between 40 and 45 years (32.2%), predominantly Malay (94.0%), female (72.7%), and married (71.9%). Most participants belonged to the support service group (70.2%), held a bachelor's degree as their highest education level (36.4%), had fewer than five years of service (32.2%), and were employed in permanent positions (79.3%).

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the research sample.

Profile	Sub-Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Less than 27 years	41	16.9
	28 to 33 years old	47	19.4
	34 to 39 years old	48	19.8
	40 to 45 years old	78	32.2
	46 years and above	28	11.6
Gender	Male	66	27.3
	Female	176	72.7
Status	Single	65	26.9
	Married	174	71.9
	Others	3	1.2
Service Group	Top Management	8	3.3

Profile	Sub-Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Highest Education	Management and Professional	59	24.4
	Support	170	70.2
	Others	5	2.1
	Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM)	1	0.4
	Malaysian Higher School Certificate (STPM)	47	19.4
	Bachelor's Degree	88	36.4
	Master's Degree	90	37.2
	PhD	15	6.2
	Others	1	0.4
	Less than 5 years	78	32.2
Length of Services	6 to 10 years	33	13.6
	11 to 15 years	61	25.2
	16 years and above	70	28.9
Employment Status	Temporary/ Part-time	7	2.9
	Contract	43	17.8
	Permanent	192	79.3

**Table 1.** (Continued)

#### 4.2. Assessment of the measurement model

As shown in **Table 2**, the convergent validity analysis demonstrates that all constructs exhibit outer loading values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.708, as suggested by Henseler et al.<sup>[46]</sup> and Hair et al.<sup>[45]</sup>. This indicates that each item has a strong association with its respective construct, confirming a high degree of convergent validity. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds 0.50<sup>[45]</sup>, signifying that more than half of the variance in each construct is explained by its indicators, which meets the minimum criterion for convergent validity. Additionally, the composite reliability values for all constructs exceed 0.80, reflecting strong internal consistency among the items and reinforcing their reliability in capturing the intended concepts<sup>[45]</sup>. Collectively, these results confirm that the measurement model meets the essential requirements of validity and reliability, thereby providing a solid foundation for subsequent analysis of the structural model and ensuring confidence in the interpretation of construct relationships.

**Table 2.** Convergent validity analysis.

Constructs	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha
Motivational Reinforcement				
MTRC1:	0.886	0.944	0.767	0.939
MTRC2:	0.901			
MTRC3:	0.910			
MTRC4:	0.908			
MTRC5:	0.778			
MTRC6:	0.865			

Constructs	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha
Trust				
TRUST1:	0.934	0.969	0.885	0.967
TRUST2:	0.948			
TRUST3:	0.951			
TRUST4:	0.939			
TRUST5	0.932			
Effective Communication				
EFFCN1:	0.930	0.963	0.872	0.963
EFFCN 2:	0.949			
EFFCN3:	0.948			
EFFCN 4:	0.938			
EFFCN 5:	0.903			
Self-Efficacy				
SECCY1:	0.906	0.922	0.810	0.922
SECCY2:	0.904			
SECCY3:	0.900			
SECCY4:	0.892			

**Table 2.** (Continued)

**Table 3** presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Correlation Ratio (HTMT) values used to evaluate discriminant validity. Discriminant validity measures the degree to which a construct is truly distinct and does not overlap conceptually with other constructs in the model. The HTMT values for all constructs are below the threshold of 0.85, as suggested by Hair et al.<sup>[45]</sup>. This confirms that each construct is unique, measures a distinct dimension, and satisfies the criteria for discriminant validity.

**Table 3.** Discriminant validity using HTMT analysis.

Constructs	Motivational Reinforcement	Trust	Effective Communication
Motivational Reinforcement			
Trust	0.888		
Effective Communication	0.874	0.889	
Self-Efficacy	0.577	0.574	0.592

**Table 4** presents the discriminant validity assessment using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The square root of the AVE values for all constructs, displayed on the diagonal, exceeds the correlations with other constructs in the off-diagonals. This indicates that all constructs meet the acceptable standards for discriminant validity<sup>[46]</sup>.

**Table 4.** Fornell-Larcker analysis.

Constructs	Motivational Reinforcement	Trust	Effective Communication	Self-Efficacy
Motivational Reinforcement	0.876			
Trust	0.845	0.941		

Constructs	Motivational Reinforcement	Trust	Effective Communication	Self-Efficacy
Effective Communication	0.828	0.858	0.934	
Self-Efficacy	0.539	0.544	0.558	0.900

**Table 4.** (Continued)

**Table 5** presents the results of the cross-loading analysis. The analysis reveals that the loading values for each indicator are higher for their respective constructs than for any other constructs. These findings confirm that all selected items meet the required criteria for discriminant validity [45].

**Table 5.** Cross-loading

Items	Motivational Reinforcement	Trust	Effective Communication	Self-Efficacy
MTRC1	<b>0.886</b>	0.740	0.717	0.445
MTRC2	<b>0.901</b>	0.739	0.718	0.505
MTRC3	<b>0.910</b>	0.764	0.721	0.519
MTRC4	<b>0.908</b>	0.757	0.717	0.490
MTRC5	<b>0.778</b>	0.656	0.711	0.410
MTRC6	<b>0.865</b>	0.785	0.778	0.453
TRUST1	0.758	<b>0.934</b>	0.780	0.543
TRUST2	0.811	<b>0.948</b>	0.823	0.470
TRUST3	0.809	<b>0.951</b>	0.819	0.498
TRUST4	0.785	<b>0.939</b>	0.802	0.505
TRUST5	0.812	<b>0.932</b>	0.814	0.534
EFFCN1	0.783	0.794	<b>0.930</b>	0.508
EFFCN2	0.791	0.792	<b>0.949</b>	0.510
EFFCN3	0.796	0.809	<b>0.948</b>	0.512
EFFCN4	0.766	0.814	<b>0.938</b>	0.533
EFFCN5	0.729	0.797	<b>0.903</b>	0.541
SECCY1	0.481	0.469	0.496	<b>0.906</b>
SECCY2	0.516	0.517	0.492	<b>0.904</b>
SECCY3	0.466	0.492	0.499	<b>0.900</b>
SECCY4	0.477	0.479	0.524	<b>0.892</b>

**Table 6** presents the model fit analysis using the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The SRMR represents the difference between the observed correlation matrix and the model's implied correlation matrix, providing an absolute measure of model fit. It assesses the average magnitude of discrepancies between observed and expected correlations. According to Hu and Bentler [47], an SRMR value below 0.10 is considered acceptable. In this study, the SRMR value of 0.038 indicates that the model demonstrates excellent fit.

**Table 6.** Model fit analysis.

Model Fit	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.038	0.038
d_ULS	0.298	0.298
d_G	0.461	0.461
Chi-square	637.980	637.980
NFI	0.897	0.897

**Table 7** presents the results of the variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis and the descriptive construct analysis. The mean values for each construct ranged from 5.705 to 5.907, indicating that motivational reinforcement, trust, effective communication, and self-efficacy were rated within the high (4.0) to very high (7.0) range. These findings suggest that respondents perceive these factors as highly significant, reflecting their views on the psychological aspects of coaching within the organisation and its impact on workplace self-efficacy. Additionally, the VIF assessment was conducted to evaluate the level of multicollinearity among the study's constructs. The results showed that all VIF values were below the threshold of 5.0, indicating the absence of serious multicollinearity issues that could compromise the analysis results [45]. Overall, these findings demonstrate that the study data are reliable and accurate, providing a solid foundation for further evaluation of the structural model and testing of the study hypotheses.

**Table 7.** VIF and descriptive constructs analysis.

Constructs	VIF	Mean	Std. Dev
Motivational Reinforcement	4.062	5.869	0.909
Trust	4.864	5.880	0.959
Effective Communication	4.416	5.705	0.977
Self-Efficacy		5.907	0.659

### 4.3. Assessment of the structural model

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is a key indicator for evaluating the predictive accuracy of the structural model, as it reflects the proportion of variance in the endogenous variables explained by the exogenous constructs. According to Cohen [48],  $R^2$  values are categorised as large (0.26), medium (0.13), and small (0.02). As shown in **Table 8**, the  $R^2$  value of 0.33 for self-efficacy, as explained by motivational reinforcement, trust, and effective communication, exceeds the threshold of 0.26, indicating that the model demonstrates substantial explanatory power. This result suggests that the model not only provides a robust prediction of self-efficacy but also compares favourably with similar studies in organisational behaviour and psychology, where  $R^2$  values typically range between 0.20 and 0.30, reflecting moderate explanatory strength.

**Table 8.**  $R^2$  analysis.

Dependent Variable	$R^2$	Predictive Accuracy
Self-Efficacy	0.33 (33%)	Large

The effect size ( $f^2$ ) complements the evaluation of the structural model by indicating the contribution of each exogenous construct to the variance explained in the endogenous construct when that construct is included or excluded from the model. According to Cohen's [48] guidelines,  $f^2$  values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are considered small, medium, and large effects, respectively. As presented in **Table 9**, the effect size values for motivational reinforcement (0.012), trust (0.007), and effective communication (0.002) on self-efficacy fall below the threshold of 0.02, suggesting minimal effects. This indicates that while these constructs contribute to predicting self-efficacy, their individual contributions are limited.

Nevertheless, when compared with prior workplace intervention studies, where small  $f^2$  values are commonly reported, the findings remain meaningful. For example, previous research in organisational behaviour has often demonstrated that psychological constructs exert only modest incremental effects on self-efficacy, with stronger predictive relevance emerging from the combined influence of multiple factors rather than single predictors. In this study, the combination of motivational reinforcement, trust, and effective communication produced an  $R^2$  value of 0.33, which exceeds Cohen's [48] threshold for a large

effect and demonstrates substantial explanatory power at the model level despite the small individual effect sizes. The  $R^2$  and  $f^2$  results indicate that although the exogenous constructs individually contribute only marginally to self-efficacy, their collective influence provides meaningful explanatory strength. This aligns with findings in similar studies, where small effect sizes at the construct level can still accumulate to generate strong overall predictive capacity at the model level.

**Table 9.**  $f^2$  analysis.

Independent Variables	$f^2$	Effect Size
Motivational Reinforcement	0.012	Small
Trust	0.007	Small
Effective Communication	0.002	Small

Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  (blindfolding) was employed in this study to assess the  $Q^2$  value, a critical indicator for evaluating the predictive relevance of the structural model. The blindfolding procedure involves sequentially removing data points from the indicators of endogenous constructs, thereby enabling the evaluation of the model's predictive accuracy using the remaining data. According to Hair et al.<sup>[45]</sup>,  $Q^2$  values greater than zero indicate that a construct possesses predictive relevance. As reported in **Table 10**, the cross-validated redundancy analysis shows that motivational reinforcement, trust, and effective communication yield  $Q^2$  values of 0.000, while self-efficacy records a  $Q^2$  value of 0.264. Since all values meet or exceed the threshold of zero, the findings suggest that the constructs in the model meet the minimum requirement for predictive relevance, enabling them to generate meaningful predictions for the endogenous variables.

While the  $Q^2$  value for self-efficacy (0.264) indicates moderate predictive relevance, the  $Q^2$  values of 0.000 for the exogenous constructs suggest limited individual predictive power beyond their explanatory contribution. Compared with prior studies in organisational and behavioural research, where  $Q^2$  values for key constructs often range between 0.15 and 0.35 to indicate moderate predictive relevance, the current findings suggest that the model's predictive capability is adequate.

**Table 10.** Construct cross-validated redundancy analysis.

Construct	SSO	SSE	$Q^2$ (=1-SSE/SSO)
Motivational Reinforcement	1452.000	1452.000	0.000
Trust	1210.000	1210.000	0.000
Effective Communication	1210.000	1210.000	0.000
Self-Efficacy	968.000	712.523	0.264

A bootstrapping method was employed in this study to determine the statistical significance of the model parameters. As shown in **Table 11**, the bootstrapping procedure confirmed three key findings in hypothesis testing. First, motivational reinforcement is positively and significantly related to self-efficacy ( $H_1$ ,  $\beta = 0.539$ ;  $t = 9.484$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Second, trust is positively and significantly associated with self-efficacy ( $H_2$ ,  $\beta = 0.544$ ;  $t = 11.688$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Third, effective communication is positively and significantly related to self-efficacy ( $H_3$ ,  $\beta = 0.559$ ;  $t = 11.122$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The consistently high path coefficients and strong  $t$ -values indicate that the hypothesised relationships are statistically robust. Overall, the use of bootstrapping provides greater confidence in the stability of the results and strengthens the credibility of the model's findings.

**Table 11.** Hypothesis testing.

Direct Relationship	$\beta$	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t-Statistics ( O/STDEV )	p-values	Decision
H <sub>1</sub> : Motivational Reinforcement -> Self-Efficacy	0.539	0.544	0.057	9.484	< 0.001	Supported
H <sub>2</sub> : Trust -> Self-Efficacy	0.544	0.547	0.047	11.688	< 0.001	Supported
H <sub>3</sub> : Effective Communication -> Self-Efficacy	0.559	0.561	0.050	11.122	< 0.001	Supported

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study emphasise the importance of psychological coaching as a key factor influencing self-efficacy. Specifically, the study demonstrates that psychological coaching serves as a significant predictor of the relationship between coaching approaches and self-efficacy. These findings not only reinforce but also extend prior research on the role of psychological coaching, which has been widely acknowledged in the literature on leadership and management. The findings indicate that psychological coaching involves leaders guiding employees to enhance their ability to address challenges and perform tasks effectively. This element acts as a crucial mediating mechanism that improves employees' self-efficacy. Consequently, these findings provide comprehensive insights into the process by which psychology-based coaching approaches positively impact employees. The study also offers practical guidance on more effective coaching methods to enhance employees' self-efficacy.

Within the context of this study, the level of psychological coaching was found to be strengthened through leaders consistently applying management skills, particularly through approaches such as motivational reinforcement, trust, and effective communication. These elements, when combined, are believed to collectively enhance employees' self-efficacy, enabling them to act more proactively in addressing workplace challenges. Employees with high self-efficacy tend to take initiative in enhancing their knowledge, finding solutions to complex problems, and improving their professional skills behaviours that align with high-performing roles. These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as those conducted by Viitala et al. [21], Rittenberg et al. [37], and Podder and Saha [22], which demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between psychological coaching and employees' self-efficacy. Within a dynamic organisational culture, psychological coaching not only serves as a significant predictor of the relationship between management skills and employee performance but also ensures that organisational goals are achieved more efficiently and competitively.

### 5.1. Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations in its framework and methodology that may affect the understanding of the relationship between psychological coaching and self-efficacy. Firstly, the study employs a cross-sectional design, in which data were collected at a single point in time. While this approach is practical for identifying the relationship between psychological coaching and self-efficacy, it cannot determine whether specific factors directly contribute to low self-efficacy when other underlying issues influence the findings. A longitudinal study might provide greater clarity regarding these causal relationships.

Secondly, the scope of the examined relationships is somewhat limited, as the study does not explore direct connections between psychological coaching and other essential elements such as leadership skills, work quality, and productivity. These relationships are relevant because leaders' coaching not only enhances employee efficiency but also plays a crucial role in shaping internal leadership, improving work standards, and contributing to overall organisational productivity. More comprehensive research is needed to understand these broader impacts better.

Thirdly, in terms of data analysis, this study employed structural equation modelling via SmartPLS. While this approach is useful for explaining the relationships between variables such as psychological coaching and self-efficacy, it only assesses the variance explained by the selected variables. This analysis does not account for external factors or other influences that may exist within an organisation. Consequently, the findings may be limited in providing a holistic view of the factors affecting self-efficacy.

Fourthly, the sample size and composition of this study were limited to 242 staff members from a single organisation within corporate governance in Peninsular Malaysia. Future research involving larger sample sizes and diverse organisational contexts is necessary to enhance the generalisability and effectiveness of the study's findings. These limitations provide opportunities for more in-depth research to strengthen the understanding of the role of psychological coaching in improving employees' self-efficacy and other factors related to overall organisational effectiveness.

## 5.2. Future research directions

This study proposes several important recommendations for future research to expand the understanding of psychological coaching within the corporate governance in Malaysia while enhancing the robustness of the findings. Firstly, respondent characteristics such as the type of service and organisational diversity are recommended for inclusion in future studies. By incorporating these demographic variables, research can identify differences and similarities in participants' attitudes towards management skills, thereby producing deeper insights into the impact of coaching on various employee categories.

Secondly, future research is encouraged to adopt a longitudinal design to examine the causal relationships between variables. This design is particularly crucial if the objective is to assess changes in employees' attitudes or behaviours over a specific period. Such an approach can provide a more comprehensive and dynamic perspective on the development and changes in the variables studied, thus enabling researchers to gain a deeper understanding of how coaching influences employees over time.

Thirdly, future studies should focus on more specific elements of psychological coaching, such as communication skills, change management, and employee motivation. A detailed exploration of these aspects is essential, as they have the potential to impact employees' self-efficacy directly.

Fourthly, future research is also encouraged to involve a more diverse population from different sectors, including the private and industrial sectors. This approach can enhance the generalisability of findings, making them more relevant and beneficial to various types of organisations. By broadening the scope and methodology of research, future studies can provide a more holistic and relevant understanding of the role of psychological coaching in improving both organisational and individual effectiveness. These recommendations collectively aim to advance both theoretical knowledge and practical applications of psychological coaching in diverse organisational contexts.

## 5.3. Implications

This study yields three significant implications: theoretical, methodological, and practical implications. In terms of theoretical implications, the study confirms three key findings that strengthen the theoretical foundation in this field. Firstly, there is a significant relationship between motivational reinforcement and self-efficacy. Secondly, a substantial relationship exists between trust and self-efficacy. Thirdly, there is an essential relationship between effective communication and self-efficacy. These three findings align with several key theories, including Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory<sup>[35]</sup>, which emphasises that individual behaviour is influenced by social learning through the observation of role models; Transformational Leadership Theory, which highlights the importance of leaders with high integrity and commitment to high

values in building trust; and the Goals-Plans-Action (GPA) Theory, which explains communication strategies for achieving interpersonal goals. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Viitala et al.<sup>[21]</sup>, Rittenberg et al.<sup>[37]</sup>, and Podder and Saha<sup>[22]</sup>, which emphasises the importance of psychological coaching in shaping professional competencies and positive employee behaviour. From a methodological perspective, this study demonstrates strength through the use of questionnaires that meet validity and reliability standards, producing accurate and trustworthy findings.

The findings highlight that psychological coaching benefits both leaders and employees in corporate governance. Leaders who communicate clearly, inspire, and manage time effectively set a strong example for employees, while also reducing workplace stress and improving performance. At the same time, employees gain from interpersonal communication training, mentoring opportunities, and exposure to digital tools that enhance efficiency. The findings regarding psychological coaching have practical implications for both leaders and employees in government administrative offices. For leaders, the study suggests several key areas of focus. Firstly, leaders who master clear and effective communication skills, both verbal and written, can convey expectations accurately and provide constructive feedback to employees. This helps employees better understand their roles and responsibilities, thereby increasing motivation and work performance. Interpersonal communication training is also beneficial for employees to build positive working relationships with colleagues and supervisors.

Secondly, a leadership approach that inspires and supports plays a vital role in helping employees reach their full potential. With opportunities for continuous learning and mentoring, employees can improve their professional skills and build self-confidence. A harmonious, team-oriented work culture also provides employees with the space to contribute ideas, share experiences, and learn from one another.

Thirdly, effective time management by leaders can guide employees in organising tasks and setting priorities. Such training helps employees manage stress and ensures they complete their work efficiently and on time. Leaders' ability to make accurate decisions and solve problems quickly also sets an example for employees regarding the importance of analytical and data-driven approaches in performing their daily tasks. In the digital era, leaders' mastery of the latest technologies can accelerate work processes and facilitate collaboration among employees. Employees should also be exposed to project management tools, data analysis software, and communication applications to enhance their efficiency. When leaders and employees engage in these efforts together, this not only boosts organisational productivity but also fosters a more positive and competitive work environment.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study confirms that psychological coaching plays a significant role as a predictor variable for employees' self-efficacy in corporate governance in Malaysia. A conceptual framework was developed based on a review of relevant literature and theories, with particular focus on the role of management skills in enhancing self-efficacy. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicate that the measurement scales used met high standards of validity and reliability, ensuring data accuracy and confidence in the study's findings. Furthermore, the results of hypothesis testing conducted using SmartPLS reinforced the role of psychological coaching as an effective predictor in enhancing self-efficacy. The findings reveal that leaders who provide structured coaching, such as motivational reinforcement, trust, and effective communication, are more effective in improving employees' self-efficacy. These findings are consistent with previous studies from Western and Asian contexts, which also emphasise the significant role of psychological coaching in maximising positive impacts on self-efficacy. While acknowledging the limitations inherent in the cross-sectional design and specific population focus, this study makes a substantial

contribution to the local literature, further enhancing the understanding of the role of psychological coaching in the context of corporate governance in Malaysia. These findings provide a foundation for future longitudinal research and broader sectoral applications of psychological coaching interventions.

## Author contributions

Conceptualization, N.I.M and A.S.O.; methodology, N.I.M and N.I.; software, N.I.M.; validation, N.I.M and H.H.; formal analysis, N.I.M and N.I.; investigation, N.I.M, N.S.A.R and A.S.O.; resources, H.H and N.S.A.R.; data curation, N.I.M.; writing—original draft preparation, N.I.M.; writing—review and editing, H.H and N.S.A.R.; project administration, N.I.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Pahang Campus, Malaysia and Infrastructure University of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to supporting this research.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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