

Yayasan Pelajaran Johor

1) Tell me about yourself

Ans: Good morning. My name is Tan Wen Bin. I am grateful for the opportunity to interview for this prestigious scholarship program.

I graduated from SMK Impian Emas in Johor Bahru. I am consistently the top performer of my form and achieved 10A+ in SPM.

Beyond academics, I actively participated in co-curricular activities and managed to win a few competitions. In 2020 and 2021, my team won the Johor SDG challenge twice in a row. In 2022, my team was the champion of the International STEM Green Innovation Competition.

In terms of leadership role, I was elected the head of prefect during Primary 6 and president of STEM Club during F5. These past experiences have shaped me into a more well-rounded individual who understands the importance of teamwork, perseverance and innovative thinking. Therefore, I consider myself a strong team leader and team player.

Shortly after SPM, I gained real-world experience through my part-time job as an accountant assistant, where I was responsible for filing and data entry. Dealing with bank statements has taught me the importance of responsibility, attention to detail because minor mistakes may have serious consequences. I believe these qualities are important for my future career.

Looking ahead, my goal is to pursue Bachelor of Computer Science in Artificial Intelligence in the US. AI has the potential to revolutionize fields like healthcare, education, scientific research, and so much more in profound ways that better society. The ongoing advancements in AI fuels my passion to be part of this progress. With a strong foundation in mathematics and physics, I believe I'm well-prepared to tackle the challenges in the ever-evolving field of AI.

2) What is your strength

Ans: My key strengths are meticulous planning and being action-oriented.

I always think through every detail and draft out a thorough plan before making any decision. I always prepare beforehand to deliver the best possible result, especially when entrusted by someone else.

During an oil rig design competition, I was responsible for my team's presentation. This presentation accounted for a significant portion of the overall points, and I didn't want to let my teammates down. My task was to ensure that our presentation was clear, comprehensive, and impressive to the judges. To achieve this, I ensured I had a deep understanding of our project and the functions of its components. I prepared answers for potential questions that might be asked during the presentation. Additionally, I practiced mock presentations with my teammates and teacher to ensure clarity and confidence in delivering our project.

In the end, the judges were impressed with our presentation, and we won the second prize.

Beyond preparation, I'm committed to putting knowledge into practice. For instance, after learning about vertical gardening during Biology lessons, I incorporated the idea into the International STEM Green Innovation Challenge.

These strengths have been crucial in my academic and extracurricular successes. My preparation skills will help me excel in my studies, while my action-oriented approach will allow me to apply my knowledge to real-world problems in our community.

3)What is your weakness

Ans: I used to have a tendency to take on everything myself. I always strive for excellence and worry that others may not deliver the high standards I set for myself. This has led me to take up as many responsibilities as possible, which has stressed me out especially when deadlines are approaching.

In a creative video competition, I took on both filming and editing, because I think this would ensure the highest quality. However, as deadlines approached, I found myself overwhelmed and falling behind schedule.

Recognising that I couldn't manage everything alone, I asked my teammate for help. One of them suggested we split the video into different clips, each of us would edit a portion. I was initially hesitant because different people have different editing style and I fear that the final product may lack consistency. However, I decided to trust their abilities.

Each teammate brought unique twist to their portion. We not only completed the project on time but also produced a superior video that showcased our collective creativity.

This experience taught me valuable lessons about the power of teamwork and the importance of trusting others' capabilities. By leveraging each team member's strengths, we've achieved better outcomes than any of us could have individually.

Moreover, this growth has prepared me for the collaborative nature of cutting-edge fields like Artificial Intelligence. In AI research and development, teamwork and diverse perspectives are crucial.

4) Why do you want to pursue AI?

I have always been fascinated by technology and the ongoing advancements in AI fuels my passion to be part of this progress. My passion for AI started when I stumbled upon a video showcasing AlphaGo playing Go against the world champion and securing a 4-1 victory. I was impressed by the AI's ability to understand the complexity of the game and creating strategies to win the game. I realized the potential of AI in tackling complex problems while creating solutions.

I chose to pursue AI because it is a highly flexible field. Malaysia is undergoing digital transformation. Every industry has started incorporating AI in some way or another, so this presents me with a unique opportunity to collaborate with experts across different domains to integrate AI in their operation. For example, I am keen on collaborating with data scientist in government agencies. By combining AI and data science, we can analyze large amount of government data more efficiently and formulate better policies. AI could analyze the average income of Malaysians to define their socioeconomic status and deliver targeted subsidy to those who truly need it.

Johor has seen a surge of investments in data centers recently. Companies like NVIDIA and Microsoft have established data center facilities in Kulai. These data centers are crucial infrastructure for AI development and deployment. They provide the computing power to train complex AI models and run AI applications at scale. These data centers will require skilled professionals who understand the hardware infrastructure and advanced software systems. This is where I can come in. My education in AI positions me well to contribute to this growing sector. I can contribute to building the AI ecosystem here, helping to develop solutions that are tailored to local needs.

Moreover, Prime Minister recently unveiled the National AI Talent Roadmap, which aims to develop 15,000 AI talents and 5,000 data professionals in Malaysia by 2026. This national strategy aligns perfectly with my career aspirations. It demonstrates the government's commitment to nurturing local AI talent and creating opportunities in this field. By pursuing AI, I'm not only following my passion but also aligning myself with our country's strategic direction. I believe this is the perfect time to delve into this field.

5)What have you done to prepare yourself for this course?

Ans: Firstly, I have a strong foundation in mathematics and physics, which are crucial for understanding AI algorithms and concepts.

I enrolled in computer vision and deep learning courses under the eLatih initiative by the Human Resources and Development Corporation. These courses have equipped me with a strong foundation in two of the main fields in AI

Additionally, I participated “AI untuk Rakyat” program under Ministry of Digital to enhance my understanding of AI.

Apart from that, I just started joining Introduction to Artificial Intelligence with Python course designed by Harvard on Edx. It’s a 7 weeks program that expose me to the theory behind machine learning, large language models and search engine algorithms through Python.

I have also taken free programming courses on YouTube, Udemy, and freeCodeCamp. These courses have honed my coding skills and familiarized me with programming languages and tools commonly used in AI, such as Python and TensorFlow.

6)What do you understand about computer science in artificial intelligence?

Ans: AI is a subfield of computer science. It focuses on developing algorithms and models that enable computers to mimic human cognitive functions like learning, problem-solving and decision making. Subfields of AI include machine learning, neural network and deep learning and computer vision.

- Machine Learning: Algorithms are designed to learn patterns from data without being explicitly programmed.
- Neural Networks and Deep Learning: Neural networks are inspired by the human brain's structure. They're particularly powerful for tasks like image and speech recognition.
- Computer Vision: This area focuses on how computers can gain high-level understanding from digital images or videos, enabling tasks like facial recognition and autonomous driving.

What excites me most about this field is its potential to solve complex real-world problems. For instance, in healthcare, AI can assist in early disease detection. In environmental science, it can help model climate change patterns. And in Johor's context, with the recent investments in data centers and the establishment of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, AI could play a crucial role in optimizing logistics and enhancing cybersecurity

7) What if you got a job offer overseas?

Ans: I know that I have to serve a bond with the Johor government for 5 years after my graduation. If the overseas job offer provided unique learning opportunities or exposure to cutting-edge technologies not yet available in Malaysia, I will sign a contract with the Johor state government to delay my bond for 2 to 3 years. During my overseas stint, I'll focus on gaining deeper insights on the industry best practices and transfer my skillset back to Johor after 3 years. Working abroad will allow me to build a global network and collaborate with leading experts in the field. This international exposure will enable me to bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas back to Malaysia to contribute to Malaysia's digital transformation. I believe my experience from working abroad will allow me to have deeper insights to assist industries with their digital transformation process. Throughout my overseas stint, I would keep a close eye on developments in Malaysia, particularly Johor's blooming tech sector. I'd look for opportunities where my overseas experience could directly address needs in our local industry. Ultimately, my goal would be to return to Malaysia with enhanced skills, a global network and possibly investment opportunities for our local tech scene.

8) Why did you choose to study abroad?

I've chosen to study in the US because I believe the education and experiences that I'll gain there can significantly contribute to Malaysia's technological advancements.

The US is at the forefront of AI research and development. Universities like MIT and Stanford offer cutting-edge AI programs and research facilities. Studying in this environment will expose me to the latest advancements in the field. Many US universities have strong partnerships with tech companies, offering opportunities for collaborative research projects. This exposure to both academic and industry perspectives will prepare me for my future career.

Silicon Valley's ecosystem is particularly exciting for me. It offers opportunities for internships and exposure to industry leaders. Companies like Google, Meta and OpenAI, which are pioneering AI technologies, are headquartered in the US. I aspire to collaborate with senior researchers to apply theoretical knowledge into practical solutions. This international exposure will enable me to bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas back to Malaysia. Malaysia is currently undergoing digital transformation and every industry has begun incorporating AI in one way or another. I believe my experience will allow me to have deeper insights to assist industries integrate AI in their business operations.

By studying in the US, I intend to leverage my knowledge to contribute to Malaysia's growing AI ecosystem. With initiatives like the National AI Talent Roadmap and the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, there's a growing need for professionals with expertise in AI. By studying in the US, I aim to bring back not just technical knowledge, but also insights into innovative practices and industry trends.

9)Is it okay for you to serve a bond?

I understand and respect the commitment outlined in the contract to serve a bond. A bond provides a clear career pathway right after my studies. According to Graduate Tracer Study by the Ministry of Higher Education, 1/3 of graduates are employed in jobs that misaligned with their education. This structured start to my professional life offers stability and a chance to refine my skills and understand how theoretical knowledge translates into practical solutions.

Organizations that offer bonds often have established mentorship programs, which is invaluable for a fresh graduate like me. I'll have the opportunity to learn from experienced professionals, understand industry best practices, and develop technical and soft skills.

Serving a bond aligns perfectly with my personal value of giving back. Just as the scholarship supports my education, the bond allows me to contribute my skills and knowledge back to the organization that invested in me. This resonates deeply with my belief in repaying those who have supported my journey.

During the bond period, I'll have the opportunity to build professional networks. These connections can be invaluable for my future career growth.

Overall, I'm passionate about using my education to make a positive impact in Johor, and a bond would give me the platform to do so immediately after graduating.

9ii)Rejected, second plan?

Ans: I will accept the committee's decision with an open heart. I'd naturally feel disappointed, as this scholarship would have significantly eased my parents' financial burden and allowed me to focus fully on my studies abroad. However, I don't see rejection as a setback. Instead, I view it as an opportunity for growth. I'd use this experience to identify areas for self-improvement and work on becoming a more well-rounded individual.

In the meantime, I have been accepted into Kolej Matrikulasi Melaka. Malaysia is also renowned for world-class universities such as UM, UTM, UKM, which are recognised internationally. I'll strive for a perfect 4.0 GPA during my PSPM and I plan to apply for other scholarships after graduating from pre-university program.

To support my education, I will also take on a part-time job to alleviate my parents' financial burden. Additionally, I will consider taking PTPTN loan to ensure I can focus on my studies without financial stress.

10) Your idol

Ans: My role model is my father. Every day, he wakes up at 5:30 am to commute to Singapore for his work. As a car painter, he has long working hours filled with demanding physical labor. Despite tiring, he never complains and always comes home with a smile.

What I admire most about my father is his unwavering dedication to provide for our family. He has always prioritized my education above all else. He never hesitated to enroll me in tuition classes or purchase all the necessary stationery and books, even when it meant extra financial strain on our family. Just yesterday, after working, he drove from Johor to Melaka and back so that I can attend this scholarship assessment.

The sacrifices my father makes every day inspire me deeply. They fuel my determination to excel in my studies, not just to repay his efforts, but to carve out a brighter future for my family. Receiving this scholarship would be a meaningful way to honor my father's sacrifices.

In essence, my father is not just my role model; he is my inspiration and the driving force behind my ambitions.

11)Describe your biggest mistake

In 2021, during COVID lockdown, I had taken a part-time job with my relative. I was responsible for inputting data for COVID screening test, including PCR, RTK and saliva tests. This was a huge responsibility as accurate data was essential to track the spread of COVID-19.

However, in pursuit of completing the tasks quickly, I made the error of not double-checking entries before submitting. This oversight could have caused workers to be quarantined unnecessarily for two weeks. I didn't have the authorization to delete the entries so I had to call the doctor-in-charge. Obviously, I was scolded.

This experience taught me a valuable lesson about the importance of thoroughness and the real-world consequences of seemingly small errors. I learnt to embrace full responsibility for my actions. As I pave my way to adulthood, I'm no longer shielded by my parents but instead, I have to hold myself accountable for my mistakes.

Since then, I always triple-check my work to minimise errors that could cause inconvenience for others

12)What is the book that you've read?

Ans: The book I recently finished is "Rich Dad Poor Dad" by Robert Kiyosaki. It sparked my interest in personal finance and the importance of financial education, a topic often neglected in traditional education. The book's core message is about building wealth through assets and passive income. It challenged the idea that financial security is solely achieved through a high-paying job, a belief that most parents seem to agree with. Parents always advise us to study hard, get into a prestigious university and pursue a stable and well-paid job to be financially free. While this idea holds some truth, the author emphasized the importance of financial education and taking a proactive approach to managing our money such as investing in stocks or real estate. We always hear about GenZ getting into credit card debts, so I reckon getting exposed to financial education since young is very important.

13) Is there a time that you feel really down?

Ans: During my SPM preparations, I faced a particularly challenging period. As a goal-oriented person, I will work tirelessly to achieve my goals. I will plan out what I want to study every day the night before but sometimes felt overwhelmed by the sheer volume of topics to cover. This led to worries about disappointing my parents and teachers.

Over time, I learnt to manage these feelings. When negative thoughts arose, I'd stop studying because I think maintaining a positive mindset is important. I'd spend time with my family, opening up about my concerns. Many youth face mental health challenges due to suppressing their emotions, so it's important to express our feelings to someone we trust. My family's support, like my mother waking early to prepare breakfast during exams, significantly boosted my morale. I also spent time for self-care activities and indulged in hobbies to maintain balance.

Throughout my experience, I've come to understand that expressing emotions, including crying, isn't a sign of weakness but a healthy way to express feelings. This experience taught me the value of emotional balance, open communication, and self-care, especially during high-pressure situations. Perhaps most importantly, I realized the value of staying true to oneself rather than living under others' expectations. I learnt to focus on achieving my personal goals and take pride in achieving them.

14) 5 words to describe yourself

Determined, organized, resilient, diligent, collaborative

15) Do you think you are a leader or a follower?

Ans: I see myself as both a leader and a follower, depending on the situation. I volunteer to be a leader when I possess the necessary expertise and experience. I'm eager to take on leadership responsibilities to guide my team towards our collective goals.

However, in areas where I have limited experience, I will be a supportive teammate. As a follower, I will support my leaders' initiative. I view it as an opportunity to gain valuable experience for future leadership roles. However, it doesn't mean that I will follow blindly. I'm not afraid to voice out my opinions if I believe they can contribute positively to our team's progress.

In essence, I adapt to the needs of the situation. I lead when I have the expertise, and I support others when their expertise or perspective are better suited for the role. But if I were given a chance, I would lean towards being a leader, because I think that's how I will learn the most.

16) What animal would you turn into?

As an eagle, I have the freedom to fly high in the sky and go anywhere I want. I would have the opportunity to have a birds-eye view of this beautiful world and see the world from a unique vantage point. Seeing things from such heights will remind me to always look at the bigger picture and not get bogged down by minor setbacks.

Eagles are symbols of strength and resilience. They face storms head-on and use the wind to lift them higher. This is a quality I deeply admire and aspire to embody. Instead of avoiding difficulties, I strive to confront them directly and use them as opportunities for growth and improvement.

17) You are being offered another course of your choice. Will you accept the scholarship?

Ans: First of all, I am deeply honoured to have been selected from among hundreds of applicants for this scholarship. My response would depend on how closely the offered course aligns with my passion for technology and artificial intelligence.

If the course is closely related to technology, I would accept the offer. While it may not perfectly align with my focus on AI, I will embrace the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and explore technology-related areas. Many courses offer transferable skills. I believe this course would strengthen my foundation in crucial areas like mathematics, logic and problem solving - skills fundamental to my future in tech. Given Malaysia's ongoing digital transformation, I'm excited about the prospect of collaborating with experts from various domains.

However, if the course significantly deviates from technology, let's say marketing, architecture, agriculture, I will turn down the offer. My passion for AI and computer science is not just an academic interest, it's a deep-rooted passion. Passion plays a pivotal role in one's career success. When you are passionate about what you do, it fuels your motivation, resilience, and dedication. This passion drives you to continuously learn and excel in your field. Pursuing this passion keeps me engaged and allowing me to bring my best to my career. Accepting an offer outside this field would mean compromising on this passion, which I believe would limit my potential.

18) If you were offered a job in Singapore and Johor at the same time, which would you choose?

Ans: Malaysia faces a significant challenge with brain drain, where talented individuals leave Malaysia for better opportunities abroad. We can't deny the financial allure of working in Singapore. Right now 1 SGD is RM 3.50. These significantly higher salaries are undoubtedly tempting for many young professionals in Malaysia.

However, we have to think about a crucial question, if all of our brightest minds that we spent two decades to nurture continue seeking work overseas, who will be here to drive Johor's development? If we do not address the brain drain issue, it will create a vicious cycle. Without retaining talent, Johor will struggle with R&D, which in turn keeps salaries lower compared to neighboring countries like Singapore. This stagnation is reflected in our GDP per capita, which has seen only modest growth over the past decade. By choosing to work in Johor, I aim to be part of the solution, helping to drive innovation and economic development locally.

Apart from that, Johor has recently seen a surge of investments in data centers. NVIDIA has invested \$4.3 billion to deploy supercomputers in Kulai, while Microsoft also has plans to deploy its data center there. With large FDI from established tech companies, Johor is poised to become a data center hub in Southeast Asia. These data centers provide infrastructure for AI research and development, offering opportunities to work on cutting-edge projects right here in Johor. It opens up the possibilities for local companies to leverage advanced AI technologies, leading to the creation of high-value jobs right here in Johor.

Being born and bred in Johor has given me a deeper understanding of our state's challenges and unique strengths. This local insight is an advantage that I can leverage to contribute more effectively to Johor's progress. This connection to my home state fuels my passion for addressing local issues and driving innovation that directly benefits our community.

By choosing to work in Johor, I can be at the forefront of this transformation. I can contribute to building the AI ecosystem here, helping to develop solutions that are tailored to local needs. While Singapore might offer higher salaries in the short term, I believe the long-term potential for growth is greater here in Johor.

19) What do you do in your past time?

Reading is a passion of mine. Recently, I finished “Rich Dad Poor Dad” by Robert Kiyosaki, which sparked my interest in personal finance and the importance of financial education, a topic often neglected in traditional education. The book's core message is about building wealth through assets and passive income. It challenged the idea that financial security is solely achieved through a high-paying job. Instead, the author emphasized the importance of financial education and taking a proactive approach to managing our money such as investing in stocks or real estate.

I also like programming. I enrolled myself in free programming lessons on platforms such as CodeAcademy, FreeCodeCamp, YouTube and Udemy, where I learnt languages such as Python, HTML and CSS. I also enrolled myself in the computer vision and deep learning course under the eLatih initiative by Human Resources and Development Corporation.

Of course, life isn't just about learning, so I also take some time to relax such as watching movies and dramas. A K-drama that I recently finished is called Queen of Tears. I also enjoy playing badminton with my sister.

20) If the allowances given by the scholarship is not enough for you to survive oversea, what will you do?

I understand that scholarship allowances might not always cover everything, especially with rising costs of living. Firstly, I will create a detailed budget that outlines all expenses, such as accommodation, groceries and transportation. This will allow me to identify my needs and my wants and cut down on my expenses. I will also adopt a more frugal lifestyle such as cooking meals at home instead of eating out, using public transportation, buying second-hand items.

If permitted by my visa regulations, I will explore part-time jobs that won't interfere with my studies. Universities often have job boards that list part-time positions suitable for students.

If permitted by YPJ, I will inquire about additional financial assistance available from universities or external organizations. Many institutions offer scholarships specifically aimed at supporting international students facing financial challenges abroad.

21i)Past contributions high school

○ Tutoring

After SPM trial, my chemistry teacher asked me to tutor two classmate after school. This was quite a challenge for me as I'm not really good at teaching.

I noticed both of them have different problems. One of them struggled with memorisation, while the other struggled to grasp the question cues. I tailored my teaching approach to each of them. I utilized mind maps to help them visualize and connect the flow of concepts, making it easier for them to retain information. Additionally, we practised past-year's papers together to familiarize ourselves with the answers that the examiners were seeking.

To improve my teaching, I think about the answers to the questions that they may ask. This allows me to answer their questions in a structured manner.

When the official SPM results were announced, both of my friends got an A-. I've found immense joy in helping others achieve their goals. This experience not only enhanced my communication and reasoning skills but also solidified my passion to help others through sharing my knowledge.

○ Add Math

Add Math is a subject that most of us struggle with. Driven by my passion to help others, I started an initiative to support my peers. I created a group where students could send the questions that they were struggling with. A few classmates and I will record ourselves solving their questions and share the videos with all Add Math candidates in our school. Our school faces a shortage of Add Math teachers, so it often takes a long time for teachers to reply our questions. I think a lack of support can make us feel helpless. I hope my initiative can more or less motivate students to not give up add math.

○ CNY Celebration

In my school, the presidents of select clubs coordinate festive celebrations. During Chinese New Year 2022, my teacher selected me to lead the school's celebration.

First, I assembled a team of club presidents, delegating tasks based on their strengths and interests. I created a group chat for quick updates and weekly in-person meetings to keep track of our progress and ensure they had all the necessary resources.

I was responsible for contacting my primary school's lion dance team and convincing them to perform. This required several meetings and careful planning, during which I honed my negotiation and persuasion skills. With the help of my teacher, I secured sponsorships to give Mandarin-oranges to every student.

I made an effort to involve students from different races in the performance. For the choir performance, I chose the well-known "Gongxi Gongxi" song to involve all students in these simple performance.

The most challenging part was the time constraint. We just finished our year-end exams at the end of January, and the celebration was in February, leaving us only two weeks to prepare. Additionally, everyone had different schedules, and many were unavailable on weekends due to tuition classes. Therefore, I created a detailed timeline, breaking down tasks into manageable chunks and assigning deadlines. We also stay afterschool every day and turn to afternoon sessions to find junior club members who can perform. We had multiple rehearsal sessions to ensure the smooth flow of the program.

The most rewarding part was seeing the smiles on everyone's face. I would say that this event was a tremendous success. It was my first time coordinating an event and I'm quite proud of it. It taught me the invaluable skills of teamwork and clear communication to ensure the smooth flow of a program.

21ii)Achievements

- International STEM Green Innovation Challenge

In 2022, I participated in the International STEM Green Innovation Challenge. While searching for project ideas, my team and I noticed that some of the plants in our school were withering. We aimed to address the issue of plant withering while promoting sustainability. Our goal was to create an innovative solution that could keep the plants healthy, especially during long school holidays.

We decided to create a vertical garden with an automated watering system. We repurposed recyclable materials such as discarded plastic bottles to construct our vertical garden. The standout feature of our project was the automated watering system, which used a water pump and timer to conserve water and prevent the plants from withering.

During the competition, we encountered several challenges that tested our problem-solving skills. Setting up the timer and water pump presented technical difficulties. Although we had learned the theory during our RBT (Reka Bentuk dan Teknologi) classes, applying it in practice was more difficult than anticipated. We had to do a lot of tinkering and research to overcome these technical hurdles. For instance, calibrating the timer to ensure consistent watering was a significant challenge, and we faced several instances of water leakage that required modifications to fix.

Our innovative approach paid off, and we won the first prize in the competition. The success of our project was due to our creative solution to the problem of withering plants while also reducing waste. This experience highlighted my passion for problem-solving and my dedication to turning ideas into reality. I learned the importance of practical experience and became more observant of my surroundings, constantly seeking opportunities for improvement.

- Johor SDG Challenge

In 2020, I participated in the Johor SDG Challenge organized by RCE Iskandar. My teammate and I were required to make a video about the practice of Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) in our school. This competition exposed me to the SDGs and the pressing issues our world faces, some of which hit close to home.

We focused on SDG3: Good Health and Well-being. Through a survey using Google Forms, we discovered that one out of 30 students in our school was obese due to the high consumption of junk food and carbonated drinks.

To tackle this problem, we collaborated with the school canteen to restrict the sale of fried foods and canned drinks, replacing them with healthier alternatives like vegetables. Additionally, we partnered with the school counseling team to organize talks promoting healthy lifestyles and balanced diets as outlined in the Food Pyramid. We also organized mini sports to encourage students to take part in physical activity.

Conducting a school-wide survey using Google Forms proved challenging. Many people, especially the girls are quite sensitive with their weight. We encountered issues with low response rates and had to persistently follow up with students to gather sufficient data. Apart from that, implementing healthier food options in the canteen faced resistance from students. Many were accustomed to the existing menu and were hesitant to embrace change. However, our canteen operator was very supportive and offered vegetables at a cheaper price to encourage healthier eating habits.

Our efforts paid off, and we won the first prize at the state level. The most rewarding part was seeing the positive impact of our initiative. Even after the competition ended, our canteen continued to expand the selection of vegetables due to fervent support from teachers. This discovery taught me that action is the key to unlocking the door to change, a principle I hold onto whenever I face challenges and overcome adversities.

- Oil Rig

In 2023, I participated in an oil rig design competition organized by UTM. We had to design an oil rig model capable of sustaining 10 kg load. My team and I work together to research buoyancy principles, material properties and rig structures.

While searching for ideas, my teammate and I had conflicting ideas. My teammate believed a more lightweight design would sustain more weight, while I argued for a heavier design to prioritize stability. This difference in opinion created tension and hindered our progress.

I suggested we take a break from the project to have a respectful and open discussion about our ideas. We eventually agreed to a concession: instead of choosing one design over the other, we decided to build two different models to compare their pros and cons as we have enough time. This approach allowed us to fully explore both ideas without feeling that one was being disregarded.

Both designs had their own strengths and weaknesses, and through this process, we gained a deeper understanding of each approach. In the end, we were able to integrate the best elements from both models into our final design.

On the day of the competition, we faced an unexpected challenge: we were provided with fewer materials than anticipated. This required us to quickly adapt and downscale our model without compromising structural integrity. Fortunately, we had pre-drawn our design dimensions on an iPad, which allowed us to scale down the structure proportionally. This experience honed my ability to remain calm under pressure and collaborate effectively to find solutions.

Our final model sustained 8.5 kg, and we won second prize. Our success was due to our openness to new ideas, thorough research, effective teamwork, and adaptability.

22)Setback

When I was 12 years old, I discovered I have red-green colour deficiency. It broke me as a child because I could no longer pursue my childhood dream of being a pilot. I questioned why I was different from others and it felt unfair.

I started learning about colourblindness and how people cope with it. I found out Mark Zuckerberg has the same condition. His achievements reminded me being colourblind doesn't limit my full potential.

Yet, there were moments of disappointments. During a Chemistry experiment, I struggled to interpret the results on pH papers. However, with the help from teachers and classmates, I was able to overcome it. Obtaining a driver's license is more troublesome for me as well, as I have to undergo thorough examinations. I'm blessed with supportive parents who have always been there no matter what.

Now I don't really think it's a setback because honestly it doesn't really affect me. I've grown to embrace it and learnt to love myself the way I am.

I consider myself fortunate enough to discover it at a young age. Over the years, I explored other passions that aren't limited by my condition. Eventually, my focus shifted to artificial intelligence. I believe that if approached with the right mindset, challenges can be a catalyst to steer growth.

23)How can your degree in AI be useful to us?

Ans: I chose to pursue AI because it is a highly flexible field that opens up opportunity for collaboration with experts from various domains.

AI and data science can be applied to analyze the average income of Johoreans. This analysis can help in developing targeted subsidy programs. By using AI algorithms to process large datasets, we can identify income patterns and living costs across different regions and demographics in Johor. This would allow the state government to design more efficient and fair subsidy programs, ensuring that aid reaches those who need it most. Apart from that, AI-driven data analysis can help create a more accurate system to assess eligibility for Rumah Mampu Milik Johor. By considering factors like income, family size, and cost of living in different areas, we can ensure that these homes are allocated to the most deserving Johoreans.

As Johor continues to digitalize its services and economy, cybersecurity becomes increasingly crucial. Between 2017 and June 2021, there were 67,000 reported cybercrimes. My AI expertise can contribute to developing advanced threat detection systems. Using machine learning algorithms, we can create more robust cybersecurity systems that can identify and respond to new types of cyber threats. AI can help predict and mitigate cyber attacks by analyzing historical data and recognizing attack patterns. This proactive approach can protect critical infrastructure, public services, and private enterprises from potential threats.

A bug in CrowdStrike's cybersecurity software has led to widespread crashes of Windows computers globally, disrupting crucial sectors such as healthcare, aviation, and banking. This incident highlights a significant area where AI could prove invaluable. By employing advanced AI systems to analyze code, IT professionals can identify and rectify potential issues before updates are deployed.

24) How do you see yourself 10 years from now?

My tertiary education will take around 5 years. At this stage, I strive to acquire deep expertise in AI, machine learning, data analysis, and predictive modeling. During my semester breaks, I aim to supplement my academic learning with internships at leading AI companies. This will give me the opportunity to collaborate with other senior researchers and hone my skills from among the best of the best. I believe my experience working in these companies will allow me to bring back fresh perspective and innovative ideas to contribute to Malaysia.

After completing my education, I envision returning to Johor to apply my skills and knowledge. I aim to join JCORP to explore how AI could be implemented into 4 of JCORP's core businesses such as agribusiness, food and restaurant, wellness and healthcare, real estate and infrastructure. Other than that, I will focus on developing AI solutions that address local needs such as data science, cybersecurity and automation. At the mean time, I will pursue additional certifications and training programs to stay updated with the fast-evolving AI landscape such as attending workshops, seminars, and conferences.

In the subsequent 10 years, I envision myself having more experiences and has progressed to a leadership position, perhaps as a Senior AI Specialist or AI Project Lead. In this role, I would mentor young talents from Johor, helping to build a strong pool of AI expertise within Johor. This aligns with BOMJ's mission of nurturing young talents who can contribute to Johor's development.

Moreover, I plan to collaborate with local universities to develop AI education programs. This will ensure that Johor continues to produce skilled professionals in this critical field, supporting Johor's long-term technological growth.

Ultimately, my vision is to be a key player in driving Johor's digital transformation, ensuring that our state remains at the forefront of technological innovation.

25)What makes you stand out from other applicants?

Firstly, I believe every applicant brings something unique to the table and there is a lot to learn from all of you.

That being said, I think my unwavering passion for AI sets me apart from other applicants. My fascination with AI began early on, and I have actively sought out opportunities to deepen my understanding. In the dynamic and competitive field of AI, advancements happen rapidly, so it's important to stay up-to-date with the latest advancements. I constantly seek out ways to expand my knowledge and upskill myself. I have enrolled myself in computer vision and deep learning course under the eLatih initiative by Human Resources and Development Corporation, where I began building a foundation in two of the main fields in AI. Apart from that, I also participated in "AI untuk Rakyat" program under Ministry of Digital to enhance my understanding of AI. I believe these experiences will better equip me to pursue AI.

Furthermore, my problem-solving skills and analytical thinking make me a strong candidate for this program. I am adept at breaking down complex problems into manageable parts and identifying creative solutions.

I am also a highly motivated individual with a strong work ethic. I am confident that I have the dedication and perseverance required to excel in this demanding field.

Moreover, I have a track record of effective teamwork and leadership. As the head prefect during my primary school years, I was responsible for mentoring other prefects, maintaining discipline, and organizing school events. These experiences honed my leadership skills and taught me the importance of collaboration and effective communication. I believe these skills are crucial for success in AI, as the field often requires working in interdisciplinary teams to develop innovative solutions.

Most importantly, I am deeply committed to Johor's progress and believe that AI has the potential to revolutionize various sectors, from cybersecurity to data science to automation.

26) Why do you choose this scholarship over the others?

I chose Biasiswa Orang Muda Johor (BOMJ) scholarship because it aligns perfectly with my aspirations as a Johorean deeply committed to local development. BOMJ's specific emphasis on Johor allows me to apply my knowledge directly to local issues through projects and initiatives tailored to Johor's unique needs. This scholarship provides more than just financial support; it offers a platform to make an impact on Johor's development. This scholarship provides the foundation for nurturing my talents while allowing me to give back to the community that has shaped me.

Being born and bred in Johor has given me a deeper understanding of our state's challenges and unique strengths. This local insight is an advantage that I can leverage to contribute more effectively to Johor's progress. This connection to my home state fuels my passion for addressing local issues and driving innovation that directly benefits our community.

The BOMJ program also offers a unique benefit by connecting me with a diverse network of talented young Johoreans across various fields. This interdisciplinary community fosters potential for innovative collaborations that can significantly benefit our state.

By choosing BOMJ, I'm not only investing in my own future but also in the future of Johor. The scholarship's focus on developing local talent for local impact resonates deeply with my personal goals. It allows me to pursue my passion for AI while ensuring that the knowledge and skills I gain will directly benefit my community. This alignment of personal growth with community development is what sets BOMJ apart from other scholarships and makes it the perfect choice for me as a young Johorean eager to contribute to our state's advancement.

27)What values do you hold in life?

One of the values that I hold in life is commitment to lifelong learning. In fast-evolving fields like AI, staying abreast of the latest developments is essential. I actively seek opportunities to expand my knowledge through online courses. For example, I have enrolled in Computer Vision and Deep Learning course under the eLatih initiative by Human Resources and Development Corporation and participated in the “AI untuk Rakyat” program to enhance my understanding of AI. Apart from that, I just started joining Introduction to Artificial Intelligence with Python course designed by Harvard on Edx. It’s a 7 weeks program that expose me to the theory behind machine learning, large language models and search engine algorithms through Python. This commitment ensures that I remain competitive in my field.

Another value that I hold in life is commitment to excellence. I strive for excellence in everything I do. I set high standards for myself and ensure that my work is of the highest quality. I’m also attentive to small details. My part time job as an accountant admin has taught me that small things matter and that paying close attention to the finer points can make a significant difference. This focus on detail helps me ensure accuracy in my work.

I also hold myself accountable for my actions. I take full responsibility for my actions and their outcomes, whether they are successes or failures. When faced with challenges, I analyze what went wrong, take responsibility and develop strategies for improvement. This mindset encourages me to learn from my mistakes and continuously improve.

28)Do you have any questions?

- i) Beyond financial support, are there any additional opportunities associated with this scholarship?
- ii) What kind of leadership projects are scholars involved in?
- iii) Are there networking opportunities with alumni or industry professionals as part of the scholarship program?
- iv)What are the expectations for scholars in terms of academic performance and extracurricular involvement?
- v)Could you please tell me more about the career pathway available after my graduation?

1. Did you face any difficult situations in school?
2. This is your first time studying abroad and stepping out of your comfort zone. What would you do to better prepare yourself?
3. How do you deal with stress?
4. What advancement about AI excites you the most?
5. How would you entitle yourself to the top universities in the world?