



UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH TAN SRI DATO' AZHAR AZIZAN @ HARUN
REGARDING HIS EXPERIENCES IN PARLIAMENTARY MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

This oral history transcript documents an interview with Tan Sri Dato' Azhar Azizan Harun, former Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat, about his career, leadership, and contributions to Malaysia's parliamentary system. The interview was designed to document his personal experiences, professional development, and thoughts on legislative leadership and governance. The discussion delved into his professional history, leadership beliefs, decision-making process, obstacles encountered during his term, legislative procedures, and advice for future leaders. The interview was conducted utilizing a semi-structured format, which allowed the subject to offer comprehensive experiences and reflections. The received material was transcribed and organized carefully to assure correctness and validity. This transcript is an invaluable original historical source for understanding the Speaker's responsibilities, parliamentary administration, and the value of integrity, knowledge, and successful leadership in public service. This oral history record is intended to aid students, researchers, and future generations by preserving firsthand accounts of Malaysia's parliamentary evolution and leadership.

Keywords: *Oral History, Parliament of Malaysia, Dewan Rakyat, Parliamentary Leadership, Tan Sri Dato' Azhar Azizan Harun*

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We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to Tan Sri Dato' Azhar Azizan Harun for generously sharing his time, knowledge and valuable experiences during the interview. His insights into Malaysia's parliamentary system have greatly contributed to the success of this project.

Next, we would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to our beloved lecturer for the continuous support, guidance, encouragement, and constructive feedback given throughout the completion of this assignment. Our sincere thanks also go to Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) for giving us with the opportunity to conduct the oral history project.

Finally, we would like to thank our family members, friends and group members for their support and cooperation throughout the preparation of this report. Their assistance and motivation have been invaluable in completing this project successfully.

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
MP	Member of Parliament
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizational
PM	Prime Minister
UK	United Kingdom
UiTM	Universiti Teknologi MARA
YB	Yang Berhormat
PAC	Public Accounting Committees
KSU	Ketua Setiausaha

List of Names

NH	Nila Humaira
AA	Aisyah Adibah
TSAAH	Tan Sri Dato' Azhar Azizan Harun
DSIY	Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri Yaakob
TSPAM	Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia

INTERVIEWERS BIODATA

1.0 Interviewer's Biodata

1.1 First Interviewer



Figure 1: First Interviewer

Name	Nila Humaira Binti Hanif
Date of Birth	8 July 2004
Address	No 15, Jalan Sari Ilham ½, Alam Sari, 43000 Kajang Selangor
University Name	Universiti Teknologi MARA (Cawangan Puncak Perdana)
Matrix Number	2025178827
Course	Bachelor Of Information Science in Records Management
E-mail	nilahumairahanif@gmail.com

1.2 Second Interviewer



Figure 2: Second Interviewer

Name	Aisyah Adibah binti Nor Azizan
Date of Birth	19 April 2004
Address	No 21 Jalan Khamis 10/KU8, 42200 Meru Klang
University Name	Universiti Teknologi MARA (Cawangan Puncak Perdana)
Matrix Number	2025178455
Course	Bachelor Of Information Science in Records Management
E-mail	aisyahazizan4@gmail.com

INTERVIEWEE'S BIODATA

2.0 Interviewee's Biodata



Figure 1: Interviewee

Name	Tan Sri Dato' Azhar Azizan Harun
Date of Birth	26 October 1962
Place of Birth	Kampung Sanglang, Kedah
Email	agchamb@agchamb.com.my
Contact	+603 2242 3888
Profession	Lawyer, former Election Commission of Malaysia Chairman, and former Dewan Rakyat Speaker.

INTRODUCTION

3.0 Introduction

Malaysia practices a parliamentary democracy based on the Westminster system, with Parliament serving as the highest legislative entity responsible for enacting laws, representing the people, and supervising the executive. The Malaysian Parliament is made up of three components which are Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the Dewan Negara, and the Dewan Rakyat. These chambers work together to execute legislative representative, and oversight roles (Parliament of Malaysia, 2024).

Over time, the Malaysian parliamentary system has evolved significantly in response to changes in administration, public expectations, and political dynamics. These changes have highlighted the necessity of understanding how Parliament works, its member's obligations, and the problems that come with carrying out legislative duties. Oral history is an excellent research method because it captures firsthand recollections and personal experiences that may not be available in written documents, preserving important historical knowledge for future generations (Ritchie, 2015).

Therefore, this oral history project was carried out to capture Tan Sri Dato' Azhar Azizan @ Harun's experiences and viewpoints as the previous Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat. This interview provided significant firsthand information on parliamentary administration, leadership, parliamentary reforms, Special Select Committees, legislative procedures, governance, and the value of knowledge and leadership in public service.

Overall, this transcript is a significant historical document because it captures the interviewee's experiences and reflections. It also serves as a valuable resource for researchers, students, and the general public interested in learning more about the Malaysian parliamentary system and its role in promoting democratic governance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

4.0 Literature Review

According to Mahani Musa (2018), oral history is an important method of research for capturing the stories of those who participated in the historical events. The method will help the researcher get information not available in written form, since the participants will be able to talk about their experiences, views, and memories based on real-life events. Oral history is useful not only as an addition to the written form of data but also for the preservation of national heritage as well as for getting a better picture of historical events. However, according to Mahani Musa (2018), the employment of the method has not been maximized in Malaysia, even though there are many personalities with much experience in the different spheres of life in the country.

In addition, another study by Kamarudin and Denison (2022) reveals that oral history acts not only as a source of historical information but also to gain more insight into personal experiences. Oral history interviews allow identifying the problems, the decision-making process, and the role of a person that cannot necessarily be found in any official papers. Such an approach also makes the research much more reliable because the information is provided directly by the people under consideration. Therefore, the use of oral history in this case would be extremely useful in researching the experience of national persons like Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun.

As explained in the Journal of the Malaysian Parliament, the institution of Parliament is one of the important components in the country's parliamentary democracy system. The major roles played by Parliament include the creation of laws, balancing the actions of the executive arm, and serving as the means through which citizens can communicate their views regarding national affairs. To perform the above roles, the institution of Parliament must be run in a manner that professional and transparent, using the Federal Constitution and the Standing Order of the Dewan Rakyat.

Based on Maha Balakrishnan (2025), there is a need for reforming parliamentary institutions to aid in the process of checks and balance and the legislative process. It needs to be understood that the management of time in Parliament, agenda setting, and debates by members of Parliament are the areas that will ensure the smooth running of Parliament. Even though there have been efforts in the recent past towards giving power to Parliament, there is much that still needs to be done in this regard.

The behaviour of the Members of Parliament during the sitting in the Dewan affects the perception and credibility of the Parliamentary institutions. Aslan found that the use of disrespectful language, discrimination, and interruption of speeches can lead to ineffective proceedings. Moreover, the position of the Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat is important to ensure the professionalism and good manners of all the sittings. The practice of a code of ethics and observance of standing orders would increase the public's confidence in the institution of Parliament. (Aslan, 2022)

Moreover, Yang di-Pertuan Dewan Rakyat is the one who controls the activities in the Dewan, especially in cases where there are any forms of harsh language or actions that affect the continuity of the debate. According to the Peraturan Mesyuarat Dewan Perwakilan, the Speaker has the right to give directions, issue warnings, and deal with Members of Parliament who do not comply with the rules. The efficiency of the parliamentary system depends not only on the Members of Parliament but also on the wisdom of the Speaker in handling the Standing Orders. (Kamilan & Saari, 2020)

The oral question-and-answer system in the Dewan Rakyat is an important tool for enhancing government accountability to citizens. In the process of oral questioning, MPs discuss issues related to policies and administration within the government, and at the same time, it is the duty of the government to explain itself to the public. It becomes evident that the activities of the Dewan Rakyat need to be systematically managed by the Speaker. (Mydin & Shamsuddin, 2018)

Based on the literature review outlined above, it is fair to suggest that the use of oral history is a very appropriate method of research in capturing the experiences of those who have played roles in shaping the growth of the nation. Previous studies discussed areas of the importance of oral history and the functions of Parliament and the role of the Yang di-Pertuan Dewan Rakyat, as well as administrative aspects of Parliament. Nevertheless, the work has been done using the oral history method in capturing the experiences of Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun. This research was therefore carried out to capture the experiences and contribution of Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun as a lawyer, former chairman of the Election Commission, and former Yang di-Pertuan Dewan Rakyat.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

5.0 Interview Transcript

AA: Hi, Assalamualaikum Tan Sri

Tan Sri: Waalaikummusalam

AA: This is Oral History Interview Recording with Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun regarding his experiences and involvement in Malaysia Parliamentary System. The recording is conducted at the office Azhar & CO

Tan Sri: Yeah

AA: Bangsar South City, Kuala Lumpur, on Fifteen May, two thousand twenty-six (15th May 2026) at 2:30 PM. This interview is conducted by me, Aisyah Adibah binti Nor Azizan, and my team member Nila Humaira binti Hanif. With all due respect, we shall now begin this interview session.

Tan Sri: Okay

AA: May I start the first question?

Tan Sri: Yeah

AA: Tan Sri, can you share your career background and how you became involved in Parliament Malaysia?

Tan Sri: My career background, where I since my graduation in nineteen eighty-six (1986) from University of Malaya, I practiced law, then I did my master's nineteen eighty-nine (1989). When I came back in nineteen ninety (1990), I continue practicing law. Then in two thousand and eighteen (2018), after general election 14, the government appointed me as the Chairman of the Election Commission. When that government changed hands in two thousand and twenty (2020) so, Tun Dr. Mahathir [Prime Minister of Malaysia twice, in 1989 and 2018] resigned, and then later Tan Sri Muhyiddin [Prime Minister of Malaysia in 2020] became Prime Minister. He invited me to be nominated as Speaker of Dewan Rakyat, Parliament Malaysia. So, that *yelah* [well] then my name was nominated and it was a voting and they replaced the 10th speaker Tan Sri Arif Yusoff [former Yang di-Pertua Dewan Rakyat] with myself. Yeah.

AA: Okay, thank you for sharing that, Tan Sri. The next question is: what motivates you to take a role in the Parliamentary system?

Tan Sri: Well, first of all, I never applied for the job. So, you know, to be a speaker you cannot apply to be a speaker. Right. But of course, if you politician *ke* [or] you have always wanted to be the speaker as suppose if you close to the government, you will meet the Prime Minister and say that you like to be a speaker, but I was, I never applied to be a speaker. I was happy to be a Chairman of the Election Commission so, to ask me whether what motivated me that there wasn't any motivation because I never apply for the job. Yeah, but when I was invited by the Prime Minister to be nominated as a speaker. What motivated me to accept that nomination was because of the fact that I knew many member parliament from the government side and also from the opposition side, most of them are my friends both from government side and the opposition side so, because Tan Sri Muhyiddin did not have that much majority, I think 3 seats *kot* [maybe] so I thought I could be the bridge between the government side and the opposition side because both of my friends. I know them for long time *pun* [also], so I thought I could be the bridge so that somewhat motivated me to accept that nomination.

NH: Because you been offered and also you have a lot of friends that you know.

Tan Sri: Yeah, no when I was practicing law for 13 years at that time so, I was also, I mean they call me an activist, I don't know whether I was an activist or not but because of those days my activism days my writing days I know both sides, I know some of them are in fact very old friend so I thought I could be speaker in the middle I could bridge the government and the opposition. I will be in a good position so yeah.

AA: So, the next question is what was your journey to becoming the Speaker of Parliament?

Tan Sri: What was my journey?

AA: Yes!

Tan Sri: I mean it's the same like my career path just now. I did law, and then I practiced law. When I practiced law, I was involved in a bit of a activism. I like to write

about constitutionalism. I like to write about human rights, and I like to write about elections you know. So those were my writing activism days, and because of that, especially because of my involvement in many election petitions and I wrote quite a lot about election law. Then when the government, new government was formed in two thousand and eighteen (2018), Pakatan Harapan [political party] at that time under Tun Mahathir they thought, why don't let him be the Election Commission, so they approached me again, I never applied for the job. So, when they approached me, initially I was quite reluctant because I would never know anything about organizing and election, I only know the law. No, they say you will be supported by a very experience secretariat. So, I accepted. Then after about 20 months, 1 day when the Prime Minister changed, the new Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin called me and said I would like to nominate you to be a speaker. So that was a journey. It wasn't a planned journey like, you know, it's not like when I was in school, I want to be a doctor so I, you know I plan *tak da* [none]. It wasn't like that. It was just fated to be that way. Yeah.

AA: So, the next question is what were your main responsibilities during your time as speaker?

Tan Sri: Well, the main responsibility of a speaker of the rakyat, the main responsibility is to chair the majlis, the meeting, the majlis Dewan Rakyat lah. The sitting during the sitting, I would chair. I've got 2 *timbang* [deputy], so we would share for one and half hours and then change to another person. So that's the main responsibility. I sit there as chairman of the meeting lah, basically *kan* [right] so I make sure that the procedure of the meeting, the etiquette followed people follow the standing order *ni* [this] is a book of procedure of the Dewan Rakyat, standing orders, I show you this: this is the standing order [Tan Sri shows the Standing Orders].

NH: Is the rule of guideline.

Tan Sri: *Haah* [yes], this is the procedure of the Dewan Rakyat lah standing order under the law the Dewan Rakyat is supposed to have its own procedure under the federal constitution, so this is a procedure that's why it's called standing order because standing order meaning this order stands all the time. That's why it's called a

standing order. Otherwise, without a standing order, every day before we meet, we have to say, okay, what's the procedure today?

NH: Everyday change.

Tan Sri: So, that is why we have one order and this order applied to all the _____. Ramai orang *cakap* [many people say] standing order but, not know why is standing order. So, my main *apa tu* [what is] function, as I say, is to be the chairman of the meeting and ensure the standing order is compiled by everybody. So, like people want to speak, what they have to do, the standing order will have a provision about that. So, they have to follow lah. Okay so, that's my main function yang orang *nampak* [that people see] on YouTube and live _____ and but other than that, there are a lot other thing. I determine who ask what question okay, so the question time is only one and half hours, so there will be thousands of questions I determine who ask question for what day and in what order who ask question number 1 who ask question number 2. That's important because that one half hours is live telecast. Everybody wants to ask question at that time because they want to be live telecast. Okay. So, one half hours you can only answer about 12, 13 questions. So, the top 13 very important. *Yang lepas tu* [after that] after the 13 questions *tu* [that] the next 50 questions will only be answered in writing not orally. So, I determine all those orders. I will have to sit down with the secretariat, go through all the questions thousands of questions and decide and see. Okay. This guy has asked questions before. He's got top 10 before, question number 5 *dah banyak kali* [many times already]. This *kementerian* [ministry] have answered questions too many times already. So, we have to go and determine all those *lah kan* [exactly, right?]. So, those are part of the behind the door *punya* [have] function. Okay, and then, I got to chair also committees. We have selection committees, we have standing order committees, we have the Dewan committees, we have the PAC (Public Accounting Committees). I don't share lah, but I will have to appoint, and I oversee all these committees. And then under me I have 10 special committees, special select committee human rights, sustainability, Hal Ehwal Wanita or _____ so I will have to take care all then, generally basically everything to do with parliament they will have to refer to me, but I have a secretariat lah. So, secretariat are I think, 300 staff.

So, the ketua [leader] of the secretariat is called *ketua pentadbir*, chief administrator. So *kalau dalam kementerian ni ketua pentadbir ni dia macam ketua setiausaha KSU lah tapi dekat parliament* [within the ministry, the chief administrator is essentially the equivalent of the Secretary-General (KSU). Still, based in parliament] she or he is called *ketua pentadbir*, chief administrator. He or she *dia macam* [like] CEO [Chief Executive Officer] lah, she or he manages the administration of the policy and management.

NH: What do you think if there's no standing order during the parliament session?

Tan Sri: No, if you see the Federal Constitution says the parliament regulates itself. Okay, so because of that, for every meeting we have to regulate our procedure. So, if there wasn't any standing order or if there wasn't any order that stand, then every morning before we start, we have to determine what procedure for that day is. That's it, not practical lah, you know you will take 8 hours to determine procedure. Then we don't have meeting lah every day. So that is why the order is passed long time ago, and it's called standing order. This order stands every day. It's like that lah. In England *pun macam tu* [it's like that too] in Canada in America is like that. It's called standing order. So, this one if you want to amend it has to go through the standing order committee, and then they will decide whether to amend or not. And then *bila* [when] they agree to amend what are the amendments, then we will draft the amendment we will have to table this in the Dewan for approval, then *baru boleh* [only then is it possible to] amend.

AA: So Tan Sri, what were some key experiences that shaped your role in parliament?

Tan Sri: Well, of course, my first day experience was very bad because the opposition objected very strongly against my appointment. Yeah. So actually, what happened was because the prime minister changes, the Pakatan Harapan government fell, the new government came out, Tan Sri Muhyiddin and Bersatu [political party], so they became angry, and I became the target, so they objected. So, they objected very badly. In fact, some of them very rude. I had to chase 2-member parliament out of the house that day on my first day, and nobody listened to me; they were shouting at me all the time, so that shaped my career as a speaker. From that night, I learned what politics is all about how politicians behave and I learned how bad politics could be. Yeah. But you know I'm not the

kind of person who run away. I don't. I took a job; I have to do it. So, that day and that night I learned a lot, I thought what to do. So, the next day I regarded the next day as the first day as a speaker. So, my style is as I said I don't run away. Number 1. Number 2, I don't keep grudges. I don't. So, I'm not vengeful, and I'm not the kind who made sour face. *Muka masam* [scowl]. You did something to me yesterday, today I'm gonna [going to] boycott you. I'm not like that. And I don't use my power to get back at people. That's me. So, the next day, I went to the office, and there was this MP [Member of Parliament] who actually call me a _____ the day before. Okay. And she was waiting for me to see me in the office early in the morning, you know, and she was fidgeting outside. I was, and my officer said she would like to see you. Ouh, she called me _____ yesterday. Yeah. What she wants? Anyway, I said okay, come. So, she came, we have coffee, and I told her let you call me _____ yesterday, then she tried to explain. I said no, it's okay. Let's regard this as our first day, you know. So that is my style. I engage a lot. As I said, I don't go grudges. I'm not vengeful. I don't abuse my power. I don't get back at people. Whatever happens in the Dewan, once I step outside of the Dewan it's okay with me. I forget about it yeah. So, engage a lot of people engagement is important that shapes my speakership, engagement. I have to engage because there are 221 during my time I passed away. 221. So, I had _____ all and I think after some time they realize my style you know, and they accepted me as a speaker. So, I will engage I go, I walk everywhere in the parliament. I was probably the first speaker who went to the coffee lounge. Yeah. No other speaker have been to the coffee lounge. I would just walk to the coffee lounge, and they were so surprised to see me. Oh my god, Speaker, yeah, I drink coffee. So, I'm like that. I would go to the back bench room, I go to the MP [Member of Parliament] room, I just talk to the everybody by the corridor, you know. So that's my style.

AA: So, the next question is how did you're upbringing, and family support shape the person you are today? Maybe like parenting, support system, influenced by siblings or family.

Tan Sri: Yeah, of course, I mean family shapes you, of course part of it lah. Another one, life in university, I was in hostel since I was 15, I was abroad for a while, but family plays a big part. I was brought up by my grandmother and

grandfather. Unlike your father brought up by my parents. So, I was brought up 100% by my grandparents. My grandmother was a very strong-willed lady. You know she controls everything, so she even names me whoever she wants to name me she names. Whoever she wants to take, she just takes. You know, so she was also a very strict disciplinarian. You wake up at 5 am, you go to school, come back, you *mandi* [shower], you pray, you *makan* [eat], you go *mengaji* [recite] Quran, you *balik* [go home]. She is very regimented. So that I'm like that now, you know. Then I went to the hostel. So, it's all the same time, discipline. So, and she demands a lot from me and from all her grandkids lah. She demands a lot, and although she's illiterate, she's got this vision that all her grandkids whom she took care of must have English education. So, my eldest brother had English education. She took care of him. She took care of me. I had English education. Although the school was 16 miles away and there was only 1 bus. So yeah, we have to sacrifice lah. We have to wake up early. We have to sleep early, you know. That was it. So that shaped me, and she would although she's illiterate also, she would *pantau* [monitor] she would *apa tu* [what is that] she will oversee my performance in school. You know, whether you got red mark or not, or blue mark, she checks, and she would scold you, and she made sure I did my homework. So, she did all those things. So that shaped me. I'm always on time, you know. I'm always respectful of people. I demand a lot of my staff. I'm very particular about things. Spelling mistake, comma, full stop, I do it myself. So, I'm also a control freak just like her. So yeah, then of course my elder brother became a lawyer, did law, and then he did well. He was the best student the only Malaysian who is the best student in Lincoln's Inn you know. Of course, Idrus [Tan Sri Dato' Idrus bin Azizan @ Harun, Attorney general of Malaysia] also became a lawyer, so I suppose it became motivational lah. So, I remember when I was small, I was form three ke [or] form two time I *macam* [like] I'm not going to be in this village. I'm not. I have to be, so yeah, that's how the family shapes you. Of course, I got good support. I got good support from my brothers, my sister, your father. We all support each other. Although we are not very close, because we all broken up part with my parents, part with my grandparents, and then when we are small, we are just scattered all over. I'm in the hostel. So, we are not close, we are not close need family, but we support each other. And then

my family, of course, my wife, my kids, they support me a lot. It's very important.

AA: So Tan Sri, what leadership value and quality are important in managing Parliament Malaysia effectively?

Tan Sri: Well, I think I just said just now, apart from leadership and staff personally, you cannot take things personally. If you want to be a good speaker, you just can't because otherwise you wouldn't be speaking with anybody. They will say all sort of thing about you, you know, they will scold you. Everybody is scolding each other, otherwise so you cannot take things personally. You cannot have grudges. You cannot be vengeful. You cannot tell people, okay this guy tomorrow I'm get back at you. No, I think that is the single most important behaviour that you should have lah in the parliament. Of course, time management is important because time is gold in the Dewan. Whoever gets 5 minutes to speak, he so happy and he will want 1 minute more. So, you got to manage that time, you know, time slot. So, that is a must. Number 3, I think, is empathy. You need to empathize; you need to engage. That's why I engage because I want to empathize. Empathize means I need to know where they're coming from and where they're going and why. So, that is what empathy is all about. So, to do that, I need to engage because I have to get to know you and what is stand for and why. Of course, number 4 is power persuasion, you cannot simply if you disagree with anybody you cannot just simply pull the shutter down and that's it okay, we agree to disagree. We agree to disagree is very overrated phrase. There's no such things we agree to disagree. It's just that we disagree lah. Okay, but you need to find a way to find agreement. You know, in whatever conflict basically political conflict, of course there are differences, right? But there is always a point of convergence. You have to find that point, and you start your relationship from that point. Always remember you that there is no zero-sum game, meaning I disagree with you, you disagree with me, we agree to disagree. That's it. No, that is a failure, you know, because that is accepting the fact that okay, we are different. So that's it. Then we will never work together. You have to acknowledge the differences, number 1. Number 2, you got to find there always 1 point where you convert. That's why I call it the point of convergence. Then you build your relationship. I give you an example:

there are some people who say Islam doesn't support human rights, because you have to dress like this, cannot dress like that, *kan?* [right] women cannot do this. Okay, and there are always other people who say human rights is un-Islamic. The Westerners will say Islam is against human rights, but there are some Muslims who actually say human right is un-Islamic, *kan ada* [after all, there is]. So, if we agree to disagree than it's like, *ouh betul lah* [ouh that's right] to the Westerners will say Islam is against human rights, and the Muslim will say human rights is haram, not Islamic. Okay so, are we gonna [going to] accept that? If we accept that it's a failure lah. Okay, you have to find a point of convergence. So, you trace back and then you *tengok* [see] when women were regarded as property in the Western country the Middle Ages, women property charter *dia orang panggil kan* [they call it that, right], Nabi Muhammad gave inheritance to women, right to inherit. So, how you say Islam is against human rights? When prisoners of war were tortured and killed in the Western civilization? Nabi Muhammad had a code of prisoners, how to treat prisoners, so how can you say Islam is against human rights? So, if we could start from that point, that's a point of convergence. You could start from that point then you can build the relationship from that. That's why I meant. In politics, Malaysian politics *pun* [also] is the same. When issues crop up, there will be differences, but if you work hard enough, empathize, engage, and empathize, you will find a point of convergence. And why don't you build the political relationship from that point? Basically, you find a point of commonality where the opinion is common rather than you acknowledge differences and that's about it, you can't. It's a failure of the current system as well. So, it takes a lot of effort, but you know, with reasonable effort, with hard work, as suppose we can go far.

AA: So Tan Sri, how do you maintain fairness and neutrality during parliamentary sessions?

Tan Sri: Of course, in my mind, you know, I always thought that I could bridge the opposition and the government. Like I said, I want to bridge them, so I have to be fair, and I did my best. My first guide is the law, what does the law say. Okay, when there's an issue, what does the law say, I have to follow the law. If the law says like this, I have to follow. I got no choice. There are also situation where the law is not clear or the law give me discretion. So first, is the law, you follow

the law, but if the law gives you discretion or the law is not clear you have to interpret the law. Okay, I always when there is discretion or where I have to interpret the law, I always do it in a way that I think is in the best interest of the country. That's my guide, then when you make a decision as a leader, there will always be 50% who agree, 50% who disagree. I don't care as long as I follow the law or I do something in the best interest of the country, I don't care. You disagree *ke* [or], you agree *ke* [or], too bad, I'm the speaker. That's what I did.

NH: Alright, so Tan Sri how do you handle any conflicts or disagreement among members?

Tan Sri: Inside the dewan, I would have to be very strict. If you're wrong, you're wrong, I don't care whether you are the government or opposition. There was a time when actually one of the government motion was lost because, lost by 3 votes I think by 1 vote because 3 government members came late to vote and I disqualified them yeah. I'm, I will be very strict you know so in the dewan I have to be strict, outside the dewan, I engaged yeah. I engaged and my style is I try to accommodate as much as possible to both side so that takes a lot of effort lah. I could take it easy and say look cannot, you know and that's it. But I'm not like that lah I try very hard to find the way to accommodate.

NH: So, if the members is disagree what do you do?

Tan Sri: If they disagree, I will explain to them sorry I just can't do it you know and I can't argue but outside the dewan is very rare lah. I say no, very rare I always find the way to accommodate. I'm the first speaker who actually organize a conference in the parliament in cooperation with the leader of opposition; nobody has done it. Every, I don't think even England has done it yeah. So, I go to that extent to accommodate member of parliament.

NH: Okay so what decision-making skills that are important in the parliamentary leadership?

Tan Sri: No, you have to be decisive. You know, you cannot deliberately. You cannot say, ouh, tomorrow like this, or why don't we do this? I'm not too sure, no you can't. You just have to be decisive when there is an issue you have to deal with it and decide and of course decide. My guidance is simple. I decide in accordance with

the law. That's it okay, but if I have the power on discretion, I will decide in the way that I think is in the best interests of the country but whatever it is, there must be a decision you cannot postpone or wait for the problem to disappear. It will never disappear. So, you have to decide. Of course, lah before decision I have to before deciding I look at the law, I got some advisors or I call up people *yang* [that have] more experience than me you know *apa* [what] engage ask their opinion I will decide lah.

NH: Alright next what were the biggest challenges that you face during your time in the parliament?

Tan Sri: Biggest challenges is actually; it's just behaviour of member of parliament lah. Some of them in the dewan they get a bit emotional. They lose their temper, you know. They scold people, they are of course their also a member of parliament who like to provoke like, I know you are emotional fellow. And I know you react badly, and then in the dewan I will provoke you. So that you will react badly you know. So, those are challenging because those is impromptu. You need to control at that time. At that point of time itself. So, I find that challenging. But I think after some time, once you gain some respect from them as supposed they will, you know, follow what you say lah but they will always keep trying. Of course, if you look at social media. Okay social media is a big challenge as well people will say all sort of thing about you and people who do not know anything will _____ so I. Those are challenging but I don't, as a I said I don't care so I don't look at.

NH: Don't read all the comments and negative comments.

Tan Sri: I don't care. So, I had my strategic communication people when I just became speaker, they you know, every week or every 2 weeks they prepare report of what the nets say about me so I _____ this not your job. Your job is not to protect me; your job is to protect the parliament. Okay? And I don't care what people say. Whether they *puji* [praise], they give me credit. They say I'm the best or not or whether they say this fellow is the worst human being on earth both I don't care. So, I said can you please stop doing this? I don't want to hear this report. Okay? Your job is not this. So, basically as long as I do my job the best that I can and in

the best interest of the country, I'm okay I don't care in fact if you look those days, I never answered anything I don't until now I don't.

NH: How did you handle any difficult or unexpected situation?

Tan Sri: You have to remind yourself that you are the speaker. Alright? So, no matter what they say, no matter how loud their voices are and how intense they attack you or they attack each other you have to remember I'm the speaker okay, I'm the speaker meaning I have the last say okay. Never mind. You give them times 1 minute, 2 minute, 3 minute. At the end of the day, okay I said you all sit down my turn this my ruling you listen to me. So, mostly they will make a bit of noise and they will accept. Okay so you had to always remind yourself, you're the speaker, you have the power, and you have the law, you have the knowledge, as long as you decide fairly in accordance with the law. There will come a time when they were grudgingly accept your ruling. You know, so yeah after some time they will do it you have to treat them with respect *jugak* [too] lah respect is both way lah so I don't, in that direction I'm okay I feel okay.

NH: Is there any members or people that doesn't listen to you during the parliament in the dewan rakyat?

Tan Sri: Yeah, I mean in the dewan of course they will they would try very hard to disagree with you know. If they disagree lah, so and then you know they are wrong, and they know they are wrong, you know so *tak pela* [it's ok] it's just be patience then finally you say, look this what my ruling is sorry I got no choice. I would, because I'm a lawyer, I know the law so that's an advantage and I always support my ruling with either the standing order or the law. I will bring book into the dewan. I mean look at YouTube sometime, I will be reading book in front of them so, I always backup my ruling so my ruling is just not me, I mean is not just me you know it's the law, it's the book it's the precedent. You know and yeah. At the end of the day, they have to accept it yeah. I make research before I rule, I don't simply rule.

NH: Okay, if possible, can you share any experience that is not widely known to the public. I mean like behind the parliament what is actually happening?

Tan Sri: A lot. In fact, the experience outside the dewan is more than the experience in the dewan, because the dewan is just *berapa jam eh sehari?* [how many hours a day?] 10 o'clock to 5.30, officially. But then sometimes you see until 8, 9 p.m. But behind close door, there are more things that happen. The meetings, the select committee meetings, the policy meeting, the negotiations, the engagement *kan* [right?]. So, I try my very best, as I said just now, to accommodate everybody. You know. I even had organized a conference in cooperation with the leader of opposition, which I don't think anybody has done that before, because I did not want to turn down the leader of the opposition initiatives to have a conference. Of course, I also engaged with a lot of *persatuan* [associations] NGOs [Non- Governmental Organizations] you know like NGO about *mendaulatkan bahasa Malaysia* [upholding the Malay language]. I engage them. So, these are the kind of things of happening behind closed door that not widely known. Nobody knows. *Bukan* [No] because this are behind the curtain *punya kerja* [work] and I engage a lot also with diplomats *duta* [ambassadors], the ambassadors. Some of them remain good friends until know. I have roundtable meeting with the I think, more than 10 ambassadors. I represented Malaysian to ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] in two thousand and twenty-two (2022) because the parliament was already dissolved. The Prime Minister could not go. Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri Yaakob [Prime Minister of Malaysia at that time] and he sent me. I represented national program ASEAN in Cambodia. There are a lot of other things which I don't think I could tell you know. Because all these things happen in confidence so yeah. But let me just say that the behind closed-door work, I think those are more meaningful work then the one in the dewan. So, a lot of things happened, and a lot of things are done in the rooms rather than in the dewan because people are more open to interact behind closed doors than in the dewan. Because in the dewan there's a camera and dewan is just a politics. It's just politic. Policy, most of the time, politic. Policy, probably part of it. Probably 30%, 40% of the time. But they are all politics is _____ all. I've got, I give you a simple example. There was this MP [Member of Parliament] who like to speak English in the dewan.

So, I called him I said YB [Yang Berhormat] why could you, please speak less English, speak *Bahasa Malaysia* [Malay Language] lah. And you know what he said? He said, “Ouh, I’ve got to speak English, because my voters are all English”. So, you see what I meant you see? So, in the dewan he wasn’t addressing me, on the dewan he was addressing voters, you, see? So, that’s what I meant by a lot of you is politics in the dewan. So, that’s what it is. I always said whether that this CCTV [Closed- Circuit Television], this a camera in the dewan, I always questioned whether it’s a good thing or not okay, because Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia [Malaysian politician and lawyer from Sabah]. He, I was told he fought for it. *Dulu2 tak de camera kan dalam dewan?* [Back then, there were no cameras in the Dewan, right?] Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia was the one who fought for camera and livestreaming at the dewan, the intention was good. The intention was at people like you all people, all of us lah *rakyat Malaysia dapat tahu dapat tengok macam mana undang-undang* [the Malaysian people, to know and see how laws are made] how laws are promulgated, how MPs, how Menteri do their job in the dewan. The intention was good. Transparency lah *kan?* [right?] But the side effect of that is, member of parliament starts playing politics in the dewan. Because it’s live stream. They want to talk to their voters, not to the dewan. So, that’s the negative side. Then sometimes I wonder whether cameras are good or not in the dewan. But when I say that they say I’m not transparent, I against democracy. No, I’m not against democracy, but I’m just being realistic yeah. All of this drama in the dewan it’s just because people want to see drama, that’s why. You contrast that to behind closed-door meeting, select committee meeting, special select committee meeting. It’s all very peaceful and people work together, opposition and government they discuss nicely *pasai apa* [why] because there’s no camera no drama, so I don’t know they are pros and cons lah.

NH: Okay as you said just now and during Aisyah’s questioned what are some more common issues in the parliamentary operations?

Tan Sri: Common issues? I think operation wise, is always time lah you know, *tak cukup masa* [there’s never enough time] because everybody wants to speak. Before my time, of course they follow the English practice where they have to catches the speaker attention and the speaker will call them to speak and they were instances

before where MPs would speaking for 3 hours, for 2 hours, you know taking their time. During my time, no more. I want list of speaker the chief they have to give me list of speakers and then I will decide how much time they have. So, that everybody can speak. So, I think time management is always an issue. Number 2, I think the government always delay in giving their bills to everybody *undang-undang* [law]. Law, before they passed to become law, they are called bills. So, I think bills need to be given to every MP 2 weeks, 3 weeks before. So, that the MP can read and then obtain opinion from the constituency. So that they can debate the more meaningful way. But now, bills sometimes *2 hari 3 hari mana ada masa nak* [come only two or three days before there's no time to read them.] So, I think that can be improved. And then I think we need more researchers. When I became a speaker, I learnt the parliament only had 11 researches, *mana cukup* [that wasn't enough] 11 researcher there are how many ministries 25 ministries, so 1 researcher 1 ministry *pon tak de* [there wasn't even one researcher for each ministry]. So, you know I wanted to have at least 15. So, I had some *ape nama* [what that it calls]. I had some budget. So, I think I contracted another 20. So, it became 21, 22. Now, I do not know how many. We need more researchers to help, to assist the MPs, we need better library with better access, we need also a mini secretariat for each special committee that we have. When I became speaker, special select committee do not have secretariat, they don't even have. Meaning they don't have staff lah. So, I got 10 or 11 special select committee no staff. So, they had to borrow the dewan rakyat staff and because of that the dewan rakyat staff become overworked. So, after my first year MOF [Ministry of Finance] gave me budget, so I had 2 staff for each special select committee. 1 researcher and 1 administrative they need that; they need permanent staff for each select committee. Otherwise, select committee can't function well. I wanted to have a nice little building for every special select committees, because meeting room *pon* [also] is quite premium everybody *berebut* [everybody competes to use them]. I want this so I think we need premises more meeting room for special select committee. Those were the normal operation issue lah.

NH: How do real life parliamentary practices differ from what is written in books?

Tan Sri: No, it's almost the same yeah, because we follow the UK [United Kingdom] system. And you know the bible for parliamentary procedure is called Erskine May [Bible of Parliamentary Procedure]. I think if your library, you will get it. Even if you go to parliament UK, Erskine May you can *ape tu* [what is it] you can access Erskine May for free. Parliament UK website. Erskine May is the bible lah. Erskine May was written long time ago, so if you look, we follow Erskine May as much as we can. So just now, I said when I make ruling, I would quote books and law the first book that we will quote is of course Erskine May yeah so not much of a different from the book.

NH: Alright next what insight can you share about managing the parliamentary operation effectively?

Tan Sri: No, engagement as usual and I'm a stickler for propriety. I want everything to be proper. Everything must be orderly to me you know. So, my first task to the secretariat was every year I want to pass the audit 100% okay. They said "Ouh audit 80% is good 85%". I said no audit must be a 100% because if it's 90% meaning there is a 10% mistake that you have done. Audit you have to pass 100% you know. So, I think audit is important otherwise that's where money is lost and whatever. Every year you all rate Jabatan Audit Negara *punya* [the National Audit Department's] funding *kan beli* [to buy] computer, 1 computer 80,000 *kan* [RM80,000 right] that is why audit you have to pass 100%, you cannot *kata* [said] ouh you achieve very high sir 80%, no 80% is not high, 100% is good. Yeah, so my first task to them next year I want 100% audit, so reports are very important everything done I want report and follow up is important. So, I have I started management meeting. Even in election commission parliament every week, I have management meeting. I have management meeting with the Minister of Law. Early in the morning, every Wednesday the minister would have to come at 8 am. Okay, this week *apa jadi*, [what happened] next week *apa jadi* [what happened]. I want to know because you have to have that, otherwise you *lepas tangan* [leave everything to others] lah and then everybody do their own business nothing. So, basically you had to have a plan every week and next week the follow up last week *punya* [last week's matters] and then discuss that

week *punya* [that week's matters] and then like that yeah, so those are part of management and duty of the speaker which people do not see.

Nila: Okay so our last questions is what advice would you give to future leaders or younger generations?

Tan Sri: Younger generation do not have concentration, we cannot concentrate. I don't blame you, because there too many choices. Too many things to see, too many little snippets to read, you go to Twitter you got millions of tweet that you want to read, you go to YouTube you got millions of video you want to watch, TikTok *lagi* [TikTok too] so you got no time you only have this 1 minute attention span because you want to move to the next video, that's your challenge. Okay, and I doubt whether you all go to the library anymore or you read books anymore because it's not your nature, your nature is instant you *bukak* [open] TikTok *tengok2* [scroll through it] you *pergi balik kat mana pulak* [then you move on to something else] and then you *tengok* [watch] Instagram punya reel *lagi* [as well] and then *pergi* [go to] Facebook *lagi pergi* [Facebook as well, go] Twitter *lagi pergi* [then go to] YouTube, you got so many thing and then you got your Spotify to listen so, I don't think you're read. Youngsters don't read, I know my kids don't read, you don't go to library. I don't, those who take law, I don't think them even seen a law book or law reports *macam tu* [like that] so my first advice is always *ilmu* [knowledge] you need to have *ilmu* [knowledge] and to have *ilmu* [knowledge] you need to read and by reading I don't mean twitter or Instagram or a small TikTok video, That's not knowledge, those are opinion and useless opinion *pon* [too] and raw opinion you know and you have to find that knowledge yourself. Of course you go to lecture *dengar* [listen to] lecturer you go to tutorial you *dengar* [listen to] tutor those are information gathering lah but you need to read, if you don't read how you're *gonna* [going to] be a leader, and I find that very disconcerting because when I interview people and not only local grad foreign grad *pon* [also] overseas grad *pon* [also] the level of knowledge not that sorry to say, then very timid you know. When I interview people, I always at the end of my interview I always said okay, "I'll give you 2 minutes to do whatever you like to convince me to take you" which means I'm giving you a free hand you can read poem *ke apeke menangis ke* [cry if you want] whatever but they just freeze they don't know what to do. Wah my time

you give me 2 minutes I will take 10 you know. So, first is *ilmu* [knowledge] lah you need to know the stuff otherwise how you're *gonna* [going to] lead you know, and then of course you have the right character lah, characteristic you got to be patient, you got to listen more, empathizes, engage and don't pretend that you know everything, you don't know everything. In fact, a leader will say he or she knows everything bound to fail, bound to fail. You are supposed to acknowledge that you don't know everything that's why you need advisors *kan* [right?]. So, you need advisor, listen to your advisor, but of course you need to have good advisors, so you've got to find good advisor lah don't just simply put your friend to advise you. But most important thing is *ilmu* [knowledge] first *nombor* [number] 1 you *takde ilmu* [if you don't have knowledge] you *takle jadi* [you can't be] kind of it, you just roping in the dark and nothing will move lah so you need to read _____ so when the last time you read?

NH: Hahaha mostly gen z (Generation Z) only read online.

Tan Sri: Yeah, read online. But are those book or not? Ha, you _____ condense *kan sekarang tambah AI* [Artificial Intelligence] *semua* [everything is condensed now, and now there's AI as well] and the *dia punya content lagi kan* [even the content itself] some *baca summary je* [only read the summary].

NH: Even student only read article but only a few like keyword abstract not whole article.

Tan Sri: Yeah, you need to read books, article *macam* [like] modern law review _____ good because it gives you ideas but it must come from good journal lah modern law review lah *pebenda* [or whatever] books are most important *tapi tula* [but that's the problem] nowadays even university *pon macam* [even universities are like that], I don't know do the university nowadays give you list of book to read? *takde kan* [they don't, do they?].

NH: No

Tan Sri: *Dulu* [back then], our time when you register for that year first year *la katakan kata undang- undang* [let's say you were studying law] law of thought. So, first lecture the lecturer will distribute list of readings *bukan* [not] list of readings, the module lah for that year so *kata* [let say] for that term *dia bagi* [they would give us] module for this term so this term *dia nak belajar apa* [what we were going to

study] A, what is thought. B, _____ *kecuaian la ape benda kan* [negligence or whatever] and then under every *tajuk* [topic] there will be a cases that we need to read okay and then there will be list of reding, at the end of it extra reading if want to score 'A' you know references a,b,c. Nowadays, *mana ada* [they don't even have] my son _____ I *tanya takda kan* [I asked him, and he said there wasn't one] list of cases so I do not know how, I don't know what they do in university nowadays, really my daughter *pon serupa la* [it's the same with my daughter] where is the list of reading *takde* [there isn't one]. What books you're supposed to read *takde* [there isn't one] they just given all this *nota* [notes] so I think that's a biggest challenge lah. Too many thing to see so you don't even know which one you should or which you shouldn't see, which one you see and believe which one you shouldn't believe. Nowadays, you *tengok* [look at] now *tambah degan* [now, with] AI you don't even know whether that videos is talking to you is really a person or not *kan* [right?]. Today I receive a video *pagi tadi dia cakap* [this morning it said] _____ has just resign _____ I *ada video tidak betul pon* [I have video, it wasn't even true] so that's the challenges lah for gen z.

NH: Any other thing that you want to say Tan Sri?

Tan Sri: Nothing it's just sometime life you plan everything and it never happen *kan* [right?], sometimes you just do your stuff and then suddenly you taken away and became something, so faith *jugak la kan* [its's also about fate, isn't it], but the only thing that you can do is to excel in whatever you do, you have to excel. I when, I go to school UiTM (Universiti Teknologi Mara) *ke mana* [anywhere else] even to my staff my secretariat my first speech will always be about excel, you have to excel if you don't excel you are average or worse you're _____ so whatever you do you have to excel not everybody is born to be a Prime Minister or speaker or judge or whatever you know, so you have to excel. Some people are just born, whether you do you did become a driver but you have to be the best driver you have to excel *kalau* [if] you *jadi* [become] _____ buat kopi *pon* [also] okay is alright, but you have to make the best coffee you got no choice if you don't excel you just be average lah _____. I will always ask people whom I interview *sekarang ada* [there are now] 30,000 lawyer kat Malaysia 30,000. What make what will make the client come to you and not the other 29,999. You excel lah you got something more *kan* [right]. To both of you, to all the student,

you always remember that you *kena* [must] excel, it doesn't matter. I mean not all of us are born to get CGPA 3.95 out of 4 out of 4 *kan* [right]? Yeah no, not all of us, but later when we work where they have something more if you are master or you're good at a certain thing, so you're just have to excel la otherwise *kalau macam* [if you're] lawyer you 30,000 *orang kan* [people right] so that's your challenge to excel.

NH: Okay that's all

Tan Sri: Thanks

NH: Thank you so much Tan Sri, that concludes the oral history interview regarding the experiences and also contributions of Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun in the Malaysian parliamentary system. We would like to express our sincere appreciation and also gratitude to Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun for his willingness to share valuable information, experiences, and insights throughout this interview session. So, we hope that this recording will benefit listeners, researchers, students, and future generations. Thank you so much.

Tan Sri: Thanks for coming thank for giving me opportunity I hope every day is okay.

6.0 Challenges during the interview session

During the face-to-face interview session with Tan Sri Dato' Azhar Azizan Harun, several errors and interruptions were identified during the recording and transcription process. The following issues were encountered:

- There were interruptions caused by heavy rain and thunder, which affected the clarity of the audio recording.
- Some words and sentences could not be heard and understood due to the weather conditions during the interview.
- A few sections of the transcript could not be transcribed accurately and are indicated by [] or _____ to preserve the accuracy of the interview without making assumptions about the interviewee's intended words.

Despite these challenges, every effort was made to ensure that the transcript accurately reflects the interviewee's responses while preserving the original meaning and context of the interview.

SUMMARY

7.0 Summary

The oral history research was conducted by the interviewer through a physical session with Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun, which the interviewer examined his professional background, and association with the Malaysian Parliamentary system. This interview was conducted at Azhar & CO, Bangsar South City, Kuala Lumpur, on 15th May 2026 at 2:30 PM. The interview took place to document the background of Tan Sri Azhar, from being a legal professional to becoming the 10th Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat.

During the interview, Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun provided important information on his roles and experiences as the Speaker of Parliament. He talked about his duties in managing the sittings of the Dewan Rakyat, the importance of Standing Orders, and how parliamentary questions works, and his roles as a neutral judge between the government and the opposition. Other personal experiences, such as his challenges on his first day as Speaker and how family background and work experience shaped him as a leader.

INTERVIEW LOG

8.0 Interview Log

Time	Summary	Notes
00.00-02.40	Career background	• Graduated with a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Malaya (UM) in 1986. • Appointed as Chairman of the Election Commission in 2018. • Nominated and elected as the 10th Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat in 2020.
02.41-05.00	Motivation for becoming Speaker	• Did not apply for the Speaker position. • Accepted the nomination after being invited by the Prime Minister. • Believed he could bridge the government and opposition due to his good relationship with both sides.
05.01-05.30	Professional relationships	• Had over 30 years of experience as a legal practitioner. • His public engagement and legal career helped him gain trust from Members of Parliament.
05.41-08.00	Journey to becoming the Speaker of Parliament	• Was actively involved in legal practice, constitutional law, human rights, and election-related writings. • His expertise in election law and election petitions led to his appointment as Chairman of the Election Commission in 2018. • Described his career progression as a result of opportunities and circumstances rather than personal ambition.

08.01-11.00	Major responsibilities as Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat	• Chaired Dewan Rakyat sittings together with the two Deputy Speakers. • Ensured parliamentary procedures, decorum, and Standing Orders were followed throughout each sitting. • Explained that the Standing Order serve as the official rules governing parliamentary proceedings.
11.01-13.30	Management of Parliamentary Question Time	• Selected parliamentary questions to be answered during Question Time. • Determined the order of members of parliament asking questions. • Highlighted that only a limited number of questions could be answered within the allocated 90-minute session.
13.31-16.30	Additional Responsibilities of the Speaker	• Explained the process of managing parliamentary questions beyond the oral Question Time session. • Reviewed thousands of submitted questions with the parliamentary secretary to determine the order and priority of questions. • Highlighted that many of these responsibilities are performed behind closed doors as parts of the Speaker's administrative duties.
16.31-19.30	Parliamentary Committees and Administration	• Explained his involvement in overseeing various parliamentary committees, including the Selection Committees, Standing Orders Committees, and other committees related to parliamentary functions.

		• Appointed members and monitored the activities of Special Select Committees, including committees related to human rights, sustainability, and women's affairs. • Explained the role of the Chief Administrator of Parliament, who managed 300 parliamentary staff and functions similarly to a Chief Secretary or Chief Executive Officer.
19.31-22.00	Importance of Standing Orders in Parliament	• Explained that the Federal Constitution allows Parliament to regulate its own procedures. • Highlighted that Standing Orders provide a consistent framework for parliamentary proceedings. • Explained that without the Standing Orders, Parliament would need to determine procedures before every sitting, making parliamentary operations inefficient. • Shared that similar systems are practiced in other parliamentary democracies such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.
22.01-24.00	Amendment Process of Standing Orders	• Explained that amendments to the Standing Orders must go through the Standing Orders Committees. • The committee reviews and decide whether amendments should be made. • Approved amendments are then drafted and presented in the Dewan

		Rakyat for approval before becoming effective.
24.01-27.30	Key Experience during the first day as Speaker	• Shared that his first day as Speaker was challenging experience due to strong opposition against his appointment. • Explained that political tensions occurred following the change of government, causing some members of Parliament to strongly object to his appointment. • Experienced disruptions during the first sitting, including having to remove two Members of Parliament from the House. • Reflected that the experience taught him about political behaviour, challenges of leadership, and the realities of parliamentary politics. • Despite the difficulties, he decided to continue fulfilling his responsibilities and viewed the experience as an important lesson in his role as Speaker.
27.31-29.00	Influence of family support and personal development	• Explained that his grandmother played an important role in shaping his discipline and personality. • Share that his grandmother monitored his academic performance, homework, and behaviour from a young age. • Mentioned that his upbringing influenced his punctuality, attention to detail, and high expectations towards himself and his staff.

		• Shared that the achievements of his siblings, who also pursued careers in law, became a source of motivation.
29.01-30.00	Importance of family support	• Explained that although his family members were not very close due to being separated during childhood, they continued to support each other. • Highlighted that support from his siblings, father, wife, and children, contributed significantly throughout his career. • Emphasized that family support is an important factor in personal and professional success.
30.01-31.30	Leadership values in managing parliament	• Explained that a leader should not take criticism personally or hold grudges against others. • Highlighted the importance, especially in managing speaking time among members of Parliament. • Emphasized empathy as an important leadership quality that requires engagement and understanding of different perspectives. • Explained the importance of persuasion in resolving disagreement and finding common ground between opposing parties. • Stated that conflicts should not be viewed as a zero-sum game, but as an opportunity to find areas of agreement.

31.31-32.40	Finding common ground and point of convergence	• Explained the importance of acknowledging differences while searching for a point of convergence. • Emphasized that disagreements should not prevent people from building relationships and cooperation. • Shared that finding common values or shared perspectives can help resolve conflicts. • Provided examples of discussions involving Islam and human rights to explain the importance of identifying common ground. • Related this concept to Malaysian politics, where differences can be managed through effort, engagement, and empathy.
32.41-33.19	Maintaining fairness and neutrality as Speaker	• Explained that his intentions as Speaker was to bridge the relationship between the government and opposition. • Emphasized that fairness and neutrality were essentials in carrying out his responsibilities. • States that his primary guide when making decisions was the law. • Explained that when the law provides discretion or is unclear, decisions should be made based on what he believed was in the best interest of the country. • Highlighted that leaders will always receive both agreement and

		disagreement, but decisions should be guided by the law and national interest.
33:20 – 34:38	Conflict management in Parliament	• Strict enforcement inside Dewan Rakyat • Rules apply equally to government and opposition • Speaker very firm in decision-making inside Parliament • Tries to accommodate both sides in negotiations
34:41- 35:38	Handling disagreement among members	• If members disagree, Speaker explains decisions clearly and may refuse requests when necessary. • Focus on finding solutions for both government and opposition. • Organized parliamentary conference with Opposition Leader (first time done)
35:47- 37:13	Decision making skills in parliamentary leadership	• Must be decisive, cannot delay decisions • Issues must be addressed immediately, not postponed. • Decisions based on law • Consult advisor or experienced people before making decision.
37:35 – 39:09	Biggest challenges in Parliament	• Behaviour of MPs (emotional, provocation in Dewan Rakyat) • Need to control situations immediately during debates. • Social media criticism and negative comments • Chooses not to focus on social media.

39:10 – 40:36	Handling public comments or social media	• Does not care about negative or positive public comments • Focus on doing the job in the best interest of the country • Does not respond to public criticism or praise, even on social media
40:45 – 42:10	Handling difficult or unexpected situations	• Must always remember role as Speaker with final authority in Dewan Rakyat. • Speaker has the final say in decisions and rulings. • Decisions must be fair and based on law. • Mutual respect is important between Speaker and MPs.
42:20 – 43:39	Handling members who do not listen	• Members may disagree during debates in Dewan Rakyat. • Speaker remains patient and handles disagreement calmly. • Final ruling is based on law and Standing Orders. • Uses legal knowledge as a lawyer to support decisions • Refers to books, law, and parliamentary precedent before making rulings. • Decisions are evidence based, not personal opinions.
44:07- 50:41	Behind the scenes of Parliament	• Most parliamentary work takes place behind closed doors. • Involves Select Committee meetings, policy discussions, negotiations, and stakeholder engagement.

		• Regular engagement with NGOs, diplomats, and ambassadors • Behind the scenes meetings are more collaborative and meaningful than Dewan debates. • Live broadcasting encourages MPs to focus on politics and public image. • CCTV live streaming improves transparency but may increase political drama.
50:59- 55:09	Common issues in parliamentary operations	• Time management- limited time for all MPs to speak • Bills are distributed too late, leaving MPs insufficient time to prepare. • Need more researchers to support MPs. • Improve library resources and access • Each Special Select Committee should have permanent staff (researcher and administrative officer) • Need more meeting rooms and facilities.
55:19- 56:15	Parliamentary practice vs. books	• Malaysian Parliament follows the UK parliamentary system • Erskine May is the main reference for parliamentary procedure. • Parliamentary rulings are guided by Erskine May and the law • Real parliamentary practice is largely consistent with what is written in the reference books.

56:24 – 58:50	Effective parliamentary operations	• Emphasizes proper and orderly management • Aim for 100% audit compliance to ensure accountability. • Reports and follow-up are essential • Every issue must have a clear plan and follow-up
59:07- 1:07:38	Advice for future leaders and younger generation	• Develop knowledge through reading books and quality journals • Avoid relying only on social media, AI or short-form content • Future leaders should have confidence, good character, and communication skills • Be patient, willing to listen, and open to advice from qualified advisors • Do not pretend to know everything • Critical thinking is important to distinguish reliable and unreliable information
1:07:49 – 1:10:50	Final advice	• Success is influenced by effort and fate • Always strive for excellence in whatever you do • Everyone should aim to be the best in their profession • Excellence helps individuals stand out in a competitive environment • Academic results are not everything, continuous improvement and quality matter.

CONCLUSION

9.0 Conclusion

The oral history interview with Tan Sri Dato' Azhar Azizan Harun provides vital insights into his career, leadership and contributions to Malaysia's parliamentary system. The interview focused on the Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat's responsibilities, the problems of preserving justice and order during legislative sessions, and the significance of leadership based on integrity, knowledge, and the rule of law. It also highlighted the importance of behind-the-scenes legislative operations such as committee meetings, policy discussions, negotiations, and administrative management, which are rarely accessible to the public. Overall, this oral history transcript is a remarkable historical record that preserves firsthand experiences and provides excellent reference information for future researchers, students, and anyone interested in the establishment and administration of the Malaysian Parliament.

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APPENDICES

1. Consent Form


UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA
PERJANJIAN MENGENAI PROJEK SEJARAH LISAN
KURSUS IMR621: ORAL HISTORY AND DOCUMENTATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Saya ASHAR HADAW K/N: 626076-03-5559 pada
15/5/2026 (tarikh) dengan ini bersetuju dengan syarat-syarat temubual yang telah
diadakan di antara saya dengan Universiti Teknologi MARA. Syarat-syarat tersebut adalah seperti
berikut:

1. Rakaman hasil temubual ini adalah bertujuan untuk kegunaan pengajaran, penyelidikan dan
penerbitan tanpa melibatkan bayaran/ tuntutan dari mana-mana pihak. Walaubagaimanapun
bagi tujuan selain daripada yang tersebut, persetujuan daripada peserta temubual perlu
diperolehi.
2. Rakaman hasil temubual yang tersebut di atas adalah diserahkan dan menjadi hak milik
sepenuhnya Universiti Teknologi MARA untuk penyimpanan kekal dan boleh mengambil apa-
apa tindakan yang difikirkan perlu bagi memelihara rakaman dan transkrip tersebut.
3. Pihak Pusat Pengajian Sains Maklumat, Universiti Teknologi MARA boleh membuat transkrip
rakaman dan transkrip-transkrip ini perlu/tidak perlu disemak oleh peserta temubual
(interviewee).
4. Rakaman dan transkrip ini akan dibuka kepada semua penyelidik sama ada dari Malaysia atau
luar negara yang bertujuan membuat penyelidikan yang sah dengan syarat: -
a. Apabila perakuan diambil dari rakaman/transkrip ini untuk digunakan di dalam
penerbitan, tesis dll., sumbernya (naratif dari peserta temubual) hendaklah diakui
oleh penyelidik-penyelidik.


Nama peserta kajian: ASHAR HADAW
Tarikh: 15/5/2026


Pensyarah: Hanis Diyana Kamarudin

2. Permission Letter

www.uitm.edu.my

 UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

Fakulti Sains Maklumat

Ruj. Kami : 600-FSM (HEA.7/6/4)
Tarikh : 8 Mei 2026

YBhg. Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun
Pemilik Perniagaan
Unit B-09-06, Tower B, Vertical Business Suites
Bangsar South City, No. 8, Jalan Kerinchi
59200 Kuala Lumpur

YBhg. Tan Sri

PERMOHONAN KEBENARAN UNTUK MENJALANKAN KAJIAN

Dengan hormatnya perkara di atas adalah dirujuk.

2. Bagi memenuhi keperluan kursus **ORAL HISTORY AND DOCUMENTATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE (IMR621)**, dua orang pelajar daripada program Sarjana Muda Sains Maklumat (Kejuruteraan Pengurusan Rekod (CDM261), Fakulti Sains Maklumat, UTM Cawangan Selangor, Kampus Puncak Perdana ingin menjalankan satu kajian dalam bentuk temubual di organisasi YBhg. Tan Sri pada **15 Mei 2026 (Jumaat) jam 2 petang**.

3. Untuk makluman YBhg. Tan Sri, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mendapatkan maklumat tentang pengalaman, pandangan serta sumbangan Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun dalam sistem Parlimen Malaysia.

4. Sehubungan itu, dalam usaha menyempurnakan kajian tersebut pihak kami memohon agar kebenaran bagi melaksanakan sesi temubual dapat diberikan kepada pelajar berkenaan :

Bil	Nama Pelajar	No. Pelajar	No. Telefon
1	Aisyah Adibah Binti Nor Azizan	2025178455	011-64004122
2	Nila Humaira Binti Haniff	2025178827	019-6368191

5. Justeru, untuk sebarang pertanyaan dan maklumbalas, pihak YBhg. Tan Sri boleh menghubungi nombor yang tertera di atas. Perhatian, sokongan dan pertimbangan daripada pihak YBhg. Tan Sri berhubung perkara ini amat dihargai dan didahului dengan ucapan terima kasih.

Sekian.

اوسمة: تقوى مولى
"MALAYSIA MADANI"
"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"

Saya yang menjalankan amanah,



(DR. HANIS DIYANA KAMARUDIN)
Pensyarah Kanan

Fakulti Sains Maklumat
Universiti Teknologi MARA
Cawangan Selangor, Kampus Puncak Perdana
40150 Shah Alam, Selangor
MALAYSIA
Tel: (+603) 7962 2002/2020/2021/2023/2220/2148
Web: http://fsm.uitm.edu.my

 UTM Cawangan Selangor

3. Interview Questions

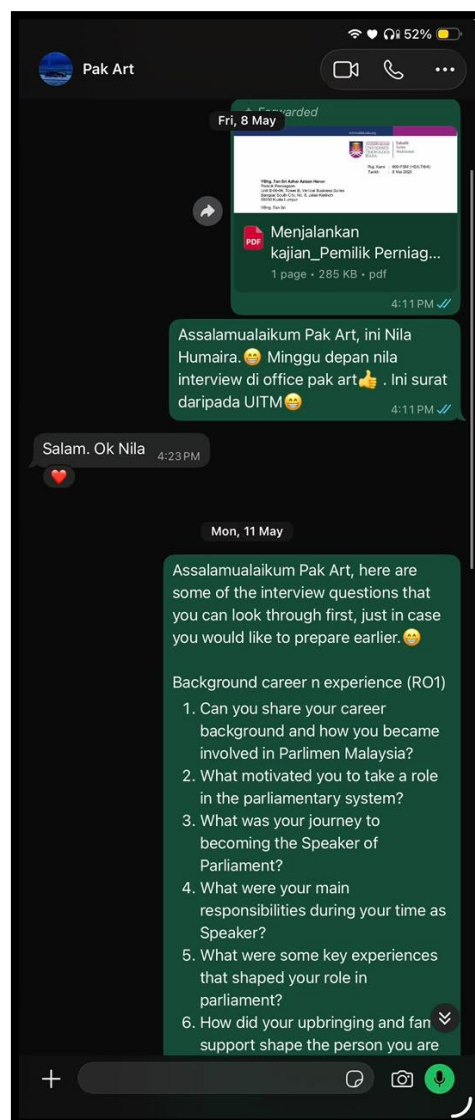
1.	Can you share your career background and how you became involved in Parliament Malaysia?
2.	What motivates you to take a role in the Parliamentary system?
3.	What was your journey to becoming the Speaker of Parliament?
4.	What were your main responsibilities during your time as Speaker?
5.	What were some key experiences that shaped your role in parliament?
6.	How did you're upbringing, and family support shape the person you are today? Maybe like parenting, support system, influenced by siblings or family.
7.	What leadership value and quality are important in managing Parliament Malaysia effectively?
8.	How do you maintain fairness and neutrality during Parliamentary sessions?
9.	How do you handle any conflict or disagreement among members?
10.	What decision-making skills that are important in the parliamentary leadership?
11.	What were the biggest challenges that you face during your time in the parliament?
12.	How did you handle any difficult or unexpected situation?
13.	Are there any members or people that doesn't listen to you during the parliament in the Dewan Rakyat?
14.	Can you share any experience that is not widely known to the public. I mean like behind the parliament what is happening?
15.	What are some more common issues in the parliamentary operations?
16.	How do real life parliamentary practices differ from what is written in books?
17.	What insight can you share about managing the parliamentary operation effectively?
18.	What advice would you give to future leaders or younger generations?

4. Research Diary

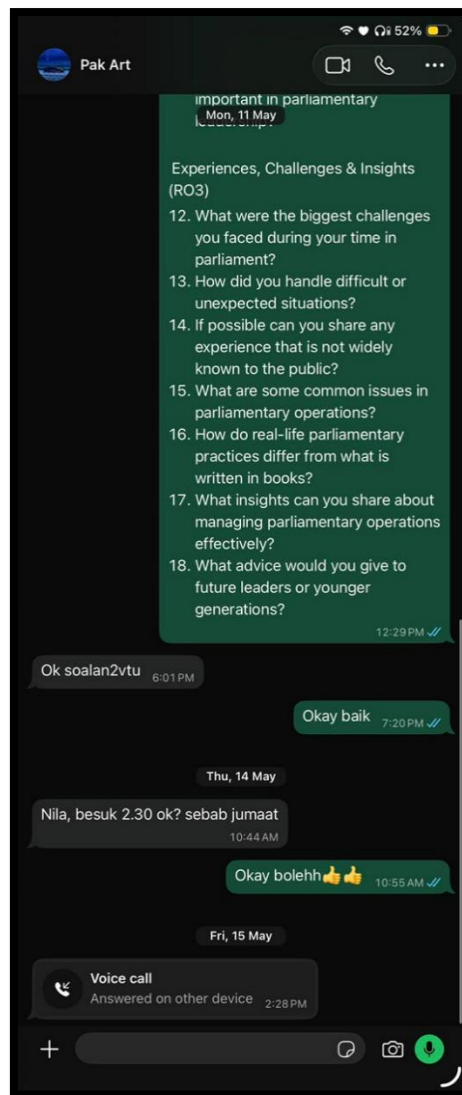
WEEK	DATE	ACTIVITIES	LOCATION
Week 1	7 April 2026	Initial discussion on the oral history project, selection of interviewee (Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun), and division of tasks among group members.	BK 20
Week 2	14 April 2026	Conducted preliminary research on Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun's background, career journey, and involvement in the Malaysian parliamentary system.	BK 20
Week 3	21 April 2026	Developed research objectives and prepared interview questions based on the research focus and oral history approach.	BK 20
Week 4	28 April 2026	Reviewed and refined interview questions to ensure they aligned with the research objectives. Prepared documents for the interview session.	BK 20
Week 5	5 May 2026	Communicated with the interviewee's representative to confirm the interview schedule, location, and other arrangements.	Online (WhatsApp)
Week 6	15 May 2026	Conducted the oral history interview session with Tan Sri Azhar Azizan Harun regarding his career background.	Azhar & Co, Bangsar South City, KL
Week 7	22 May 2026	Organized the interview recording and prepared the audio/video materials for transcription purposes.	Online
Week 8	29 May 2026	Transcribed the interview recording and reviewed the transcript to ensure accuracy according to the original recording.	College

Week 9	12 June 2026	Analysed interview data based on identified themes such as career background	College
Week 10	19 June 2026	Prepared the findings and discussion section based on the research objectives and interview findings.	College
Week 11	26 June 2026	Developed the literature review section by reviewing journal articles related to parliamentary governance and political leadership.	BK 20
Week 12	3 July 2026	Combined all sections of the report, reviewed references, and made improvements to the journal article.	College
Week 14	13 July 2026	Conducted final review of the report and prepared for the submission.	Online

5. Preparation Before the Interview (Preliminary)



The figure above presents evidence of the communication between the researcher and the interviewee through WhatsApp prior to the interview. The communication was conducted to facilitate the interview arrangements and to submit the official invitation letter via WhatsApp.



The figure above shows the discussion between the researcher and the interviewee through WhatsApp regarding the interview questions. The researcher shared the interview questions in advance and confirmed the interview arrangements with the interviewee.



The figure above shows the interview session being conducted between the researchers and the interviewee



The figure above shows the researchers presenting a token of appreciation to the interviewee after the interview session. The token was presented to express sincere gratitude for the interviewee's time, cooperation, and valuable contributions to this oral history project