



m5 Solutions Sdn Bhd
202001023533 (1379853-H)

www.m5solutions.my
contact@m5solutions.my
+6012 277 9585

How Malaysians Perceive and Use AI at Work, in Studies, for Health and in Personal Life: Findings from the m5 AI Use Survey 2026

by

Mohd. Nasir bin Mohd. Ismail, PhD (Johns Hopkins)
Mostafa Ghane, PhD (UKM)
Nadra Najiha Barakathulla

m5 Solutions Sdn. Bhd.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

October 2026

How to cite: Mohd. Ismail, M. N., Ghane, M., & Barakathulla, N. N. (2026). *How Malaysians perceive and use AI at work, in studies, for health and in personal life: Findings from the m5 AI Use Survey 2026*. m5 Solutions Sdn. Bhd.



Executive Summary

AI is now widely used by Malaysians. The purpose of this study is to gather data on perceptions and use of AI among Malaysians at work, in studies, for health and in personal life. The survey method was used to gather data in October 2026. The study found that:

- 1) 46.4% of Malaysians used AI almost daily.
- 2) 77.8% of Malaysians perceived AI as very beneficial or somewhat beneficial.
- 3) Men were more likely to perceive AI as beneficial than women in Malaysia (54.6% of men vs 33.9% of women rated AI as very beneficial, p-value<0.001).
- 4) People between the ages of 41 and 50 years rated AI the most beneficial while those between the ages of 18 and 30 years were less positive about its benefits (p-value<0.001).
- 5) Malaysians can be divided into four distinct groups based on their AI use: **Power Users**, **Work-Focused Users**, **Occasional Sceptics** and **Non-users**, with each having their own characteristics.
- 6) 62.5% of Malaysians used AI to ask health questions while 44.5% used AI to make health-related decisions.
- 7) Men were more likely to make health-related decisions using AI than women in Malaysia (53.1% of men vs 37.3% of women, p-value=0.001).
- 8) 68.4% of Malaysians have used AI to make decisions at work or in their studies.
- 9) 45.4% of Malaysians have used AI to discuss personal problems.
- 10) Men were more likely to use AI to discuss personal problems than women (51.5% of men vs 40.3% of women, p-value=0.021).

The study recommends:

- 1) AI training, including AI ethics, should be introduced to all Malaysians starting from school and in the workplace.
- 2) Medical schools in Malaysia should start teaching AI as part of their curricula.
- 3) AI governance and policy should be introduced and refined as we gather more data on AI use and behaviors among Malaysians.



1.0 Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now widely used among Malaysians. Hence, it is crucial to understand the perceptions and usage behaviors of Malaysians to better structure the education, training and policy related to AI. This study was conducted by m5 Solutions Sdn. Bhd., a data and AI company based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The study was conducted in October of 2026 almost 4 years after Large Language Models like ChatGPT were introduced.

2.0 Method

The data was collected using the survey method. Participants were recruited through social media by using both convenience and snowballing sampling. 427 Malaysians aged 18 and above responded to this online survey. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Malaysians were asked how they perceive AI, how often they use AI, what they use it for (at work or in studies, in their personal life, for health and to discuss personal problems), and whether they have been trained to use AI, including how to use it ethically. Responses were compared across gender, age and employment status. Latent class analysis, a statistical method that groups people with similar behaviors, was used to identify four types of AI users in Malaysia. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=427)

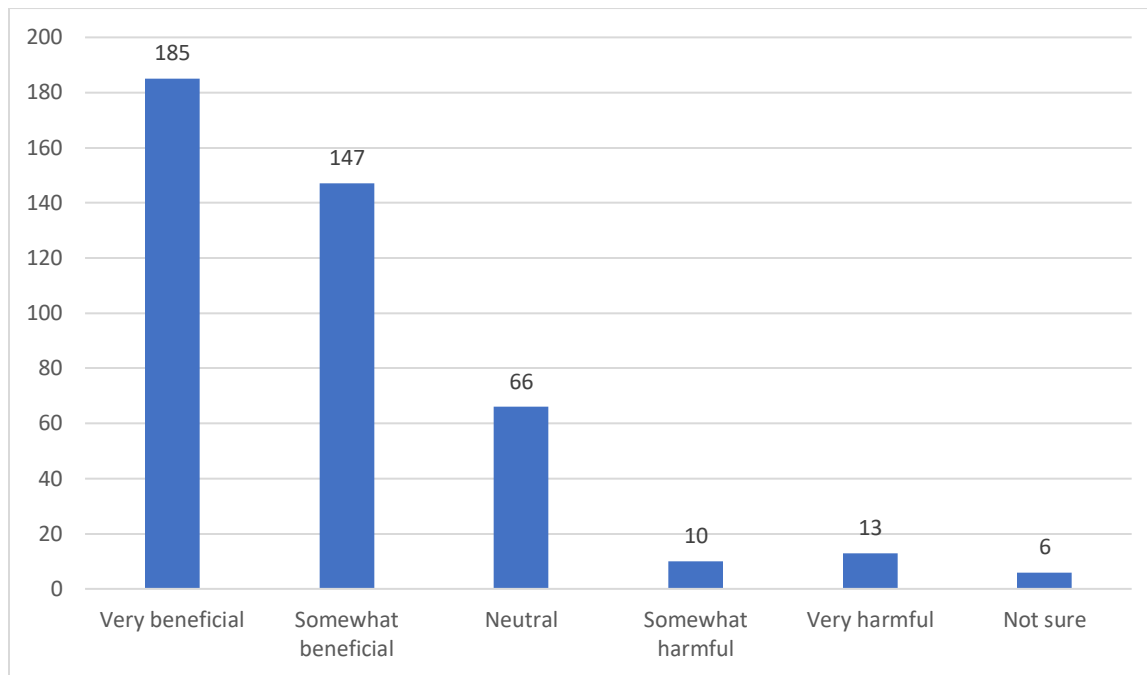
Characteristic	n (%)	P-value
Gender		0.059
Female	233 (54.6)	
Male	194 (45.4)	
Age Group		<0.001
18 to 20 years old	17 (4.0)	
21 to 30 years old	59 (13.8)	
31 to 40 years old	137 (32.1)	
41 to 50 years old	131 (30.7)	
51 to 60 years old	60 (14.1)	
61 years and above	23 (5.4)	
Employment Status		<0.001
Employed	251 (58.8)	
Self-employed	85 (19.9)	
Student	45 (10.5)	
Homemaker	23 (5.4)	
Retired	18 (4.2)	
Unemployed	5 (1.2)	



3.0 Perceived Benefits of AI

46.4% of Malaysians used AI almost daily. 77.8% of Malaysian respondents perceived AI as very beneficial or somewhat beneficial. Only 1.4% of respondents said they were not sure about the benefits or harms of AI as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Perceived benefits of AI by Malaysian respondents (n=427)



3.1 Perceived benefits based on gender

There is a significant difference in perception of AI benefits across gender with men more likely to have positive views about AI (p-value=0.001). The mean rating is used to do this analysis with 1 standing for very harmful, 2 for somewhat harmful, 3 for neutral, 4 for somewhat beneficial and 5 for very beneficial.

Table 2: Perceived AI benefits by gender (n=421; n=6 rating “not sure” were excluded)

Gender	n	Mean rating (SD)	p-value
Male	192	4.31 (0.95)	0.001
Female	229	4.00 (0.98)	



Malaysian men have more positive views about AI than women, with 54.6% of men rating AI as very beneficial compared to 33.9% of women ($p\text{-value}<0.001$). Women were more measured in their perception of AI with 39.9% rating AI as somewhat beneficial and 18.5% as neutral.

This difference is partly linked to how women used AI. Women were more likely to rarely or never use AI in their work or studies (9.40% of women vs 3.10% of men, $p\text{-value}=0.010$) and were also less likely to use AI to make decisions at work or in studies compared to men (62.7% of women vs. 75.3% of men, $p\text{-value}=0.005$).

Women tend to use AI as a source of information rather than as a decision-maker. For example, while a similar percentage of men and women used AI to ask questions related to health (63.4% of men vs 61.8% of women, $p\text{-value}=0.734$), women were less likely to use AI to make health-related decisions (37.3% of women vs 53.1% of men, $p\text{-value}=0.001$).

3.2 Perceived benefits based on age group

Table 3: Perceived benefits by Age Group (n=421; n=6 rating “not sure” were excluded)

Age Group	n	Mean rating (SD)	P-value
18 to 20 years old	17	3.47 (1.01)	<0.001
21 to 30 years old	59	3.78 (1.12)	
31 to 40 years old	137	4.17 (0.92)	
41 to 50 years old	128	4.43 (0.81)	
51 to 60 years old	58	4.02 (1.03)	
61 years and above	22	4.14 (1.08)	

Younger people between the ages of 18 and 30 years (the age groups are combined) rated the perceived benefits of AI lower with only 26.3% of 18- to 30-year-old respondents rating AI as very beneficial compared with 47.0% of those aged 31 years and above ($p\text{-value}=0.001$). This younger population also used AI less frequently compared to those aged 31 years and above (27.6% of younger groups used AI daily vs 50.4% of older age groups, $p\text{-value}<0.001$) and 14.5% said AI did not make them more productive (vs. 4.8% for other age groups, $p\text{-value}=0.008$). This is perhaps because, as young people, they are not allowed to use AI in their everyday schoolwork.

Those between the ages of 41 and 50 years had the most positive perceptions of AI (56.5% of 41- to 50-year-olds rated AI as very beneficial vs 37.5% of other age groups, $p\text{-value}<0.001$). 55% of them used AI daily (vs 42.6% of other age groups, $p\text{-value}=0.021$) and 90.8% of them said AI made them more productive (vs 82.8% of other age groups, $p\text{-value}=0.038$). 79% used AI in their personal life (vs 69.9% of other age groups, $p\text{-value}=0.045$) and 55% used AI to make health-related decisions (vs 39.9% of other age groups, $p\text{-value}=0.004$).



This age group is likely to use AI to do their work from writing emails to completing reports at work. Given that they have done similar tasks before AI was widely adopted, they could see the differences in their productivity after using AI. Furthermore, this is the age where most of them tend to be busiest and hold higher career positions, so AI is seen as a tool to help them to complete their tasks more productively. With little to no AI governance in their workplace to curtail them from using AI, unlike younger people, they are free to use AI in almost all their daily tasks. However, 66.4% of them have never been trained to use AI ethically.

4.0 Types of AI Users in Malaysia

By conducting latent class analysis, four different types of AI users were identified in Malaysia. These users can be broken down into four distinct groups: 1) Power Users; 2) Work-Focused Users; 3) Occasional Sceptics; and 4) Non-users.

Table 4: Types of AI users in Malaysia

Parameter	Power Users 38.9% of Malaysians (n=166)	Work-Focused Users 42.4% of Malaysians (n=181)	Occasional Sceptics 13.1% of Malaysians (n=56)	Non-Users 5.6% of Malaysians (n=24)
Uses AI daily or often	89%	80%	7%	0%
Finds AI useful for work/studies	99%	100%	70%	4%
Says AI makes them more productive	100%	99%	34%	0%
Has used AI to make work decisions	99%	62%	29%	0%
Uses AI in personal life	100%	61%	57%	8%
Has asked AI health questions	100%	35%	64%	4%
Has discussed personal problems with AI	83%	20%	36%	0%
Has made health decisions using AI	86%	17%	30%	4%



Power Users – 38.9%

Power Users used AI at work/studies and outside of it too. They rated AI positively with 62% of them rating it as very beneficial (mean rating: 4.50). They were equally divided by gender. 37.3% of them were between the ages of 41 and 50 years. 25% of them were self-employed. However, only 54.8% of Power Users had been trained in AI ethics despite their heavy use of AI.

Work-Focused Users – 42.4%

Work-Focused Users relied on AI to complete their work/studies tasks. Few of them used AI to discuss personal problems (only 20% had used AI to discuss personal problems), ask health questions (only 35% asked), or make health-related decisions (only 17% did). They were mostly from the employed group (68.5%); the mean perceived benefit rating was 4.18 (40.3% very beneficial and 43.6% somewhat beneficial). 56.4% of them had never received any AI training and yet 80.1% wanted it. This is the group most eager for AI training.

Occasional Sceptics – 13.1%

77% of them used AI sometimes and only 34% said AI made them more productive. However, unlike the Work-Focused Users, they had used AI to ask health questions (64%). They viewed AI critically with 39.3% perceiving AI benefits as neutral and 14.3% as harmful (mean rating 3.34). This was also the youngest group with 32.1% aged between 18 and 30 years and 23.2% being students.

Non-users – 5.6%

This was the group that rarely or never used AI. They were overwhelmingly women (79.2%), homemakers or retired (50.0%) and older (25.0% aged 61 years and above). 25.0% were unsure about AI benefits while 41.7% were neutral.

5.0 AI and Health: How Malaysians use AI for their health

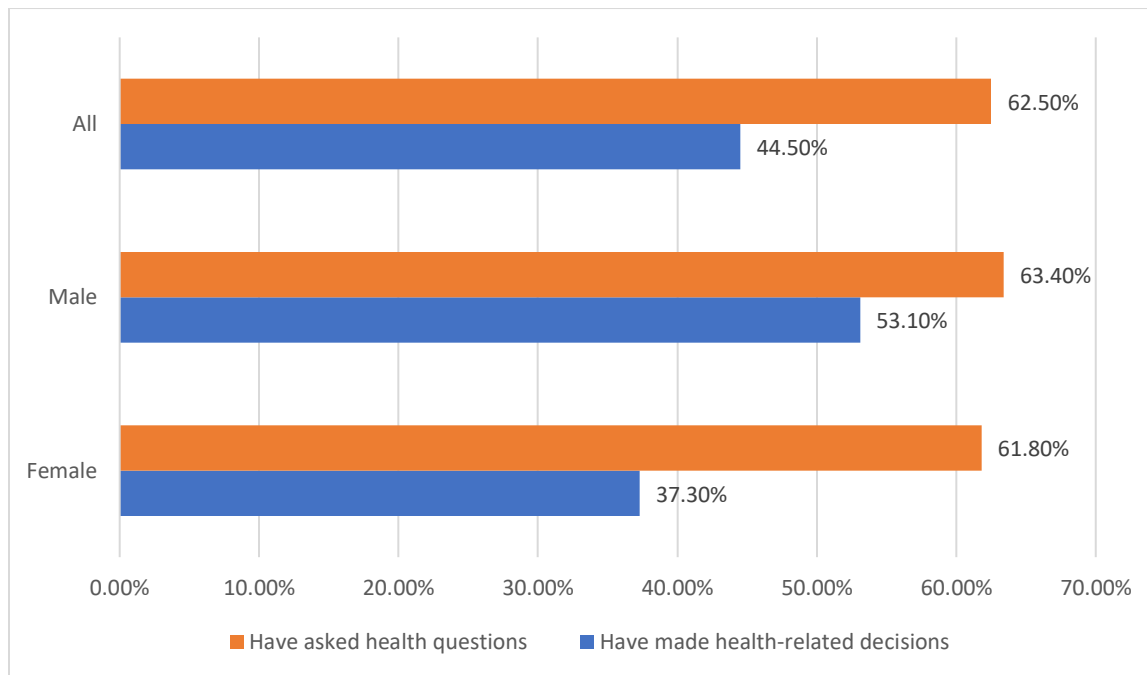
62.5% of Malaysian respondents used AI to ask health questions and 44.5% have used AI to make health-related decisions, including whether to see doctors. Both men and women use AI equally to ask health questions (63.4% of men vs 61.8% of women, p-value=0.734).

However, men are more likely to use AI to make health-related decisions than women (53.1% of men vs. 37.3% of women, p-value=0.001). Older individuals used AI less to ask health questions (only 30.4% of those aged 61 years and above vs 64.4% of other age groups, p-value=0.001).



On the other hand, 55.0% of respondents aged 41 to 50 years old used AI to make health-related decisions (vs 39.9% of other age groups, $p\text{-value}=0.004$). Frequency of use is strongly associated with AI use to ask health questions (74.2% of almost daily users vs 52.4% of less frequent users, $p\text{-value}<0.001$) or make health-related decisions (58.1% of almost daily users vs 32.8% of less frequent users, $p\text{-value}<0.001$).

Figure 2: AI and Health Use among Malaysian respondents



Many Malaysians see AI as a source of information for health. Additionally, Malaysians are using AI to make health-related decisions. However, 56.3% of Malaysians who have used AI to make health-related decisions have never received AI training in ethics. This should raise concern about how AI is used to make decisions without the necessary skills and training.

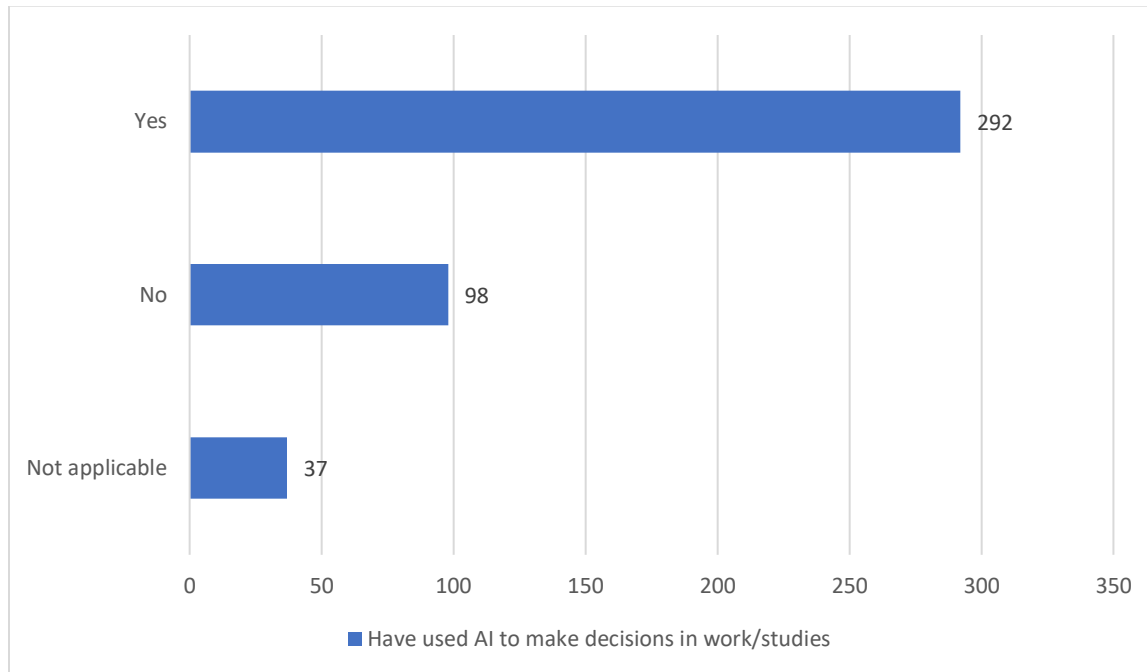
6.0 AI is used to make decisions at work or in studies

68.4% of Malaysian respondents (292 out of 427) have used AI to make decisions at work or in their studies. Frequency of use of AI is a significant factor that influences this behavior ($p\text{-value}<0.001$). There are no significant differences by gender, age or employment status.

Additionally, those who perceived AI as beneficial ($p\text{-value}=0.004$) and those who have used it in their personal life ($p\text{-value}<0.001$) are more likely to use AI to make work/studies decisions. This suggests that when they are comfortable enough to use AI at home or perceive it as beneficial, they are more confident using AI to make work/studies decisions.



Figure 3: AI used to make decisions at work or in studies (n=427)



However, there are also 95 respondents who have never used AI to make work/studies decisions despite using AI for work or studies (50 of them used AI almost daily or often). These 50 frequent users who used AI at work but never used it to make decisions are also less likely to use AI to make health-related decisions or discuss personal problems. This suggests they belong to a unique category of individuals who treat AI as a mere information source and rely on human judgement to make decisions. 49 of these 50 respondents belong to the category of Work-Focused Users.

Those who chose “not applicable” for AI use to make decisions at work or in studies tend to be homemakers, retirees and those who have never used AI before. Those among this group who were employed used AI sometimes or rarely. This suggests that their exposure to AI is limited, or they are outside of the workforce.

7.0 AI to discuss personal problems

AI is not just a tool used to complete tasks at work or school or a tool to seek information. AI is now becoming a confidant for discussing personal problems. 45.4% of Malaysian respondents have used AI to discuss personal problems.

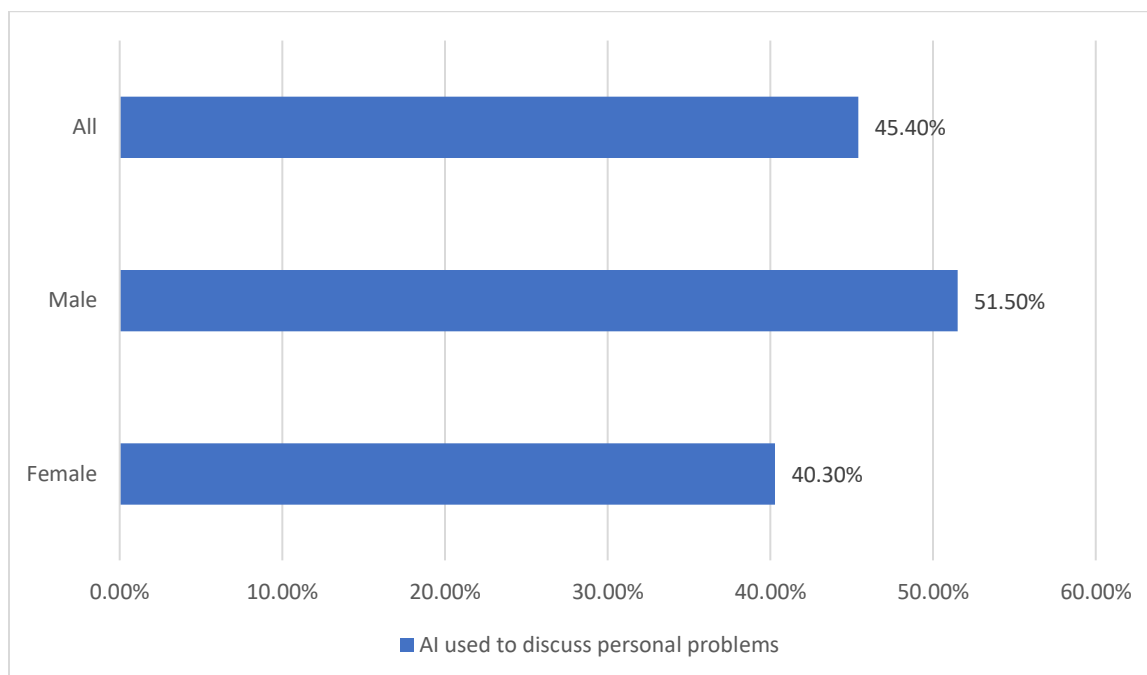
Men were more likely to use AI to discuss personal problems than women (51.5% of men vs 40.3% of women, p-value=0.021). Younger age groups, 18- to 20-year-olds and 21- to 30-year-olds, were



more likely to use AI to discuss personal problems compared to other age groups (58.8% of 18- to 20-year-olds, 54.2% of 21- to 30-year-olds vs 26.1% of those 61 years and above, p-value=0.023).

Self-employed respondents had the highest percentage of users who used AI to discuss personal problems (60.0% of self-employed vs 41.8% of other Malaysians, p-value=0.003). Almost daily users were also more likely to use AI to discuss personal problems (57.6% vs 34.9% of less frequent users, p-value<0.001).

Figure 4: AI used to discuss personal problems (n=427)



It is interesting to note that in a world where the male loneliness epidemic is widely discussed, AI is now used by men to discuss their personal problems. Perhaps AI as a new form of technology is seen as more trustworthy for keeping their feelings and thoughts private than talking to other people. Perhaps, *AI has become the new safe space* for men.

Self-employed individuals also tend to use AI to discuss personal problems at a higher percentage than other employment groups. This could be partly due to a lack of co-workers and friends to talk to. It could also be because personal and business problems often overlap. It could be because they see AI as a trustworthy tool to confide in, as they have already used AI to make work and health-related decisions (76% have used AI for work-related decisions and 54% for health-related decisions). Finally, it could also be due to AI being widely accessible and almost free, so confiding in AI does not cost them much.



8.0 Moving Forward

Based on this study, here are some recommendations:

- 1) AI education and training should be introduced at schools, universities and workplaces. This is because 46.4% of Malaysians were already using AI daily and yet many had not been trained to use AI. Without AI training and AI ethics training, Malaysians will continue to use AI at work, in studies, for health and in personal life without much guidance. We found that 80.1% of Work-Focused Users wanted to attend AI training so the interest in AI education and training is already there. Non-users should also be identified so that they too can start maximizing the potential of AI.
- 2) AI education and training should be introduced to medical students and medical doctors in Malaysia. Given that 62.5% of Malaysians were already using AI to seek health information and 44.5% were already making health-related decisions by using AI, it is vital that medical school curricula in Malaysia and globally be updated to adapt to these new patient behaviors. Likewise, medical doctors should receive AI training so that they can understand this technology better.
- 3) AI governance and policy should be developed in Malaysian companies and organizations with annual audits to make sure AI is used effectively. This is because 68.4% of Malaysians were already using AI to make work/studies decisions.