



MR TAN WEI XUAN
PIL – MaritimeONE Scholarship recipient

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▲ Mr Tan Wei Xuan wants to use digital analytics to improve business models. He hopes to use his skills to contribute to the continual improvements of Singapore's maritime operations.
PHOTO: WINSTON CHUANG

Using data to steer the maritime industry

PIL – MaritimeONE scholar Tan Wei Xuan believes that data science can be used to improve the productivity of shipping operations

TEXT BY LILING KOH

As the Covid-19 pandemic raged and threatened the survival of all businesses, hitting hardest at small business owners such as his parents who run a vegetables stall, National University of Singapore (NUS) undergraduate Tan Wei Xuan was desperate to help them ride out the rough times.

Together with his brother, the 21-year-old built an online presence for the stall so their parents could

continue to peddle their produce. In the process of creating the virtual sales platform, coupled with working on a few personal projects such as setting up a private tuition website and executing online marketing campaigns, Mr Tan found himself having to study volumes of data and analyse numbers in order to help the business grow.

“While working on these ventures, I realised that digital analytics and the idea of improving business

models greatly resonated with me. This was why I was inspired to delve deeper into the study of data analytics,” says the first-year student who is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science (Data Science and Analytics) at NUS.

He also knew that he wanted to work in the maritime industry, adding that “Singapore is known as one of the top maritime capitals in the world and I believe that there will be vast opportunities for me”.

Mr Tan is on the right course. He went on to apply for and was successfully awarded the PIL – MaritimeONE Scholarship in September 2021.

A HEAD START IN THE MARITIME SECTOR

The MaritimeONE scholarship programme is a joint initiative by Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF), the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, the Association of Singapore Marine Industries and the Singapore Shipping Association. The scholarships are sponsored by leading maritime companies and offer students a pathway into the maritime sector. The PIL – MaritimeONE Scholarship that Mr Tan received is sponsored by shipping company Pacific International Lines (PIL).

“This scholarship provides many opportunities for me to be exposed to the various areas in the maritime industry, which will not only enrich my learning experience, but also help me to develop valuable interpersonal skills,” says Mr Tan. “I am also looking forward to the internship opportunities during my summer break where I will get to learn more about how PIL operates.”

AN INDUSTRY MOVING GLOBAL TRADE

According to SMF, in recent years, the maritime industry has been incorporating technology and harnessing data-driven insights to make more informed business decisions while becoming more sustainable. That means that as technology and data analytics become more widely adopted, more roles in these fields will also become available.

The onset of the pandemic has presented enormous challenges for the entire maritime transport sector, an industry responsible for moving more than 80 per cent of global trade. The role of maritime transport is more important than ever in supporting the resilience of national economies during the current crisis.

Singapore's role as a global maritime hub inspires Mr Tan to want to create a positive impact on the industry. He hopes to develop new technological innovations to make shipping operations more cost-effective.

“With my analytical and interpersonal skills acquired from my studies, I hope to provide meaningful insights and contribute to the continual improvements to our work operations,” he says.

Mr Tan's parents are very supportive of his choice of industry while most of his friends are unfamiliar with the maritime sector. He looks forward to educating them about the industry while sharing about what he has learnt along the way.

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