

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, it discusses the structure of academic perspectives, which include current related issue for this study. There are three parts of literature reviews, which are: The Qur'an, Levels of understanding the Qur'an and Characteristic Diverse Groups of People. This is then followed by the recent studies related to this study. This chapter exposed each of the literature reviews that include books and articles from contemporary and classic scholars.

2.2 The Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an is one of the biggest mukjizat (miracle) that was given to the last Prophet Muhammad PBUH, the messenger of Allah SWT through Jibrail A.S in the Arabic language begins with Surah Al-Fatihah and ends with Surah An-Naas. It is the holy book of Islam and the most influential reference for Muslims especially and the message remains unchanged compared to other religious texts in the world. According to Qur'an, Allah has laid down the solution to every human problem in the Qur'an very clearly. Qur'an says:

﴿وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ

تَبَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهْدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Surah An-Nahl 16: 89)

(And on the day when We will raise in every people a witness against them from among themselves, and bring you as a witness against these-- and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything, and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit.)

2.2.1 The Qur'an as Guidance to Mankind

The Qur'an is the primary source reference and the religious text of Islam that needs to be understood as the guidance in the entire life of Muslims. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

﴿وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Al-Qamar 54:17)

(And certainly, We have made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, but is there anyone who will mind?)

The Qur'an was preserved nearly from 1444 years ago by Allah SWT to the universe, specifically to humankind as guidance for the believers and non-believer. Still, it is actually beyond manpower limitation to holistically comprehend nor describe the importance of what the Qur'an holds to them. Nevertheless, Muslims are required to have some idea of what it means to them, and most important of all is to inspire them to immerse the whole of their life to Qur'an, in total commitment as it demands. Truly, it is such of blessing in efforts of understanding Qur'an as mention in Hadith An -Nasa'i. Sunan An-Nasa'i. The Book of Prayer (Kitab Al-Salat): Detailed Injunctions about Witr. Chapter:Regarding the Rewards for Reciting The Qur'an. Hadith No. 1455;

(وعن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "ما اجتمع قوم في بيت من بيوت

الله يتلون كتاب الله، ويتدارسونه بينهم، إلا نزلت عليهم السكينة، وغشيتهم الرحمة، وحفتهم الملائكة، وذكرهم

الله فيمن عنده) (صحيح) .

“Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah peace open Him said, “Any group of people that assemble in one of the Houses of Allah to recite the Book of Allah, learning and teaching it, tranquillity will descend upon them, mercy will engulf them, angels will surround them and Allah will make mention of them to those (the angels) in His proximity.” (Sahih)

The Qur’an is the bearer of the sign or indication of science and a miracle that can be studied continuously. Many aspects of the Qur’an as the source of admiration in terms of the language of the Qur’an in *Al-Ijaz Al Balaghi* and correlated with the scientific miracles in *Al-Ijaz l ‘ilmiy Qur’an*. However, it is not a book of science (Naik, 2001). The language itself is very beautiful not comparable and even impossible for any mankind to compose something as great as it. It is also capable to amaze and defeat the language experts during the time of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

In detail, the Qur’an is exposed to all human groups of all ages. Thus, regardless of the reader’s differences of diversity, the Qur’an is written with comprehensible language, which can be understood by everyone even though they do not speak Arabic. The word used in the Qur’an itself is easily understood by the human race not to mention if they learn it well. Clearly, even people who cannot speak Arabic people can understand the words

used by Allah SWT in the Qur'an, which contains everything humankind needs to know as the guidance to be applied spiritually and physically in life (Selamat & Jasmi, 2013). The Qur'an includes all aspects of science, law, and way of life (Murad, 1985). To know how Muslims understand the Qur'an, the measurement of understanding this book needs to be discussed.

2.2.2 Content of the Qur'an

The Qur'an contains the words of Allah SWT almighty God as guidance and discusses many topics such as previous peoples, laws, ethics, faith, afterlife, science and so on. The content of the Qur'an that was used in this study can be divided into two types, which are Vision and sight verses and Surah Al-Ikhlās.

The basic definition of vision and sight from the Qur'an is '*basara*'. The rational meaning of *basara* can be divided into two categories which are; firstly, *basara* indicates the characteristic of Allah and secondly, *basara* can rely on humankind. It also has some other meanings, which are the sense of sight, eyes and thought (Yusuf, 2013).

Vision and sight terms that use in the Qur'an verses are *basara*, *raā*, *nazara*, and *syahada* (بصر, رأي, نظر, شهد). Therefore, the researcher plans to highlight the vision and sight verses from the Qur'an that includes these four words. According to Qur'anic Arabic Corpus (2011), the words *basara* were repeated 148 times, *nazara* 129 times, *raā* repeated 328 times and the term *syahada* equal to 160 times repeated. In the end, the total frequency of vision and sight verses from the Qur'an is concluded to 765 times. Thus, this fact can conclude about the importance of vision and sight in the Qur'an itself and to humankind

based on the extent 765 of frequency which deserves to be discussed. The table below shows the total frequency of vision and sight verse from the Qur'an.

Table 2.1: Total Frequency of Vision and Sight Verses from The Qur'an

KALIMAH	FREQUENCY
Root bā ṣād rā (بصر)	148
Root nūn zā rā (نظر)	129
Root rā hamza yā (رأي)	328
Root shīn hā dāl (شهد)	160
TOTAL	765

All of these terms share similarities indicate the sense of vision and sight, which are the eyes. Conversely, as for the differences, the external meaning can indicate to different meaning each for example *basara* can be extended to the meaning of how the heart see, opinion, and understanding while *nazara* and *raā* mean as though, then *syahada* means as witness or evidence. Vision and sight work through the eyes as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf verse 179 and 195:

﴿وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ

أُذُنٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَمِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَقِيلُونَ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Surah Al-A'raf 7: 179)

"And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have **eyes with which they do not see**, and they

have ears with which they do not hear. Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless”

﴿أَلَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا ۖ أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبِطُشُونَ بِهَا ۖ أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا ۖ أَمْ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۚ قُلْ

أَدْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُوا فَلَا تُنْظَرُونَ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Surah Al-A'raf 7: 195)

(Do they have feet by which they walk? Or do they have hands by which they strike? Or do they have **eyes by which they see**? Or do they have ears by which they hear? Say, [O Muhammad], “Call your ‘partners’ and then conspire against me and give me no respite.)

These two verses from the Qur'an show that the sense of vision and sight work using the eyes. Scientifically, the human eye is a vital organ of the human body, which reacts to light for several purposes. The eye as a conscious sense organ allows vision. The eyes are undoubtedly the delicate and most sensitive and amazing organs human possess. The ability of vision works 180 degrees horizontal and 145 verticals through light waves. Light waves are absorbed by the eyes towards the picture and then explain the nature and what is the view. It presents with the window through which humans can view the world and are responsible to send all the information in the brain which is probably why human rely on our eyesight more than any other sense.

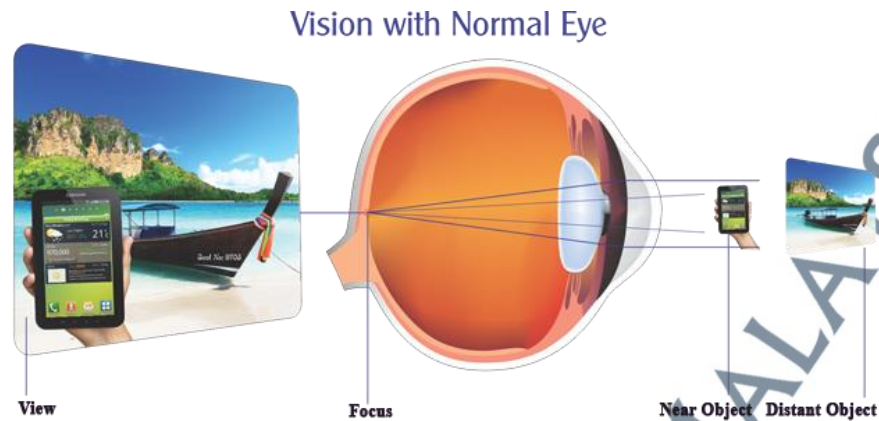


Figure 2.1: Vision with Normal Eye

The vision and sight in the verse 179 are not only referred to the vision and sight of the eye as the working tools only but also the meaning towards mankind who doesn't have the consciousness to see the signs of Greatness of Allah SWT. Therefore, humans must see a meaningful vision that connects to their attitudes and actions. This meaningful vision is certainly not on animals. Thus, when humans see an object and they cannot perceive the divine meaning of the object, they can be equal with the animals. Because in animals they have no elements to perceive more than the senses and mind observations (Yusuf, 2013). While humans, Allah gives us the advantages which can capture the hidden meaning behind the Qur'an (Sīnā, 1952).

In this study researcher minimises her finding that related to these four words in three verses that indicate vision and sight from the Qur'an as follow:

﴿شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Surah Ali-Imran 3:18)

(Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge – [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.)

﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَّا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوتٍ فَأَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Surah Al-Mulk 67: 3)

([And] who created seven heavens in layers. You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency. So, return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks?)

﴿فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Surah At-Tariq 86: 5)

(So let man observe from what he was created)

Surah Al-Ikhlâs contains four verses, forty-seven within fifteen words and as one of the Surah Makiyyah in the Qur'an. This surah contains the most fundamental of Islamic pillars, which is *Tauhid* the Allah SWT. The four verses in this surah are as below:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Surah Al-Ikhlâs 112: 1-4)

(Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One (1) Allah, the Eternal Refuge (2) He neither begets nor is born (3) Nor is there to Him any equivalent (4)

Surah Al-Ikhlās is one of the common surahs that is always being recited by Muslims nowadays by the child and the adult. It is also one of the short Surah in the Qur'an but can give broad meaning to understanding it. Based on *Tafseer Muyassir*, in the first verse says: *He is Allah, the One*, the word 'قُلْ' means that Allah SWT is the only one God who governs this universe. His names and features are no equal to any. The second verse says that '*Allah, the Eternal Refuge*'. This verse carries out the meaning of Allah SWT is perfect, glorious, and great in his features. He is the only place to seek needs and desires.

The third verse says that '*He neither begets nor is born*'. This verse rules out the Allah SWT have no children, parents, or companions such as Christianity that believes that Jesus is the son of God. The fourth and the last verse says: '*Nor is there to Him any equivalent*' refers to Allah SWT is no equal to any of his creations either in His names, features, and glorious. He has not ever been nor ever can have similarities to any creatures in this universe. All for this verse also reject the statement supposition that Allah SWT comes in a human form.

Besides, there are also Hadith that mention the rewards for those who recite Surah Al-Ikhlās, for instance:

- 1) Al-Bukhari. Sahih Al-Bukhari. The Book of Oaths and Vows. Chapter: How did the oaths of the Prophet PBUH use to be. Hadith No.6643: *Narrated by Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri: A man heard another man reciting: Surat-ul-Ikhlās (The Unity) 'Say: He is Allah, the One (112) and he was repeating it. The next morning, he came to*

Allah's Messenger PBUH and mentioned the whole story to him as if he regarded the recitation of that Surah as insufficient on that, Allah's Messenger PBUH said, "By Him in Whose Hand my soul is! That (Surah No. 112) equals one-third of the Qur'an." (Sahih)

- 2) An-Nasa'i. Sunan An-Nasa'i. The Book of the Commencement of the Prayer.

Chapter: The virtue of reciting "Say: He is Allah, (the) One". Hadith No. 994:

Narrated by Zaib bin Al-Khattab, said: "I heard Abu Hurairah say: 'I came back (from a journey) with the Messenger of Allah SWT and he heard a man reciting 'Say: He is Allah, (the) One, Allah-us-Samad (the Self-Sufficient Master). He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none equal or comparable unto Him.' The Messenger of Allah SWT said: 'It is guaranteed.' We asked him: 'What, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'Paradise.'" (Hasan)

- 3) Ibn Majah. Sunan Ibn Majah. The Book of the Establishing the Prayer and the Sunnah Regarding Them. Chapter: What was narrated concerning twelve Rak'ah from the Sunnah. Hadith No. 1148: *Narrated by Abu Hurairah that in the two Rak'ah before the Fajr, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH used to recite: Say: 'O you disbelievers!' [Al-Kafirun (109)] and "Say: Allah is One." [Al-Ikhlās (112)]* (Sahih)

2.3 Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

Levels of understanding the Qur'an can be defined as different levels of knowledge in understanding this first source of Islam. This level of understanding of the Qur'an aims to measure how diverse groups of people nowadays understanding the Qur'an. Ibn Qayyim (1996) detailed that some groups of people do not need any additional references such as

Exegesis, Hadith and others to capture the meaning of the Qur'an. Meanwhile, for others, these references are needed.

Ksār (2003) explained that there are many levels of understanding the Qur'an from understanding the literal meaning until it grows into the higher or maximum levels of understanding.

There were two exegeses referred in this study which were *Tafseer Ibn Kathir* and *Tafseer Jalalayn*. The first exegesis which is *Tafseer Ibn Kathir* written by Ismail Ibn 'Amr Ibn Kathir Ibn Daw Ibn Kathir, better known as Ibn Kathir. He was born in Basrah on 705 H/1304 AD. His father died when he was 7 years old and he moved to Damascus with his brother where there he studied various field of knowledge. Among his famous teachers were Abd al-Wahhab, Ibn al-Suhnah, Al-Amidi, Ibn 'Asakir, Ibn al-Muzzi and Ibn Taymiyyah. (Al-Dhahabiy, 1973). Ibn Kathir's expertise had been proven in various fields of knowledge, up to he was included as one of the outstanding scholars of the time. He died in Damascus in 774H/1373 AD (Abdullah, 2013).

This exegesis included as one most well-known exegesis in the types of *Tafseer bil Ma'thur*. Written on his exegesis, the best way to interpret is with the Quran itself. If one doesn't find (exegesis) from the Qur'an, he must refer to the Sunnah (Hadith) of the Prophet PBUH. The reason to refer is because the Sunnah is the lectures and explanations of the Qur'an. Even Al-Imam Al-Syafie stated that all of the rule from the Prophet SAW was from his understanding of the Qur'an (Ibn Kathir, 2003).

In general, he begins the interpretation of each surah mentioning the advantages and the reason for it. Then he explained the number verses and sometimes the number of letters, surahs and other related matters with a surah which is interpreted to prove the privilege of

the Qur'an (Abdullah, 2013) For example, he has mentioned about Surah Al-Mulk contains thirty verses that gives forgiveness for those who recite it (Ibn Kathir, 2003). However, revealed Ibn Kathir used *Tahlili* method coherently starting from Surah Al-Fatihah until Surah An-Nas according to *mushaf* Usmani. He does not neglect on the aspect of *Asbab An-Nuzul* and the suitability of content or story covered between each other. Eventually, he divided the verses of the surah that he wanted to interpret to several groups according to by these verses' sequences. Therefore, the number of verses interpreted in one-by-one collection were different, sometimes only one verse, two, three, four or more based on its suitability and relation (Maliki, 2018). One of the main patterns was the interpretation described by referring it to other related verses from the Qur'an (Abdullah, 2013). For instance, in Surah At-Tariq verse 5 was group in verse 5 until 8 under the title of 'How Man is created is a Proof of Allah's Ability to Return to Him (Ibn Kathir, 2003). Allah says:

﴿فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ﴾

“(So, let man see from what he is created!). This is alerting man on the weakness of his origin from which he was created. The intent of it is to guide man to accept (the reality of) the hereafter, because whoever is able to begin the creation then he is also able to repeat it in the same way. This is as Allah SWT says,

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ﴾ [الروم: 27]

(And He it is Who originates the creation, then He will repeat it; and this is easier for him). (30:27)

This is as Allah SWT says,

﴿خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ﴾

(He is created from a water gushing forth) meaning, the sexual fluid that comes out bursting forth from the man and the woman. Thus, the child is produced from both of them by the permission of Allah.”

Both of the verse compiled in a group due to the relationship and suitability between one verse to another. He was also mentioned on other verse in Surah Ar-Rum verse 27 to support and interpret the meaning of the Qur'an in Surah At-Tariq verse 5. In interpreting the verses of the Qur'an, Ibn Kathir used the following sources of interpretation:

1. Verses of the Qur'an.
2. Hadith.
3. Opinions of Companion
4. Opinion of the Tabi'in (Mani' Abd Halim , 2003)

The second exegesis mentioned was Tafseer Jalalayn written by Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti. Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli 's full name is Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Ahmad Al-Imam Al-Allamah Jalaluddin Al-Mahalli. He was born in 791 H/1389 AD in Cairo, Egypt. He is better known by the name "Al-Mahalli" which was attributed to his hometown located on the west side of Cairo, not far from the Nil River (Muhammad Sofyan, 2015). Since childhood, he had shown signs of intelligence in various field such as sciences, *usul fiqh*, *nahu* and mathematic. Most of the knowledge were self-taught and only few that he learns from the *Salafis* at that time for an example Al-Badri Muhammad bin Al-Aqsari, Burhan Al-Baijuri, A'la Al-Bukhari and Syamsuddin bin Al-Bisati. He died on 864 H/1445 AD (Saiful & Alaika Salamullah, 2008).

The second author of this exegesis was Jalaluddin Asy-Syuyuthi which is Al-Hafidz Jalaluddin Abil Fadhil Abdur Rahman Abu Bakar Asy-Syuyuthi. He was born on 849 H/1445 AD and comes from a scholarly background. Since young, his father always tried to make him a scholar and a pious person. His father makes him attend various classes and even often asked great scholars to pray for his son. One of the scholars who prayed for him to become a great scholar was Imam Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, the author of the book *Bulughul Maram*. After the death of his father, he was able to complete his studies at the Al-Syaikuni Mosque (Yusrin, 2004). He died on 911 H/ 15005 AD.

According to Quraish Shihab (2013) there were 4 types of method of interpretation in the Tafseer Jalalayn which were *Tahlili*, *Ijmali*, *Muqaran*, and *Maudhu'i*. First, the *Tahlili* method is one of the interpretation methods that aims to explain the content of the verses of the Qur'an with all its aspects. Second, the *Ijmali* method is an interpretation that interprets the verses of the Qur'an by conveying the meaning globally. Next, the *Muqaran* method emphasizes its study on the aspect of comparison in interpreting the Qur'an. Lastly, the *Maudhu'i* or thematic method is an interpretation method which discussed according to certain themes in the Qur'an.

Although the writing of this exegesis was composed by two scholars, the methodology of interpretation utilized is the *Ijmali* (global) method. In precise, the *Ijmali* includes an easy feature in decoding verses that was done consecutive from one verse to a different and from one surah to ensuing in sequence. Al-Farmawi (1977) stated that the *Ijmali* method could be an interpretation of the Quran based on the sequence of the verses using short explanation and straightforward language. As a result, the simplicity was able to be understood by everybody from all walks of life, crowd and intellectual. From the

aspect of *Asbab An-Nuzul*, this part sometimes existed in the exegesis to understand the background or context of the revelation of a verse. Still, the Sunnah (Hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and the views from some of Salafi scholars were also taken as references to strengthen the interpretation of the two authors.

Al-Suyuti said he interprets the tafsir in the manner used by his teacher Al-Mahalli where he stated from the solid references, grammatical status or pronunciation when required, attention to distinctive *Qiraah* with simple phrase and leaving those that are as well long and unnecessary (Iyan Sofyan, 2021). This method was commonly point out the verses of the Quran in brief with preferred and easy-to-understand language. It will interpret the Qur'an accordingly from the beginning until the end (Saiful & Alaika Salamullah, 2008) In interpreting the verses of the Qur'an, Imam Al-Mahalli and Imam Al-Suyuti used the following sources of interpretation:

1. Verses of the Qur'an.
2. Hadith.
3. Opinions of friends.
4. The opinion of the *Tabi'in*.
5. Rules of the Arabic language.
6. Ijtihad.

In Tafseer Jalalayn it explained in Surah Al-Ikhlâs, first explained this surah was revealed due to the Prophet PBUH was asked about Lord and this surah was the answer. This is similar as stated before that the method of interpretation mentioned about the *Asbab*

An-Nuzul exist in order to understand the background or context of the verse. Next, the table below illustrate on how surah Al-Ikhlās was interpreted in Tafseer Jalalayn:

Table 2.2: Interpretation of Verses in Surah Al-Ikhlās from Tafseer Jalalayn

Verse from Surah Al-Ikhlās	Tafseer Jalalayn
قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ١	Say: ‘He is God, One (اللَّهُ is the predicate of هُوَ, ‘He is’, and أَحَدٌ is its substitution or a second predicate)
اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ٢	God, the Self-Sufficient, besought of all (اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ constitute a subject and a predicate) [الصَّمَدُ means] the One Who is always sought at times of need
لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ٣	He neither begot, for no likeness of Him can exist, nor was begotten, since createdness is precluded in His case
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ أَחَدٌ ٤	Nor is there anyone equal to Him’, neither match nor comparison (لَهُ, ‘to Him’, is semantically connected to كُفُوًا, ‘equal’, but precedes it because it is the object of the intended negation; أَحَدٌ, ‘anyone’, which is the subject of يَكُنْ, ‘is there’, has been placed after the predicate of the latter [كُفُوًا, ‘equal’] in order to retain the harmony of the end-rhyme [of the verses])

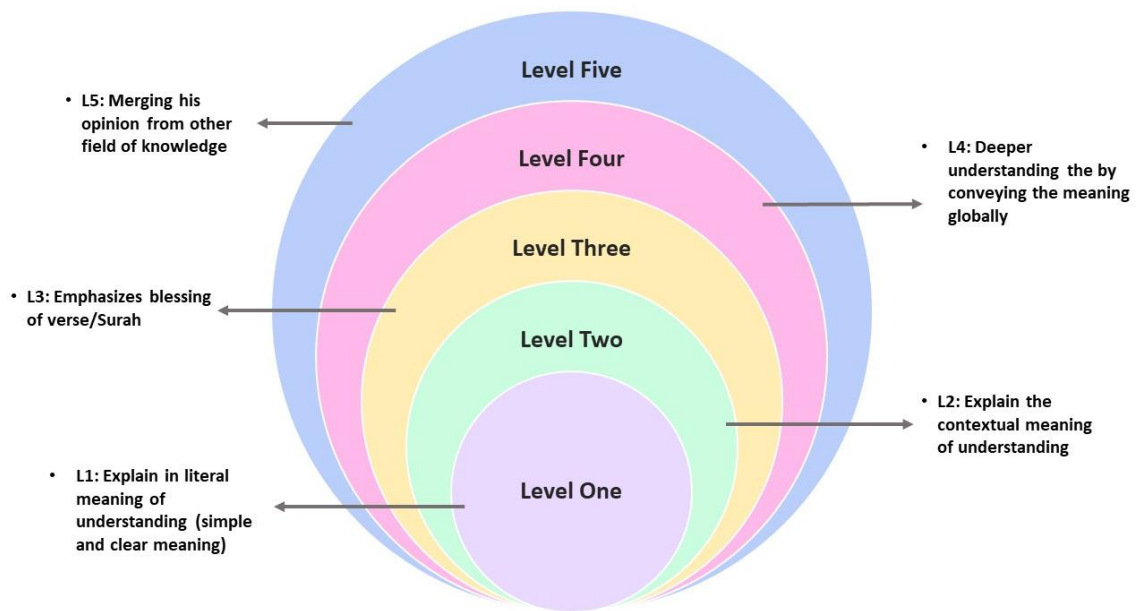
Based on the table above the explanation shown about Surah Ak-Ikhlās was short and used direct language. Besides that, the element of grammatical disciplines was interpreted to ensure and clarify the words chosen in this surah.

The understanding of today's Muslims may be different, but it does not mean that they can match the ability of the *Mufasir* to understand verses of the Qur'an holistically and spiritually. Yet, it is important to see their understanding and how far it could be implemented in their life. Therefore, based on Ibn Qayyim (1996) who discussed the categorisation of levels of understanding the Qur'an this study focused on many levels of understanding the Qur'an supported by, Ksār (2003), Ibn Kathir, (2003) and Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti (2007) which is the framework to be used to analyse the data for the second of the research questions.

Table 2.3: Framework Analysis Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

Reference/Level of Understanding	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Madarij Al-Sālikin Baina Manāzil Iyyāka Na'budu Wā Iyyāka Nasta'in by Ibn Qayyim (1996)	Require translation tools to understand				Didn't need any translation tool
Fahm Al-Qur'an Dirāsah 'la Dw' Al-Madrosah Al-Sulūwkiyyah by Ksar (2003)	Minimum comprehension of basic meanings and simple explanation				Higher understanding
Tafseer Ibn Kathir by Ismail Ibn 'Amr Ibn Kathir Ibn Daw Ibn Kathir (1984)	- Mentioning the privilege or blessing element from the verse/surah - Explain the meaning generally - Mentioned the <i>Asbab An-Nuzul</i> if needed - Verses divided into several groups to interpret - Referred interpretation verses by verses from the Qur'an				
Tafseer Jalalayn by Jalal al-Din al Mhalli & Jalal al-Din Suyuti (2007)	- Compare specifically on the word grammatically in Arabic language - Interpreted the verses by conveying the meaning globally - Used short explanation and straightforward language - Discussed according to certain themes				

The framework can be summarized as the figure below:



Source: Ibn Qayyim (1996), Ksār (2003), Ibn Kathir, (1984) and Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti (2007)

Figure 2.2: Summarization Framework Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

This figure shows the summarization of the framework to answer the second research question. The level was created according to the source shown and the preliminary study conducted and will be mentioned in 3.7 Preliminary Study. The levels of understanding the content of the Qur'an are divide into five levels, which are Level One, Level Two, Level Three, Level Four, and Level Five. Figure 2 shows that Level One can understand the content of literal and minimum layer of understanding that is simple and clear explanations. All the level specifications require translation tools to understand the content of the Qur'an such as *Exegesis* or *Hadith* except Level Five.

Level Two is capable of understanding the content of the Qur'an along with the features from Level One but with a higher level of understanding the content of the Qur'an. People at this level would possess and understand the contextual meaning of the Qur'an. Then, in Level Three they will know quoting blessing elements from the verses. Blessing

elements indicate virtues and benefits for an instead for those who read the Surah Al-Mulk they will be protected from the torments after they die in the grave later.

Furthermore, the next level will have the advantages in explaining deeper understanding by conveying the meaning globally of the verses or surah from the Qur'an. This Level Four has high thinking ability in a new concept or theme of meaning according to the rules and regulations in Qur'an and can reflect its message. The highest level, able to merge their opinion from another field of knowledge as an open-minded and intellectual people that are experts in the Qur'anic field of knowledge. Conversely, people at this level will not need additional translation tools to help them understand the Qur'an.

Meanwhile, in terms of language, Murad (1985) added that the Arabic language becomes the most essential element to understand the Qur'an due to work as the language in the Qur'an. Imam Syafie *Rahimahumullah* explains the importance to know the Arabic language for those who want to understand the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In understanding Islam, the Arabic language is the fundamental element (Zain, 2009). Meanwhile, Zarabozo (1999) stated that knowledge of the Arabic language is not a sufficient element to understand the Qur'an completely and correctly. Indeed, even knowledge of the other verses of the Qur'an is not sufficient to interpret all of the Qur'an. One must also look to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his explanations of the contents of the Qur'an. The *Companion* was all fluent in Arabic but there are times where they misunderstood the real meaning of certain verses. They would refer to Prophet Muhammad PBUH on how general or how specific the verses and what it exactly means. However, the researcher agrees that both language proficiency and aid explanation of hadith complete each other to help in understanding the Qur'an.

Levels of understanding the Qur'an were explored with the specific sample from the total verses in the Qur'an. Therefore, the researcher chooses suitable verses to know the levels of understanding diverse groups of people.

2.4 Characteristics Diverse Groups of People

Islam is a peaceful religion that did not practice discrimination despite the diversity differences such as skin colours, cultures, and others but equally applies a good approach to everyone. Diversity is one of the laws of nature, which is something that mankind cannot claim is man-made but was created by Allah SWT for the human to benefit from it.

﴿وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لَيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Al-Ma'idah 5: 48)

(and if Allah had pleased, He would have made you (all) a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds)

Diversity is one of the tests to humankind to live in peace with each other regardless of the differences. In addition, Allah SWT wants us to understand and accept the beauty of each of His creations where there are different cultures in the same land even in Malaysia itself. Allah SWT assures us that people can live together in peace and harmony with the differences. The analogy of diversity is like a garden where different types of flowers grow on the same soil (Wani, Abdullah, & Chang, 2015). Allah SWT says of the diversity of mankind in Surah Al-Hujurat 49:13:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

أَتْقَلُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾

(Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat 49:13)

(O you men! surely, We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware)

Islam encourages Muslims to respect different beliefs, the culture of life, community, and ideology. Allah SWT creates mankind with various facets so that Muslims can get to know each other and as a test to establish good relationships among each other. Each requires one another to help build a harmonious life for the sake of humankind. According to Michael H. Hart (1987), The Prophet Muhammad PBUH is the first person to the most influential people on earth and an example of the Qur'an's teachings who always show his respect, peace, and love to others. For example, on the day of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH said that everybody was equal to enter the house of Abu Sufiyan, the leader of the Quraysh in that time which is the people who were enemies of Islam. The Prophet Mohammed PBUH said, "You are free today". The attitude shows by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH should be emulated not only for Muslims but also for all humankind to develop a more prosperous and peaceful world.

From the western perspective, diversity is a subjective phenomenon created by group members themselves who based on their different social identities categorise others as similar or dissimilar.

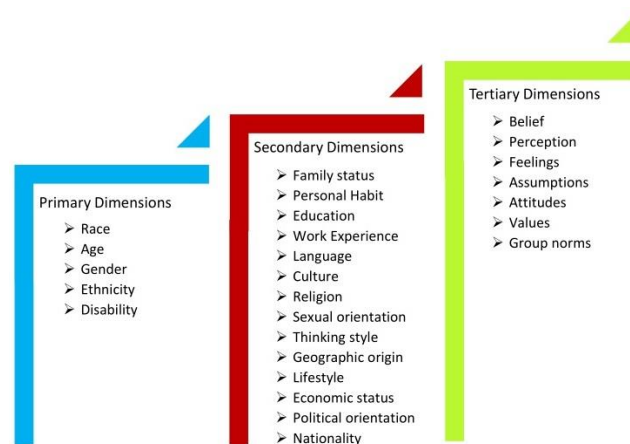
“A group is diverse if it is composed of individuals who differ on a characteristic on which they base their own social identity”

(O'Reilly, Williams, & Barsade, 1998)

Gardenswartz & Rowe (1994) described diversity as being like an onion, possessing layers that once peeled away until it reveals the core. Diversity can be defined as a subjective phenomenon, which categorised groups of people based on their personal identity experiences, and backgrounds (O'Reilly C. C., 1989). Elsewhere, this study focused on the definition from Loden, M, Rosener (1991) that define diverse groups of people as the distinction between one group to others which cover three dimensions which are primary, secondary and tertiary.

Primary dimensions of diversity incorporate identities such as age and gender. Meanwhile, secondary dimensions of diversity are less prominent than primary dimensions of diversity and related to self-esteem and self-definition. Characteristics such as family status, personal habits, work experience, education, languages and culture consuming more time to describe under the secondary dimensions. The tertiary dimensions then include the main core to the identity of people and in a deeper position against both primary and secondary dimensions as examples beliefs, perceptions, and feelings.

Loden, M, Rosener, & J.B (1991) define diversity as that which differentiates one group from another group within along primary and secondary dimensions.



Source: Rijamampianina & Carmichael (2005)

Figure 2.3: Dimensions of Diversity

Figure 4 shows about Dimensions of Diversity by Rijamampianina & Carmichael (2005) can be divided into three dimensions. Primary dimensions of diversity are the influences on our identities, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, age and mental or physical abilities and characteristics. The primary dimensions shape our basic self-image as well as our fundamental worldviews. Additionally, they have the most impact on groups in the workplace and society. Secondary dimensions of diversity are less visible, exert a more variable influence on personal identity, and add a subtler richness to the primary dimensions of diversity. They include educational background, geographic location, religion, first language, family status, work style, work experience, military experience, organisational role and level, income, and communication style. The secondary dimensions influence our self-esteem and self-definition. There is a definite trend towards definitions of a multiplicity of diversity dimensions; Arredondo (2004) then adds culture, social class, and language to the primary dimensions and healthcare beliefs and recreational interests to

the secondary dimensions. She further adds a tertiary dimension, which encompasses historical moments experienced.

Dimensions of diversity can be seen through the analogy of an iceberg. The obvious and small portion is related to race, ethnicity, gender, age, and disability. Meanwhile, the secondary dimension lying below the surface and need some time to reveal for instance religion, personal habits, education, work experiences, language, culture and others. The tertiary dimensions then place beneath the surface is the core of the identity of the surface and the real essence of diversity such as belief, perception, feeling and others (Mazur, 2010).

2.5 Recent Studies

Understanding the main primary source of Islam is compulsory for every Muslim. Qur'an itself can be defined as a book of guidance for every people in this world and no doubt about it, as mentioned in the second chapter of Al Qur'an in Surah Al-Baqarah: 2

﴿ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Surah Al-Baqarah 2:2)

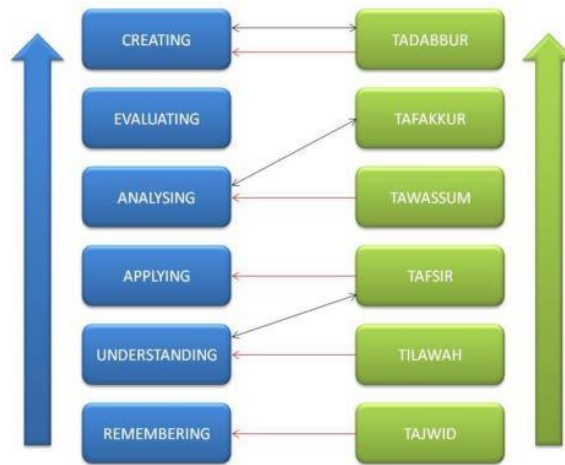
(This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah)

The nature of the Qur'an perfection combines fundamental aspects of life, which include true faith, worship, manners, and justice, teach, and tell about the life stories of previous people as the valuable lesson for all mankind in all-time.

Many studies are focused on the recitation of the Qur'an but less study in terms of understanding the Qur'an. Ikhwanuddin & Che Noraini (2014) in a study of 'Relationship

between Memorisation Technique, Mastery of the Arabic Language and Understanding of the Qur'an' stated that even those who memorising the whole Qur'an are not able to know the real meaning of what they have been memorised. The problem is where they have the memory information but without any value which causing them hard to retrieve and easily forgotten the information (Wetwood, 2004). The research approaches used in this study is the qualitative using instrument of questionnaire to 37 students. This study concludes that the institutions that produce *Huffaz* should give high concern in understanding the verses and implementation of its teachings. By studying *Exegesis*, *Huffaz* could improve their understanding of the Qur'an as the more fundamental in Islam rather than only memorising the Qur'an. Therefore, as a solution, a study towards the understanding of the Qur'an should be prioritised to help Muslims to apply its teachings in real life.

Meanwhile a year before in 2013 by Abidin, Syed, & Abdul Razak they have established a study of education in defining the initial cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy and the Qur'an's levels of understanding that focuses on the ability to think. However, there is currently no education system or method that is based on the Qur'anic levels of understanding due to the absence of proper definition. Therefore, this study provides general correlations between the cognitive levels and the Qur'anic levels of understanding so that the cognitive domain can be defined equally in terms of Qur'anic levels of understanding.



Source: Abidin, Syed, & Abdul Razak (2013)

Figure 2.4: Initial correlation between Cognitive Domain and Qur'anic Level of Understanding

The above illustration shows the similarities between the initial cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy and the Qur'anic level of understanding, which can provide better definitions for the existing cognitive domain that forms in the Qur'anic levels of understanding approach. However, it is still in the initial stage and the definitions within the level of understanding will need more advancement. Each level of the understanding needs to be clarified and explore to the Muslims to ensure the precise definition in terms of levels of understanding the Qur'an.

In enhancing the understanding of the Qur'an, efforts have been done in a research "Understanding of the Qur'an amongst the Melanau Ethnic Group: toward Constructing a Translation Module of the Qur'an" by Puji, et al (2015). It took place in Sarawak specifically to the Melanau or a liko (people of the river) which is the form of the largest Muslim group in Sarawak. This ethnic group has its system of beliefs and traditional customs. This system of beliefs encompasses theories on nature, man's origin, and way of

life. Their traditional customs are frequently manifested in various gathering events including Kaul Festival. This ethnic group has its own merits as a fluid and harmonious society, a mini-United Nations with leadership calibre. However, their system of beliefs and traditions at times presents a serious and big challenge to enhance understanding of the Qur'an amongst them. This study, therefore, attempts to discuss this challenge as well as the effort to compile a translation of the Qur'an in the Melanau language as a kaizen (slow and steady effort) in uslub dakwah (preaching methodology) in Malaysia.

Borneo Post online reported in 2012 42,000 people had converted in Sarawak with an annual average of between 1500 persons. Thus, the Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) gives many efforts to bring the Muslims in Sarawak especially the Malays and Melanau community into getting closer to understand the Qur'an through preaching activities, websites, or pamphlets. Because of the differences between the Malay and the Melanau languages in terms of phonetics and morphology, the language factor presents difficulties in enhancing understanding of the Qur'an. Besides that, other bigger challenges include the system of beliefs and traditions that influences their way of life and perspective. According to (Rahman, 1987) this tribe believes in animism and many important issues in life are subject to the supernatural.

The grand challenge to develop their understanding related to the contradiction with the Islamic belief (*akidah*) itself. They have faith in believing in the power of the supernatural such as honouring the guardian spirits in festive gatherings as the Kaul (cleansing or purification) Festival. Thus, this study can be an enhancement in exploring other factors that might include the challenge in understanding the Qur'an from the dimension of diversity.

In conclusion, the researcher explored the understanding of the Qur'an among diverse groups of people in this era to see how they were capable to understand the Qur'an. Their levels of understanding of the Qur'an were driven by their different characteristics in diversity such as family status, education, experience, and others.

2.6 Chapter Summary

To summarise, this chapter explains academically which include current related issues for this study such as people's understanding level towards the Qur'an. It complied with four scholar's categorisation that explains how people can achieve each level of understanding Qur'an based on features in their explanations in the verses and surah. This chapter also explains the significance of vision and sight verses, Surah Al-Ikhlās and the creation of diversity as a path to get to know each other's differences from the Qur'an and western perspectives. Then, explain the recent study related to the study.