

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This section elaborated on the description of the participants involved in this study. This includes two parts of the findings which are the profile of the participants and the findings for each research question which revolves around their understanding of the Qur'an. All the participants are addressed using pseudonyms to provide anonymity. Each research question is followed by a discussion.

4.2 The Participants

This section expands on the participants involved in this study. The general information about the participants can be found in 3.4 Research Participants. This section describes the characters of the participants as shown during the data collection. They were chosen among students and lecturers.

The participants chosen were those who are students and lecturers. The overall pictures of the participants were described through the individual description themselves during data collection and end with a table of summary as the main information for the participants. Their relevant opinions based on the levels of understanding the Qur'an are stated and described in this chapter. Then, this chapter extracted the characteristics of the participants who give their understanding of the Qur'an. The information was gathered through semi-structured interviews.

4.2.1 The students

There are two types of students as participants in this research which were: secondary and tertiary students.

A) Secondary Students

The secondary students were chosen were Amie (P2 Amie), Syahirah (P3 Sya), Fazrina (P4 Ina), Zull Arifin (P5 Zull), Ira Ahmad (P6 Ira), Haziah (P7 Hazi), and Iman (P18 Iman) who were high school students in Nilai. Amie (P2 Amie) is the eldest daughter in her family with two more siblings. Her father works as the facility's manager while her mother is a housewife. Her mother was mostly the responsible person in encouraging her in reading the Qur'an at least one time per day. She has been to KAFA (Kelas Al-Qur'an dan Fardu Ain) and Sekolah Rendah Agama (SAR) in her primary school. Then, Syahirah (P3 Sya) was born in a family that supports learning Qur'an specifically her grandmother. The support and encouragement were given to her since she was little due to her history of learning Arabic when she lived in Egypt for a couple of years.

The fourth participant is Fazrina (P4 Ina) comes from a well-being family and does not have any financial concerns. However, she has a different level of understanding of the Qur'an. Her levels of understanding can give a whole new perspective in this research which was highlighted in this chapter later. His father was a successful development advisor. Zull Arifin (P5 Zull) had a great father who emphasized the teachings of Islam and the stories of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon Him.

Participants number six is Ira Ahmad (P6 Ira), an ordinary Malay girl and comes from a well-educated family. Her father works as an officer in Kastam Diraja Malaysia and her mother is a housewife. All her siblings had finished their education in degree and currently

working. The next participant Haziah (P7 Hazi) who is the daughter of a police officer while her mother had her own catering business. Her siblings mostly are still studying and only one of them is working as a physiotherapist. Comes from an average family, she explained that curiosity is what affects her to understand the Qur'an. Lastly is Iman (P18 Iman), 19 years old and currently studying in upper sixth. He comes from not so well-being family due to his family circumstances and is the only son of 4 siblings. Sadly, he says that his family does not concern about the education of the Qur'an specifically his mother who did not have a lot of knowledge about Islam.

B) Tertiary Students

The next groups of participants were chosen from Bachelor's Degree students majoring in language and religious studies from a local university in Malaysia. They were Lia Ahad (P1 Lia Ahad), Umar (P9 Umar), Rohaizah (P10 Ijah), Fadhli (P11 Fadhli), and Bell Alia (P8 Bell).

Lia Ahad (P1 Lia Ahad) age 22 years old is a student from major in the Arabic language. She was born in a religious family where her father works as *Pegawai Agama* and her mother works as *Ustazah* in a school. All of her siblings attended Islamic religious education. Contrary, Umar (P9 Umar) was not born in a religious and educated family. Due to financial problems, his father only learns until third grade, and her mother until sixth grade in elementary school. However, his parents wanted him to go to a religious elementary school because his dad could not afford to provide religious knowledge himself. Even though there were none besides him in his family who qualified to enter a religious school, he thinks if he could not teach others about Islamic teachings at least he can teach it to his family members.

The next participant is Rohaizah (P10 Ijah) who her father also had the same occupation as Lia Ahad's (P1 Lia Ahad) parents, *Pegawai Agama* and *Ustazah*. Her family fix certain times in between after Maghrib and before Isyak reciting the Qur'an and obligated 2 times a day praying in *jamaah*. This is one of the influences on her learning and reading the Qur'an because she frequently recited and hear it during prayers. Fadhli (P11 Fadhli) as the eleventh participant said that all of his siblings' study in a religious school except one who studied art. Besides that, his father also gives special attention to their Qur'anic learning. From this view, it can be seen that Fadhli (P11 Fadhli) comes from a religious family background as he strengthens it himself. Next, Syaza (P12 Syaza) currently struggling in Doctor of Philosophy in Economic and Muamalat administration. She has a master's degree and a Bachelor degree in the Arabic Language. All of her family members also give high attention to learning Islamic teachings. It is all thanks to her grandfather who persuaded his father to make them study religious education.

4.2.2 The lecturers

These groups of participants were chosen among lecturers due to their importance in enhancing intelligence and better society. They were Haninah (P13 Hani), Solehah (P14 Solehah), Musa (P15 Musa), Bayah (P16 Bayah), and Wahid (P17 Wahid)

Participant number thirteenth, Haninah (P13 Hani) who is married. She and her husband both were teachers in Qur'anic studies. She spends at least once a day reading the Qur'an and explained that we should remind ourselves to read the Qur'an especially right after prayer. She also added that as parents they need to take responsibility to teach their children the Qur'an and making sure they read and memorise it. Besides that, she sometimes gives little explanation of the meaning of the Qur'an to her children. The next

participant is Solehah (P14 Solehah), who teaches Arabic language studies. When she was little, her parents did not send her to others to learn the Qur'an. Instead, her mother taught her. Her father studied in Egypt in religious studies and she and her siblings were emphasized and encouraged by their father in reading the Qur'an and *khatam* (finish) reading it. All of them were also sent to religious schools.

Participant number fifteen who is Musa (P15 Musa), went to Egypt and studied there at age 17 years old. His mother died when he was 5 months old and his father remarried. He was brought up by his grandfather. As for education, he took all levels of education: Degree, Master's degree, and Doctor of Philosophy in Egypt. Studied in the Arabic Language, he emphasized as we all know the Qur'an is written in the Arabic Language, and if we understand the language itself, it could make our *Iman* (faith) grows stronger. The next participant who is Bayah (P16 Bayah) said that her late father wanted her to study in a religious school. Therefore, she went to the school and registered. Later, she said that maybe due to the blessings of her father, she becomes attached to the Arabic languages and it also contributed to her then continue her study in *Syariah Law* (Islamic law) in Jordan at Al-Bayt University. Continuing her Master's degree, she continued her study also in *Syariah Law* at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Malaysia. Then after positioning her job as a lecturer, she continued her study in Doctor of Philosophy in Hadith and Qur'anic studies and took her longer than others due to her differences in the field of knowledge between Master's degree and Doctor of Philosophy. Now, she is determined to be the one who is close to the Qur'an and as one of those who understand the Qur'an. The way into achieving her dream was through research.

The seventeenth participant, Wahid (P17 Wahid) from Indonesia but already settle down in Malaysia. Married and is blessed with four kids. He said that every day they must at least listen to the Qur'an verses. If he was not the one who recites, her wife will be the one. If none of them, it must be his children or some audio playing but for sure his children must read Qur'an after *Maghrib* due to their tight schedule.



Table 4.1: Summary of Participant's Details

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education Religious/ Non-religious	Notes
1.	Lia Ahad (P1 Lia Ahad)	Female	23	Single	Bachelor's Degree/ Religious	
2.	Amie (P2 Amie)	Male	16	Single	High school/ Non-religious	
3.	Syahirah (P3 Sya)	Female	16	Single	High school/ Non-religious	
4.	Fazrina (P4 Ina)	Female	16	Single	High school/ Non-religious	
5.	Zull Arifin (P5 Zull)	Male	16	Single	High school/ Non-religious	
6.	Ira Ahmad (P6 Ira)	Female	16	Single	High school/ Non-religious	
7.	Haziah (P7 Hazi)	Female	16	Single	High school/ Non-religious	
8.	Bella Alia (P8 Bell)	Female	22	Single	Bachelor's Degree/ Religious	
9.	Umar (P9 Umar)	Male	22	Single	Bachelor's Degree/ Religious	
10.	Rohaizah (P10 Ijah)	Female	22	Single	Bachelor's Degree/ Religious	
11.	Fadhli (P11 Fadhli)	Female	22	Single	Bachelor's Degree/ Religious	
12.	Syaza (P12 Syaza)	Female	29	Single	Master's Degree/ Religious	
13.	Haninah (P13 Hani)	Female	40	Married	Doctor of Philosophy/ Religious	
14.	Solehah (P14 Solehah)	Female	42	Married	Doctor of Philosophy/ Language	
15.	Musa (P15 Musa)	Male	50	Married	Doctor of Philosophy / Language	
16.	Bayah (P16 Bayah)	Female	40	Married	Doctor of Philosophy/ Language	
17.	Wahid (P17 Wahid)	Male	36	Married	Doctor of Philosophy/ Religious	
18.	Iman (P18 Iman)	Male	19	Single	High school/ Non-religious	

4.3 The Verses

The verses chosen are the vehicle to find out how diverse groups of people were able to understand the Qur'an are shown as the table below:

Table 4.2: The Chosen Verses for the Study

No	Verse Address	Verses	Meaning
1	Surah Al-Ikhlâs (112:1-4)	قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝	1. Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One, 2. Allah, the Eternal Refuge. 3. He neither begets nor is born, 4. Nor is there to Him any equivalent."
2	Surah Ali-Imran (3:18)	شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَكُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ	18. Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge - [that He is] maintaining [creation] injustice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

3	Surah Al-Mulk (67:3)	الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَّا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ	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?
4	Surah At-Tariq (86:5)	فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ	5. So let man observe from what he was created.

4.4 RQ 1 – Diverse Groups of People Understand the Qur'an

RQ1 focuses to see on how diverse groups of people are capable of understanding the contents of the Qur'an. The contents of Qur'an verses that had been used to know how diverse groups of people can understand the Qur'an was stated in 3.5 Data Collection Procedure and the section before this.

As discussed in the literature review and supported in 3.7 Preliminary Study that Levels of understanding the Qur'an are divided into five levels of understanding which start with Level One until Level Five. Interestingly, data revealed that there are six levels of understanding which can be summarized in the table below:

Level	Zero	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Features	Not understand the Qur'an	Literal meaning	Contextual meaning	Quotes blessing element	Understand in high thinking ability in a new concept or theme of meaning and can reflect the message	Merging other fields of knowledge into their understanding
		Reread translation	Summarize understanding			
		Simple, direct, and clear understanding	Using simple and direct different words			

As shown above, the researcher found that diverse groups of people understand the Qur'an not only within five-level but consist of six levels starting with level zero. Each level is more intense than the last one. The clarification and elaboration will continue in the next section.

4.4.1 Level Zero



Level Zero is defined for those who cannot understand the contents of the Qur'an. Based on the findings, the results showed that there is a mismatch between the existing theory constructed and the actual reality occur. The result indicates that some people cannot understand the meaning of the Qur'an although they have been given the translation. The evidence of this claim is shown in the figure below:

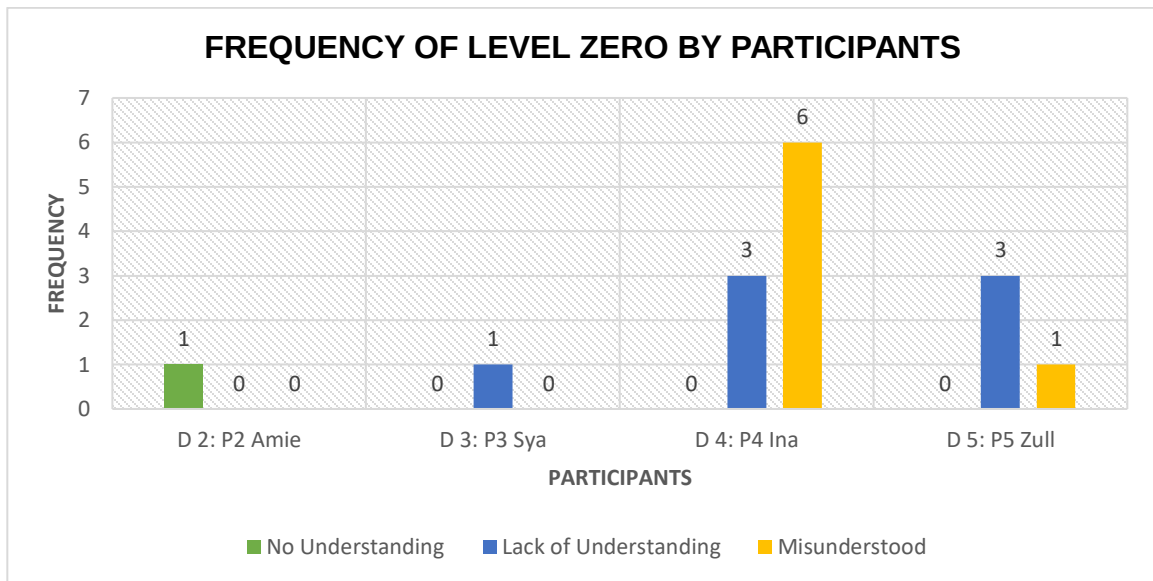


Figure 4.1: Frequency of Level Zero by Participants

The figure above shows the frequency of Level Zero which is an emerging data that appear and could not match any framework that has been developed. This Level is divided into three segments of features which are: No understanding, Lack of Understanding, and Misunderstood. The figure below indicates the excerpts of participants in level zero who cannot understand the Qur'an although the translation was given during the interviews:

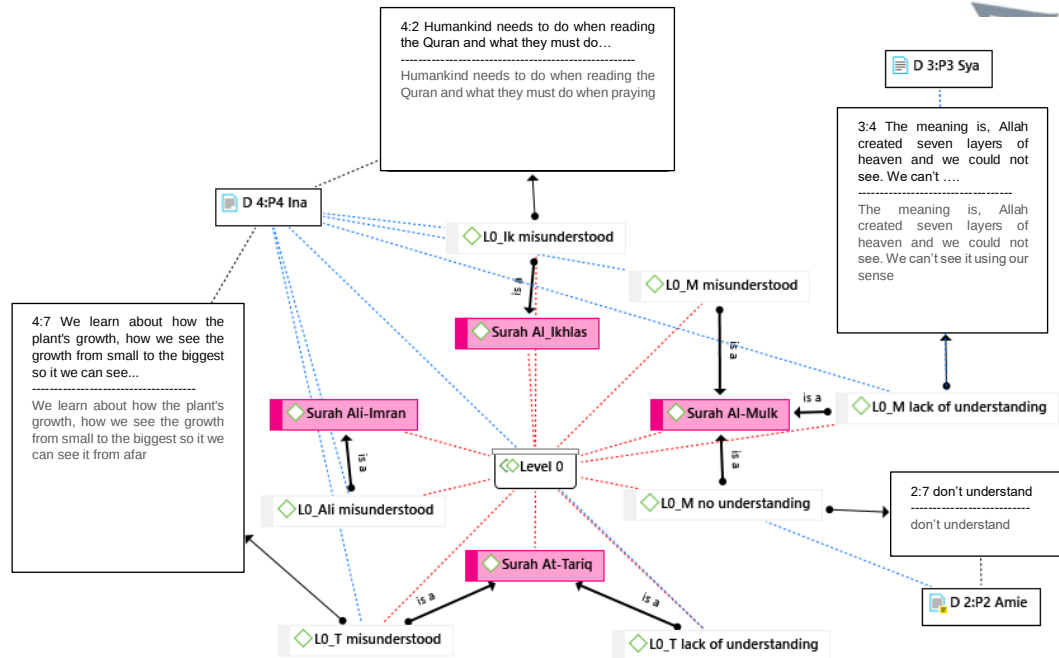


Figure 4.2: Level Zero Outputs

This can be observed as Figure 4.2: Level Zero Outputs above shows when the participants mentioned as below:

4:2 Humankind needs to do when reading the Quran and what they must do...

 Humankind needs to do when reading the Quran and what they must do when praying

“Humankind needs to do when reading the Qur’an and what they must do when praying” (P4 Ina)

Participant P4 Ina stated that Surah Al-Ikhlās is about what we as humans need to do when reading the Qur’an and praying. Surah Al-Ikhlās is clearly about the existence of the only God which is Allah SWT and his features. Therefore, the researcher concludes that Participant P4 Ina has misunderstood the verses as she stated the surah about reading the Qur’an and praying instead of the features of Allah SWT in the verses. The same pattern

can be seen when P4 Ina quoted her understanding of vision and sight verses as mention in the figure below:

4:7 We learn about how the plant's growth, how we see the growth from small to the biggest so it we can see...

We learn about how the plant's growth, how we see the growth from small to the biggest so it we can see it from afar

“We learn about how the plant's growth, how we see the growth from small to the biggest so we can see it from afar” (P4 Ina)

Participant P4 Ina stated that, Vision and sight verses Surah At-Tariq verse 5 about the growth of plants and how we could see it grows at their biggest even from a far distance. Her understanding carried a different understanding than the translation shown and is concluded as misunderstood the verses. The verse asks us how we can observe humankind being created and was not about the plants as she mentioned.

3:4 The meaning is, Allah created seven layers of heaven and we could not see. We can't

The meaning is, Allah created seven layers of heaven and we could not see. We can't see it using our sense

“The meaning is, Allah created seven layers of heaven and we could not see. We can't see it using our sense.” (P3 Sya)

It is true and acceptable when Participant P3 Sya mentioned in vision and sight verses Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 about the seven layers of heaven was created by Allah but the statement on it could not be seen by mankind sense, is slightly different from the real translation stated. Instead, Allah SWT the Most Merciful asks humankind about His creation which is perfect and did not have any inconsistency. Instead, Participant P3 Sya mentioned how humankind cannot see using sense only.

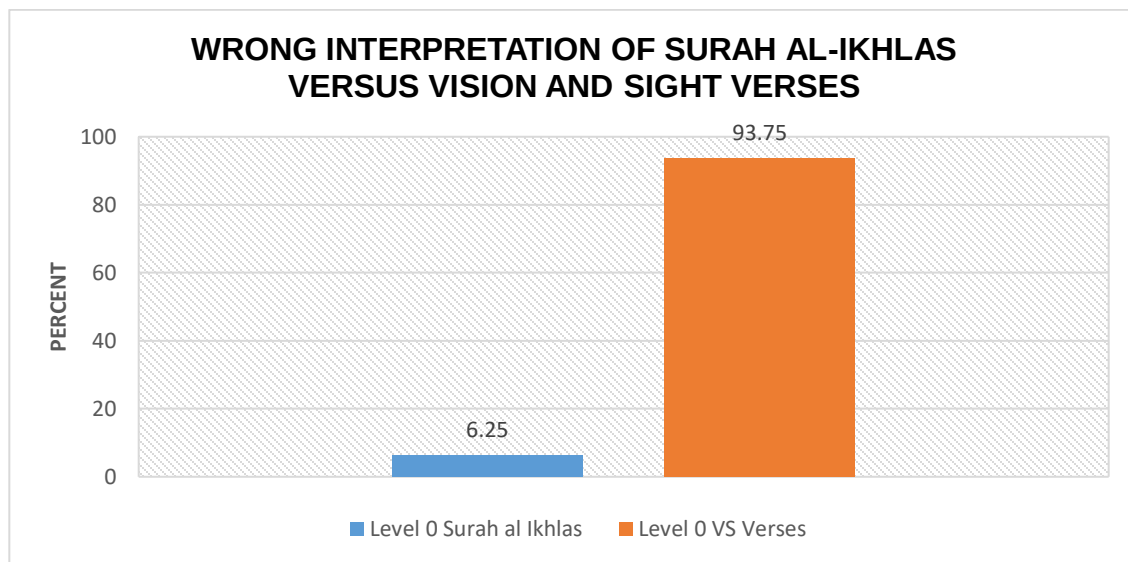


Figure 4.3: Wrong Interpretation of Surah Al-Ikhlās versus Vision and Sight Verses

Additionally, there are more occurrences of wrong interpretation of the verses and less of the surah. 93.67% wrong interpretation of the verses while others remain in the Surah Al-Ikhlās. It can be said that the difficulties in understanding vision and sight are due to the unfamiliar reasons for the verses meanwhile Surah Al-Ikhlās is one of the most familiar and well-known Surahs for Muslims to be read and remember.

In conclusion, the framework that was contracted shown that the level of understanding of the Qur'an starts with an understanding based on the literal and simple meanings, but the findings showed the opposite. The level of understanding of Level One is questionable as findings highlight there are misunderstandings and misinterpretations instead. Thus, theoretically, results from this study could enhance the existing theory in which, instead of beginning with level One, it should begin with Level Zero.

4.4.2 Level One

Level One

Level one is stated as those who are simply able to understand the Qur'an as the literal and minimum layer of understanding. They can explain their understanding using the most common, simple, and direct meaning based on the verses give. This level of understanding is the basic level to achieve to have the higher level. The figure below shows on participants' excerpts who were able to understand in Level One:

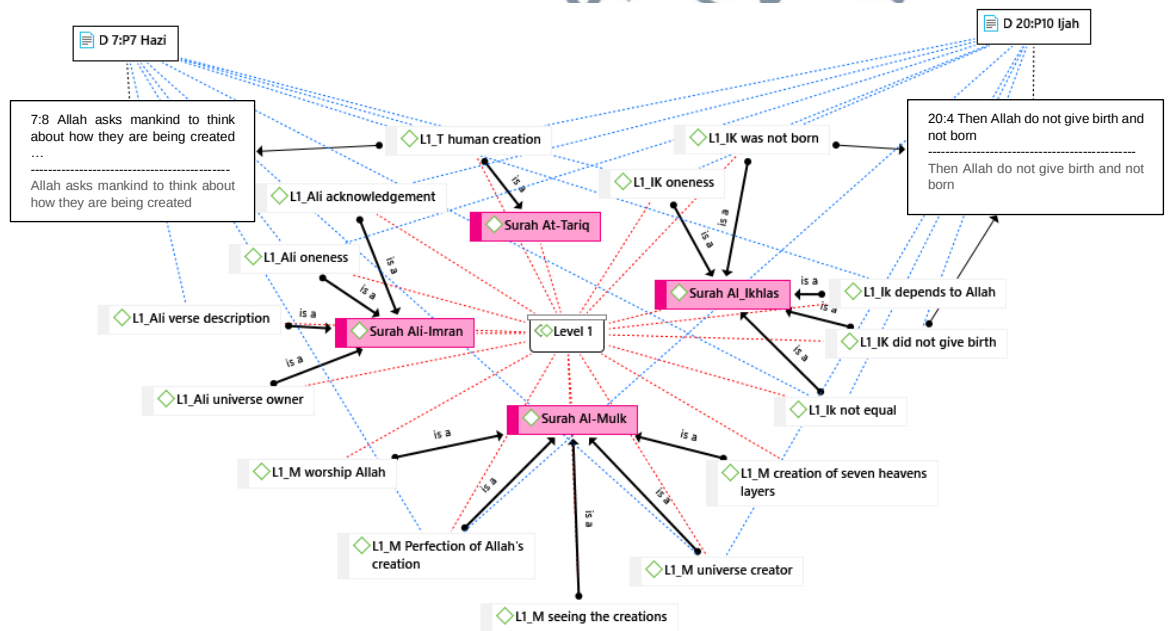


Figure 4.4: Level One Outputs

Participants considered as Level One as shown above in Surah Al-Ikhlās by P10 Ijah which gives the common, direct, and simple meaning about the oneness of Allah SWT who did not give birth and not be born. This can be proved when the participant mentioned:

20:4 Then Allah do not give birth and not born

Then Allah do not give birth and not born

“Then Allah do not give birth and not born” (P10 Ijah)

It was also repeated by other participants such as:

“Allah is One, He is not born and do not give birth. There is no God except Allah” (P2 Amie)

“Say oh Muhammad My God is One, means the Prophet Muhammad SAW said to Allah that Allah is One. Every human and creature need to beg for any wish always ask Allah. He is not born nor gives birth. There is no other like him” (P5 Zull)

The participants’ opinion on this verse is basically about the oneness of Allah SWT as the only God to the whole universe. The participants understand that Allah SWT is not born and does not need any creature making Him exist. His existence is not equal to any. He is the only place to seek hopes and wishes.

When given a different verse of the Qur’an, similarly the participants also explain the simple and direct explanation. This can be seen when they been given vision and sight verses Surah At-Tariq verse 5, participant P7 Hazi stated his understanding as below:

7:8 Allah asks mankind to think about how they are being created
...

Allah asks mankind to think about how they are being created

“Allah asks mankind to think about how they are being created” (P7 Hazi)

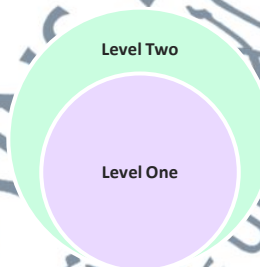
It was also repeated similar when other participants stated such as:

“It’s about the creation of human beings. From man and women..” (P6 Ira)

The words **creation** and **created** both come from the participants which are the keywords in understanding this verse. The verses ask mankind to think about how they are being created which leads to the thought of the existence of the almighty who created mankind.

In conclusion, the researcher concludes that this level had the basic understanding using the most common, simple, clear, understandable words and direct meaning based on what had been given on the translation to understand the meaning of the Qur'an in mind. It is also can be said that the participants in Level One simply repeated the translated version of the surah given to them. The findings show parallel as the framework that had been built by the researcher as labelled Level One.

4.4.3 Level Two



According to the preliminary study and the findings, participants who were capable to understand Level Two had achieved Level One of Understanding the Qur'an. Level One is measured when participants mention simple, direct, and reread what have they seen on the translation. Meanwhile, Level Two is for those who can elaborate the contextual meaning and summarize their understanding of the contents of the Qur'an using simple and direct words. They used different words to elaborate their understanding but still understand directly the contents of the Qur'an. The extracts can be shown as below:

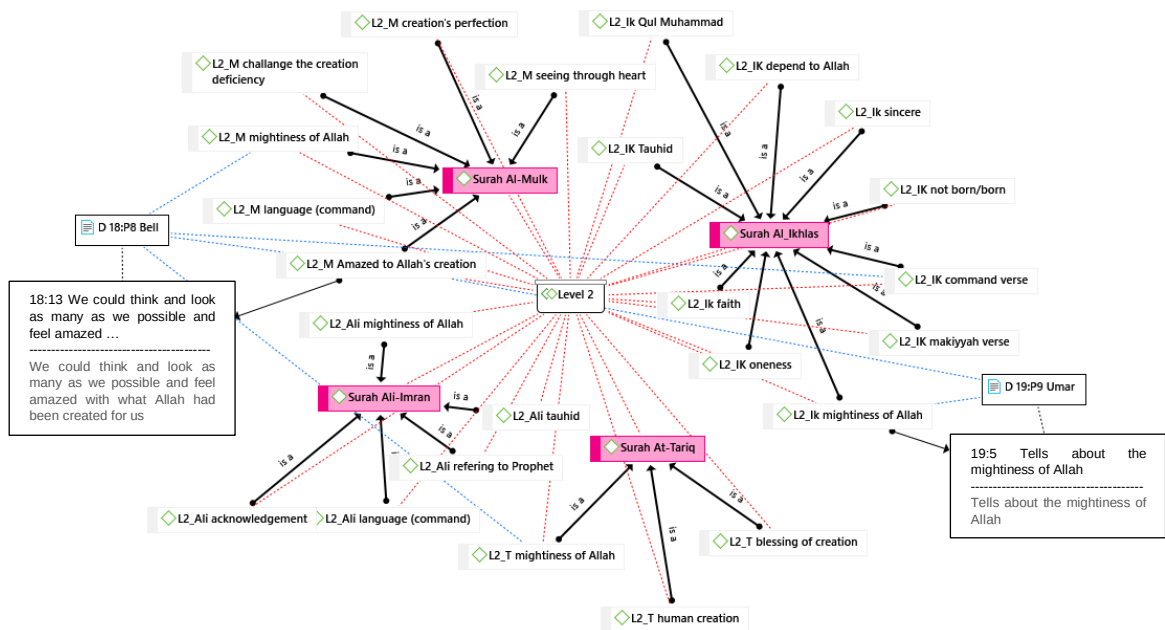


Figure 4.5: Level Two Outputs

This can be seen in Figure 4.5 when the participants stated as below:

19:5 Tells about the mightiness of Allah
Tells about the mightiness of Allah

“Tells about the mightiness of Allah.” (P9 Umar)

A participant with Level Two also can be seen in the excerpts below:

“Al-Ikhlās is about the Oneness of Allah SWT and His Mighty” (P7 Hazi)

P9 Umar and P7 Hazi both mentioned, from their understanding in Surah Al-Ikhlās about the Mightiness of Allah SWT which was not stated in the translation. They can elaborate and provide a different word to describe the attribute of Allah SWT. The translation itself indeed talks about the oneness of Allah and His attributes as a whole. Some stated the most fundamental of Islamic pillars, which is about monotheism (Tauhid) that declare Allah SWT is one and the only to depend on. Both elements of Mightiness and

Tauhid are carried out from this Surah as it is the explanation and stand about Allah SWT is one and refuse the statement of supposition Allah SWT comes in a human form.

As strengthening to this claim, the researcher found that when the participants were given the vision and sight verses, they were also capable to explain not only based on the translation but also using their own simple and direct words. This can be proved when the P8 Bell mentioned:

18:13 We could think and look as many as we possible and feel amazed ...

We could think and look as many as we possible and feel amazed with what Allah had been created for us

“We could think and look as many as we possible and feel amazed with what Allah had been created for us” (P8 Bell)

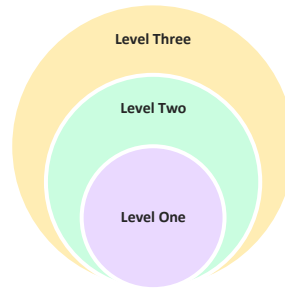
While there is another mention as below:

“The meaning is Allah who created all of his creation with perfection” (P9 Umar)

When given a different surah, participants P9 Umar and P8 Bell mentioned in Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 that Allah SWT is the one who created His creation with perfection without any deficiencies or inconsistency. All His creations were perfect and we, as humankind would feel amazed from looking into his creation. The verse itself asks us to repeat our vision to the sky and see are any breaks or damage. This contributed to their understanding of the perfection of the sky as one of Allah's SWT creations. Thus, this indicates that their understanding of the Qur'an is at Level Two which was able to understand the Surah in a simple way and contextual meaning.

In conclusion, Level Two of understanding the Qur'an is the level when an individual could understand the Qur'an without only depending on the translation. They were capable to understand and explain using their own simple words in deeper meaning as a clear picture but not entirely as the whole true meaning of the contents itself.

4.4.4 Level Three



Participants who were capable to understand Level Three had achieved Level Two and Level One of Understanding the Qur'an. This level includes those who were able to quote any blessing elements or benefits of the Qur'an for those who read the verses in the Qur'an. To make it more comprehensible if a person was asked about the benefits of Surah Al-Kahf he can mention that reading Surah Al-Kahf especially on Friday will be blessed from the day until the next Friday. The extract on how Level Three can explain can be seen below:

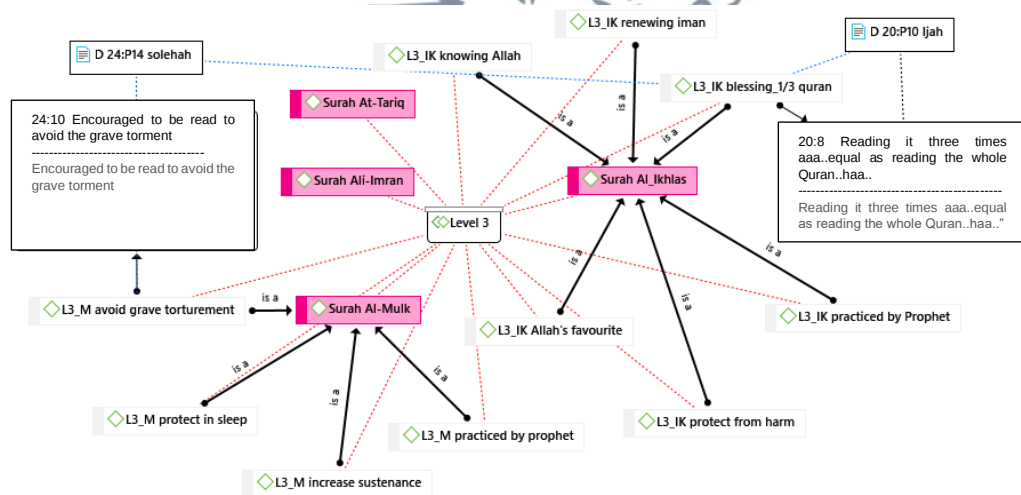


Figure 4.6: Level Three Outputs

This can be observed as Figure 4.6 shows when P10 Ijah quoted as below:

20:8 Reading it three times
aaa..equal as reading the whole
Quran..haa..

Reading it three times aaa..equal
as reading the whole
Quran..haa.."

*"Reading it three times aaa..equal as reading the whole
Qur'an..haa.." (P10 Ijah)*

This statement strengthens the claim of definition in Level Three as another participant also quoted:

*"Those who read Surah Al-Ikhlās, in the hadith, equal as reading one third from the
Qur'an" (P13 Hani)*

Surah Al-Ikhlās as mentioned in the 2.2.2 Content of the Qur'an is one of the surahs that has many benefits to the reciter and was also mentioned by the participants that had been interviewed such as stated by P10 Ijah and P13 Hani. P10 Ijah said that reading Surah Al-Ikhlās three times is equal to reading the whole Qur'an. Meanwhile, P13 Hani said that reading Surah Al-Ikhlās is equal to one-third reading the Qur'an. Both statements were a little bit different but carried out the meaning of reading surah Al-Ikhlās will give the same reward as reading one-third of the Qur'an.

Meanwhile, the vision and sight verses also mentioned the same knowledge about the benefit for those who recite surah Al-Mulk can avoid the grave torments. This can be seen proved in the excerpts below:

24:10 Encouraged to be read
to avoid the grave torment

Encouraged to be read to avoid
the grave torment

*"Encouraged to be read to avoid the grave torment" (P14
Solehah)*

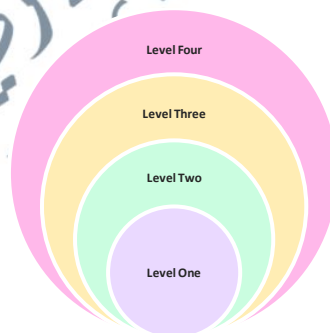
Similar to P14 Solehah statements, P18 Iman also mentions the same answers:

"If we remember Al-Mulk, we would avoid from the grave torments" (P18 Iman)

One of the Vision and Sight verses which is Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 was chosen due to its familiarity in the society that could bring their sincere understanding towards the contents of the Qur'an. P14 Solehah and P18 Iman mentioned that those who read and remember Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 will be given the reward, which is avoiding the torments in the grave. Their understanding of the blessing elements would be not known if they are not familiar with the verse. In addition, no translation in the verse mentions reading or remembering the surah will reward them in that specific reward or blessings. So, it can be said that they had been learned and familiar with the verse to the knowledge of quoting the blessing. They would not know about the element without attending lectures that explain reward or blessing in certain verses or surah in the Qur'an.

In conclusion, as mention in this section about the definition of Level Three is those who were able to quote the blessing elements or benefits if they read the contents of the Qur'an as can be seen in the statements above. This understanding is limited because the understanding expressed by the participants is based on what has been explained in Islam for example in Hadith while other levels have a larger scope and can be explained in more detail.

4.4.5 Level Four



Level Four consists of those who can also understand the Qur'an from Level One until Level Three of Understanding the Qur'an. This level defines for those who understand the purpose of the meaning by conveying the meaning globally of the verses or surah from the Qur'an. They can mention the contextual meaning but with wider and in details such as being able to explain in a new concept or theme of meaning which related according to the content of the Qur'an or reflecting its message to their life. The figure below shows on participant's excerpts who were able to understand in Level Four:

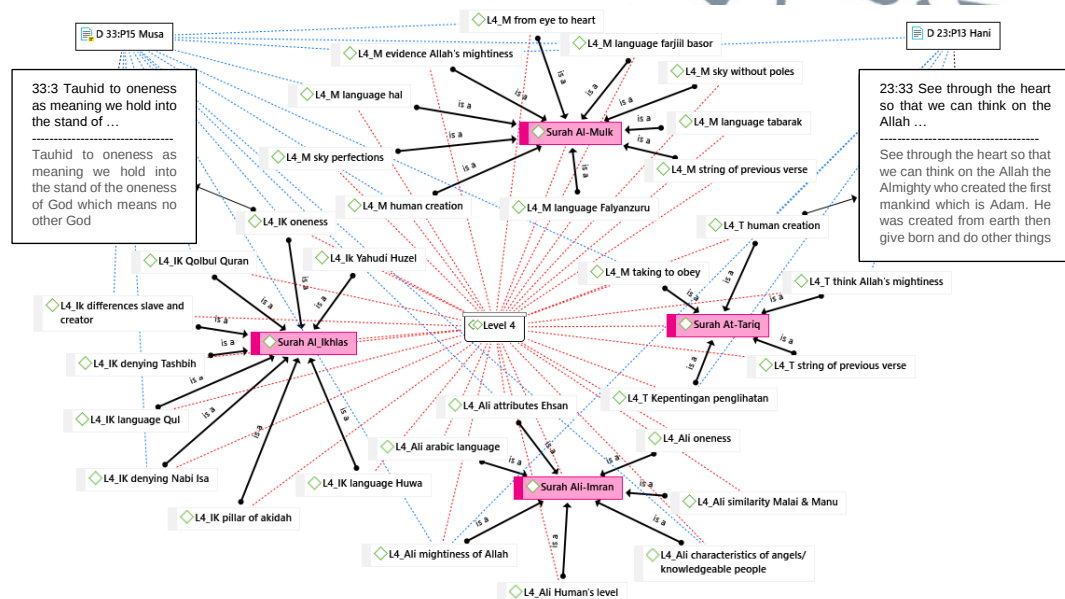


Figure 4.7: Level Four Outputs

This can be observed as the Figure shows P15 Musa excerpts as below:

33:3 Tauhid to oneness as meaning we hold into the stand of ...
Tauhid to oneness as meaning we hold into the stand of the oneness of God which means no other God

"Tauhid to oneness as meaning we hold into the stand of the oneness of God which means no other God." (P15 Musa)

Another participant stated as below:

“It means the denial of Tashbih. Others said that Allah’s hand is like this. No. This surah deny that Allah is not like anything” (P16 Bayah)

The quotes from participants P15 Musa and P16 Bayah explain the wider contextual meaning of the surah rather than just quoting what they have been reading from the translations. This knowledge could only be gained for those who had to learn depth about the Qur’an. P15 Musa said Surah Al-Ikhlās is about the oneness of Allah SWT which has to do with Tauhid. Tauhid means belief in the oneness of Allah SWT as the fundamental principle in Islam and is the first pillar of Iman in Islam. This aspect provides the core belief in acknowledging everything that exists in this universe has been made by the almighty power of Allah SWT. What he had explained was one of the aspects that is related to this Surah. This is what the researcher labelled as a new concept or theme of meaning. The participants will never be able to explain such as what has been said by P15 Musa without further learning and good understanding about the Qur’an by attending lectures related to the Qur’an. The relationship about Tauhid stated by these P15 Musa is parallel with the meaning of the surah which focuses on the attributes of Allah SWT such as Allah SWT is neither born nor was give birth.

In order to strengthen this statement, details by P16 Bayah who explains that this Surah denied any form of shape that related to Allah SWT. From the contexts of *asbabun nuzul* Rasullallah PBUH was asked by the *Mushrikin* about Allah SWT’s shape, and this Surah was revealed to answer the question. As indicated, this Surah could explain the oneness of Allah SWT who is no equal to anything. This is *Tauhid*, which is the main principle in Islam and has closely related to the bedrock of the fundamental phase in Islam which is the Kalimah “*La Ilaha Illa Allah*”.

When given a different verse of the Qur'an which is the vision and sight verses, participants such as P13 Hani quotes as below:

23:33 See through the heart so that we can think on the Allah ...

See through the heart so that we can think on the Allah the Almighty who created the first mankind which is Adam. He was created from earth then give born and do other things

"See through the heart so that we can think on the Allah the Almighty who created the first mankind which is Adam. He was created from earth then give born and do other things" (P13 Hani)

Another participant quoted as below:

"From the earth, from a despicable water..Then Allah created us as babies and then human. We have been created with the perfect critical thinking (mind)" (P17 Wahid)

Both participants P13 Hani and P17 Wahid replied with a similar pattern but in different explanations. This is due to their area of expertise of knowledge. Yet, their understanding is not contradicted to the meaning of the Qur'an. Their understanding needs better deep appreciation which once again needs a good understanding of the Qur'an. These two participants explained on how the creation of mankind and not only about the literal meaning of the verse. In Surah At-Tariq verse 5, how mankind was created is questioned. P13 Hani said on how we must see with our heart which is, think about the Almighty Allah SWT who created mankind since the first Prophet Adam AS. The creation of Prophet Adam AS lived in this world and then gives birth to his child until the existence of mankind today. This understanding indicates how P13 Hani's knowledge that she had learned which capable to an understanding about the verse asking the man to observe on how they were created.

Meanwhile, P17 Wahid excerpts show that he understands that the creation of mankind was from despicable water. This refers to semen which is the first process of the

creation of man before being born. Then, after being born, the baby grows up to an adult. Mankind is a special creation because they have a mind which was not possessed by any other creations. It enables mankind to differentiate good and bad things and many aspects of life. The perfectness of mankind's mind which highlighted by the participants in his understanding. P17 Wahid could explain the verse which needs mankind to think about how they were created. However, based on the interpretation from *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* this verse is a reminder to mankind on the weakness of their origin as well as guided to admit the existence of the final and resurrection day. This is because indeed only God can create something and is capable to create it once again. The participants' understanding or view and spiritual interpretation are different from each other. However, the understanding of the participants is not contrary to the interpretation of the real but an understanding that they can take out from their knowledge and level of each sense of thinking. This is what the researcher is trying to explore in this study to see how people can understand the Qur'an.

In conclusion, Level Four defines for those who are capable to understand a new concept or theme of meaning and think in higher understanding but still relate to the content of the Qur'an using wider advantages in explanation and not as basic contextual only.

4.4.6 Level Five



The highest level, Level Five were those who could understand from Level One until Level Five of Understanding the Qur'an. Level Five is defined as those who can merge their other knowledge without contradicting the understanding of the Qur'an. For example, when an individual was asked from one verse of the Qur'an humankind creation, he can merge his understanding with some point of a scientific process such as the process of fertilization till born.

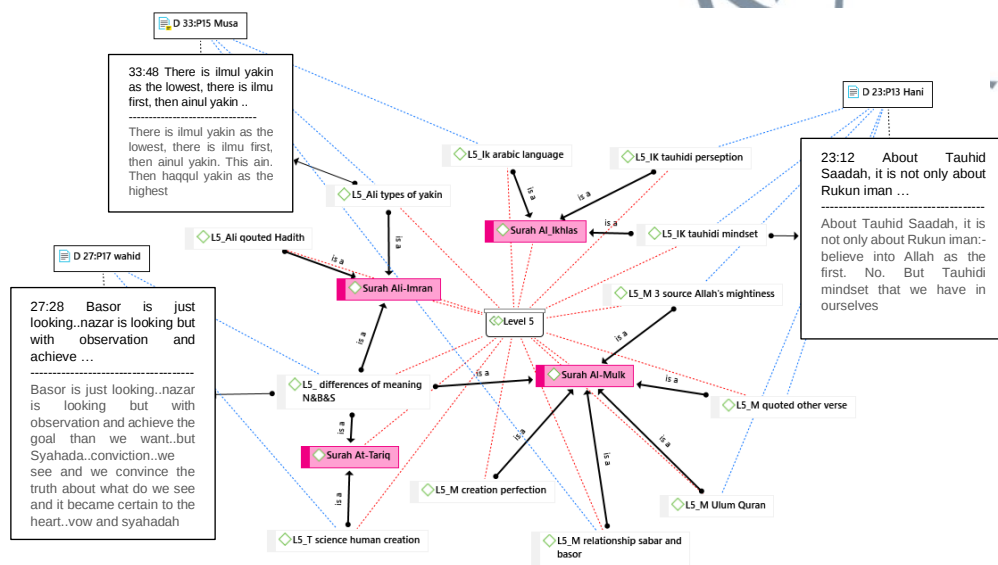


Figure 4.8: Level Five Outputs

This can be observed as Figure 4.8 shows P13 Hani excerpts about Surah Al-Ikhlās:

23:12 About Tauhid Saadah, it is not only about Rukun iman ...
About Tauhid Saadah, it is not only about Rukun iman:- believe into Allah as the first. No. But Tauhidi mindset that we have in ourselves

“About Tauhid Saadah, it is not only about Rukun iman:- believe into Allah as the first. No. But Tauhidi mindset that we have in ourselves” (P13 Hani)

P13 Hani not only understands that Surah Al-Ikhlās concern with the aspect of *Tauhid* referring to the principle of Iman (Rukun Iman), but also *Tauhid* is related to the mankind mindsets which she called as *Tauhid* Mindset. She merged his understanding about *Tauhid*,

the first Rukun Iman in this Surah, and other pieces of knowledge she possessed which is Islamic worldview. The first Rukun Iman is to believe Allah is like the understanding in Level Four. However, the differences are when not only the participant relates this surah with *Tauhid*, *Rukun Iman* which is to believe Allah SWT but also comprehends its connection to *Tauhidi* mindset. She also added about *Tauhidi* perception and *Tauhidi* behaviour that we should also be practised. She clarified that all forms of responses, behaviour, or situations that occur in our life must be directed to Allah SWT because everything we do will surely be rewarded by Him later. This implies participants can merge or integrate other knowledge into their understanding of the Qur'an.

When given to another verse which was Surah Al-Imran verse 18 the participants quoted as follow:

33:48 There is *ilmul yakin* as the lowest, there is *ilmu* first, then *ainul yakin* ..

There is *ilmul yakin* as the lowest, there is *ilmu* first, then *ainul yakin*. This *ain*. Then *haqqul yakin* as the highest

*“There is *ilmul yakin* as the lowest, there is *ilmu* first, then *ainul yakin*. This *ain*. Then *haqqul yakin* as the highest.” (P15 Musa)*

Participant P15 Musa relates the first words which were “شَهِدَ” (*syahida*) with his knowledge about certainty (*Yakin*). He was able to relate and merge his knowledge of certainty (*Yakin*) to the verse of Surah Al-Imran verse 18 from the Qur'an as stated in level five when he said that the word “شَهِدَ” relate to three types of certainty which were *Ilmul Yakin*, *Ainul Yakin*, and *Hakkul Yakin*. This is one of the aspects of stages for an individual

to gain knowledge from Allah SWT. According to Abdul Rahman (2005), there are three types of certainty;

1. *Ilmul Yakin*: Rational belief or certainty from the source of knowledge as stated in the Qur'an:

﴿كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. At-Takathur, 102:5)

“No! If you only knew with knowledge of certainty..(Imul Yakin).”

2. *Ainul yakin*: Certainty gained from the source of evidence and using senses, specifically the eyes as stated in The Qur'an:

﴿لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ۖ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. At-Takathur, 102:6-7)

“6. You will surely see the Hellfire. 7. Then you will surely see it with the eye of certainty (Ainul Yakin).”

3. *Hakkul Yakin*: True and highest certainty, without any possibility to be wrong because it is from the revelation (*wahyu*) by Allah SWT. It is stated in the Qur'an:

﴿وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ﴾

(Al-Qur'an. Al-Haqqah, 69:51)

“And indeed, it is the truth of certainty (*Hakkul Yakin*).”

P15 Musa understanding’s fits into the features for those who are capable to merge their knowledge to their understanding of the Qur’an.

Another interesting finding was a participant who was able to explain the differences between the words of basara, nazara, and syahada (بصر, نظر, شهد). Even though he did not mention raā, (راي) but those three words were enough to label his understanding as Level Five. The participant excerpt is as follow:

27:28 Basor is just looking..nazar is looking but with observation and achieve ...

Basor is just looking..nazar is looking but with observation and achieve the goal than we want..but Syahada..conviction..we see and we convince the truth about what do we see and it became certain to the heart..vow and syahadah

“*Basor is just looking..nazar is looking but with observation and achieve the goal than we want..but Syahada..conviction..we see and we convince the truth about what do we see and it became certain to the heart..vow and syahadah .*” (P17 Wahid)

The speciality of P17 Wahid as seen above was, able to differentiate between the verse from the vision and sight verse as different meanings which similar as mentioned in 2.2.2 Content of the Qur’an.

According to the vision and sight verses from his perspective, *Basor* is seeing something from the eyes. Meanwhile, *Nazar* means meticulous observation until someone’s able to gain reward from what they have been expected. Then, *Syahada* is a special term about vowing and pledging from someone to the extent of certainty into the heart. This level of understanding is different from the other because only those who knew

the Arabic language, or the Qur'an language terms could understand the differences. Therefore, the merging knowledge here was the Arabic language into the understanding of the content of the Qur'an that labelled as Level Five.

In conclusion, Level Five is understanding the Qur'an plus an additional explanation from another field of knowledge in participants' view and knowledge that they have. They could relate to another field of knowledge such as Islamic worldwide, certainty, Arabic language, etc. However, the understanding does not contradict the interpretation or translation from the content of the Qur'an even though integrating its understanding with other aspects of knowledge. This even makes it easier to explain the content of the Qur'an more broadly.

4.4.7 Discussion

RQ1 seeks on how diverse groups of people can understand the Qur'an. It is true that before there were 5 levels of understanding but in the end, as the data acquired new findings, the researcher has found an interesting finding. According to the literature reviews and preliminary study, there were five levels of understanding. However, the results obtained were different. There was one additional level of understanding in diverse groups of people who understand the Qur'an which was Level One. Therefore, understanding the Qur'an among diverse groups of people were not only contains five-level instead it is six levels starting with Level Zero. The figure below shows how a diverse group of people can understand the Qur'an.

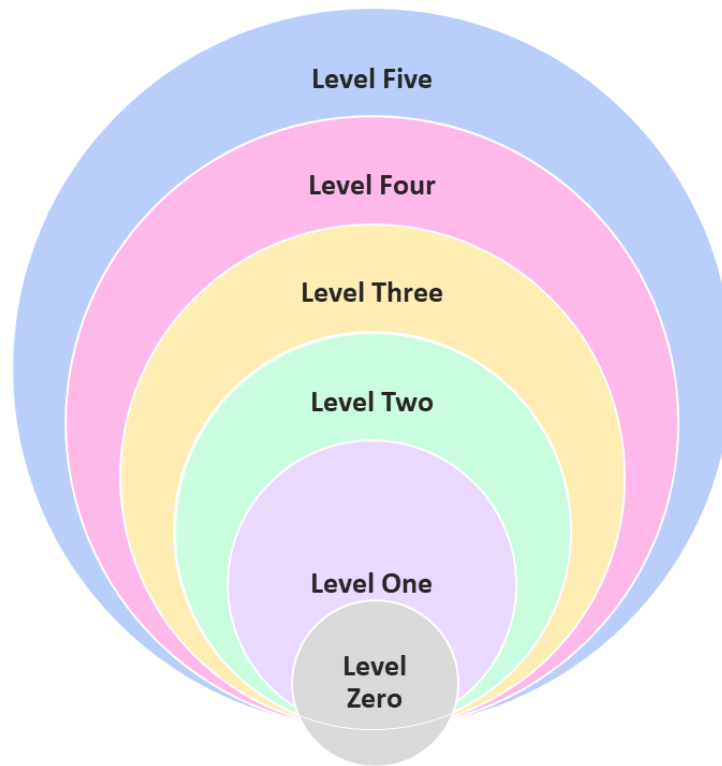


Figure 4.9: Diverse Groups of People Understand the Qur'an

There were 6 levels of understanding rather than 5 levels which contradicted the conceptual framework that had been build and the preliminary study that had been conducted. Level One consists of those who are capable to understand the Qur'an in clear meaning or reread the translation given. The data also revealed that those who achieved Level Two or higher could also explain their understanding at a lower level. The same pattern continued until they have reached Level Five. For example, those who could understand Level Five could also understand the content of the Qur'an in Level One, Level Two, Level Three, and Level Four.

The addition level which is Level Zero is the level of those who had no understanding, Lack of Understanding, and Misunderstood the contents of the Qur'an. This level is very dangerous as it can lead to misunderstandings of the messages that were conveyed in the

Qur'an. Although this level was not stated in the framework analysis, it became an interesting merging data that happen to the research which explains that some people could not understand the Qur'an even after given the translation. Each participant could understand one or higher levels of understanding. Therefore, there is a need to categorize the compiled levels into a new categorization with an additional Level Zero.

4.5 RQ 2 – Levels of Understanding of The Qur'an Among Diverse Groups of People (Categorization)

Based on the findings in RQ1, using the framework analysis as mentioned on 3.6.1

Framework Analysis, the researcher found that diverse groups of people can have a different understanding of the Qur'an. A person who could understand the highest level of understanding had achieved the lower level. For example, a participant who could understand the Qur'an in Level Five can explain as he can understand from Level One until Level Four. Not to mention some cases on those who could not understand the Qur'an even though they had been given the translation.

Therefore, it is not suitable to put each group into the level stated because one participant could achieve one or more levels of understanding of the Qur'an. So, the researcher classified the participants into a categorization to make it easier to identify their features based on the new classification created. The classification created divided into 5 levels which are; Naïve, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert. Each participant's total responses were converted into a percentage to measure how their understanding of the Qur'an would fit into the new classification. The final result for their excerpts for one participant as an example from each categorization was put in a table, arrange according to

how the participants explain when being asked to make it easier to understand on their levels of understanding the Qur'an.

4.5.1 Naïve

Naïve level falls for those who have Level Zero in their understanding of the Qur'an. More clearly, although a participant had understood in other and higher level of understanding they still can be Naïve if their understanding included Level Zero. The figure below shows four participants included in the Naïve level with its percentage in each level of understanding the Qur'an.

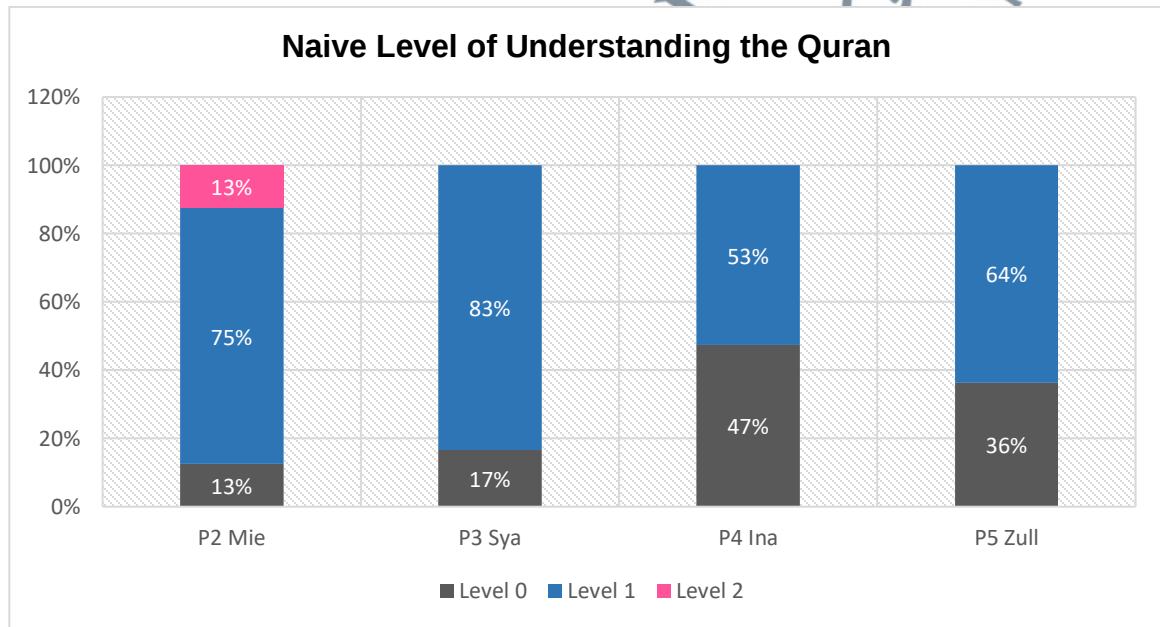


Figure 4.10: Naïve Level of Understanding the Qur'an

According to their responses, all four participants understood Level Zero with P14 Ina, 47 per cent as the highest percentage of Level Zero in understanding the Qur'an. Then, were followed by P5 Zull at 36 per cent, 17 per cent by P13 Sya, and P3 Mie with 13 per cent. Logically, all four participants have a higher percentage in Level Two and even achieved Level Three by P2 Mie but still fall in Naïve. The reason is, it is dangerous for

someone to misunderstand the contents of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is not a common book but is the book of guidance from Allah SWT to humankind and it needs good and accurate understanding because it could shape their faith in Allah SWT. Precise data could be seen on the figure below by P4 Ina:

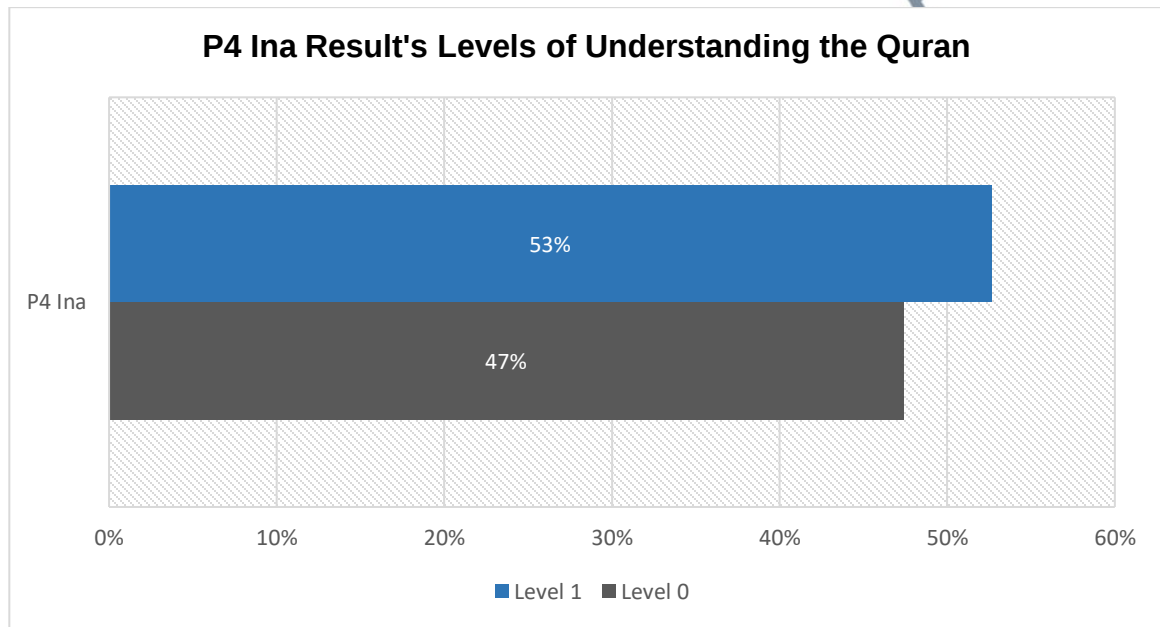


Figure 4.11: P4 Ina Result's Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

Ina falls into the Naïve level because her level of understanding had included 47 per cent of level 0. This is not considered a small value. Even though she managed to understand 53 per cent of Level One from the total of her answers but due to the existence of her understanding in Level Zero, she falls into Naïve. The reason was as stated before which is, it is very dangerous due to the relation to one's faith as Muslim in the compulsory to have a good understanding of P4 the main sacred texts in Islam. The table below shows examples of P4 Ina quotation and the Level to her quotation labelled as Level Zero or Level One:

Table 4.3: P4 Ina Quotations and Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

No	Quotations	Coded	Surah/VS verse
1.	<i>"Humans need to do when reading the Qur'an and what they have to do during praying"</i>	Level Zero	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
2.	<i>"What had been told by Allah SWT to his Prophets and what we need to do to believe"</i>	Level Zero	Alī-Imrān (3:18)
3.	<i>"Said that Allah SWT opens an unlimited view to see"</i>	Level Zero	Al-Mulk (67:3)
4.	<i>"We learn on how the plants live, how we see them small and then grow big until it can be seen from far away. There was also a science aspect in this surah"</i>	Level Zero	Al-Tariq (86:5)
5.	<i>"He said Allah didn't give born nor be born."</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
6.	<i>"I feel Allah explains to make us believe on what had been stated in the Qur'an and the things we should do."</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
7.	<i>"Allah is one, no such him and the only one forever"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
8.	<i>"I think Allah explains to us to believe on what had been stated in the Qur'an and the things that we should obey"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)

According to the table above, No1, P4 Ina explained Surah Al-Ikhlās was about the things that humans need to do when they are praying though it was completely different from the meaning of the surah. Surah Al-Ikhlās is about the oneness of Allah SWT and His attributes are no equal to any other, while her understanding was misunderstood because it had no connection between her explanations or understanding with the translation of the

Surah itself. No2 was about Surah Al-Mulk verse 3, P4 Ina said that Allah SWT shows us a broad view that He had created. The translation from this verse somehow related because Allah SWT indeed ask us to see the sky, but the participants were not aware that the reason to look was to find if there were any breaks or deficiencies and not just looking at the sky without thinking about the greatness of Allah SWT in creating the sky.

Even though P4 Ina was able to explicit understanding in Level One when he stated such as shown in No5, He said Allah did not give birth or been born and No7, there is none such Him, the explanation was not able to put him as Beginner due to the dangerous existence of Level Zero from his understanding. Misunderstanding the content of the Qur'an could lead to a wrong understand of the teachings of Islam and close related to someone's faith in Allah SWT.

Therefore, the existence of Level Zero put four participants from this research into the Naïve level who were: P2 Mie, P3 Sya P4 Ina P5 Zull. The next categorization to be discussed will be beginner which included only Level One in their understanding.

4.5.2 Beginner

Beginner falls for those who have achieved 100 per cent of Level One in their understanding of the Qur'an. Contrary to Naïve, Beginner is only included Level One in their understanding of the Qur'an. The figure below shows two participants: P6 Ira and P7 Hazi percentages in understanding the Qur'an as Beginners.

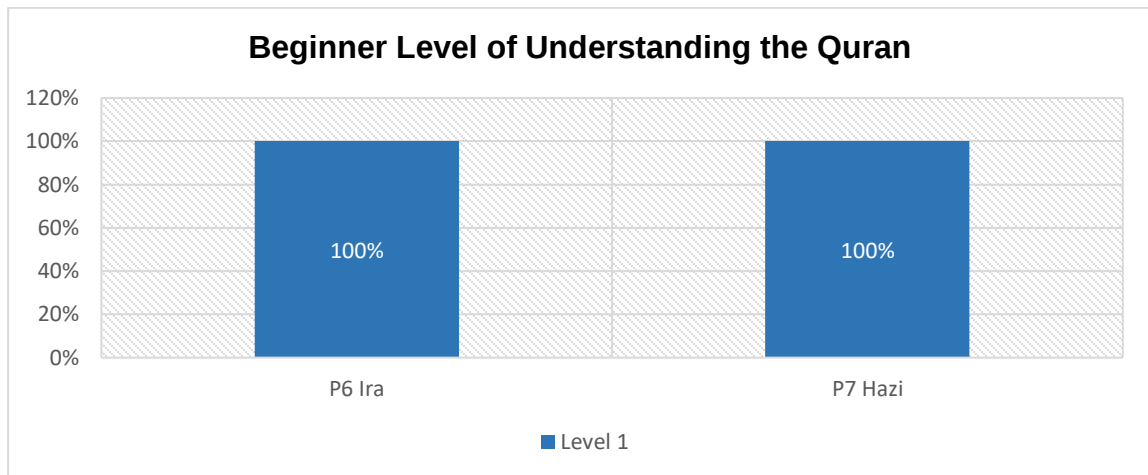


Figure 4.12: Beginner Level of Understanding the Qur'an

As beginners, both participants P6 Ira and P7 Hazi had understood the contents of the Qur'an in this study in Level One only. They understand in literal meaning such as Allah is one and was never born or give birth to any from their understanding in Surah Al-Ikhlās. Their pattern of understanding was using simple words and direct meaning or just reread the translation given. As an example, outputs from P7 Hazi is shown below to claim the statement.

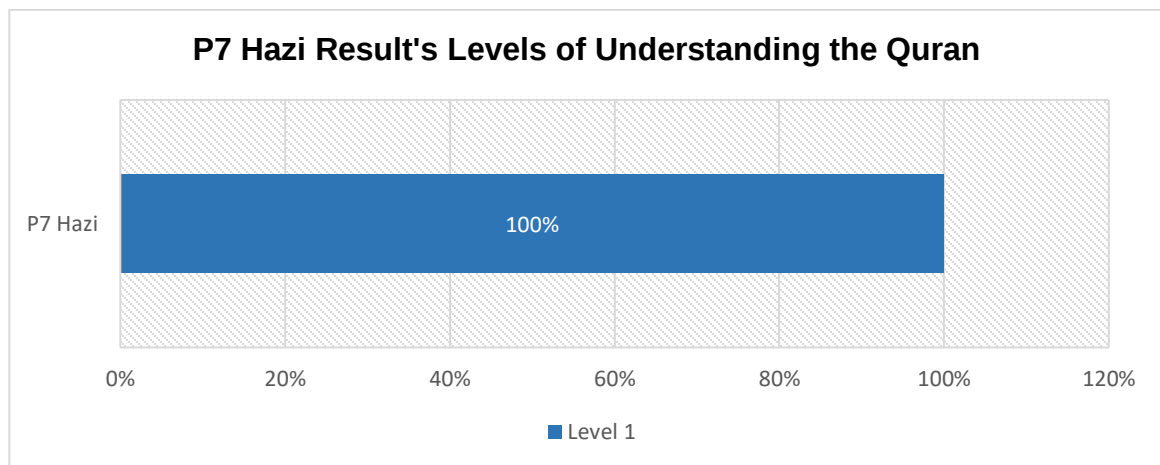


Figure 4.13: P7 Hazi Result's Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

According to the figure above, P7 Hazi was able to understand all of the verses given in Level One of understanding the Qur'an and none to the others. His understanding was 100 per cent fall ins into Level one which categorized him straight as Beginner. Specific excerpts can be seen on the table below:

Table 4.4: P7 Hazi Quotations and Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

No	Quotations	Coded	Surah/VS verse
1.	<i>"Al-Ikhlās is about the oneness of Allah s.wt and His Mighty"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
2.	<i>"About Allah is not the same as humans"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
3.	<i>"He is the only one and not the same as humans"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
4.	<i>"The one to ask any wish and confide"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
5.	<i>"From what I could understand, Allah is aaa..He who created all creatures in this world"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)

6.	<i>"There was no flaw to any of His creation compared to the mankind"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
7.	<i>"Allah ask the mankind how they were created"</i>	Level One	At-Tariq (86:5)
8.	<i>"Allah asks and explains to His creations and his servants that He is the one to be worship"</i>	Level One	Ali-Imran (3:18)
9.	<i>"Allah tells to His creation that He is the one to worship because he rules this universe according to the Qur'an. He is Almighty and wise"</i>	Level One	Ali-Imran (3:18)
10.	<i>"How do I say this...He is not the same as other things to worship such as statues or air"</i>	Level One	Ali-Imran (3:18)

According to the table above, No1 P7 Hazi said Surah Al-Ikhlās is about the oneness of Allah and His Mighty. It is true this Surah is about the oneness of Allah as it started with the first verses saying Allah is one. The explanation is simple and easy for them to figure. In the second verse of Surah Al-Ikhlās, P7 Hazi reread the translation given without adding any opinion or words as we can see in table No4, saying Allah SWT is the one to ask for any wishes and confides which same as the translation given. As for the fourth verse of Surah Al-Ikhlās, P7 Hazi understands Allah is not the same as others such as humans shown on No2 and No3 which is close and can be understood from the translation given saying nothing is equivalent to Him. The participant only added humans as the example of 'nothing'. The word 'nothing' here leads to the meaning of any creature living on this universe and the participant use human as an example.

The same pattern also can be seen on No5 referring to Vision and sight verses on Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 when he quotes Allah who created all creatures in this world. He simplifies his understanding using simple words rather than talk about Allah created seven

layers of heaven. Moreover, on No 6 P7, Hazi explained Allah's creation had no flaws and adding a comparison to the creation of mankind. The word that was added is still on a small quantity and strictly stick literally to the simple and common words which lead to his literal meaning of understanding which comes along with Level One. Similarly, the pattern of rereading the translation can be seen in table No7 when P7 Hazi mentioned on the Vision and sight verses in Surah At-Tariq verse 5 Allah asks mankind how they were created which was the same as the translation given.

To sum up, the existence of Beginner includes two participants from this research who were: P6 Ira and P7 Hazi. The next categorization to be discussed will be the Intermediate which includes Level One and Level Two in their understanding of the Qur'an.

4.5.3 Intermediate

Intermediate is for those who achieved Level Two as the maximum in the levels of understanding the Qur'an. They were consisting of three participants which were P1 Lia Ahad, P8 Bell, and P9 Umar. The figure below shows the participants' partition between Level One and Level Two of understanding the content of the Qur'an.

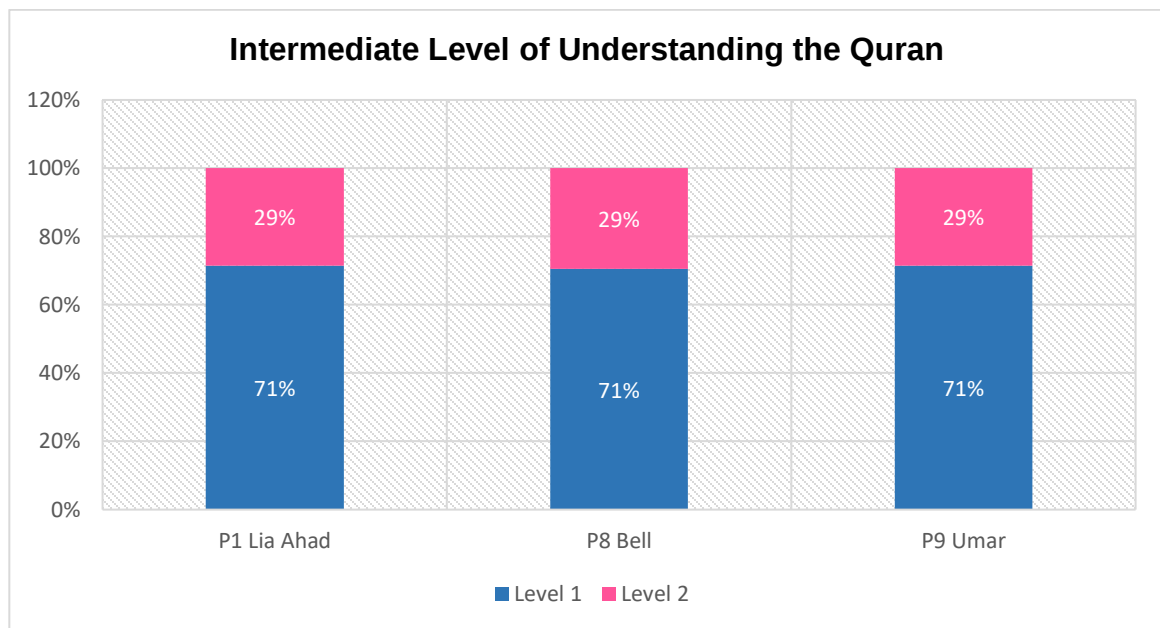


Figure 4.14: Intermediate Level of Understanding the Qur'an

Coincidentally, all of the participants were intermediate equal in the levels of understanding the Qur'an. Level two took as many as 29 per cent and the remains on Level One with the same average for each participant. They were able to understand the literal meaning, reading the translation, and also explained the contextual meaning of the understanding. As an example, at first, the participant explained as Level One saying Allah is one in Surah Al-Ikhlās. Then they added explanation of the first verse on the Surah was the main elements of *faith* (Akidah) in Islam which start with “قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ” referring to Allah as the only one. Mentioning the contextual meaning of the surah lead to the categorization of an individual who understands the contextual meaning of the message in the Qur'an. The words “هُوَ” in this Surah on the first verse refers to the oneness of Allah

SWT. To see the specific result, the figure below shows P8 Bell results as categorize in the Intermediate level of understanding the Qur'an:

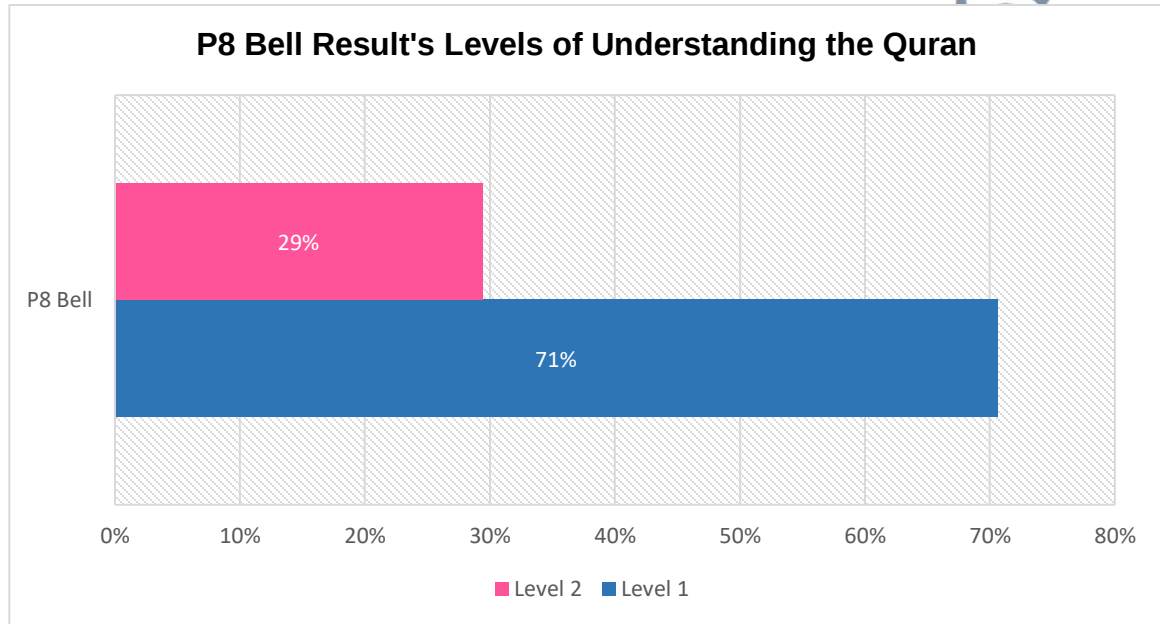


Figure 4.15: P8 Bell Result's Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

P8 Bell falls into Intermediate levels which included 71 per cent of Level One and took 29 per cent in Level Two. Even though P8 Bell's understanding in Level One was higher than Level Two, she has been placed as Intermediate because of the measurement of how high she was capable to reach the levels of understanding of the Qur'an as stated before. The same way was measured to the other two participants in Intermediate and this is the way of measurement of level chosen by the researcher through the whole of the research conducted. The table below is the specific excerpts from participant P8 Bell:

Table 4.5: P8 Bell Quotations and Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

No	Quotations	Coded	Surah/VS verse
1.	<i>"Qul is referring to a command sentence"</i>	Level Two	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
2.	<i>"Say Allah is one"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
3.	<i>"The one to seek any wish"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
4.	<i>"He didn't give birth"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
5.	<i>"He was not born"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
6.	<i>"Creation was indeed being created were nothing compared to the creator"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
7.	<i>"He rules the occurrence of the seven layers of the sky in layers."</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
8.	<i>"You will not see any defection, imbalance or unnecessarily from his creation"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
9.	<i>"Look back and see either there was any flaw or not"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
10.	<i>"Allah creates anything without any deficiency"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
11.	<i>"We feel amazed with every creation created for us when we think or see even it several times"</i>	Level Two	Al-Mulk (67:3)
12.	<i>"As a reminder that we are his creation and are nothing compare to the creator"</i>	Level Two	Al-Mulk (67:3)
13.	<i>"Therefore, mankind needs to think from what he was created"</i>	Level One	At-Tariq (86:5)

14.	<i>"Develops feeling Allah is the almighty and we didn't deserve to be arrogant"</i>	Level Two	At-Tariq (86:5)
15.	<i>"Allah creates something that mankind will never be able to create"</i>	Level Two	At-Tariq (86:5)
16.	<i>"The Qur'an tells there is no God except Allah and the only one worthy of worship"</i>	Level One	Ali-Imran (3:18)
17.	<i>"Admitted by the knowledgeable person which means they do not deny it."</i>	Level One	Ali-Imran (3:18)

According to table No.2 until No.6, P8 Bell reread the translation given and using a direct word from her understanding of Surah Al-Ikhlās. Despite that, she was able to explain in No1 about a certain word which was " قل " that referring to a command sentence in the Arabic language. Logically, her explanation came out because she had some basic knowledge of the Arabic language. Unquestionably, she was able to tell her understanding of basic knowledge in the Arabic language such as the word " قل " in the surah. She also was consistent in giving her understanding in vision and sight verse from Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 when she mentioned her understanding similarly as the translation given in No10 labelled as Level One.

On top of that, she can extract the contextual meaning of what she had understood from the vision and sight verse in Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 as she mentioned her feeling when seeing the creations of Allah SWT. This is parallel to the meaning of the verse as it required us to observe and look up the skies and find were there any breaks. She explained her amazing feeling when seeing the perfect creations of Allah SWT. This is the result of her

understanding in Level One and followed by Level Two of understanding. The same pattern can also be seen in Tables No13 and No14. In No13, the participant understands the vision and sight verse on Surah At-Tariq verse 5 using simple words and reread the translation, for instance, she mentioned how mankind needs to think about the creation process which was labelled as Level One. Continuing in No14, she elaborated on the mightiness of Allah SWT who created mankind, and we as his creation were not worthy to be arrogant on this world. Her understanding of the probation of arrogance is from her understanding in Level Two an outcome from Level One which was about observation to the great process of human creation created by the almighty Allah SWT.

All in all, the Intermediate consist of three participants who were P1 Lia Ahad, P8 Bell, and P9 Umar. They can elaborate the literal meaning using simple words and explain the contextual meaning from their understanding of the Qur'an. The further level to be discussed will be the level of Advanced which includes those who understand minimum as Level One and the highest Level Three or Level Four in their understanding of the Qur'an.

4.5.4 Advance

Those who achieve the maximum in Level Three or Four were categorized as Advanced in the levels of understanding the Qur'an. Four participants included in this level were P10 Ijah, P11 Fadhli, P18 Iman, and P14 Solehah. The figure below shows the participants partition between Level One until Level Three or Level Four of understanding the Qur'an:

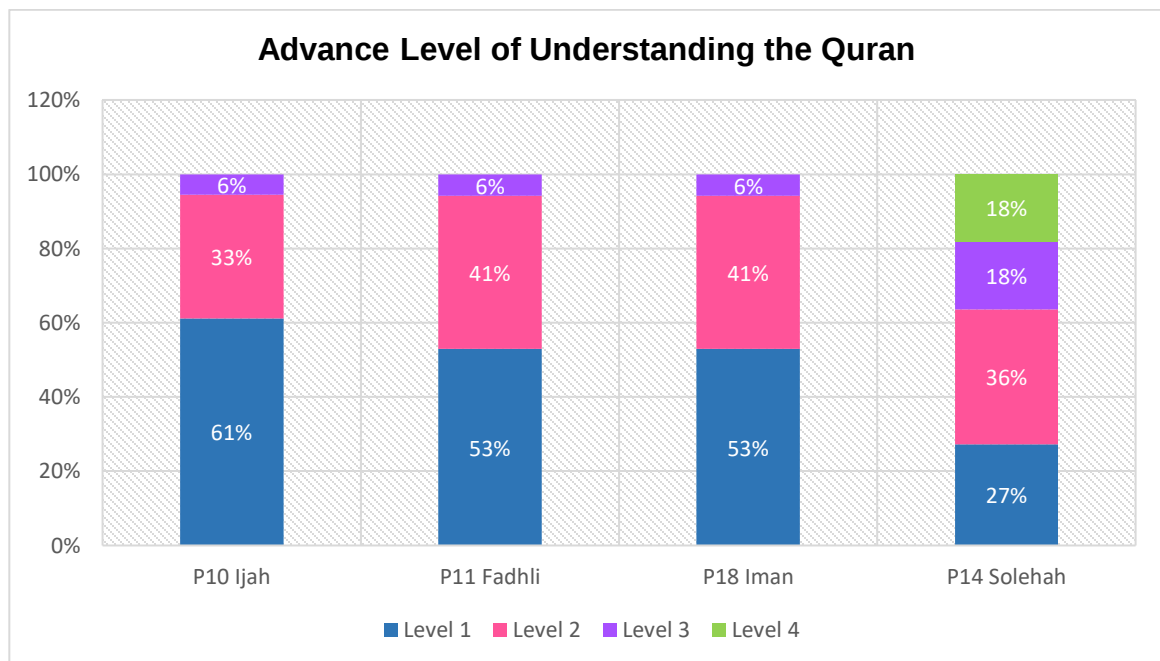


Figure 4.16: Advance Level of Understanding the Qur'an

According to Figure 4.16: Advance Level of Understanding the Qur'an above, all four participants were able to understand starting in Level One until maximum to Level Three of understanding the Qur'an. There was only P14 Solehah who was able to understand maximum in Level Four. Specifically, their pattern of understanding contains literal meaning, explain in contextual, quoting blessings elements and know the purpose of the meaning by conveying the meaning globally of the verses or surah from the Qur'an. As an example, when been asked about Vision and sight verse in Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 P18 Iman explained that if we memorize this Surah, we can avoid ourselves from the grave torments. His understanding was labelled in Level Three which quoting blessings elements from the Qur'an. He also did not miss the advantage in explaining the understanding in Level One and Level Two.

Meanwhile, P14 Solehah was categorized as Advanced and not Expert due to her capability to reach her highest understanding only in Level Four. This is because Expert is for those who can combine all of the levels of understanding the Qur'an except Level Zero and included Level Five however P14 Solehah could not achieve it. This is parallel to the result findings for Participant C in the 3.7 Preliminary Study. The figure below shows P18 Iman results who is included in Advanced of understanding the Qur'an:

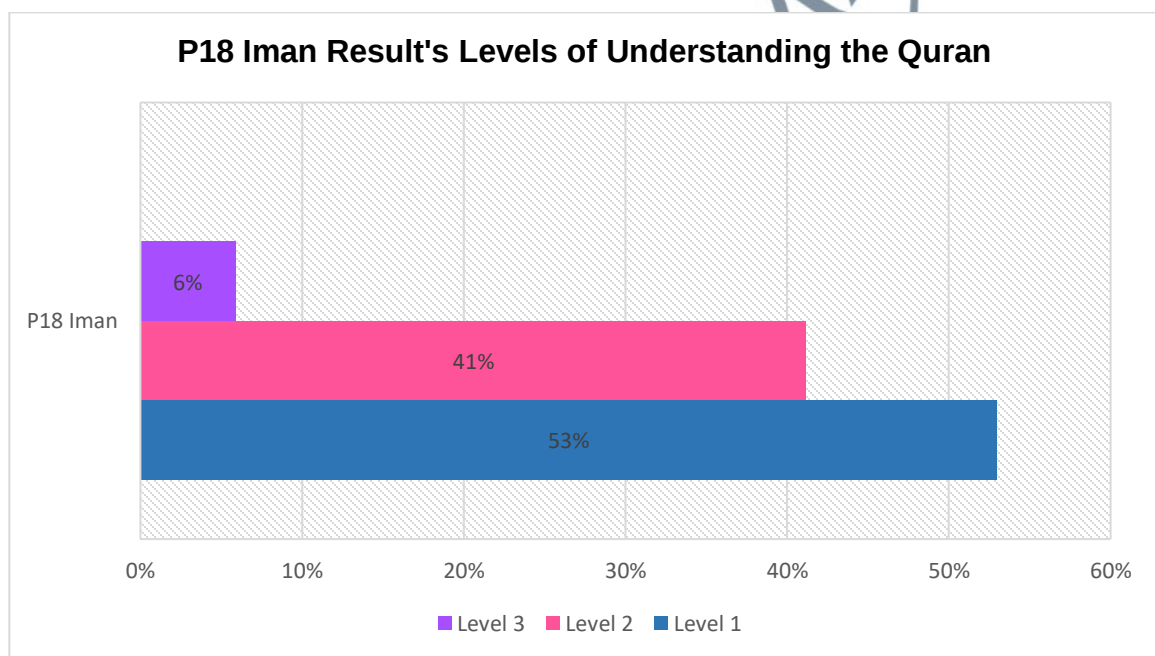


Figure 4.17: P18 Iman Result's Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

P18 Iman was categorized into Advanced level which included 51 per cent of Level One and took 41 per cent in Level Two. It only took 6 per cent of Level Three in quoting element blessing from the Qur'an. The flowing table is the specific excerpts from participant P18 Iman:

Table 4.6: P18 Iman Quotations and Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

No	Quotations	Coded	Surah/VS verse
1.	<i>"The meaning here is sincere, and it can't be shown. It exists by intention. Sincerity is judge by God."</i>	Level Two	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
2.	<i>"Say Allah is One. There is none other"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
3.	<i>"Do not have a child and do not give birth"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
4.	<i>"One of the favourite Surah, usually being read when doing Hajat pray"</i>	Level Three	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
5.	<i>"Allah created us and also this world"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
6.	<i>"His creations are perfect and have no deficiency"</i>	Level Two	Al-Mulk (67:3)
7.	<i>"So, Allah said what is the deficiency, what is lack"</i>	Level Two	Al-Mulk (67:3)
8.	<i>"Allah wants to tell that his creation is too perfect"</i>	Level Two	Al-Mulk (67:3)
9.	<i>"Allah also created things we can't see such as the tier sky"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
10.	<i>"We will avoid the torment of the grave"</i>	Level Three	Al-Mulk (67:3)
11.	<i>"Allah tries to tell us to think on to the things he created"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
12.	<i>"Humankind was created, born without flaw, despite their differences they all have their functions"</i>	Level Two	At-Tariq (86:5)
13.	<i>"Allah is Al-mighty and Wise"</i>	Level Two	At-Tariq (86:5)

14.	<i>"There is none to be worship except Allah"</i>	Level One	Ali-Imran (3:18)
15.	<i>"Allah is Al-Mighty who governs this whole word"</i>	Level One	Ali-Imran (3:18)
16.	<i>"Although we do not see Allah, there is only a lot of evidence that is believed that Allah exists to the extent of angels say, Allah exists"</i>	Level Two	Ali-Imran (3:18)

As one of Advanced, P18 was able to mention his understanding in Level One and Level Two as can be seen in the table above. Again, the same pattern can be seen in all parts of Level One and Level Two except No4 and No10. For example, in No14 P18 Iman reread the translation mentioning there is no God to be worshipped except Allah and continuing to tell Allah is Al-mighty who governs this world. Following this, he explained in Level Two quoted on even though we do not see Allah SWT, there was a lot of evidence on his existence and even the angels were acknowledging His existence.

Besides the most important element is that P18 Iman mentioned in No4 that Surah Al-Ikhlās is one of the Surah which frequently being read in *Sunat Hajat prayer* and one of the favourite Surah by Allah SWT. The first point here is that he was able to mention this Surah usually being recited when praying *Sunat Hajat Prayer*. Logically, his understanding was combined with his practices and experience reciting or seeing and hearing upon performing the prayer. Then, the next point is this Surah is one of the favourite Surah which is similar to one hadith that tells on reading it is equal to one per third of reading the whole Qur'an as explained in 2.2.2 Content of the Qur'an. There was also a hadith mentioned on how a man was promised paradise based on the word of Prophet Muhammad SAW because he recited this Surah. Furthermore, this shows the great

advantage and blessings element of the Surah for those who recite it. Meanwhile, in vision and sight verses in Surah Al-Mulk No10, he quoted on whoever reads this surah will be protected by Allah from the torment of the grave. These two statements will not be quoted by the participant unless he had additional knowledge on the Surah by joining a lecture directly or indirectly. As compared to Level One and Level Two, Level Three, there is no hint to be mentioned except because of the statement mentioned by the researcher earlier.

This is for those in Expert categorization who were able to understand the content of the Qur'an in Level One until the highest level labelled in this study.

4.5.5 Expert

Expert categorization was for those who achieve the maximum in Level Five in understanding the Qur'an. They were five participants categorized in this level and they were P12 Syazas, P13 Hani, P15 Musa, P16 Bayah, and P17 Wahid. Figure 24 below shows the participants partition between Level One until Level Five of Understanding the Qur'an:

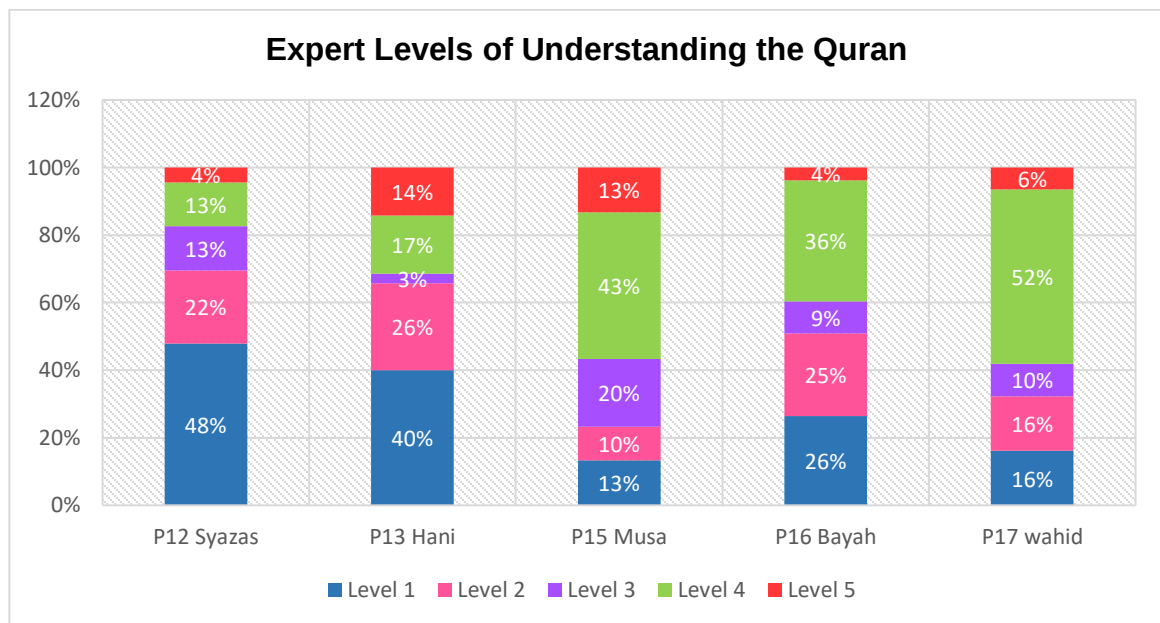


Figure 4.18: Expert Level of Understanding the Qur'an

According to the figure above they were five participants categorized as Expert. They were capable to understand in Level One until the maximum Level Five of understanding the Qur'an.

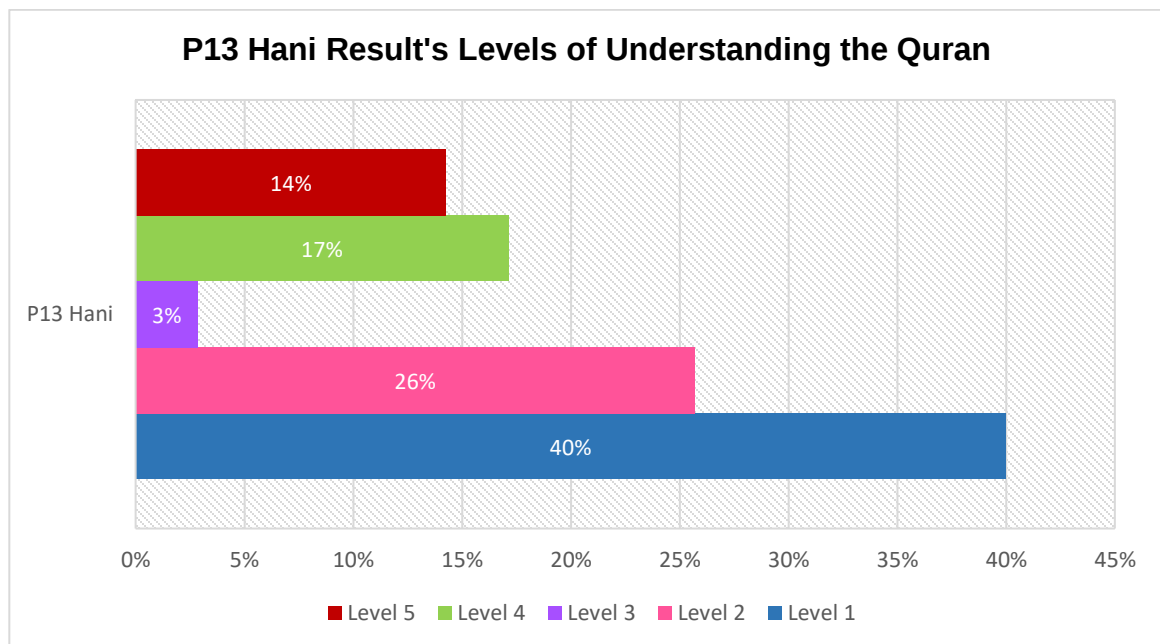


Figure 4.19: P13 Hani Result's Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

P13 Hani was included in Expert because she had achieved Level five as the maximum level in understanding the Qur'an. She had the highest Level Five among the other participants which took 14 per cent of Level Five. Once again, this measurement did not measure from the highest quantity of quotation or percentage of understanding the Qur'an. Instead, it is based on how the participant was able to gain the highest level of understanding which is Level Five. As we can see, Level One in P13 Hani's result precisely took 40 per cent from the whole excerpts from her but she was categorized as Expert because of the existence of 14 per cent of Level Five. The excerpts of P13 Hani can be seen on the following table:

Table 4.7: P13 Hani Quotations and Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

No	Quotations	Coded	Surah/VS verse
1.	<i>"Al-Ikhlās included in Surah Al-Makiyyah"</i>	Level Two	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
2.	<i>"The whole surah brings focus on Tauhid"</i>	Level Two	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
3.	<i>"Those who read Surah Al-Ikhlās, in the Hadith, equals as reading one third from the Qur'an"</i>	Level Three	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
4.	<i>The real concept of Surah Al-Ikhlās as mentioned before is related to Tauhid, Oneness of Allah SWT</i>	Level Two	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
5.	<i>"All 4 verses of Surah A-Ikhlās shows Allah is One"</i>	Level Two	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
6.	<i>"Allah is One, that is what mentions there"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
7.	<i>"Took meaning there is none before him and no one after"</i>	Level Two	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
8.	<i>"He did not give birth"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
9.	<i>"Was not born"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
10.	<i>"And there is no one equals to Allah SWT"</i>	Level One	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
11.	<i>"This is about Tauhid Saadah, it's not only confines about Rukun Iman, First, believe to Allah. No. It's about Tauhidi mindset, it must always have in us"</i>	Level Five	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)
12.	<i>"Every perception, every attitude, every response to any situation and every shape of behaviour had to be centred to Allah which means that every action I had done will be judge by Allah"</i>	Level Five	Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4)

13.	<i>"If we see literally to this verse shows on how Allah SWT creates the sky by seven layers, سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ seven layers, طِبَاقًا..tiered"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
14.	<i>"Didn't you see what Ar-Rahman created"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
15.	<i>"Allah created it by layers"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
16.	<i>"Look back to the sky. Means? Allah ask us to see the tiered sky"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
17.	<i>"This universe is one of the sources of how powerful Allah SWT is"</i>	Level Two	Al-Mulk (67:3)
18.	<i>"We can see the power of Allah SWT. This universe and ourselves the mankind is also one of the proofs of it"</i>	Level Four	Al-Mulk (67:3)
19.	<i>[سُرِّيهِمْ عَايَتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ ..] [فَصَلَتْ:53-53] 53. We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves [Fussilat:53]</i>	Level Five	Al-Mulk (67:3)
20.	<i>"In this verse, it mentions the creation of the sky, right? Tibaqo, by layer"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
21.	<i>"Can you see His creation?"</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
22.	<i>"But, beyond the sky, what Allah wants, what He wants to show? He also wants to show His mightiness"</i>	Level Two	Al-Mulk (67:3)
23.	<i>"What does Allah want to show? Allah wants to show his greatness. So the Qur'an verse as I'm saying, all verses in the Qur'an were themed into three domains..identify either it's about Tauhid... Then when we read another verse and then we realized it's about</i>	Level Five	Al-Mulk (67:3)

	<i>Syariat.. the third is when we found verse about akhlak, value, and others”</i>		
24.	<i>“Seeing the creation of Allah in layers and tied”</i>	Level One	Al-Mulk (67:3)
25.	<i>“When reflecting on the mightiness of Allah SWT is divided into three sources. The first one is the Qur’an “Al-Maqrū” to be read: the Qur’anul Kareem. As requested for us to be read, either understand the meaning or not the rewards will surely be given. Second, Al-Kitab Mantuqah as said by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. So, the hadith of the Prophet can make us understand the mightiness of Allah SWT. And lastly, Kitab Al-Manzur which is the book of the universe that lay open us, the universe and every creation of Allah SWT”</i>	Level Five	Al-Mulk (67:3)
26.	<i>“So, can’t man see, he sees فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ, see mankind مِمَّ خُلِقَ from what he was created”</i>	Level One	At-Tariq (86:5)
27.	<i>“We can relate these two verses to the importance of vision, and it is not a blessing given by Allah that should not be taken for granted”</i>	Level Four	At-Tariq (86:5)
28.	<i>Seeing leads us to think about the greatness of Allah SWT</i>	Level Four	At-Tariq (86:5)
29.	<i>“Seeing through the heart’s eye to make us think on how the mightiness of Allah SWT. He created mankind only from one Adam. From the earth and then gives born to many through the process of human creation and others”</i>	Level Four	At-Tariq (86:5)

30.	<i>“The elaboration was about the concept of Tauhid o Allah, Lailahailallah”</i>	Level Two	Ali-Imran (3:18)
31.	<i>“Allah is seeing أَنَّهُ – Allah testify, it’s a phrase as the first. Then وَالْمَلَكُ – the second extend. Angels. The third وَأُولُوا أَعْلَمُ and فَأَيُّمًا بِالْقِسْطِ. They have the knowledge which holds to the only concept of fairness. and finally going back to لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ Asmaul Husna Aziz and Al-Hakim. Aziz the All-mighty and Al-Hakim the wise.”</i>	Level One	Ali-Imran (3:18)
32.	<i>“There is some scholar mentioned it refer to the prophets”</i>	Level Two	Ali-Imran (3:18)
33.	<i>“How Allah witness himself, denying there is no God except Him”</i>	Level One	Ali-Imran (3:18)
34.	<i>“Angels, what are their duties? They were related to Al-Hakim, wise. For example, Raqib and Atid which ustazah count them as the writer of good and bad deeds. Next Munkar and Nakir give rewards. Justice there exists. It is also related to the prophet. All of these three entities finally are inter-related to the mightiness of Allah SWT”</i>	Level Four	Ali-Imran (3:18)
35.	<i>“Prophets took and help the deen of Allah SWT which brings us back to the attributes of Aziz Al-Hakim itself”</i>	Level Four	Ali-Imran (3:18)

The most interesting data to put this participant in Expert was when she merged her understanding of the Qur'an in Surah Al-Ikhlâs with *Tauhid*. She mentioned the importance of Muslims to have a *Tauhidi mindset* in every one of us. She mentioned specifically the importance of the main aspect in our life for example perceptions, attitudes, responses, and behaviours in any situation had to guide by Allah's command and remember that every action we choose will be judged by Him later. This is one of Level Five mentioned as the maximum in Expert. Another example can be seen in No23 when she has been given Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 to be explained. She explained the verse was about Allah wants to show his greatness and continued saying that all verses in the Qur'an were themed into three domains which are *Tauhid*, *Syariat*, and *Akhlak*. She was able to merge her knowledge of the *Ulum Qur'an* into her understanding from the verse of Surah Al-Mulk.

Apart from this, P13 Hani also was able to quote one verse from the Qur'an which had some connection to her understanding in Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 as demonstrated in No19. She mentioned verses on Surah Fussilat verse 53 that lead to the meaning of how we must see Allah SWT's sign of greatness such as the horizon and also in ourselves. This is comparable with the vision and sight verse on Surah Al-Mulk verse 3 as it leads to the meaning of the greatness of Allah's creation such as the perfection of the skies. Both had the same theme and parallel understanding in admiration of His creation.

One of the advantages P13 Hani was able to tell the meaning of the verse word by word from the verses given for instance in No13 she quoted as follow:

"If we see literally to this verse shows on how Allah SWT creates the sky by seven layers,

سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ seven layers, طِبَاقًا..tiered"

Next, in table No 26 until No29, P13 Hani shows in Surah At-Tariq verse 5 of vision and sight verses that she can explain in Level One and directly to Level Four. She didn't give her explanations from Level Two and Level Three in the Surah. In detail, again she was able to quote the meanings one by one according to the content of the Qur'an given. This is one of the pieces of evidence on her capability in Arabic proficiency. Due to her expertise in this understanding, she didn't need to explain in Level Three or Level Four. There was a level that didn't have been mentioned by the participants for instance Level Four. But her understanding had achieved to Level Five as maximum as can be seen in Surah Al-Ikhlâs No1 until No12. This further strengthens the researcher's stand which is a participant had to reach a certain level before can be placed in the categorization even though skip one or more levels before it.

4.5.6 Discussion

This section is answering the RQ2 which is: What are the levels of understanding the Qur'an among diverse groups of people. From the result of the Levels of understanding the Qur'an, there were 18 participants categorized which are Naïve, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert according to their answers given. The figure below shows the categorization for all participants divided into 5 levels as discussed:

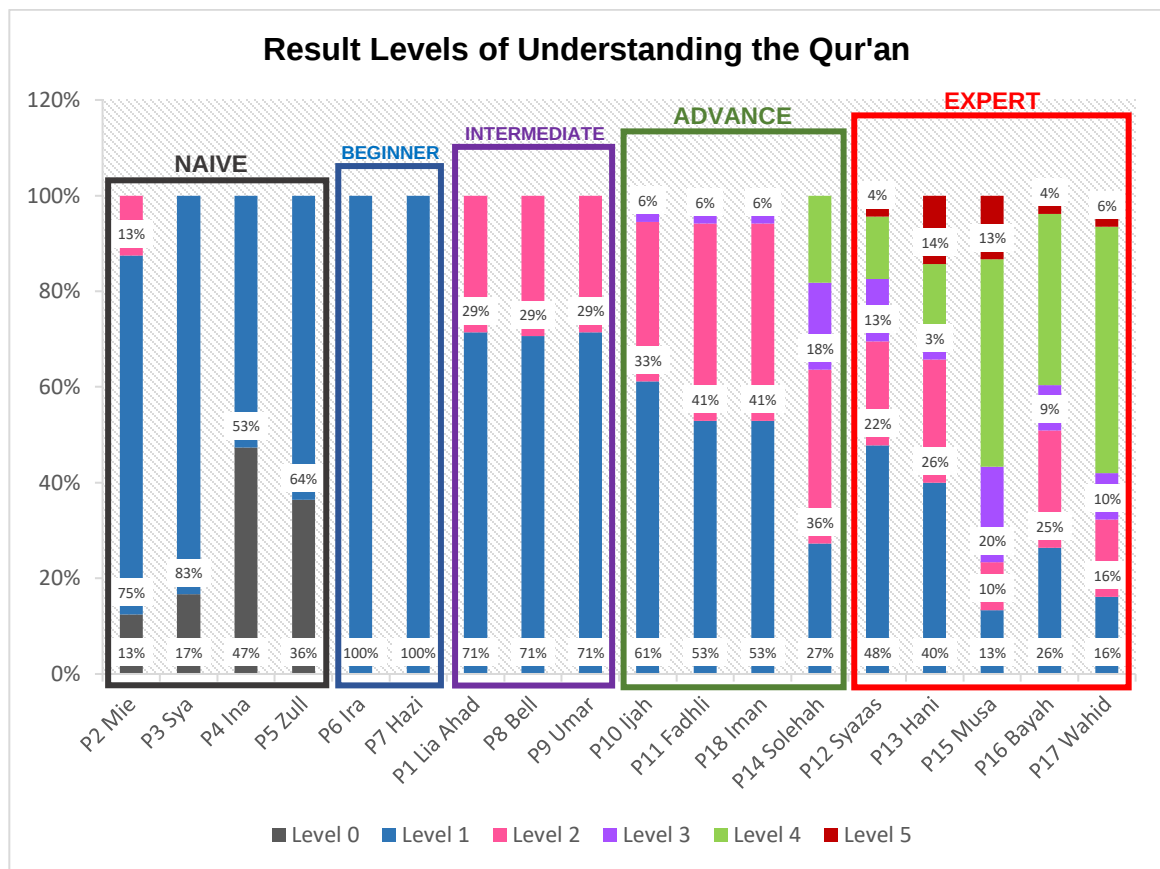


Figure 4.20: Result Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

Naïve consists of 4 participants who were P2 Mie, P3 Sya, P4 Sya, and P5 Zul. These four participants were capable to understand Level Zero and to the extent of Level Two. They were categorized due to the existence of Level Zero which refers to people who can't understand the meaning of the Qur'an although they had been given the translation. Then continued by Beginner's that consist of two participants who were P6 Ira and P7 Hazi. They could understand fully in Level One of understanding the Qur'an. Meanwhile, P1 Lia Ahad, P8 Bell, and P9 Umar were included as Intermediate. Their understanding contains Level One and Level Two consist of those who can understand Level One until Level Four, 4 participants included P10 Ijah, P11 Fadhli, P18 Iman, and P14 Soleheh identified as

Advanced. Lastly, P12 Syazas, P13 Hani, P15 Musa, P16 Bayah, and P17 Wahid were Experts.

In clarify these categorizations, it is important to comprehend that even though all of the participants were assembled into certain categorization, the meaning of the term ‘understand’ in this study is not holistically and spiritually to seek the understanding and getting the real meaning of the Qur’an, nonetheless, it is based on the aspect of the capability of diverse groups of people to understand the Qur’an in focusing diverse groups of people nowadays in understanding the contents of the Qur’an as described on 1.8 Definition of the term - 1.8.3 Understand the Qur’an. The next findings will be discussed following RQ2 is RQ3 which is finding the characteristics of diverse groups of people based on their levels of understanding of the Qur’an.

4.6 RQ 3 – Characteristics of Diverse Groups of People based on Their Level of Understanding the Qur’an

In answer RQ 3, this study used the thematic analysis to know the characteristics of diverse groups of people based on their levels of understanding in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan. The characteristic attributes to be studies about diverse groups of people in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan were; age, race, gender, language, work experience, family status, personal habit, education, perceptions, culture, feeling, and belief.

The characteristics such as age and gender-related to basic self-image and how the world could see an individual. These attributes collapse due to their role in how other people could identify a person and are not the significant attributes to differentiate diverse groups of people characteristics who understand the Qur’an. Meanwhile, for the rest attributes the findings come out broadly and could not find the similarities and saturation of the data

except for two attributes of characteristics which were Language proficiency and Personal Habit. The finding for these two attributes based on their levels of understanding the Qur'an is shown in the table below:

Table 4.8: Characteristics Diverse Groups of People based on their Levels of Understanding the Qur'an

LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING	CHARACTERISTICS	
	Arabic Language Proficiency	Personal habits on the Qur'an
NAIVE	Below Basic or Basic	Doesn't read Read 1 page to 3 pages
BEGINNER	Basic or Intermediate	Read 1 page to 5 pages
INTERMEDIATE	Basic or Intermediate	Read 1 page to 10 pages
ADVANCE	Below, Intermediate or Expert	Read 1 page - 1 juzuk
EXPERT	Intermediate or Expert	Read 2 pages - 1 juzuk
		Practiced zikir
		Repeats hafazan

According to the table in characteristics, for Naïve they were labelled below basic or basic in Arabic language proficiency. Some acknowledge they do not read the Qur'an, and some read 1 page to 3 pages max. For a beginner, they had the basic or intermediate Arabic language proficiency but more frequently reading the Qur'an as 5 pages at the most. Continuing to Intermediate, they had the ability as basic or intermediate proficiency and higher frequency on reading the Qur'an reaching 10 pages per day. The Advanced could read up to 1 juz (20 pages) a day but some had below basic Arabic language proficiency. This interesting data will be discussed later. Finally, the Expert characteristic in Arabic

language proficiency was intermediate or expert level with an additional practice related to the Qur'an besides reading it.

Looking closely at the Naïve Arabic proficiency, they claimed that they had below basic or below levels of proficiency. For instance, P12 explained that she had below basic Arabic language proficiency even though she had admitted had learned it once. Yet due to a long period of non-practising the language, she had to acknowledge she had the below basic in the language. Next, proving on the personal habit those in Naïve P2 Ina mentioned as follow:

"This year I had never read the Qur'an yet" (P2 Ina)

This is clearly can be the evidence on why she had been categorized as Naïve because she has never read the Qur'an and sadly brought her to misunderstand the contents of the Qur'an.

Interestingly, those who were even Advanced also admitted had below basic in Arabic proficiency for instance P18 Iman mention:

"I think I didn't have even the basic knowledge." (P18 Iman)

Yet, when being asked about his habit of reading the Qur'an he replied that he was able to read 14 pages a day. Generally, this is the reason why he had an equal understanding to other Advanced participants. This shows reading frequency had a close relationship to understand the Qur'an. The more you read the Qur'an the higher your level of understanding of the Qur'an could be achieved. In addition to this, the difference in Experts in the personal habit on the Qur'an was that they were those who read only two pages compare to some Advanced participants. However, they had other additional practices, for instance, P16 Bayah mentioned as follow:

“Tasbih or anything can make me remember to Allah every day” (P16 Bayah)

Corresponding to this statement, P17 Wahid mentioned he always repeats his *hafazan* (memorization) besides reading the Qur’an 1 juzuk per day. This shows that reading Qur’an was not only the way to make someone expert, but they must have other practices related to the Qur’an to grab its broad understanding.

4.7 Conclusion

In short, one participant could have many levels of understanding of the Qur’an and it is suitable to classify them into a categorization to make it clear in recognizing each other’s features. Therefore, five levels of understanding of the Qur’an had been introduced and categorized to each participant in this study which consists of Naïve, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert.

Next, in terms of seeking their characteristics based on their levels of understanding earlier, there were 12 attributes to seek on the characteristics diverse groups of people understand the Qur’an. On the contrary, there were only two attributes were saturated while the other was collapsed. The findings on characteristics had various views and patterns which make it hard to differentiate one another except their Arabic proficiency and personal habit on the Qur’an was seen different between each other.