



Profiles of the Prophet's Companions as Guardians of Quranic Memorization and Transmission

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the Prophet Muhammad's companions who memorized the Quran in safeguarding revelation and shaping the intellectual tradition of Islam, emphasizing their contributions to oral transmission, written documentation, and the establishment of pedagogical models that remain central to Islamic education. Employing a literature review of classical sources (*kutub al-turath*) and contemporary scholarship on Quranic codification, the research highlights figures such as Ubay ibn Ka'ab, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Zayd ibn Thabit, and Ali ibn Abi Talib, who were recognized as leading authorities in Quranic memorization and teaching. These companions exemplified the integration of linguistic intelligence, spiritual devotion, and commitment to revelation, mastering the Quran comprehensively while verifying recitations, educating the *tabi'in* generation, and contributing to the compilation of the *mushaf* during the caliphate of Usman ibn Affan. Their profiles demonstrate how memorization and teaching ensured the integrity and unity of the Quran across diverse communities. The findings affirm that Quranic memorization has strong historical roots and remains a cornerstone of Islamic pedagogy, scholarship, and spiritual practice, linking early preservation efforts with contemporary educational traditions and underscoring its enduring significance in both spiritual life and intellectual heritage.

INTRODUCTION

The preservation of the Quran through memorization and transmission by the Prophet's companions represents one of the most enduring intellectual and spiritual traditions in Islam (Ahmad, 2024; Pramono, 2018). From the earliest period, memorization (*hifz*) was not only a devotional practice but also a mechanism to safeguard the authenticity of revelation. The companions of the Prophet were entrusted with this responsibility, ensuring that the Quran was preserved both orally and textually (Azwar, 2023; Famwanto & Fakhruddin, 2026; Faris, 2024).

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Classical sources such as al-Suyuti's *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* and al-Tabari's *Tafsir* emphasize the central role of companions like Ubay ibn Ka'b, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Zayd ibn Thabit, and Ali ibn Abi Talib in ensuring accurate recitation and teaching (Famwanto & Fahrudin, 2026). Their contributions were not limited to memorization but extended to verification of recitations and the education of subsequent generations.

Contemporary scholarship affirms that the Quran is unique among scriptures in being preserved through a dual system of oral memorization and written documentation. This phenomenon is rooted in the dedication of the first generation, who combined linguistic mastery with spiritual devotion (Mufid & Mokhtar, 2023). Thus, the companions' profiles embody a synthesis of intellectual rigor and religious commitment. Their role as guardians of revelation highlights the importance of studying their lives and contributions to understand the foundations of Quranic transmission (Febrianti et al., 2025; Fitriati et al., 2024; Hidayat, 2024; Inayatullah & Safruroh, 2024).

The urgency of examining the companions' memorization lies in its relevance to current debates on Quranic authenticity and pedagogy. In modern scholarship, questions of textual integrity and transmission are often raised, making it essential to revisit the historical foundations of Quranic preservation (Inayatullah & Safruroh, 2024; Rachmadhini et al., 2026).

In an era of increasing textual criticism and comparative religious studies, understanding how the Quran was preserved provides evidence of its continuity and resilience. The companions' efforts demonstrate how oral and written traditions converged to establish a standardized text that has remained intact across centuries (Nubowo, 2014). Research on codification, particularly the Uthmanic *mushaf*, illustrates the importance of collective memorization and verification in maintaining textual unity. This process underscores the companions' role not only as transmitters but also as educators and custodians of revelation (Herawati et al., 2024; Rosyidah et al., 2021). By analyzing their profiles, this study contributes to clarifying their motivations, methods, and legacy. It also links their historical contributions to contemporary practices of Quranic education, affirming the relevance of memorization in both spiritual and academic contexts (Bhat & Bisati, 2025; Wijaya, 2024).

The primary objective of this study is to document the biographical and intellectual characteristics of leading companions who memorized the Quran. Their profiles provide insight into the qualities that enabled them to safeguard revelation with precision and devotion. Another objective is to assess their role in transmitting revelation to subsequent generations. The companions not only memorized the Quran but also taught it to the *tabi'in*, ensuring that the tradition of memorization and recitation continued unbroken (Abdullah et al., 2021).

A further aim is to connect their legacy with contemporary practices of Quranic pedagogy. By examining their methods and motivations, this study highlights the continuity between early preservation efforts and modern institutions of Quranic education. Ultimately, the study seeks to affirm that Quranic memorization is not merely a devotional act but a scholarly tradition that has shaped Islamic intellectual heritage. This objective situates memorization within both historical and contemporary frameworks.

Despite extensive scholarship on Quranic codification, there remains a gap in systematic biographical analysis of the companions specifically as memorizers

and transmitters of the Quran. Most studies focus on textual history, manuscript variants, or theological debates, while the personal profiles of these figures are less explored. Existing research often emphasizes the compilation of the Quran during the caliphate of Usman ibn Affan, yet it does not sufficiently address the individual contributions of companions in shaping the oral tradition. Their pedagogical strategies and intellectual motivations remain underrepresented in academic discourse (Wahyuni et al., 2025).

Furthermore, while contemporary studies highlight the uniqueness of Quranic preservation, they rarely integrate biographical detail with pedagogical analysis. This creates a gap in understanding how memorization functioned both as a spiritual discipline and as an educational method. Addressing this gap requires a study that combines historical biography with thematic analysis. By focusing on the companions' profiles, this research contributes to filling a critical void in Quranic studies.

This study seeks to explore the defining characteristics of the Prophet's companions who memorized the Quran, examining how their memorization practices contributed to the integrity of revelation. It also investigates the ways in which their teaching shaped the transmission of the Quran to the *tabi'in* generation and beyond. By addressing these questions, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the companions' role as guardians of Quranic memorization and transmission, situating their contributions within both historical and pedagogical contexts.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research method with a descriptive-analytical approach, focusing on the historical and intellectual contributions of the Prophet's companions who memorized the Quran. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for exploring biographical profiles and thematic narratives, as it allows for the integration of textual evidence with interpretive analysis (Abishev et al., 2025; Creswell, 2018; Engkizar et al., 2023; 2025; Jaafar et al., 2025). The descriptive-analytical design enables the researcher to synthesize classical Islamic sources with contemporary scholarship, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of Quranic memorization and transmission in the formative period of Islam (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2022; Neumann & Suen, 2018; Wulandari et al., 2024).

The primary data sources consist of classical Islamic texts, including al-Suyuti's *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* and al-Tabari's *Tafsir*, which document the roles of companions such as Ubay ibn Ka'b, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Zayd ibn Thabit, and Ali ibn Abi Talib. Secondary sources include contemporary academic studies on Quranic codification and oral transmission, such as (Agustina & Yusro, 2020; S. Ahmad, 2017). These sources provide both historical detail and modern scholarly perspectives, ensuring that the research is grounded in authoritative references while engaging with current debates in Quranic studies (Faris, 2024).

The study employs thematic analysis as the primary tool for organizing and interpreting data. Thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative research to identify, analyze, and report patterns within textual data (Clarke & Braun, 2018). In this research, themes such as linguistic intelligence, spiritual devotion, pedagogical strategies, and codification practices are extracted from classical and contemporary sources. The use of thematic analysis allows for systematic categorization of the

companions' contributions, ensuring that the findings are both coherent and analytically rigorous (Bagheri et al., 2017).

The technique of narrative synthesis is applied to integrate findings from diverse sources into a unified account. Narrative synthesis is effective in combining qualitative data from historical texts and modern scholarship, enabling the researcher to construct a comprehensive profile of the companions as guardians of Quranic memorization. This technique involves summarizing, comparing, and interpreting textual evidence while maintaining fidelity to the sources. By employing narrative synthesis, the study highlights the companions' roles in preserving the Quran and situates their contributions within broader discussions of Islamic pedagogy and intellectual heritage (Engkizar et al., 2025; Putri et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting the detailed findings, it is important to situate the study within its broader historical and intellectual context. The companions of the Prophet played a pivotal role in safeguarding the Quran through memorization, verification, teaching, and codification, thereby establishing a dual system of oral and written preservation that has endured across centuries. Their contributions were not only devotional but also pedagogical and scholarly, shaping the foundations of Islamic education and ensuring the integrity of revelation. By examining their profiles, motivations, and methods, this research highlights how the companions functioned as guardians of Quranic memorization and transmission, providing a model of preservation that continues to influence contemporary practices. The following findings elaborate on these dimensions, offering a comprehensive analysis of their roles in maintaining the authenticity and unity of the Quran.

Profiles of the companions as Quran memorizers

The study reveals that several companions of the Prophet were distinguished for their mastery of Quranic memorization. Figures such as Ubay ibn Ka'b, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Zayd ibn Thabit, and Ali ibn Abi Talib were recognized not only for their ability to memorize the Quran comprehensively but also for their deep understanding of its linguistic and spiritual dimensions (Farnas, 2025; Luthfiyah, 2019; Muhammad, 2012; Wahyuni et al., 2025). Their profiles demonstrate a unique integration of intellectual capacity and devotional practice. The profiles of the companions as memorizers of the Quran can be easily seen in the following image.

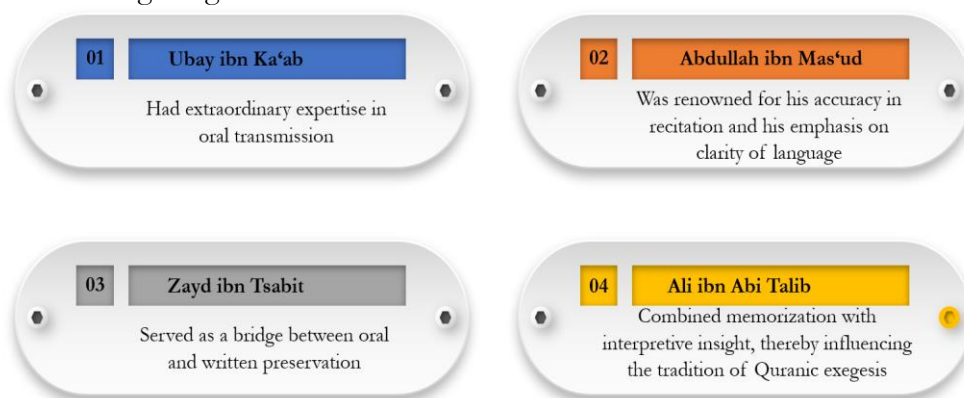


Fig 1. Profiles of the companions as Quran memorizers

Ubay ibn Ka'b, for instance, was often referred to by the Prophet as one of the foremost reciters, highlighting his exceptional skill in oral transmission. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was renowned for his precision in recitation and his emphasis on linguistic clarity, which made him a respected authority among the early Muslim community.

Zayd ibn Thabit's role as the Prophet's scribe positioned him at the intersection of oral and written preservation, while Ali ibn Abi Talib combined memorization with exegetical insight, influencing later traditions of Quranic interpretation. These companions exemplified the qualities necessary to safeguard revelation. Thus, the profiles of these companions underscore the importance of linguistic intelligence, spiritual devotion, and commitment to revelation. Their lives provide a model of how memorization was not merely mechanical but deeply embedded in intellectual and spiritual practice.

Contributions to verification and transmission

Another significant finding is the companions' role in verifying recitations and ensuring accurate transmission of the Quran. Oral memorization was complemented by collective verification, where companions cross-checked recitations to maintain consistency and authenticity (Alrumiah & Al-Shargabi, 2023). This practice established a communal safeguard against textual distortion.

Ubay ibn Ka'b and Abdullah ibn Mas'ud were particularly active in verifying recitations, often consulted by other companions for accuracy. Their authority in this regard reflects the importance of peer review in oral tradition, a method that parallels modern practices of scholarly validation.

The companions also transmitted the Quran to diverse communities, adapting recitation to different dialects while maintaining fidelity to revelation. This flexibility ensured accessibility without compromising authenticity, a balance that reinforced the Quran's universality (Anisa et al., 2023; Falhan & Iman, 2024). Therefore, their contributions to verification and transmission highlight the collective responsibility of the first generation. By combining memorization with communal validation, they established a model of preservation that continues to inform Islamic pedagogy today.

Educational legacy for the *Tabi'in* generation

The companions' teaching of the Quran to the *tabi'in* generation represents a crucial aspect of their legacy. They not only memorized the Quran but also institutionalized its pedagogy, ensuring that memorization became a cornerstone of Islamic education (Ghoni et al., 2022).

Through structured teaching circles (*halaqah*), companions like Ubay ibn Ka'b and Abdullah ibn Mas'ud trained students in recitation, memorization, and interpretation. These practices laid the foundation for later institutions of Quranic learning, such as madrasas and tahfiz schools (Zaini & Pasaribu, 2020).

The educational legacy also extended to the transmission of exegetical insights. Ali ibn Abi Talib, for example, emphasized the integration of memorization with understanding, encouraging students to reflect on the meanings of verses rather than reciting mechanically (Inayatullah & Safruroh, 2024; Sahin, 2022). This finding affirms that Quranic memorization was embedded in a broader educational framework. The companions' teaching shaped the intellectual tradition of Islam, ensuring that memorization remained both a spiritual discipline and a scholarly pursuit.

Role in codification and standardization of the *mushaf*

The final finding concerns the companions' contributions to the codification and standardization of the Quran during the caliphate of Usman ibn Affan. Zayd ibn Thabit played a central role in compiling the Quran into a unified *mushaf*, drawing upon his memorization and scribal expertise.

This process involved cross-verification with other companions to ensure accuracy, reflecting the collective nature of Quranic preservation. The Uthmanic codex established a standardized text that eliminated dialectal variations, thereby reinforcing unity across the Muslim community (Hidayatulloh et al., 2026).

The codification project illustrates how oral and written traditions converged. Memorization provided the foundation, while written documentation ensured permanence. Together, they created a dual system of preservation unparalleled in other religious traditions. Thus, the companions' role in codification underscores their commitment to safeguarding revelation. Their efforts ensured that the Quran remained intact and accessible, a legacy that continues to shape Islamic scholarship and pedagogy.

The profiles of the Prophet's companions who memorized the Quran illustrate the intersection of linguistic intelligence, spiritual devotion, and pedagogical commitment. Cognitive theories of memory emphasize that repetition and emotional engagement enhance retention (Safa, 2024; Yusoff, 2023). This aligns with the companions' practice of reciting the Quran in prayer and teaching circles, embedding memorization within spiritual life.

Scholars such as Akbar et al., (2025) highlight Ubay ibn Ka'b's mastery of recitation, while Abdullah ibn Mas'ud's emphasis on linguistic precision reflects the role of phonological awareness in oral transmission. Their profiles demonstrate how memorization was not merely mechanical but deeply intellectual.

The companions' role in verifying recitations reflects the communal nature of Quranic preservation. Social learning theory posits that knowledge is reinforced through collective validation (Faris, 2024). The companions applied this principle by cross-checking recitations, ensuring accuracy and consistency.

Ubay ibn Ka'b and Abdullah ibn Mas'ud were often consulted for verification, embodying the concept of peer review in oral tradition. Their authority illustrates how communal practices safeguarded authenticity, a method comparable to modern scholarly validation.

Previous studies affirm that oral transmission in Islam was characterized by collective responsibility. Ecker, (2015) notes that memorization was always accompanied by verification, preventing distortion. This dual process of memorization and validation ensured the Quran's integrity across diverse communities. Therefore, the companions' contributions to verification and transmission highlight the importance of communal mechanisms in preserving sacred texts. Their practices resonate with theories of collective memory, demonstrating how communities safeguard knowledge through shared responsibility.

The companions' teaching of the Quran to the *tabi'in* generation established memorization as a cornerstone of Islamic pedagogy. Constructivist theories of education emphasize that learning occurs through active engagement and social interaction (Piaget & Vygotsky, 2008). The companions embodied this by creating teaching circles (*halaqah*) where students learned through recitation and reflection.

Ubay ibn Ka'b and Abdullah ibn Mas'ud trained students in both

memorization and interpretation, laying the foundation for later institutions of Quranic learning (Akbar et al., 2025). Their methods illustrate how pedagogy combined oral practice with intellectual engagement. Ali ibn Abi Talib's emphasis on understanding alongside memorization reflects Bloom's taxonomy, which situates comprehension as a higher cognitive skill beyond rote learning (Bloom, 1956). His approach ensured that memorization was integrated with reflection, shaping the intellectual tradition of Islam.

Research on Islamic education confirms this legacy. Muslim et al., (2024) argues that the companions institutionalized memorization as both a spiritual and scholarly practice, influencing madrasas and tahfiz schools. Their teaching demonstrates how memorization became embedded in Islamic pedagogy as a holistic discipline.

The companions' contributions to codification during Uthman's caliphate illustrate the convergence of oral and written traditions. Theories of textual transmission emphasize that standardization is essential for preserving authenticity across communities. Zayd ibn Thabit's leadership in compiling the Quran reflects this principle. The Uthmanic codex eliminated dialectal variations, reinforcing unity. This process aligns with Thobani, (2011) concept of "imagined communities," where shared texts create collective identity. The standardized *mushaf* provided a unifying reference for the Muslim community.

Scholars affirm the significance of codification. Akbar et al., (2025) argue that the Uthmanic project ensured textual stability, while Güneş, (2020) highlight the integration of oral and written preservation. Together, these studies confirm that codification was a collective achievement rooted in memorization. Thus, the companions' role in codification underscores their commitment to safeguarding revelation. Their efforts exemplify how oral mastery and textual documentation converge to preserve sacred texts, a model that continues to shape Islamic scholarship.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Prophet's companions who memorized the Quran were defined by their intellectual rigor, linguistic mastery, and spiritual devotion, and their practices of memorization, verification, teaching, and codification collectively safeguarded the integrity of revelation. The findings answer the research questions by showing that their profiles embodied distinctive characteristics that ensured accuracy, their memorization practices reinforced authenticity, and their teaching shaped the transmission of the Quran to the *tabi'in* generation and beyond. The implications of these findings highlight the enduring relevance of Quranic memorization as both a spiritual discipline and an educational framework, providing a model for contemporary pedagogy in Islamic studies. The novelty of this article lies in its systematic biographical synthesis of the companions as memorizers, integrating historical profiles with pedagogical analysis, thereby filling a gap in Quranic scholarship that often emphasizes textual codification while neglecting the personal and educational dimensions of preservation.

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Author contribution

Muhammad Numan: data curation, writing-original draft preparation and editing, **Ahmad Hamed:** conceptualization, methodology, **Fathiyah Mohd Fakhruddin:** validation, visualization, supervision, software.

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