



From Planning to Practice: A Comprehensive Evaluation of Thematic Lesson Plans in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Aceh Barat

Tengku Hafinda*^{1,2}

Rica Alfisah³

Maya Agustina⁴

¹Student of Doctoral Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas
Syiah Kuala - Darussalam, Banda Aceh 23111

^{2,3,4}Department of Islamic Primary Education, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Teungku Dirundeng
Meulaboh - Meureubo 23615

*Corresponding author, e-mail: tengkuhafinda@staindirundeng.ac.id

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Abstract

This study evaluated the quality of thematic instructional planning by teachers at MIN 3 Aceh Barat, focusing on its alignment with curriculum standards and thematic learning principles. Twelve classroom teachers were selected through purposive sampling. A quantitative evaluation was conducted using a checklist instrument comprising nine essential components of effective instructional design. Data were analyzed descriptively by calculating the mean percentage of criteria fulfillment. The results indicated that most instructional designs demonstrated coherent subject integration and were rated “good,” with an average achievement of 89.90 percent. However, gaps remained in formulating specific and measurable objectives, selecting pedagogical strategies aligned with learning goals, and developing authentic assessments. These findings emphasize the persistent gap between curriculum policy expectations and classroom level planning practices. By providing empirically grounded recommendations for targeted professional development, this study offers practical guidance to enhance the consistency and effectiveness of thematic instruction in primary education.

Keywords: curriculum evaluation; thematic instruction; scientific approach; primary education

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is the process of assessing the achievement of goals and identifying issues in the performance of programs or activities to provide feedback for improving their quality. In the context of education, evaluation plays a crucial role. It provides insights into the extent to which instructional planning aligns with the actual learning process conducted by teachers (Baht, 2019; Mukhibat et al., 2024). Instructional planning is documented in the Lesson Plans, which must adhere to established regulations. Evaluation serves as a means of analyzing and refining valuable information to determine alternatives (Arikunto, 2021). These alternatives may include assessments and measurements conducted during instructional planning. Therefore, evaluating lesson plans is a more comprehensive process compared to measurement and assessment alone. The results of lesson plan evaluations enable professional decision making by providing a holistic overview of instructional planning and its alignment with predetermined criteria (Hasan, 2021; Lammert & Godfrey, 2025). The Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016 concerning Standards for Basic and Secondary Education Processes, Chapter III, stipulates that instructional planning must be developed in the form of a syllabus and lesson

plans, which must be aligned with the Content Standards. Consequently, teachers are required to prepare instructional plans accordingly, and their readiness in designing lesson plans needs to be systematically evaluated.

Thematic learning is essentially an integrated instructional model that employs a theme based approach to interconnect multiple subjects, enabling students to experience more meaningful learning. This approach is perceived as more engaging and impactful for students because it presents relevant and contextual learning themes applicable to everyday life (Prastowo, 2019; Suharman et al., 2023). Integrated thematic learning facilitates students in comprehending and exploring concepts embedded within a given theme (Pujiastuti et al., 2021). Through thematic learning, students become more enthusiastic in the learning process, as they are provided with ample opportunities to communicate and interact, both with teachers and peers. In real life contexts, students can exchange information and collaborate in discussing and understanding integrated subjects. Thematic learning has been found to enhance student motivation, as the learning materials are directly related to their lived experiences, making the learning process more authentic and meaningful.

In thematic learning, the lesson plan is a key reference for designing and managing instruction, integrating objectives, activities, and assessment methods (Hatch & Clark, 2021; Lee & Zhai, 2024; Prastowo, 2017). However, teachers in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school) still face challenges in both design and implementation. Observations in Aceh Barat revealed difficulties in aligning materials with themes, developing relevant themes, addressing limited facilities and media, allocating time appropriately, and formulating competency indicators with suitable methods.

Additionally, another prevalent issue is the tendency of teachers to prepare lesson plans solely for administrative compliance, without fully considering the diverse needs and characteristics of students (Hidayah et al., 2022; Mukminin et al., 2019). Some teachers rely on pre designed lesson plan formats provided by the government or educational institutions without making necessary adaptations to align with their specific classroom contexts. As a result, the learning process becomes less effective, failing to foster meaningful and engaging learning experiences for students. Therefore, an evaluation of thematic lesson plans used by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school) teachers is essential to ensure that instructional planning documents are truly aligned with student needs and curriculum standards.

Several prior studies have investigated the implementation of thematic learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school), but few have systematically evaluated the lesson plans themselves as critical instructional instruments, especially in terms of their administrative completeness, pedagogical depth, and alignment with curriculum standards. While many teachers demonstrate competence in mapping content to curriculum standards, challenges persist in designing authentic assessments and maintaining procedural accuracy (Otaya et al., 2020; Rahardjo, 2024). Research on Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school) has found that lesson plans are often treated as a compliance task, with limited attention to reflective and adaptive instructional design (Istiqomah & Prastowo, 2022). Limited research has explored how procedural thoroughness interacts with instructional adaptability, a gap that this study addresses through a component based evaluation framework integrating both dimensions to inform teacher professional development and policy refinement.

The national curriculum promotes the scientific approach, which includes observing, questioning, experimenting, associating, and communicating, as the basis for active, student centered learning. Yet classroom application remains inconsistent, with teacher centered practices persisting due to limited resources and training (Muhammad et al., 2023). In mathematics and science, lesson plans often lack alignment with authentic inquiry. A comparison of Indonesia and Finland showed that Indonesian plans were simplistic and resource limited, hindering project based or thematic methods, while Finnish plans benefited from infrastructure that supported deeper collaboration and creativity (Sujino et al., 2025). These findings highlight the need to assess how effectively thematic lesson plans in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school) apply the scientific approach.

Thematic learning integrates multiple subjects under a unifying theme, enabling students to connect curricular content to real world contexts. Research has demonstrated its potential to improve student engagement and foster cross disciplinary understanding when implemented effectively (Maulyda et al., 2021; Pajrini et al., 2023). However, many teachers remain unprepared to apply it optimally due to insufficient pedagogical training and administrative readiness (Ammi et al., 2023; Nada et al., 2024). Previous studies have also tended to focus on learning outcomes rather than evaluating the quality of lesson plans as a foundation for instructional effectiveness (Hendrizal et al., 2022; Mawardi & Aritonang, 2022). This dimension remains underexplored in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school) contexts, reinforcing the importance of assessing both pedagogical and administrative aspects to develop more effective and contextually responsive lesson planning practices.

Lesson plans are fundamental instructional tools that guide daily teaching and ensure alignment with educational standards (Iqbal et al., 2021; Lammert & Godfrey, 2025). In Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school)'s thematic learning, quality lesson plans integrate multiple subjects to foster interdisciplinary connections and enhance student engagement and achievement (Safitri et al., 2023; Sulthon, 2024). Despite extensive research on thematic learning implementation, limited attention has been given to evaluating the lesson plans themselves as crucial instructional instruments. Empirically, thematic analysis is essential to systematically assess curriculum alignment, uncover pedagogical gaps, and identify ineffective subject integration (Wotring et al., 2021; Ye & Xu, 2023). This analysis is urgent because inadequate lesson planning negatively affects student outcomes and the development of 21st century skills (Ali & Juanda, 2025; Kain et al., 2024; Martinez, 2022). Thus, thematic analysis provides evidence based insights for improving curriculum and teacher development to meet the demands of modern education.

While thematic learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school) has been extensively examined, limited research has focused on evaluating lesson plans as essential instruments of instructional planning. Existing studies tend to emphasize classroom implementation rather than conducting a detailed analysis of lesson plan structure and design. This study seeks to fill that gap by systematically evaluating the quality of thematic lesson plans, with attention to their structural components, alignment with curriculum standards, and effectiveness in supporting meaningful learning experiences. Such an evaluation is expected to identify areas for improvement that will enhance the implementation of thematic learning, ultimately contributing to improved educational quality. By generating evidence-based insights for teachers,

educational institutions, and policymakers, this study aims to optimize instructional planning and foster learning environments that are more engaging, effective, and student-centered.

METHOD

This study is a quantitative evaluation research based on the positivist paradigm. A quantitative approach with a psychometric tradition was employed in the data collection process. The psychometric tradition emphasizes the use of evaluation tools and procedures derived from positivist methods and well established measurement procedures (Hasan, 2021). This research adopts a non experimental quantitative approach, in line with the argument that evaluation should be directly related to actual activities taking place in the field (Hasan, 2021). In a non experimental research design, data collection involves recording existing or ongoing situations without intentionally generating new data (Arikunto, 2010). This approach is appropriate for assessing naturally occurring instructional planning documents without manipulation, allowing objective evaluation of real world practices.

The population in this study consists of all teachers at MIN 3 Aceh Barat, while the sample comprises 12 classroom teachers, selected using purposive sampling. The data collection technique involved gathering lesson plans prepared by classroom teachers, which were then analyzed by researchers using a checklist containing nine ideal lesson plan components based on lesson plan review framework by (Rusman, 2015). The checklist covered nine components of effective lesson planning: (1) subject identity, (2) indicator formulation, (3) learning objectives, (4) learning materials, (5) learning resources, (6) instructional media, (7) teaching methods, (8) learning scenarios, and (9) assessment strategies. The construct of the instrument was developed based on the pedagogical framework of curriculum policy (Permendikbud No. 22 of 2016) and the thematic learning approach as applied in primary Islamic education.

To ensure content validity, the instrument was reviewed by two university experts in curriculum and instructional design, who evaluated its relevance, clarity, and applicability in the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school). In terms of reliability, an inter rater agreement approach was used, involving two independent raters who analyzed a sample of lesson plans using the same instrument. The result showed an agreement rate exceeding 85%, indicating high reliability of the checklist.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis techniques. Each indicator was scored based on a rubric scale, and the percentage of fulfillment was calculated for each component. The fulfillment rate was then calculated as a percentage for each component. The results of the lesson plan review were calculated using the following formula:

$$Score = \frac{Total\ Score\ Obtained}{Maximum\ Score} \times 100$$

Based on the percentage scores, the quality of each lesson plan component was classified into four categories adapted from the Ministry of Education's standards:

Table 1. Score of The Lesson Plan Review

Average Score	Parameter
$90 \leq \text{Score} < 100$	Very Good
$80 \leq \text{Score} < 90$	Good
$70 \leq \text{Score} < 80$	Fairly Good
$\text{Score} \leq 70$	Poor

Source: Rusman (2015)

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. This evaluation framework ensures an objective assessment of thematic lesson plans and provides quantifiable insights into the quality of instructional planning among MIN 3 Aceh Barat teachers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the thematic lesson plan review are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Results of the Lesson Plan Component Review

No	Lesson Plan Component	Lesson Plan Indicators	Score	Category
1	Subject Identity	Includes educational unit, grade level, semester, specialization program, subject or theme/subtheme, number of meetings	78.8	Fair
2	Indicator Formulation	Alignment with basic competencies, appropriateness of operational verbs with measured competencies, alignment of formulation with knowledge aspects, and alignment of formulation with skill aspects	96.4	Excellent
3	Learning Objectives Formulation	Alignment with indicators and formulation consistency with the aspects of audience, behavior, condition, and degree	95.9	Excellent
4	Selection of Learning Materials	Alignment with learning objectives, appropriateness with student characteristics, and logical sequence of learning materials	96.3	Excellent
5	Selection of Learning Resources	Alignment with learning objectives, relevance to learning materials, adherence to scientific approach, and appropriateness for student characteristics	99.4	Excellent
6	Selection of Learning Media	Alignment with learning objectives, relevance to learning materials, adherence to scientific approach, and appropriateness for student characteristics	92.5	Excellent
7	Teaching Methods	Alignment with learning objectives, adherence to the scientific approach, and appropriateness for student characteristics	83.4	Good
8	Learning Scenario	Clearly presents introductory, core, and closing activities; alignment with scientific approach (observing, questioning, gathering information, associating, communicating); consistency with teaching methods; coherence of activities with material sequencing; and proper allocation of time for each learning phase	93.2	Excellent
9	Authentic Assessment Design	Appropriateness of forms, techniques, and instruments with competency indicators; consistency in assessment of attitudes, knowledge, and skills	74.2	Fair
Average Score			89.90	Good

In addition to score based categorization, the analysis also involved classifying each component based on its level of appropriateness: Not Appropriate, Partially Appropriate, and Fully Appropriate. This breakdown is presented in Table 3

Table 3. Distribution of Appropriateness Levels for Each Component

No	Lesson Plan Component	Percentage		
		Not Appropriate	Partially Appropriate	Fully Appropriate
1	Subject Identity	0%	83%	17%
2	Indicator Formulation	0%	17%	83%
3	Learning Objectives Formulation	0%	25%	75%
4	Selection of Learning Materials	0%	8%	92%
5	Selection of Learning Resources	0%	8%	92%
6	Selection of Learning Media	0%	25%	75%
7	Teaching Methods	16%	17%	67%
8	Learning Scenario	8%	25%	67%
9	Authentic Assessment Design	25%	42%	33%
	Average	5%	28%	67%

The evaluated lesson plans averaged 89.90, placing them in the “Good” category. Assessment covered nine components: subject identity, indicator formulation, learning objectives, learning materials, learning resources, learning media, teaching methods, learning scenarios, and authentic assessment. While overall quality was good, some areas need improvement. Subject identity scored 78.8, showing essential details were present but not always complete. Indicator formulation scored 96.4, reflecting alignment with competencies, proper operational verbs, and balance of knowledge and skills. Learning objectives scored 95.9, indicating strong alignment with indicators and adherence to the audience, behavior, condition, and degree principles.

Learning materials scored 96.3, indicating strong alignment with objectives, student characteristics, and logical sequencing. The highest score, 99.4, was for learning resources, reflecting high relevance to objectives, content, scientific approach, and learner needs. Learning media scored 92.5 but required better alignment with the scientific approach and student characteristics. Teaching methods, at 83.4, need improvement to better match objectives, the scientific approach, and learner profiles. Learning scenarios scored 93.2, showing systematic organization of instructional phases, though refinements in method consistency and material sequencing are needed for greater effectiveness.

Authentic assessment design scored lowest at 74.2, indicating weak alignment between assessment components and competency indicators, especially in assessing attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Overall, lesson plan quality is rated good, with strengths in indicator formulation, learning objectives, and resource selection, but improvements are needed in subject identity, teaching methods, and authentic assessment to better meet educational standards.

The data show that although most components are predominantly rated as “fully appropriate,” authentic assessment remains the most critical weakness, with only 33% fully appropriate and 25% not appropriate. This finding points to persistent challenges in designing

assessments that are well-aligned with competency indicators and capable of measuring attitudes, knowledge, and skills comprehensively. In contrast, learning materials and resources achieved 92% full appropriateness, reflecting teachers' strong familiarity with curriculum guidelines, their ability to select content aligned with learning objectives, and effective use of support tools to enhance instructional delivery.

Discussion

This study reveals that thematic lesson plans by MI teachers demonstrate notable strengths in content selection, indicator alignment, and resource identification, yet continuing challenges remain in administrative completeness and authentic assessment. These findings underscore the need for targeted professional development, particularly in assessment design and strategies for enhancing student engagement. While alignment with curriculum standards is evident, the overall quality of instructional planning still requires sustained support, mentoring, and policy reinforcement. Consistent in part with previous research, many teachers perceive lesson planning primarily as a formal requirement, resulting in both administrative and pedagogical gaps (Mukminin et al., 2019). Unlike earlier reports of widespread deficiencies, improvements in indicator formulation, learning material selection, and resource use are likely outcomes of curriculum standardization and training initiatives. Nevertheless, ongoing shortcomings in administrative precision and authentic assessment design suggest that such measures have yet to cultivate a fully reflective practice. This supports findings that standardized templates are frequently treated as administrative tasks rather than tools for professional reflection (Herrera & Waller, 2023).

Subject Identity

The subject identity component, which includes the theme, subtheme, class level, semester, and time allocation, scored lowest (78.8, Fair), with 83% only partially appropriate. Many sections were incomplete or vague, reducing transparency and curriculum continuity ((Kinskey & Zeidler, 2021). A complete identity supports monitoring and continuity (Rusman, 2015), but omissions often reflect a view of administration as mere formality (Mukminin et al., 2019). Teachers tended to prioritize content over procedural accuracy (Istiqomah & Prastowo, 2022). Unlike studies linking this to missing formats (Prastowo, 2019), the issue here suggests attitude rather than technical limits, influenced by low procedural literacy, limited supervision, and content focused policies. Professional development should address both technical skills and perceptions to ensure administrative completeness as a foundation for curriculum continuity and accountability (Nurkamto & Putra, 2025).

Indicator Formulation

This component was rated Excellent with an average score of 96.4, and 83% of plans fully appropriate. Most teachers effectively linked indicators to national curriculum standards, showing strong curriculum mapping skills, while 17% had vague phrasing or non observable verbs. Indicators must be clear, measurable, and achievable (Rusman, 2015). Many were replicated from textbooks without adaptation to student contexts (Istiqomah & Prastowo, 2022), and persistent errors in verb selection caused misalignment with the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Chandio et al., 2021; Syahri et al., 2021). While teachers possess strong technical skills, meaningful contextualization is often lacking (Istiqomah & Prastowo, 2022). Unlike studies

linking weaknesses mainly to limited Bloom's Taxonomy knowledge (Chandio et al., 2021), these results point to insufficient reflective practice. Difficulties in selecting operational verbs may also arise from challenges in interpreting guidelines and applying them to classroom realities (Rahmah & Zaim, 2021). Professional development should therefore integrate technical proficiency with reflective application to ensure indicators are both pedagogically relevant and measurable.

Learning Objectives

The learning objective component was rated Excellent, scoring 95.9, with 75% of plans fully appropriate. Most objectives aligned with indicators and cognitive levels, reflecting mastery of standard formats, but 25% were only partially appropriate due to vague descriptors, missing performance criteria, or lack of contextual conditions. Objectives should follow the SMART principle for consistent delivery and aligned assessment (Rusman, 2015). While many teachers can write objectives mechanically, they often struggle with effective application in practice (Damayanti & Muhroji, 2022; Gutierrez, 2021). Applying the ABCD model can improve structure, focus, and competency orientation (Iqbal et al., 2021; Pitasari et al., 2023). Consistent with prior studies, teachers possess strong technical skills but lack contextual adaptation. Unlike research attributing weaknesses solely to unfamiliarity with models like ABCD, these results point to insufficient reflective application. In the Merdeka Curriculum, unclear and inflexible objectives often stem from time constraints and limited resources rather than lack of theoretical understanding (Elsa et al., 2024; Lestari & Yusuf, 2025).

Learning Materials

Learning materials scored 96.3 (Excellent), with 92% of plans fully appropriate, showing teachers strong familiarity with curriculum documents and ability to select age appropriate, consistent, and objective aligned content (Rusman, 2015). This aligns with differentiated instruction theory, which calls for tailoring materials to students' needs, interests, and readiness (Tomlinson, 2017). However, adaptation and enrichment were limited. Reliance on textbooks may hinder contextual learning if not supported by local examples (Ammi et al., 2023; Nada et al., 2024). While teachers are proficient in selecting curriculum aligned materials, adaptation to local contexts and diverse learners remains limited (Nada et al., 2024). Literacy materials in Kurikulum Merdeka often lack local contextualization, reducing engagement and deeper learning (Zakiyah & Tiarina, 2023). Professional development should therefore strengthen teachers' ability to adapt and enrich materials with locally relevant, student centered content.

Learning Resources

This component scored highest with an average of 99.4, and 92% of entries fully appropriate. Teachers effectively identified and cited relevant resources such as guides, textbooks, and visual references, reflecting curricular alignment and accessibility (Rusman, 2015). While government publications ensure curriculum fidelity, overreliance may limit creativity and contextual adaptation (Boche et al., 2021; Panjaitan et al., 2021). Schools should encourage varied and localized resources, including digital content and community knowledge, to enhance authenticity. A comparative study in Shanghai and Central Java found that although textbooks are essential, Indonesian teachers focus on adapting materials to student needs within a centralized system (Fan et al., 2025). Thus, professional development should reinforce alignment while fostering independence and creativity in resource customization.

Instructional Media

The instructional media component was rated Excellent (92.5), though 25% of entries were only partially appropriate. Teachers commonly listed relevant media such as images, videos, and real objects, but often did not explain their rationale or integration strategies. Media should be chosen for its pedagogical value in enhancing engagement, understanding, and retention rather than for decoration (Rusman, 2015). In Indonesia, media use remains limited due to insufficient training in media rich instruction (Ahmad et al., 2022). Professional development is needed to help teachers select and integrate media to promote interactivity and meet diverse learning needs.

International research shows similar challenges. In Namibian primary schools, inadequate ICT facilities and limited training hindered effective media use (Nkengbeza et al., 2022). A systematic review of digital pedagogy in primary education found persistent barriers including poor infrastructure, lack of sustained training, and limited institutional support, all restricting meaningful media integration (Azman et al., 2024). These findings emphasize the importance of training that covers both technical skills and strategies for context adaptation and pedagogical alignment.

Teaching Methods

This component was rated Good (83.4), with 16% not appropriate and 17% partially appropriate. Many teachers listed traditional methods without explaining their suitability, variation, or alignment with objectives. Instructional methods should be intentionally selected based on learner diversity, content complexity, and intended outcomes (Rusman, 2015). Some scholars similarly argue that effective teaching is less about variety and more about intentional alignment between strategy and desired outcomes (Kwon et al., 2023; Sajidan et al., 2022). This highlights the need for reflective pedagogical practice where teachers justify their choices and design lessons that activate learners. Evidence indicates that teacher centered practices remain common in Indonesian primary schools. For instance, a case study in Banten found that teachers dominated classroom discourse, limiting student participation (Rachman, 2019). Comparative international research shows that while modern, student centered methods enhance engagement and autonomy, their effectiveness is maximized when combined with traditional strategies in a hybrid model tailored to learners' needs (Falasi, 2024; Kristiyuana et al., 2025). These insights emphasize the need for professional development that introduces diverse teaching methods and fosters reflective decision making to support active, meaningful learning.

Learning Scenario

The evaluation rated the learning scenario component as Excellent (93.2), though only 67% of plans were fully appropriate. Most scenarios followed structured sequences, but some lacked coherent logic and failed to operationalize the scientific approach (Rusman, 2015). Similar findings in MI contexts show reliance on generic formats not tailored to classroom realities (Hidayah et al., 2022; Mukminin et al., 2019). Even when aligned with curriculum standards, scenarios are often insufficiently adapted to local conditions or realistic pacing. For instance, in border area schools, localized materials were used but scenario structures remained formulaic due to limited training and infrastructure (Okta & Putra, 2025). Reviews also warn that rigid adherence to sequential templates can hinder formative assessment and flexible responses (Retnowati et al., 2024; Sukma et al., 2023). Professional development should

therefore train teachers not only in standard frameworks but also in adapting scenarios, varying pacing, and applying scaffolded strategies responsive to real classroom contexts.

Authentic Assessment

This was the most critical weakness, scoring 74.2 (Fair), with only 33% fully appropriate and 25% not appropriate. Teachers often relied on written tests or vague assessment types without rubrics or performance tasks, despite the importance of authentic, performance based assessment in measuring not only knowledge but also application, analysis, and synthesis (Rusman, 2015). Stronger alignment between learning indicators and assessment is needed for accurate skill measurement (Rosyada & Retnawati, 2022), yet many teachers lack assessment literacy, particularly in designing performance tasks (Habibah, 2022). Addressing this requires intensive training, collaborative rubric design, and modeling of diverse strategies (Achmad et al., 2022; Habibah, 2022; Imamuddin et al., 2022). Persistent challenges have also been documented in Southeast Sulawesi, where teachers struggled to implement authentic assessment despite thematic learning training (Kadir & Hasri, 2021), and in Ghana, where performance tasks were used but results were not applied effectively, underscoring the need for technological support and professional development (Dwamena et al., 2024). Advancing authentic assessment therefore depends on strengthening teachers' capacity to design quality instruments and establishing systems that translate results into actionable teaching improvements.

Overall, while the analyzed lesson plans are of good quality, improvements are needed in specifying measurable learning objectives, diversifying teaching methods, using innovative media, and aligning authentic assessments with competency based learning. Continuous enhancement of teachers' lesson planning skills through training, mentoring, and access to updated resources is essential to support high quality, adaptive learning tailored to students' needs.

This study used a standardized checklist with explicit scoring criteria but relied mainly on expert judgment, introducing potential subjectivity despite consensus discussions. As common in document based evaluations, assessor perspectives may influence scores. Future research should incorporate triangulation with classroom observations, peer reviews, or student outcome data to improve objectivity and validity. This study contributes to the literature on lesson plan quality in primary education through a comprehensive component based analysis integrating administrative and pedagogical dimensions. It refines existing frameworks by highlighting the links between procedural completeness, instructional adaptability, and assessment alignment. Practically, the findings provide evidence based guidance for policymakers, school leaders, and teacher trainers in developing professional development and policy interventions that strengthen both technical skills and reflective practice. By connecting empirical evidence to actionable recommendations, the study supports the optimization of lesson planning as a strategic tool for effective, student centered learning.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that while thematic lesson plans in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school) demonstrate generally strong performance in areas such as indicator formulation, learning objectives, and resource selection, persistent weaknesses remain in

administrative completeness, teaching method alignment, and authentic assessment. Theoretically, these results reinforce the importance of integrating both administrative and pedagogical dimensions within lesson planning frameworks, as procedural clarity and instructional adaptability are equally vital for achieving intended learning outcomes. Practically, the study provides empirical evidence that can inform targeted professional development, policy formulation, and school level interventions aimed at improving not only the structural compliance of lesson plans but also their instructional depth and responsiveness to diverse student needs. Looking ahead, this research offers a foundation for developing more adaptive and evidence based lesson planning practices in primary education. Its insights can guide policymakers in balancing curriculum standardization with flexibility, support teacher trainers in embedding reflective and context sensitive approaches into professional learning programs, and inspire further studies that link lesson planning quality to measurable improvements in student engagement and achievement. By bridging research and practice, these contributions can help advance the quality of thematic learning toward more effective, student centered education.

Recommendations

This study has certain limitations, as it relied primarily on document-based evaluations using expert judgment, which may introduce subjectivity despite consensus discussions. At the practical and policy levels, teachers should continue to apply innovative strategies and authentic assessments, while education authorities must provide ongoing professional development and allow curriculum flexibility. Therefore, future research should incorporate triangulation with classroom observations, peer reviews, and student outcome data to strengthen objectivity and validity. Moreover, longitudinal investigations are needed to examine the sustained impact of lesson planning improvements, the role of professional learning communities, and the effectiveness of digital tools and adaptive planning models in enhancing thematic learning.

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