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IMPROVING THE SOCIAL SKILLS OF STUDENTS WITH ADHD THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THINK-PAIR-SHARE COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY AT BND KAUBUN KINDERGARTEN

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to enhance the social skills of students with ADHD by employing a cooperative learning methodology, namely the think-pair-share model, at BND Kaubun Kindergarten. Although cooperative learning has been widely applied in early childhood education, limited studies have specifically examined its effectiveness in improving the social skills of students with ADHD in kindergarten settings, particularly through the integration of engaging physical-motor activities. This research employed the Kemmis and McTaggart Classroom Action Research framework, consisting of two cycles. The research subject consisted of one student exhibiting ADHD symptoms in Group B. Data collection methods included a social skills attitude evaluation instrument and observational learning assessments. The study employed quantitative methods for the outcomes of the attitude evaluation scale and qualitative methods for observational data. The results indicated a significant enhancement in the social skills of the student with ADHD in Group B at BND Kaubun Kindergarten. This success resulted from the application of the think-pair-share cooperative learning strategy, complemented by engaging physical-motor stringing activities. This implementation positively influenced the student's ability to respond to questions, take turns speaking, share, cooperate, manage emotions, and demonstrate empathy. The improvement was evidenced by increased scores on the attitude scale, from 28% in the pre-action stage to 44.44% and 66.77% in Cycle I, and further to 86.11% and 94.44% in Cycle II. This progress is attributed to the student's enthusiasm for collaborative learning and interest in hands-on activities using novel materials. Therefore, this study implies that the integration of structured cooperative learning strategies with interactive physical activities can serve as an effective approach for educators to support the social development of students with ADHD in early childhood education settings.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education plays a crucial role in laying a strong foundation for children's overall development, encompassing cognitive, emotional, physical, and social domains (Li et al., 2024). At this stage, children begin to learn how to communicate, cooperate, and build relationships with others, making it a critical period for fostering essential social skills. These skills include sharing, taking turns, understanding emotions, and developing empathy, all of which are necessary for effective interaction within their immediate environment, such as family, school, and the broader community (Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024).

In this context, inclusive education becomes highly significant. Inclusive education emphasizes the provision of equal learning opportunities for all children, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or developmental conditions (Pradhan & Naik, 2024). It ensures that children with special needs are not excluded from mainstream educational settings but are instead supported within them. Inclusive education not only enhances academic achievement but also promotes positive social development by encouraging interaction among diverse groups of learners. Through inclusive practices, children learn to appreciate differences, develop tolerance, and build mutual respect, which are essential values in a diverse society (Aguis, 2024).

One developmental condition frequently identified in early childhood is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity, which can significantly affect a child's ability to function effectively in educational and social settings (Cortese et al., 2025). Children with ADHD may experience difficulties in maintaining focus, following instructions, waiting for their turn, and regulating their behavior. These challenges can hinder their participation in classroom activities and limit their ability to form positive relationships with peers.

Therefore, the integration of inclusive education practices in early childhood settings is particularly important for supporting children with ADHD. By providing appropriate interventions, structured learning environments, and individualized support, educators can help these children develop better self-regulation, improve attention skills, and enhance their social interactions (Wilson et al., 2024). In addition, collaboration between teachers, parents, and specialists is essential to ensure that the unique needs of each child are met effectively.

In conclusion, early childhood education, when combined with inclusive approaches, plays a vital role in supporting the holistic development of all children, including those with ADHD (Yermakova et al., 2025). It not only facilitates academic growth but also nurtures social competence, enabling children to participate actively and successfully in their learning environments and society as a whole.

Children with ADHD often encounter significant challenges in developing positive social relationships. These challenges include difficulties in waiting for their turn, adhering to rules, and demonstrating self-control (Bullard et al., 2024). Such limitations hinder the natural development of social skills that typically emerge through everyday interactions. Furthermore, deficits in impulse control and emotional regulation are considered major barriers to social development among children with ADHD (Puspitasari & Setiawati, 2025). In addition, these children frequently struggle to interpret subtle social cues, such as facial expressions and tone of voice, which increases their risk of social rejection or isolation (Indahyanti & Dollah, 2024).

Emotional regulation difficulties are also closely linked to impulsive and sometimes aggressive behaviors in social contexts. Therefore, children with ADHD require structured instructional approaches that incorporate consistent guidance, positive reinforcement, and opportunities for guided social interaction (Fidosieva, 2025). These strategies are essential to help them adapt and function effectively within social environments.

At the early childhood education level, the development of social skills is a fundamental component of learning. Children are introduced to basic competencies such as sharing,

communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Within the Independent Curriculum, these competencies are embedded in the "Identity" element, which includes emotional maturity and social awareness. However, children with ADHD require more specific and structured instructional strategies due to their limitations in attention control and emotional regulation.

Previous studies have demonstrated that cooperative learning strategies can enhance social interaction and student engagement. In addition, several studies have explored interventions for children with ADHD, primarily focusing on behavioral management and structured instruction (Ogundele & Ayyash, 2023). Nevertheless, most existing research has not specifically integrated cooperative learning models, such as Think-Pair-Share (TPS), with engaging physical-motor activities in inclusive early childhood settings. This indicates a research gap regarding the combined implementation of structured cooperative strategies and hands-on activities to improve social skills in children with ADHD.

Therefore, the novelty (state of the art) of this study lies in integrating the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) cooperative learning model with physical-motor stringing activities within a classroom action research framework in an inclusive kindergarten setting. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on behavioral interventions or general cooperative learning, this study combines structured interaction stages with sensory-motor engagement to create a more adaptive and engaging learning environment for children with ADHD.

Initial observations conducted at BND Kaubun Kindergarten revealed that 6 out of 12 students in Group B demonstrated underdeveloped social skills. Among them, one student (ML) had been identified with ADHD by a child psychologist. This student frequently exhibited impulsive behavior, limited attention span, and difficulty following instructions during structured activities such as role-playing. The initial instructional strategy applied by the teacher, namely role-playing, did not produce optimal outcomes, as the student continued to face difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, turn-taking, and understanding basic social rules.

To address these challenges, the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) cooperative learning strategy was implemented. This approach was selected because it emphasizes structured collaboration, active participation, and clear procedural stages (Othman et al., 2026). Argue that children with ADHD benefit significantly from structured and guided instruction to maintain focus and understand tasks effectively. The TPS model facilitates this through three main stages: thinking individually, pairing with peers, and sharing ideas with the group. These stages create a safe and interactive learning environment, enabling children with ADHD to practice cooperation, active listening, and respect for others' perspectives.

The implementation of TPS at BND Kaubun Kindergarten followed six phases: (1) conveying learning objectives and engaging students through play activities, (2) presenting material through demonstrations, (3) organizing heterogeneous groups consisting of students with and without ADHD, (4) facilitating group activities supported by educational play such as stringing tasks, (5) conducting evaluation through observation and reflection, and (6) providing rewards or positive reinforcement, such as stickers and verbal praise. Through this structured approach, children with ADHD are encouraged not only to participate collaboratively but also to regulate their emotions and build positive social relationships.

Based on this background, two research questions were formulated: (1) How can the TPS approach improve the social skills of children with ADHD? and (2) What are the outcomes of implementing this strategy at BND Kaubun Kindergarten? Accordingly, this study aims to improve both the learning process and the outcomes related to social skill development among children with ADHD.

The significance of this study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it contributes to the advancement of inclusive education research, particularly in the application of cooperative learning strategies for children with special needs. Practically, it provides educators with a structured and applicable approach to managing learning for children with

ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Furthermore, educational institutions may utilize these findings to design more effective inclusive curricula and instructional strategies that support the development of students' social skills.

METHOD

This study employed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology based on the Kemmis and McTaggart framework, which consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Nora et al., 2025).

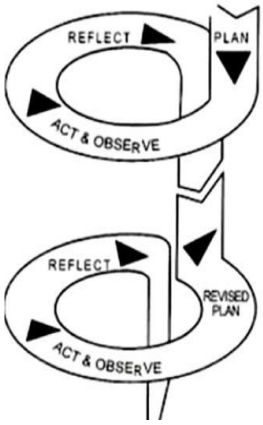

Figure 1. Kemmis and McTaggart Model
Source: Aliyah et al. (2023)

Classroom Action Research was selected because it enables teachers to directly identify problems and implement practical solutions within the classroom context (Munawaroh, 2025). This method is considered effective in improving children's social skills through cooperative learning strategies, as it involves structured, cyclical, and reflective actions aimed at enhancing the quality of the learning process.

Research Time

This study was conducted over a period of five months, from December 2024 to May 2025. The implementation took place weekly, with two meetings in each cycle. The research consisted of two cycles, with each session lasting 35 minutes.

Description of Research Site

This research was conducted at BND Kaubun Kindergarten, located in Kaubun District, Kadungan Jaya Village, East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan. The school is equipped with adequate facilities to support learning activities, including comfortable classrooms and sufficient educational teaching aids.

Subjects and Their Characteristics

A research subject refers to an individual or entity that becomes the focus of the study. The subject of this research was a child in Group B at BND Kaubun Kindergarten, identified by the initials ML, a 6-year-old male diagnosed with ADHD.

The child demonstrated characteristics commonly associated with ADHD, including inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. These behaviors affected his social skills, particularly in areas such as turn-taking, listening to peers, participating in group activities, and regulating emotions. In social interactions, children with ADHD may display either aggressive or passive tendencies. Subject ML exhibited clear symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which significantly influenced his social functioning.

Action Scenario

This study applied a Cooperative Learning strategy using the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) model, following the four stages of Classroom Action Research: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Fawale, 2023).

Planning Stage: The researcher conducted an initial assessment, identified social skill deficits in the child with ADHD, developed learning strategies, arranged a research schedule, and prepared assessment instruments.

Action Stage: The intervention was implemented in two cycles, each consisting of two meetings conducted collaboratively with the classroom teacher. The implementation followed the TPS procedure, including forming pairs, facilitating discussions, conducting presentations, evaluating learning outcomes, and providing recognition.

Observation Stage: Observations were carried out to document student participation and the implementation of the TPS strategy using an attitude assessment scale.

Reflection Stage: The results of each cycle were evaluated to identify strengths and weaknesses. Improvements were then formulated and applied in the subsequent cycle. After the first cycle showed suboptimal results, refinements were made for the second cycle based on observational findings.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Attitude Scale Assessment: This instrument was used to observe children's responses during interactions with teachers and peers. The aspects assessed included communication, turn-taking, cooperation, self-control, sharing, and empathy.

Observation: Observations were conducted during the learning process to monitor both teacher and student activities, as well as the implementation of the TPS strategy. Structured observation guidelines were used to ensure consistency.

Research Instruments

Children's Social Skills Attitude Assessment Scale: This instrument measured children's social skills based on observed behaviors during interactions. The scoring system consisted of four categories:

- Score 0: Not Yet Developed (BB)
- Score 1: Beginning to Develop (MB)
- Score 2: Developing as Expected (BSH)
- Score 3: Very Well Developed (BSB)

Observation Guidelines: These were used to systematically observe teacher and student activities before, during, and after the implementation of the TPS model.

Action Success Criteria: The success of the intervention was determined based on both process and outcome indicators, specifically the improvement of social skills in children with ADHD after implementing the TPS cooperative learning model. Success was measured using the BB, MB, BSH, and BSB categories (scores 0–3). The intervention was considered successful if at least 76% of the children achieved the BSB category (very well developed).

Data Analysis Techniques: This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative descriptive analysis techniques.

Quantitative Analysis: Applied to the social skills attitude scale data using scores ranging from 0 to 3 (BB to BSB). The analysis followed steps including determining the maximum score, calculating individual student scores, and converting them into social skill achievement levels (Haneef, 2024).

Qualitative Analysis: Used to analyze observational data from classroom activities. This process involved interpreting field notes through detailed, analytical, and descriptive narration, qualitative analysis produces descriptive data based on observational frameworks, which are then presented in narrative form, both written and verbal (Gülpınar, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

1. Pre-Action Implementation

The research subject was a 6-year-old male child with ADHD in Group B of BND Kaubun Kindergarten. Before the intervention was implemented, the researcher conducted a pre-action stage to determine the child's initial level of social skills.

The assessment was based on six aspects of social skills: (1) communication, (2) turn-taking in speaking, (3) cooperation, (4) self-control, (5) sharing, and (6) empathy. Each aspect was measured using specific indicators.

Table 1. Pre-Action Values of The Social Skills Attitude Assessment Scale for Children

Subject	Maximum Score	Pre-Action Score	Percentage
ML	36	10	28%

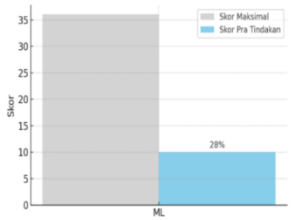

Figure 2. Comparison of Maximum Score and Pre-Action Score

The data indicate that the child obtained a score of 10 out of 36 (28%), which shows that the child's social skills were still in the low category prior to the intervention.

2. Description of Pre-Action Social Skills

The pre-action social skills assessment shows that subject ML achieved a score of 10 (28%), indicating low social skill development. The assessment covered six aspects: (a) communication (answering and responding), (b) turn-taking in speaking, (c) cooperation in groups, (d) self-control, (e) sharing ability, and (f) empathy.

Each aspect was measured through observable indicators reflecting the child's ability to interact socially during learning activities.

3. Cycle I Implementation

Cycle I consisted of three meetings: one pre-action meeting (March 11, 2025) and two action meetings (March 13 and 19, 2025). The main activity involved bead stringing tasks conducted in pairs to improve social skills in children with ADHD symptoms.

a. Planning: At this stage, the researcher developed learning modules based on initial observations and students' abilities. Learning media such as videos and images, teaching materials, and assessment instruments were also prepared. The pre-action activity was conducted to determine the initial level of social skills before the intervention.

b. Action Implementation: Two meetings were conducted on March 13 and 19, 2025. The activities focused on group and pair-based learning to enhance social interaction, following structured stages: introduction, core activity, and closing.

1) **Meeting I:** The first meeting was held on March 13, 2025, with the theme *"Objects Around Me."* Students created bracelets, rings, and necklaces through bead stringing activities with teacher guidance.

Initial Activities: The teacher conditioned the class, greeted students, led a prayer, and introduced the activity through songs and apperception.

Core Activities: The teacher presented videos and images demonstrating bead stringing. Students were divided into groups of four and worked in pairs. They collaborated to create bracelets, practicing communication, cooperation, patience, and empathy.

Closing Activities: Evaluation was conducted by asking students to identify materials and observing their interaction. The session ended with reflection, rewards, and prayer.

2) **Meeting II:** The second meeting was conducted on March 19, 2025. The learning process followed similar steps with improved engagement.

Students participated in group discussions, practiced bead stringing, and demonstrated social skills such as sharing tools, cooperating, and communicating empathetically. During evaluation, students presented their work and identified materials used, reflecting both cognitive understanding and social interaction.

c. Observation of Cycle I: The observation focused on students' social skills, teacher performance, and student responses. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Social Skills Scores During Three Meetings

Meeting	Maximum Score	Acquisition Score	Percentage
Pre-Action	36	10	28%
Meeting I	36	16	44.44%
Meeting II	36	24	66.77%

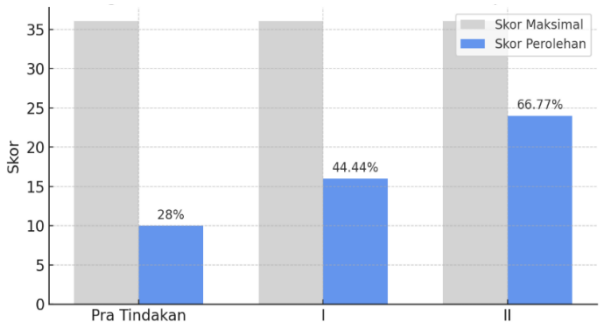

Figure 3. Comparison of Maximum Score and Score Achieved per Meeting

The data show a significant improvement in social skills from pre-action to Meeting II. This improvement was influenced by bead stringing activities conducted in pairs and groups, which encouraged active social interaction. Students became more enthusiastic and began to respond to questions more confidently, although they still required repeated instructions and showed limited self-confidence.

d. Reflection of Cycle I: Reflection was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and plan improvements. The results showed an increase in social skills; however, the achievement had not yet reached the success indicator (76%). Several challenges were identified: Students were easily distracted due to differences in materials, External disturbances from other students and Limited cooperation and empathy between pairs. To address these issues, improvements were planned for Cycle II: Standardizing materials and tools, Strengthening classroom management, Minimizing external distractions, Providing rewards to motivate cooperation. Since the results were not optimal, the research continued to Cycle II.

4. Cycle II Implementation

Cycle II was conducted in two meetings: April 10 and April 17, 2025. This cycle maintained the same learning structure as Cycle I, with improvements based on reflection results.

a. Planning: Improvements included: Ensuring uniform materials, Better classroom conditioning, Providing rewards for cooperative work.

b. Action Implementation

1) **Meeting I:** Conducted on April 10, 2025, students engaged in bead stringing activities with improved structure and supervision. They worked collaboratively in pairs, demonstrating improved communication, cooperation, and empathy.
2) **Meeting II:** Held on April 17, 2025, the activities followed similar steps. Students showed better participation, communication, and emotional control. They were able to share roles, complete tasks collaboratively, and present their work confidently.

c. Observation of Cycle II: The results of Cycle II are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Result of Cycle II

Meeting	Maximum Score	Acquisition Score	Percentage
I	36	31	86.11%
II	36	34	94.44%

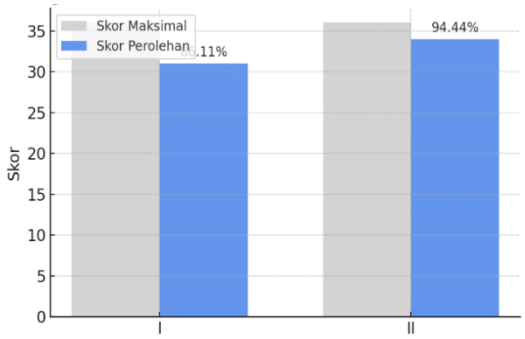

Figure 4. Comparison of Maximum Score and Achieved Score (Meetings I & II)

The results show a significant increase in social skills from 86.11% to 94.44%. Students demonstrated improved focus, confidence, cooperation, and self-control. They followed instructions more effectively and interacted positively with peers.

Teachers contributed significantly by maintaining structured learning, consistent materials, and providing motivation and reinforcement.

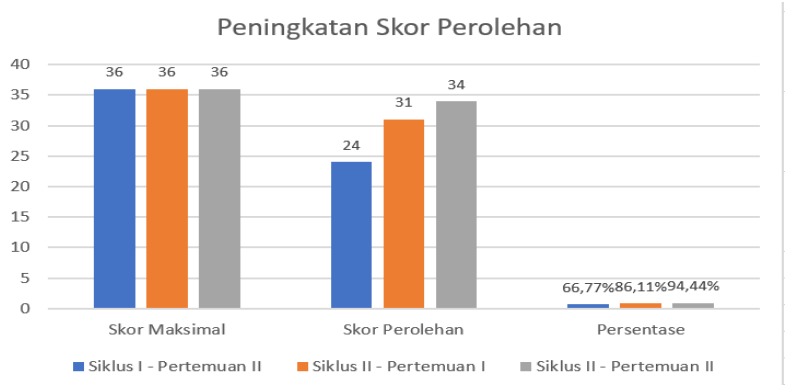

Figure 6. Graph Improvement Score Acquisition Cycle I Meeting II, Cycle II Meeting I and II

d. Reflection of Cycle II: The reflection results indicate that the intervention was successful. Students' social skills improved significantly and exceeded the success criterion of 76%. This improvement was supported by: Increased teacher supervision, Structured cooperative learning (TPS), Engaging and meaningful activities, Consistent reinforcement

and motivation. Overall, students were able to interact more effectively, complete tasks collaboratively, and demonstrate empathy, cooperation, and communication skills.

Discussion

The research subject, a 6-year-old male student with the initials ML at BND Kaubun Kindergarten, demonstrated symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) that significantly affected his social skills. ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties in regulating attention and controlling hyperactive behavior. This is consistent with the definition provided by the American Psychiatric Association (Sonuga-Barke et al., 2023), which identifies inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity as the core symptoms of ADHD. These characteristics contribute to delays in social skill development among children with ADHD compared to their peers (Ulu Aydin et al., 2024).

Initial observations revealed that 6 out of 12 students exhibited underdeveloped social skills, with ML demonstrating the most significant challenges. His impulsive behaviors such as speaking out of turn, difficulty following rules, and limited attention can be linked to deficits in executive functioning and emotional regulation (Bullard et al., 2024). These limitations hinder effective social interaction, supporting the argument that poor impulse control is a primary barrier to social development in children with ADHD. Furthermore, the limited effectiveness of the previously implemented role-playing method indicates that less structured approaches may not adequately support children with ADHD, who require more systematic and guided interventions (Nwankwo et al., 2024).

The implementation of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) cooperative learning strategy, combined with beading activities, provided a structured and interactive learning environment that addressed these challenges. From a theoretical perspective, cooperative learning, as proposed, emphasizes positive interdependence and individual accountability, both of which are essential for promoting social interaction (Azizi et al., 2025). The TPS stages thinking, pairing, and sharing are aligned with constructivist learning theories, allowing students to process information individually before engaging in guided peer interaction. This structured approach helps reduce impulsivity by providing clear turn-taking opportunities and predictable social routines (Ahmad, 2025).

The findings of this study demonstrate a significant improvement in ML's social skills, including turn-taking, cooperation, sharing, emotional regulation, and empathy. This improvement can be explained by the integration of structured interaction and engaging physical-motor activities. The use of beading activities played a crucial role in maintaining attention and increasing student engagement. This is consistent, who emphasize the importance of multimodal and activity-based interventions for children with ADHD. The hands-on nature of the activity supports sensory engagement, which helps children remain focused during social interaction tasks (Walsh et al., 2025).

Compared to previous studies, this research provides new insights. Sprimarily focused on behavioral interventions and parent-teacher training to manage ADHD-related behaviors (Alqifari et al., 2025). Highlighted structured classroom strategies without specifically integrating cooperative learning models. In addition, studies on cooperative learning have demonstrated its effectiveness in improving social interaction in general student populations but have not specifically addressed its application for children with ADHD in early childhood settings (Pajaron & Labitad, 2025). Therefore, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that integrating the TPS model with physical-motor activities is particularly effective for young children with ADHD in inclusive classrooms.

Furthermore, the structured phases of TPS directly address the core deficits of ADHD as identified by the American Psychiatric Association. The "think" phase supports attention and individual cognitive processing, the "pair" phase facilitates guided social interaction in a controlled setting, and the "share" phase enhances communication skills and self-confidence.

This step-by-step interaction reduces cognitive overload and supports gradual social engagement, which may explain the significant improvements observed in this study (Swargiary, 2025).

In conclusion, the findings indicate that the Think-Pair-Share cooperative learning model is both effective and theoretically appropriate for addressing social skill deficits in children with ADHD. By combining structured interaction with engaging and meaningful activities, this approach offers a more adaptive, practical, and evidence-based alternative to traditional teaching methods in inclusive early childhood education settings.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of cooperative learning through the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) model, integrated with beading activities, has effectively improved the social skills of children with ADHD symptoms at BND Kaubun Kindergarten. The improvement is evident in several aspects of social skills, including the ability to respond to questions, take turns in speaking, share, cooperate, demonstrate self-control, and show empathy during learning activities.

The quantitative data further support these findings, showing a significant increase in achievement from 28% in the pre-action stage to 94.44% in the second meeting of Cycle II. In particular, the subject ML demonstrated consistent and meaningful progress in communication, cooperation, and self-regulation.

In addition, the TPS strategy not only supports the development of social skills but also promotes more active student engagement, creates a more enjoyable learning environment, and enhances children's motivation to participate. The use of small group and pair discussions allows children to feel more comfortable expressing their ideas and actively engaging in the learning process.

Therefore, the Think-Pair-Share model can be considered an effective alternative instructional strategy for improving the social skills of children with ADHD. Furthermore, this approach has the potential to be extended to support other areas of development, including cognitive, motor, and language skills, across broader educational contexts.

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