



## Gender Differences in Academic Performance of Basic 3 Adhd Pupils Taught Social Studies Using Cross-Age Peer Tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates gender differences in the academic performance of Basic 3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) pupils taught Social Studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The study employed a quasi-experimental design, comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of male and female ADHD pupils exposed to cross-age peer tutoring. Results revealed that male pupils performed better than their female counterparts at both stages, with a statistically significant difference confirmed by ANCOVA analysis ( $F = 590.158, p < 0.05$ ). These findings suggest that while cross-age peer tutoring enhances learning outcomes for ADHD pupils, gender disparities persist, potentially influenced by cognitive, social, and environmental factors. The study highlights the effectiveness of peer tutoring in supporting ADHD learners by providing structured interactions that enhance engagement and retention. However, the observed gender gap calls for targeted interventions to improve female pupils' learning experiences. Recommendations include teachers implementing additional support mechanisms to enhance the learning experiences of female ADHD pupils. This may include tailored instructional materials, differentiated instruction, and mentoring programs

## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's classroom, students exhibit diverse learning needs, posing significant challenges, particularly for those with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a brain-related condition that affects attention, impulse control, and hyperactivity, often impeding academic and social success. Barkley (2015) defines ADHD as a disorder marked by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that disrupts daily activities, academic performance, and social interactions. Typically diagnosed in childhood, ADHD can persist through adolescence into adulthood. Hinshaw (2018) characterizes it as a psychiatric condition typified by chronic inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Individuals with ADHD often struggle with executive functions, such as planning, time management, and organizational skills, which are critical for both academic achievement and social development.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), ADHD is primarily diagnosed in childhood, with symptoms often continuing into later stages of life (American Psychiatric Association, 2020). While its precise cause remains unclear, research suggests that genetic, environmental, and neurological factors play a significant role in its development. The manifestation of ADHD symptoms varies across individuals, with gender playing a pivotal role in how symptoms appear and are managed. Gender influences not only how ADHD presents but also how educators and society perceive and address the condition.

Gender is a socially constructed concept that extends beyond biological differences to encompass how societal values, classifications, and expectations shape male and female identities (Nzewi, cited in Meshach et al., 2019). It involves a complex interplay of biological, social, and cultural elements that affect both self-perception and external perceptions. The challenges faced by individuals with ADHD vary in severity and expression, influenced not only by individual traits but also by broader gender-related factors. Gender differences shape the way ADHD is exhibited, with variations that can either intensify or modify symptom expression. These differences are particularly evident in educational settings, where boys and girls may demonstrate distinct learning styles, behavioral tendencies, and academic engagement patterns. Research highlights significant gender-based variations in ADHD symptoms, with boys more likely to display externalized behaviors, such as hyperactivity and impulsivity, whereas girls tend to exhibit internalized symptoms, including inattention and difficulties with emotional regulation (Quinn & Madhoo, 2014).

The educational experiences of pupils with ADHD are significantly shaped by gender differences. Boys with ADHD often exhibit disruptive behaviors that draw the attention of educators, making their condition more noticeable and leading to earlier diagnoses. In contrast, girls with ADHD frequently display internalized symptoms such as daydreaming, disorganization, and poor academic performance, which may lead to underdiagnosis and inadequate

support in the classroom (Gershon, 2019). These disparities in symptom presentation influence the level of educational assistance received by boys and girls. Additionally, societal expectations regarding gender roles can exacerbate the academic difficulties faced by children with ADHD. For instance, boys are often expected to be more physically active, making their hyperactivity seem more acceptable, whereas girls may experience greater pressure to exhibit self-control, which can lead to their symptoms being overlooked. As a result, girls with ADHD may receive less tailored intervention despite facing significant academic challenges.

ADHD substantially affects academic performance, as pupils with the condition often struggle with maintaining focus, managing time, and completing assignments. These challenges frequently result in lower academic achievement compared to their non-ADHD peers (Martel et al., 2020). Additionally, ADHD pupils tend to experience difficulties with organizational skills, leading to incomplete assignments, lower test scores, and academic underperformance. Beyond these cognitive and behavioral challenges, emotional regulation difficulties and social struggles further compound their academic setbacks, creating a cycle of poor performance and diminished self-esteem. For instance, boys with ADHD may exhibit disruptive classroom behaviors, attracting educators' attention and prompting intervention, whereas girls with ADHD, who often present less conspicuous symptoms, may be overlooked. In subjects like Social Studies, which require sustained attention and complex conceptual understanding, ADHD pupils face unique difficulties. However, structured interventions such as cross-age peer tutoring (CAPT) have proven effective in addressing these academic challenges while fostering social engagement.

Cross-age peer tutoring involves pairing students of different age groups, an approach that not only enhances academic performance but also facilitates behavioral improvements. Younger pupils benefit from guided learning, while older pupils reinforce their understanding and cultivate leadership skills (DuPaul & Stoner, 2014). One promising strategy for supporting ADHD pupils in Social Studies is cross-age peer tutoring, wherein older students mentor younger peers, offering structured guidance. Research suggests that CAPT improves academic performance, enhances self-esteem, and fosters social competence in both tutors and tutees (Cohen et al., 2019). For ADHD pupils, the benefits of CAPT are particularly notable. By creating a supportive, non-threatening learning environment, older students can model appropriate behaviors and effective study strategies, while younger pupils receive individualized support. This method is especially useful in Social Studies, where complex topics benefit from peer explanations and discussions. Moreover, CAPT can counteract gender-related academic disparities by providing diverse role models and reinforcing positive study habits across gender lines, ensuring that both boys and girls with ADHD receive equitable learning opportunities.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Pupils with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) encounter significant challenges in academic environments, particularly in subjects like Social Studies that demand sustained focus, critical thinking, and collaboration. However, gender differences in the learning behaviors of ADHD pupils are often overlooked. Boys and girls with ADHD respond differently to peer tutoring, affecting the effectiveness of collaborative learning strategies. The limited research on gender-specific responses to CAPT creates a gap in understanding how best to adapt this method to the needs of all ADHD pupils.

Despite increasing recognition of ADHD in educational settings, there remains a lack of targeted, inclusive strategies to effectively address the unique needs of ADHD pupils, particularly in Social Studies among Basic 3 students. ADHD, characterized by persistent inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity, disrupts students' ability to engage with academic content and collaborative tasks. These cognitive and behavioral challenges hinder academic progress, often rendering conventional teaching methods ineffective. Furthermore, boys and girls with ADHD exhibit distinct learning behaviors and may respond differently to peer tutoring interventions. For example, boys may be more inclined to participate in competitive or peer-led activities, whereas girls may struggle with attention and social engagement in different ways. These variations raise important questions about how gender influences CAPT outcomes and whether the approach can be refined to meet the diverse learning needs of both male and female ADHD pupils.

This study aims to examine gender differences in the academic performance of Basic 3 ADHD pupils taught Social Studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

## **Aim and Objective of the Study**

The aim of the study is to investigate **gender differences in academic performance of Basic 3 ADHD pupils taught social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The specific objective is to:**

1. ascertain the mean difference in the academic performance of male and female Basic 3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder pupils taught Social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

## **Research Question**

1. What is the mean difference in the academic performance of male and female Basic 3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder pupils taught Social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?

## Hypotheses

The null hypotheses was formulated to guide the study at 0.05 significant level.

1. There is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female Basic 3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder pupils taught Social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of ADHD

**Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** is a neurocognitive condition characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, which profoundly affect learning and academic performance. ADHD is recognized as a disorder that disrupts cognitive functions essential for attention regulation, impulse control, and executive functioning, making it challenging for affected individuals to maintain focus on academic tasks (Taylor, 2019). It is also described as a developmental condition associated with deficits in working memory and self-regulation, often resulting in academic underachievement, particularly in structured educational settings (Bennett, 2020). Additionally, ADHD is identified as a chronic disorder that predominantly manifests in childhood and adolescence but frequently persists into adulthood, with symptoms that interfere with school performance, social interactions, and emotional regulation (Lawrence, 2021).

Children diagnosed with ADHD encounter significant learning challenges due to difficulties in sustaining concentration, processing instructional information, and adhering to academic guidelines. Studies indicate that pupils with ADHD frequently struggle with completing tasks, organizing schoolwork, and maintaining attention during lessons, all of which negatively impact their academic progress (Foster, 2018). Furthermore, ADHD often coexists with other learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and auditory processing disorders, compounding academic struggles and leading to lower performance in core subjects (Matthews, 2019). The inability to follow structured lesson plans and remain engaged in classroom activities places ADHD students at risk of academic lag, reinforcing the need for adaptive and individualized instructional strategies (James, 2020). Implementing effective classroom interventions, such as structured routines, positive reinforcement, and modified teaching approaches, is essential for mitigating these challenges and fostering academic success for ADHD learners in mainstream educational settings.

### *Gender Differences in Academic Performance*

Gender disparities in academic performance reflect measurable differences in educational outcomes between male and female students, influenced by

cognitive abilities, motivation, societal expectations, and pedagogical methods (Ogunleye, 2018). This gap is often attributed to variations in learning styles, self-regulation skills, and external social pressures (James, 2019). Gender differences in education can also be understood as disparities in subject preference, classroom engagement, and achievement levels, shaped by both intrinsic cognitive factors and extrinsic sociocultural influences (Benson, 2020).

Numerous studies suggest that female students tend to outperform their male counterparts in subjects requiring linguistic proficiency, such as reading and writing, due to their enhanced verbal abilities and greater attention to detail (Taylor, 2018). Roberts (2019) highlights that girls often exhibit higher levels of self-discipline, motivation, and organizational skills, which contribute to their academic success in language-based disciplines. Conversely, male students are generally observed to excel in subjects that require spatial reasoning and logical problem-solving, such as mathematics and science, due to cognitive processing differences (Anderson, 2020).

The adoption of interactive and collaborative learning strategies, such as cross-age peer tutoring, has proven effective in narrowing gender disparities in academic performance by fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment. Research shows that peer tutoring enhances student engagement and knowledge retention across genders by offering structured academic support and opportunities for collaborative learning (Foster, 2018). Female students, who may feel intimidated in competitive learning environments, often benefit from peer-assisted learning, where they receive encouragement and tailored guidance (Matthews, 2019). Likewise, male students gain from the structured interactions of peer tutoring, which enhance their concentration, problem-solving skills, and self-confidence (James, 2020). By integrating peer tutoring into classroom instruction, educators can bridge gender gaps in academic achievement and provide equitable learning support for all students.

#### *Cross-Age Peer Tutoring: Definition and Effectiveness*

Cross-age peer tutoring has emerged as an effective instructional approach for addressing the academic challenges associated with ADHD, as it provides structured and interactive learning experiences that enhance student engagement and knowledge retention. It is defined as a pedagogical strategy in which older, more knowledgeable students mentor younger or less experienced learners, fostering academic growth and social development (Harrison, 2019). Another perspective describes it as a collaborative learning method where a more proficient student provides structured guidance and scaffolding to a peer, reinforcing key concepts and improving academic performance (Mitchell, 2020). As an inclusive instructional strategy, cross-age peer tutoring accommodates diverse learning needs, particularly benefiting students with ADHD.

The application of cross-age peer tutoring in social studies instruction has demonstrated significant potential in improving the academic performance of

ADHD students by providing individualized support and reinforcing classroom learning. Studies indicate that peer-led instruction benefits ADHD learners by reducing anxiety, enhancing motivation, and promoting active engagement in learning activities (Williams, 2018). Additionally, the interactive nature of peer tutoring sustains attention and improves comprehension, as students participate in discussions and hands-on activities rather than relying on passive learning (Carter, 2019). The opportunity for immediate feedback and clarification from a peer tutor further facilitates information processing for ADHD students, leading to improved retention and application of knowledge in subject areas such as social studies (Anderson, 2020). By integrating structured peer interactions, educators can cultivate a supportive learning environment that addresses the distinct cognitive and behavioral needs of ADHD pupils.

Beyond its academic advantages, cross-age peer tutoring significantly contributes to the social and emotional development of ADHD students by fostering positive peer relationships and boosting self-confidence. Research suggests that students with ADHD frequently struggle with social interactions due to impulsivity and challenges in interpreting social cues, often leading to isolation and diminished self-esteem (Harper, 2019). Through peer tutoring, these students establish meaningful connections with their mentors, enhancing their sense of belonging and improving their communication skills (Richards, 2020). The structured and cooperative nature of peer tutoring sessions enables ADHD learners to develop essential social competencies, such as patience, teamwork, and problem-solving, in a supportive setting (Baxter, 2021). Consequently, cross-age peer tutoring not only enhances academic performance but also promotes the overall well-being of ADHD students, making it a valuable intervention in inclusive education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design incorporating pre-test and post-test assessments to examine the academic performance differences between male and female Basic 3 pupils diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) when taught Social Studies through cross-age peer tutoring. The study population comprised 1,157 Basic 3 ADHD pupils drawn from 55 primary schools within Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select three schools from this population, which were then designated to function as the experimental and control groups. To ensure fairness, simple random sampling was utilized to assign pupils from intact classes to the respective groups. The final sample consisted of 105 ADHD pupils, comprising 43 males and 62 females. Specifically, School 1 had 35 pupils (15 males and 20 females), School 2 had 31 pupils (11 males and 20 females), while School 3, which served as the control group, contributed 39 pupils (17 males and 22 females).

The primary instrument for data collection was the "Social Studies Performance Test" (SSPT), which was systematically structured into two sections. Section A gathered demographic details, including the pupil's name, age, gender, date of birth, grade level, class type, and class size, as provided by parents. Section B comprised 20 multiple-choice questions (options A-D) derived from Social Studies topics covered during the intervention phase. Each question featured a single correct answer alongside three distracters to maintain high-quality assessment standards. To ensure the validity and relevance of the instrument, a rigorous validation process was undertaken. Both content and face validity were established through meticulous reviews conducted by the research supervisor and two subject matter experts from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Furthermore, primary school-level Social Studies specialists reviewed the test items to confirm their alignment with the curriculum and instructional objectives.

To determine the reliability of the SSPT, the test-retest method was applied. Twenty ADHD pupils who were not part of the main study sample were administered the SSPT on two separate occasions with a two-week interval between tests. The Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to analyze the relationship between the initial and retest scores, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.750, which affirmed the instrument's consistency and dependability. Descriptive statistical tools, including mean and standard deviation, were employed to address the research question, while the hypothesis was subjected to statistical testing using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at a 0.05 level of significance. The entire statistical analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), ensuring accuracy and precision in the interpretation of research findings.

## RESULTS

### Research Question 1

What is the mean difference in the academic performance of male and female Basic 3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder pupils taught Social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of male and female basic 3 attention deficit hyperactivity disorder pupils taught social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State**

Group	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean gain
		Mean	Std	Mean	Std	
Male	15	12.35	1.76	22.11	2.35	9.76
Female	20	11.29	1.68	19.19	2.19	7.9

Table 1 reveals the mean and standard deviation of male and female Basic 3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder pupils taught Social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. It shows that male students had a mean score of (12.35) and standard deviation of (1.76), while the female students had (11.29) and standard deviation of (1.68) at pre-test stage. At post-test stage, male students had a mean score of (22.11) and a standard deviation of (2.35), while the female students had a mean score of (19.19) and standard deviation of (2.19). This indicates a mean difference of (9.76 and 7.9) for male and female students respectively. This shows that male students performed better than their female counterparts when taught Social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

### Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female Basic 3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder pupils taught Social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

**Table 2: ANCOVA Results of Performance of Male and Female Basic 3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder pupils taught Social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	3958.196	2	1985.197	295.140	.000	.634
Intercept	18145.371	1	17177.385	1223.110	.000	.236
Pretest	.175	1	.175	.005	.814	.000
Gender	3924.241	1	3784.394	590.158	.000	.634
Error	37227.769	32	37.877			
Total	46935.000	35				

Table 2 of the ANCOVA results reveal F-value of 590.158 and P-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  (which is less than) the chosen level of significant between 1 and 35 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected; hence the  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  level of significant. This suggests that there is significant difference in the mean performance of male and female Basic 3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder pupils taught Social studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

### DISCUSSION

Research Question One aimed to determine the mean difference in academic performance between male and female Basic 3 pupils diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) who were taught Social Studies using cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The results presented in Table 1 demonstrate that male students outperformed their female

counterparts in both the pre-test and post-test phases. Notably, male students exhibited higher academic performance even prior to the intervention, and this trend persisted following their exposure to the cross-age peer tutoring approach. These findings indicate that male pupils, on average, demonstrated a stronger grasp of the subject matter when instructed using this method.

The results from Hypothesis 1, as displayed in Table 2, further validate this trend. The ANCOVA analysis yielded an F-value of 590.158 and a P-value of 0.000, which falls below the predetermined significance level of 0.05. Given that the p-value is lower than the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis – stating that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female pupils – is rejected. This statistical outcome confirms the existence of a significant mean performance difference between male and female ADHD pupils when taught Social Studies through cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

The consistently higher academic performance of male students in this study may be influenced by several factors. Gender disparities in academic achievement have been extensively explored, with research suggesting that male students often excel in subjects requiring logical reasoning, such as Social Studies (Taylor, 2018). Moreover, male pupils may derive greater benefits from peer tutoring, particularly in ADHD-related learning contexts, where structured peer engagement enhances concentration and academic engagement (Richards, 2020). Conversely, female pupils might encounter distinct challenges that impede their academic performance, including socio-cultural expectations and lower self-efficacy in specific subject areas (James, 2020).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study investigated gender-based differences in the academic performance of Basic 3 ADHD pupils taught Social Studies through cross-age peer tutoring in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The findings revealed that male pupils consistently outperformed their female counterparts at both the pre-test and post-test stages. Furthermore, the ANCOVA results confirmed a statistically significant difference between the academic performance of male and female pupils, underscoring the role of gender in determining the effectiveness of cross-age peer tutoring as an instructional strategy for ADHD learners.

The study highlights the potential of cross-age peer tutoring in enhancing learning outcomes for ADHD pupils by fostering structured peer interactions that promote engagement, comprehension, and retention. However, the observed gender gap suggests that while this instructional method is beneficial to both male and female pupils, additional interventions may be necessary to provide targeted support for female pupils, ensuring they maximize their learning potential within the cross-age peer tutoring framework.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Educators should actively incorporate cross-age peer tutoring as a structured instructional strategy for teaching ADHD pupils in Social Studies and other subject areas. Given its demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing pupil engagement and academic achievement, this method should be widely adopted to optimize learning outcomes.
2. Since male pupils exhibited higher academic performance compared to their female counterparts, it is imperative that teachers implement targeted interventions to bridge this performance gap. Such measures may include the development of tailored instructional materials, the application of differentiated instructional techniques, and the establishment of mentorship programs specifically designed to support female ADHD pupils.
3. Teachers should undergo specialized training on the effective implementation of peer tutoring strategies, with an emphasis on adapting these methods to meet the diverse learning needs of both male and female ADHD pupils. Professional development programs should be structured to equip educators with the necessary skills to foster inclusive teaching practices that address gender-based learning differences.
4. Parents and caregivers should be actively encouraged to support cross-age peer tutoring initiatives by creating a conducive home environment that fosters collaborative learning. Additionally, schools should engage with local communities to develop mentorship programs that provide ADHD pupils with extended learning support, thereby reinforcing the effectiveness of peer tutoring beyond the classroom setting.

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