

# Normalization of Children and Adolescents Using Social Media in Their Daily Life

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## Background

- Social media is prominent in the lives of many children and adolescents because it has been integrated into our society.
- Over 60% of children under the age of 12 already engage with using smartphones, with many experiencing using a smartphone before the age of four. (Auxier et al., 2020).
- In the USA, 95% of teenagers have access to smartphones which allows adolescents to establish and maintain social networks because it is the typical way for their age group to communicate (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).
- Having constant access to smartphones can contribute to children and adolescents developing an attachment towards them, such as Mobile Phone Dependence (MPD) (Nikhita et al., 2015).
- The current study sought to investigate the relationship between age groups and their consumption of social media, along with the integration of social media into their lives.



## Results

- Analyses of variance were implemented to investigate differences amongst age categories in the SIEC and ISR.
- The SIEC differed by age category ( $F(2,136) = 6.732, p = 0.002$ ), such that children ( $M = 2.0505, SD = 0.98651$ ) were lower than both preteens ( $M = 2.6107, SD = 0.93922$ ) and teens ( $M = 2.7019, SD = 0.95363$ ).
- The ISR differed by age category ( $F(2,136) = 16.14, p = 0.000$ ), such that children,  $M = 2.78 (0.97)$  were lower than both preteens,  $M = 3.49 (0.90)$  and teens,  $M = 3.77 (0.85)$ .

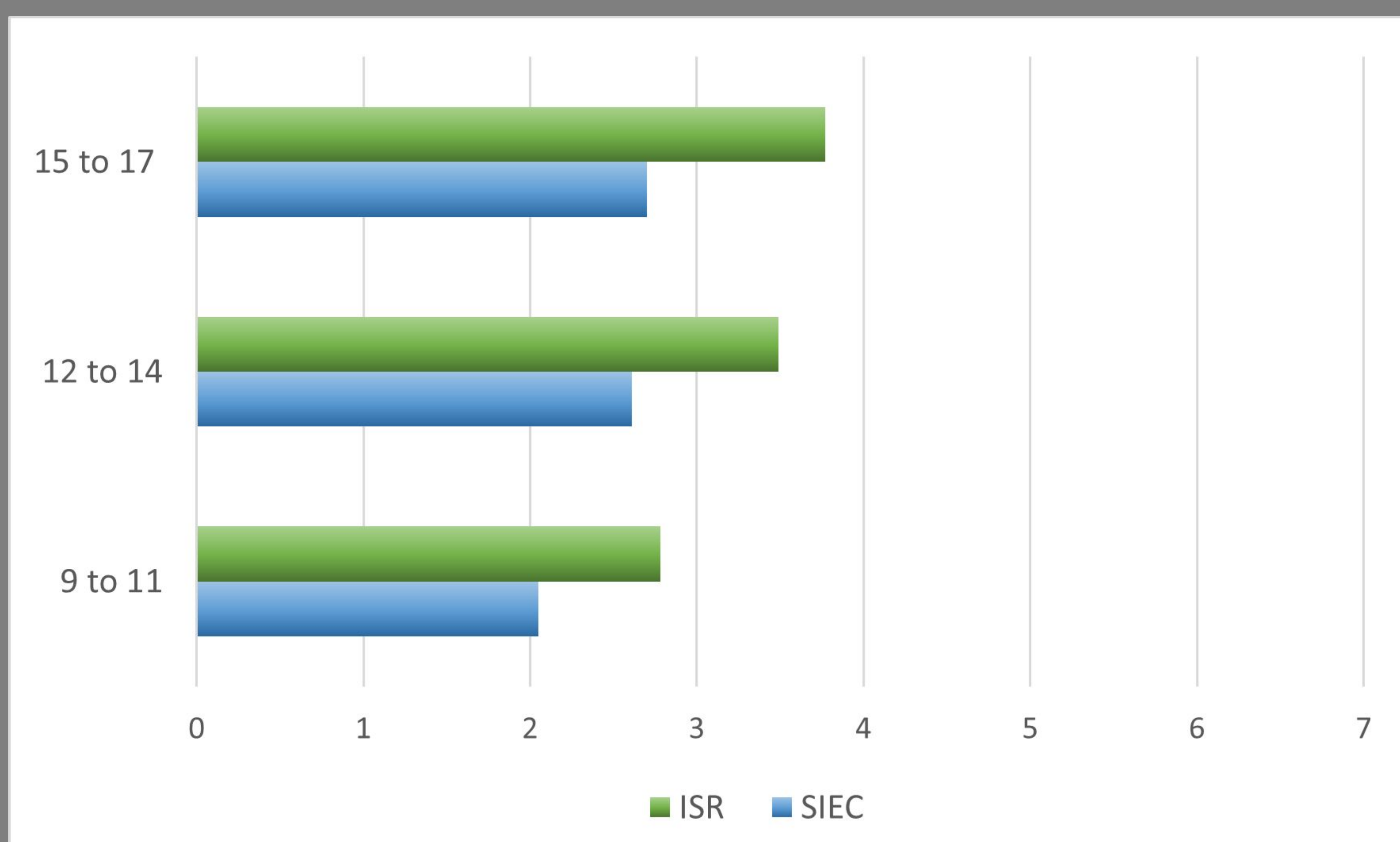
## Current Study

- Participants: 171 children and adolescents (91.3% Caucasian, 52% female)
- Participants divided into 3 categories:
  - 9-11 ( $n=52$ )
  - 12-14 ( $n=37$ )
  - 15-17 ( $n=52$ )
- Social Media Use and Integration Scale (SMUI) was utilized
  - Included two subscales:
    - Social Integration and Emotional Connection (SIEC)
      - E.g., Social media plays an important role in my social relationships.
    - Integration Into Social Routines (ISR)
      - E.g., Using social media is part of my everyday routine.

## Discussion

- The current study suggests that children are not as involved or attached to social media as adolescents are.
- Teens and preteens differ from children due to their age being the time when they are likely to access smartphones, allowing them to indulge in social media.
- The use and integration of social media in adolescence may originate from the societal popularization of using social media as a part of everyday life.

Figure 1: Mean of Social Media Integration Into Life by Age Category



Note: The subscales that are being used within this graph are the Social Integration and Emotional Connection Scale (SIEC) and the Integration Into Social Routines Scale (ISR).

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