

# Social Media Usage of Sri Lankan Consumers: Compulsive Consumption Perspective

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Social media has become pervasive, impacting the social and cultural fabric of our society and changing the nature of social relationships (Mahmood and Farooq, 2014). Facebook, being the second most visited website in the world and the most visited in Sri Lanka, could be identified as a special source of addiction. Today, an average user browses Facebook at least for 30 minutes a day as a habit using computers or smart devices and gets exposed to diverse content on Facebook (Andreassen et al., 2013; Griffiths, 2012). An addiction is known to destroy human beings and their relationships and Facebook addiction is no exception to this (Grant, Potenza, Weinstein, and Gorelick, 2010). Marlatt, Baer, Donovan, and Kivlahan (1988), defined addictive behaviour as “a repetitive habit pattern that increases the risk of disease and/or associated personal and social problems” or “the behaviour continues to occur despite volitional attempts to abstain or moderate use”. Compulsive, excessive, impulsive, uncontrolled, and indulgent were also listed instead of the term “addictive” (Alavi, Maracy, Jannatifard, and Eslami, 2011). According to Socialbakers.com, approximately there are 70% male users and 30% female users of Facebook in Sri Lanka. In this study, the researchers have

attempted to investigate the relationship between compulsive consumption behaviour on Facebook and the gender of those individuals. This relationship between gender of the user and the user’s addicted behaviour on Facebook is not only a highly interesting issue but a potential element which can affect the increase of compulsive buying behaviour on Facebook. Further, there has been a significant lack of empirical studies that investigate the relationship between gender of individuals and compulsive buying behaviour on Facebook. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To describe the degree of compulsive buying behavior on Facebook among Facebook users in Sri Lanka.
2. To examine if the Facebook addiction varies between males and females.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between gender of the individuals and compulsive consumption behavior on Facebook with special reference to Sri Lankan Facebook users. As per previous literature, the term addictive behavior on Facebook and compulsive buying behavior are used

interchangeably. Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) has identified many factors that might have been symptoms of Facebook addiction (Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg, and Pallesen, 2012). As the above research gap explains, there is a need to use salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse dimensions to examine Facebook addiction.

The study is descriptive in nature and a survey was carried out to test the association between compulsive consumption behaviors on gender of individuals. The research was single cross-sectional as data was collected from the sample at a single point of time. The unit of analysis was individual level consumers. Due to the unavailability of a sample frame, the convenience sampling technique was employed to draw the sample from the population and the sample size was 254. The survey method was used to collect data and sample data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire which was distributed among the respondents. Descriptive statistics were generated using SPSS version 23.

Following hypotheses were developed by the researcher in order to determine the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

**H1:** Degree of Facebook addiction is low among Facebook users in Sri Lanka.

**H2:** There is no significant difference between males and females in Facebook addiction.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to satisfy the reliability requirement Cronbach's Alpha values were calculated and they were greater than 0.7. Therefore, reliability of the variable

was satisfied. Moreover, KMO value of all dimensions of Facebook addiction were greater than 0.5, Sig value of the respected dimensions were less than 0.05, AVE values were greater than 0.5 and the composite reliability (CR) values were greater than 0.7. Therefore, convergent validity of respective dimensions was satisfied. All shared variances among constructs were lower than the AVE on the individual constructs satisfying discriminant validity.

In this section the researchers validate objectives by testing hypothesis developed for each objective by using analysis techniques as appropriate. The first objective is to describe the degree of Facebook addiction among Facebook users in Sri Lanka.

According to Objective 1, the Degree of Facebook addiction is tested by comparing whether the Mean ( $\mu$ ) of Facebook addiction variable (According to Table 1, Mean of Facebook addiction is 2.84) is significantly less than the test value (3); in the present case. Researcher decided to use 3 as test value because it is neutral score of the scale and to test whether the mean value of Facebook addiction is significantly towards the positive side of the value scale that used to measure all the items in the Facebook addiction variable.

(Scale: 1 - 2.5 = Normal users, 2.5 - 3.5 = Lightly Addicted, 3.5 - 5 = Seriously Addicted).

According to the Methodology, the test appropriate for this measure is one sample t-test.

According to the one sample t-test, the significant value is 0.004 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, the researcher concluded that mean value of Facebook addiction is not equal to 3 among Facebook users in Sri Lanka.



**Table 1:** Mean value of scale variables

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Facebook Addiction	254	2.8451	.84203	.280	.089
Valid N (list wise)	254				

**Table 2:** One sample Test for Degree of Facebook Advertising

Test Value = 3						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Facebook Addiction	-2.932	253	.004	-.15492	-.2590	-.0509

### 3.1 Gender and Facebook Addiction

Second objective is to examine whether there is a significant difference between males and females in terms of Facebook addiction. An independent sample t-test was carried out to see if there are any significant differences in the means of 2 groups in the variables interest (Table 3).

According to the result of Independent sample t-test, the significant value is 0.000 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05, the mean value of Facebook addiction of Males is significantly different to mean value of Facebook addiction of Females. Therefore, the researcher concluded that Facebook addiction varies according to the Gender.

**Table 3:** Independent Samples Test

Levene's Test					t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
FBA Equal variances assumed	2.363	.12551	4.014	252	.000	.41423	.10319	.21101	.61745
Equal variances not assumed			4.062	249.949	.000	.41423	.10197	.21339	.61506

According to the Table 4, 76 of respondents were Normal users, 88 of respondents were lightly addicted and rest of 90 respondents were seriously addicted to Facebook. Out of 88 of lightly addicted respondents, 21.4% of respondents are male and 40.4% of respondents are

female. Further, out of 90 of seriously Facebook addicted respondents, 53.6% of respondents are male and 13.2% of respondents are female. Therefore researcher concluded that males are lightly or seriously addicted to Facebook than females.

**Table 4:** Gender \* Facebook Addiction Categories Cross-tabulation

		Facebook Addiction Categories			Total	
		Lightly	Moderately	Highly		
Gender	Male	Count	30	35	75	140
		% within Gender	21.4%	25.0%	53.6%	100.0%
	Female	Count	46	53	15	114
		% within Gender	40.4%	46.5%	13.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	76	88	90	254

## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Among sample Facebook users, 55.1 % of respondents are Male while 44.9% of respondents are Female which indicated that there is no much difference between number of users according to gender. Although previous literature mentioned that Females are more in Facebook, current statistics suggest that Males (Mean - 3.0310) have used Facebook more than Females (Mean - 2.6168) in Sri Lankan context. As per Socialbakers.com, (which compiles social media statistics globally) higher number of Facebook users in Sri Lanka are males. So, this evidence is further validated by the sample's gender composition. Therefore researcher can conclude that marketing activities on Facebook should consider posting content that are favorable to men than women on Facebook, due to the fact that Male are dominant on Facebook in Sri Lanka. Majority of users (77.2%) are belong to age 18-27 which means that young generation in Sri Lanka is much engaged in Facebook. This finding is mainly consistent with the findings of Thompson (2012). In Thompson's (2012) study, gender differences were examined and according to the findings, females were more likely than males to report spending more time on Facebook. Liang, Zhou, Yuan, Shao, and Bian, (2016) pointed out that; males were more likely to surf the Facebook for pleasure and less likely to surf the facebook to search for

information, compared to females. These findings suggest that gender specific preventative and interventional strategies should be developed to reduce Facebook addiction.

There are many success stories about Facebook usage but at the same time, it also has some negative impacts because of addictive behavior on Facebook. Facebook addiction, excessive use of the Internet or, compulsive consumption behaviour on Facebook has been discussed. The amount of time spent on Facebook, checking social media frequently, spend entire nights on the site, daydreaming about the status updates and comments that have been received are the emerging evidence for negative impact of Facebook addiction. It is essential to understand the level of addiction to predict the other factors, because the reality of addictive behavior on Facebook is a growing problem for many users.

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