Use of Facebook Marketplace as a Shopping Medium: A Study of University Students of Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract

One of the important forms of E-commerce which is growing at a rapid speed across the globe is online classified business. Like other shopping portals/mediums online classified portals are also witnessing large number of internet users getting converted into their users. People use these online classified portals to buy or sell all sorts of used products. There are numerous local as well as multinational companies running diverse types of online classified businesses based on all known forms of business models viz Business to Business, Business to consumer, and consumer to consumer. The latest medium with many additional features is Facebook Marketplace launched by Facebook Inc. As Facebook has the highest users among all the social networking sites so it makes it captivating to investigate how Facebook Marketplace is being taken on by all the users of Facebook. The study has been conducted on university students in Jammu and Kashmir. The study not only contributes to the literature on the topic but the results provide valuable insights for Facebook for transforming the users of facebook into the users of marketplace too.

Keywords: E-commerce, Facebook, Facebook Marketplace, Online classified business, shopping medium, social networking sites.

1. Introduction

In a modern society like ours, technology has taken an important place in our lives. We use technology in every sphere of life be it in medical science, transportation, space engineering, manufacturing, entertainment or in daily life in our homes. Technology has made our life very easy with just a click of a button different tasks are done. Same holds true for shopping also. People shop within the comfort of their house.. Using technology and the internet for shopping purposes without any direct physical contact is called e-commerce or m-commerce. A more appropriate definition cited in Bagale (2014) is

"E-commerce is the use of electronic communications and digital information processing technology in business transactions to create, transform, and redefine relationships for value creation between or among organizations, and between organizations and individuals".

Wigand (1997) defines e-commerce as *"Electronic commerce denotes the seamless application of information and communication technology from its point of origin to its endpoint along the entire value chain of business*

processes conducted electronically and designed to enable the accomplishment of a business goal. These processes may be partial or complete and may encompass business-to-business as well as business to consumer and consumer-to-business transactions".

Another definition given by Zwass (1998) is *"The sharing of business information, maintaining business relationships, and conducting business transactions by means of telecommunications networks…Therefore as understood here, E-commerce includes the sell-buy relationships and transactions between companies, as well as the corporate processes that support the commerce within individual firms".*

Kalakota and Whinston (1996) have given a broader definition of e-commerce as *"E-commerce is associated with the buying and selling of information, products and services via computer networks today and in the future via any one of the myriads of networks that make up the Information Superhighway (I-way)".*

There are many authors who have jotted down various benefits which e-commerce can have for the business firms, customers or society as a whole. Some of the benefits being the cost of trading are very low, it is faster, it enables better-informed business decisions, and there is the least significance of actual location or geography (Schmid, Stanoevska-Slabeva & Tschammer, 2001). Other benefits may include that a shopper is not dependent on time (Purao & Campbell, 1998), and it makes a business location independent (Longenecker, Moore, Petty, & Palich, 2003; Purao & Campbell, 1998). Further marketplaces get expanded by going online, productivity gets augmented, value reductions, it provides a medium where business runs 24/7/365 and makes the exchange of knowledge and its management easier (McIvor & Humphreys, 2004; Raisinghani et al, 2005).

E-commerce is increasing at rapid speed all over the world and the same holds true for India. With the increase in the number of internet users the trade over the internet is also increasing and has a huge potential. India comes in second place after China in terms of connected internet users with 699 million internet users leaving behind all the developed countries also (List of countries, 2019). Table I shows that statistical reports by world-atlas rank India at second place in terms of highest internet users. Though this number is a small percentage of its population but that in itself indicates that the potential for increased internet users is still high.

Table I: Top Five Countries with highest Internet Users		
Rank	Countries	Internet Users (millions)
1	China	746
2	India	699
3	United States	245
4	Brazil	123
5	Japan	117

E-commerce has many types like Business to Business (B2B) e-g, Myntra.com & Amazon, Business to Consumer (B2C) e-g Bigcommerce.com & surveymonkey.com, and Consumer to Consumer (C2C) craigslist & facebook Marketplace, Peer to Peer (P2P) e-g Gnutella software. When a consumer buys anything from a business organization using technology it is a type of B2C e-commerce. There are different portals or websites from which one can shop varied types of products and services. Retailers develop a website, upload pictures and information of products on that, and integrate a payment gateway system with the website and start doing an online business. This concept and model of e-commerce has been there for quite a long time but the newest form of it is online classified business; which means using technology and internet for buying and selling used merchandise. Nowadays people not only use internet and technology for buying brand new products or services rather they also want to buy or sell their used products and for that, they need a medium. The portals which are used for buying or selling of used merchandise are called online classified portals. There are dedicated shopping portals for conducting online classified businesses wherein people post their ads or classifieds and interested parties communicate with the seller in order to close the deal. There are various types of online classified portals available on the internet like Quicker, OLX, eBay, and Facebook Marketplace etc.

Facebook Marketplace is a new initiative by Facebook incorporation in the field of online classified and e-commerce sector. The marketplace can be accessed through a normal Facebook profile and does not need any separate registration or profile creation. Just by a simple single click on Marketplace icon and a user can enter into the marketplace and start shopping. Facebook Marketplace has many features and can help a shopper to find sellers within his/her vicinity. A range can be given manually or GPS system of the mobile device can trace the sellers automatically within a certain range. Facebook Marketplace is not merely an option for buying and selling of products rather there are many other services also which can be availed through Facebook Marketplace.

As online classified business show a huge potential as per statistica.com. As stated by Riddhi (2012) its value is going to reach 22 billion INR in coming Years. Furthermore, India is expecting to see 70% of its internet users getting converted into digital buyers by 2020 ("eCommerce India." n.d.). With all these facts and figures and knowing that Facebook is a famous social networking site and is very much in vogue among youth it is expected that Facebook Marketplace would be well taken by them. Besides, the above mentioned facts and figures also make it intriguing to check how much facebook Marketplace is being used by the students. If not then what are the possible hindrances. This current study has also made an attempt to fill this gap and find out the usage of Facebook Marketplace among University students of Jammu and Kashmir.

2. Background and Previous Research

There are a plethora of studies which have been conducted around the globe in order to explore the factors which encourage and discourage e-commerce. Mostly the adoption depends upon different circumstances viz. environmental, technological and the organizational. The environmental circumstances comprise of the overall size

of the industry, legal and regulatory framework, competitors etc. The technological situation may include processes needed and the equipment required for going online. And organizational milieu may include its size, management, employee relations, human resource strength and skills, degree of centralization and formalization etc. There are other factors also which help in adopting e-commerce. Risk is the important factor on which e-commerce depends; if consumers don't feel safe it is likely that they won't use the internet as a medium for shopping. It is basically the apprehension of users that they might not get what they expect and they have a fear of frauds which happen while making payments online using credit cards etc (Bhatnagar, Misra & Rao, 2000). Shoppers also tend to go for e-commerce based on the advantages and benefits they derive from online shopping. Li, Kuo & Rusell, (1999) found that online shopping intentions depend upon the website accessibility. Other sub factors of a shopping experience like playfulness, effort, compatibility show mixed results in some cases these may impact the e-commerce usage while in certain circumstances they don't influence it (Goldsmith, 2002; Mathwick, Malhotra & Rigdon, 2001; Vijayasarathy & Jones, 2000). Vijayasarathy & Jones (2000) also found out that the service quality particularly helping customers with proper information before going for the actual purchase had an influence on purchasing online. There are many studies which say that people choose a website for shopping on the basis of trust also. Trust plays a significant role in online shopping (Friedman, Khan Jr & Howe, 2000; Hoffman, Novak & Peralta, 1999; Shneiderman, 2000). Chircu, Davis & Kauffman (2000) also found a positive impact of trust on online shopping intentions. E-commerce or shopping online also depends upon the type of customer, if a customer is time conscious and want to buy a product immediately s/he will not prefer buying online while an impulse and convenience-oriented customer who would prefer buying from the comfort of his home would prefer online shopping (Siu, Wang, Chang & Hui, 2001). Sometimes demographic characteristics like age, sex, level of education and income etc also play an important role in developing a preference for online buying. For example, it has been seen that males have more tendency towards shopping online than females (Li et al. 2010). The users' level of knowledge about computers also influences online shopping (Liao & Cheung, 2001). Besides all these factors a user's acquaintance with online shopping and computer experience also have a positive impact on e-commerce (Van Slyke, Comunale & Belanger, 2002). One of the most important components which have an important role in encouraging online shopping is the characteristics of products and overall websites. Websites when take measures which lower the level of risk play a significant role in making a positive impact on e-commerce. If a website sells a well-known brand or gives money back guarantee or gives offers and discounts to shoppers have a positive and significant impact on the online shopping intentions of customers (Van & Leunis, 1999). The above literature shows that there are different factors or parameters on which the adoption of e-commerce depends, and these parameters are valued differently by different people. All the studies in the above literature have been conducted on different online portals and in different geographical locations but there is a paucity of studies which might have been conducted on university students of the state of Jammu & Kashmir in India and Facebook Marketplace or any online classified portal as a

subject. Hence the current study has tried to fill this gap and has made an effort to check out the usage pattern of Facebook Marketplace among university students.

3. Contribution of the study

In addition of filling the research gap found during the review of literature this study will give insights to the Facebook about the usage pattern of Facebook Marketplace among the students. Besides, this study will be an addition to the literature related to the subject area. The study will be helpful to the researchers interested in conducting their research related to e-commerce sector.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To study online classified websites mostly used by University students across universities of Jammu & Kashmir Valley.
2. To find out which classified portal is the biggest competitor of Facebook Marketplace.
3. To explore different drivers which encourage University students to use Facebook Marketplace.
4. To find out the reasons which discourage University students from using Facebook Marketplace.
5. To study the perceived usefulness of Facebook Marketplace based upon select demographic factors.
6. To know the purpose for which students use Facebook Marketplace.

5. Research Methodology

In order to find out the usage of newly added feature/service of facebook inc. i-e Facebook Marketplace, a quantitative method was used by the distribution of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended as well as close-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; Part A consisted of demographic questions while Part B consisted of items focusing on the usage of Facebook Marketplace. Using the Krejcie and Morgan formula table for the optimum sample size for known population, the sample for the study came out to be 385. A multi-cluster stage sampling was used with a combination of systematic random sampling. A total of 450 questionnaires were circulated among the students and 408 were collected, which indicates a response rate of 90.6%. After sorting the questionnaires and taking the incomplete ones out, 398 were found suitable for the study, making the effective sample size as 398. The data was then evaluated and interpreted with the help of an analytical tool The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) VERSION 20.

6. Data Analysis and Results

Depending upon the objectives frequency, mean and independent sample T-test was employed. The items of perceived usefulness were measured on a five-point Likert scale wherein 1 indicated strongly Disagree and 5 indicated strongly Agree.

6.1 Objective 1: To study online classified websites mostly used by students across universities of Jammu & Kashmir Valley
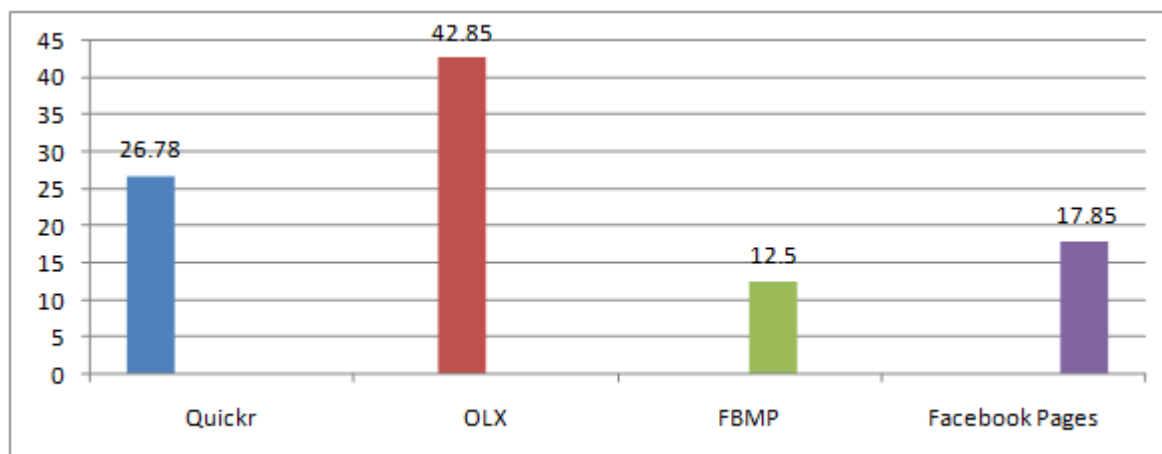

Figure 1: Online Classified Websites mostly used by University Students

It is evident from Fig 1 that four types of online classified websites are being used by the university students of Jammu and Kashmir. These websites are Quickr, OLX, Facebook Marketplace (FBMP), and Facebook Pages. The data in Fig 1 is given in percentages and it is apparent that OLX has the highest number of users amounting to 42.85 per cent, followed by Quickr (26.78%), Facebook Pages (17.85%) and at last FBMP with only 12.5%. This is palpable that Facebook Marketplace has the least number of users even after being an initiative of Facebook Marketplace.

6.2 Objective 2: To find out which classified portal is the biggest competitor of Facebook Marketplace.

From Fig 1, it can be seen that the Facebook Marketplace stands at the last position when it comes to a number of users. That in itself means that Facebook Marketplace has to face tough competition from all other big established market players of the industry.

6.3 Objective 3: To explore different drivers which encourage University students to use Facebook Marketplace.

There are a number of factors which may drive a user to adopt Facebook Marketplace as a medium of shopping but there are some general and wide-ranging drivers which became evident on the basis of responses from students. As per Fig 2, the key driver for students to use Facebook marketplace is that it is a single portal with different services (SPDS) that means FBMP is a one-stop shop for shopping and availing other services too. Fig 2 shows that 24.4% users are driven by this feature of Facebook Marketplace followed by another driver that there is no need for separate registration to be done on the Facebook marketplace and 23.6% users are driven by this element. The third important driver with 14.2% users driven by it is that FBMP is easy to use. 13.6% users have adopted FBMP

because they can shop in nearby vicinity by searching products/sellers on the basis of location, 12.9% customers were persuaded to accept Facebook Marketplace because not only second-hand product but one can see brand new products on sale on marketplace, finally sellers in Facebook Marketplace are given Community Recommended badge which builds trust on a seller and this characteristic drives 11.3% students to adopt Facebook Marketplace.
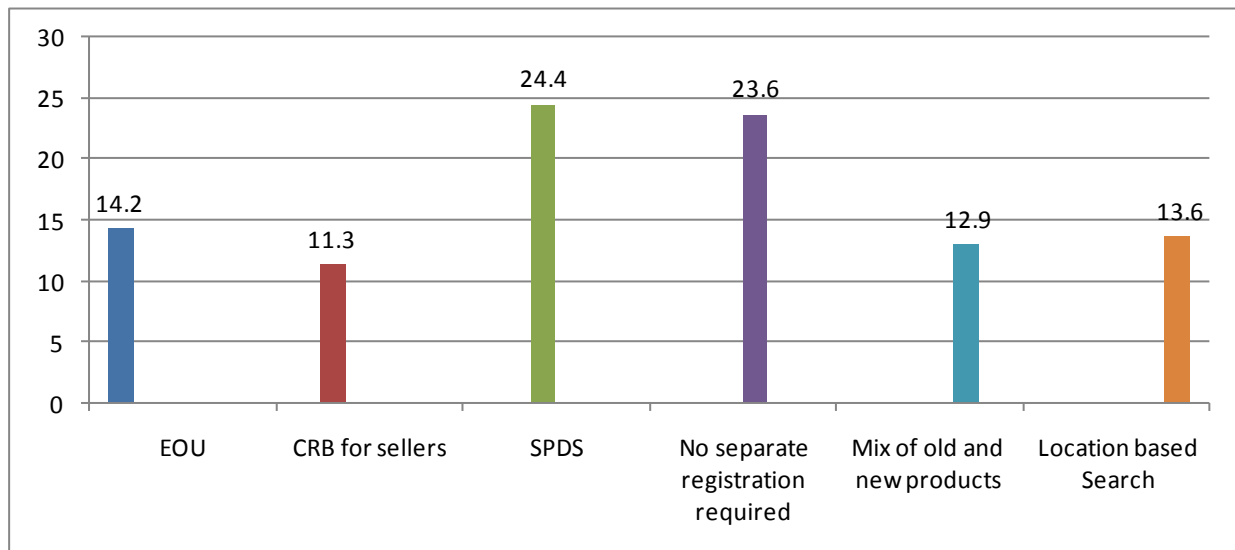

Figure 2 Drivers encouraging FBMP usage (Data in percentages)

6.4 Objective 4: To find out the reasons which discourage University students from using Facebook Marketplace.
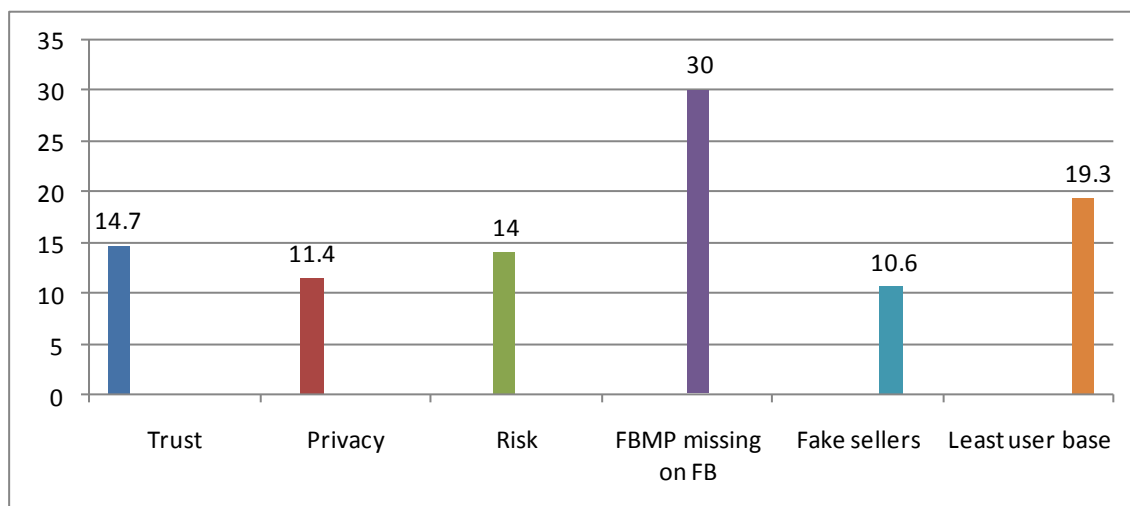

Figure 3 Factors discouraging users from using FBMP (Data in percentages)

Unlike the factors which drive students to adopt and use Facebook Marketplace, there are other factors which discourage them from using Facebook Marketplace. As per Fig 3, the most vital factor which is a reason why students don't use it is that the icon of Facebook Marketplace is missing on the websites as well as the facebook App. If it can't be accessed, it means it can't be used too; and this turned out to be the reason for 30% of respondents. Non availability of FBMP icon on the website as well as the app has taken a toll on its user base too. The decreased user base discourages 19.3% of students from taking up FBMP as a medium to shop online. 14.7% of respondents didn't accept FBMP as a medium for online shopping because of the lack of trust on vendors and missing safety policy. Risk of different types like giving out card details, paying online, getting overcharged or not getting the products on time was a reason for 14% of respondents for disparaging the use of Facebook Place. Privacy also plays an important role in non acceptance of Facebook Marketplace for 11.4% of respondents. While 10.6% don't use facebook Marketplace because of the fear of fake sellers. These fake sellers delete their profiles and that poses a risk for buyers.

6.5 Objective 5: To know the purpose for which students use Facebook Marketplace.

Table II depicts that majority of respondents (33.9%) use Facebook Marketplace for both buying and selling purpose while 23.9 % of respondents use it for looky-loo purpose, these shoppers visit the marketplace frequently but not to trade anything but to window shop. 21.2% responded by saying they use other portals instead of Facebook Marketplace. It is also evident from the Table II that 8.8% of respondents use Facebook Marketplace selling purpose only. These respondents sell their used merchandise on the marketplace while preferring other portals or offline medium for buying reasons. The same percentage (8.8%) of the respondents uses the marketplace for buying used merchandise while they don't prefer selling anything on the marketplace.

Table II: For what purpose do you mostly use Facebook Marketplace? (If you don't use FBMP please go to question 85 after filling this section)				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Both Buying and Selling	135	33.9	33.9	33.9
	Buying	35	8.8	8.8	42.7
	I don't use Facebook Marketplace	84	21.1	21.1	63.8
	Other Services	14	3.5	3.5	67.3
	Selling	35	8.8	8.8	76.1
	Window Shoppper (Looky-loo)	95	23.9	23.9	100.0
	Total	398	100.0	100.0	

6.6 Objective 6: To know how often Facebook Marketplace is being used by Respondents based on select demographic factors

The frequency of using the Facebook Marketplace was checked by seeing through the cross tab followed by chi-square significance test. The test was run multiple times in order to find out the frequency of usage among select demographic variables like gender, locality, and region.

Table III shows that majority of the male respondents use the marketplace occasionally (22.4%) or often (21.9%) while female respondents use it occasionally (12.8%) and frequently (14.8%). And there are no female respondents who use it rarely. The difference among the responses is significant as the p-value in Table IV is less than .05.

Table III: Crosstab					
% of Total					
		Gender			Total
		Female	Male	Other	
I use FBMP frequently for shopping purposes	Never	1.5%	2.0%	0	3.5%
	rarely	0	9.0%	0	9.0%
	Occasionally	12.8%	22.4%	0	35.2%
	Often	8.0%	21.9%	0.5%	30.4%
	Frequently	14.8%	7.0%	0	21.9%
Total		37.2%	62.3%	0.5%	100.0%

Table IV: Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	66.572[a]	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	77.601	8	.000
N of Valid Cases	398		
a. 5 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.			

Table V depicts the frequency of usage between users from rural and urban settlements. The results in Table V show that the majority of rural respondents use the facebook marketplace occasionally (15.6%) or often (8.8%) followed by often (8.8%). Majority of urban respondents use it often (21.6%), the percentage of users who use it occasionally is 19.6% while 12.3% of urban users use it frequently. The chi square test in Table VI shows that there is a significant difference between rural and urban users as the p-value is less than 0.05.

Table V: Crosstab				
% of Total				
		Locality (Settlement)		Total
		Rural	Urban	
I use FBMP frequently for shopping purposes	Never	0	3.5%	3.5%
	rarely	4.0%	5.0%	9.0%
	Occasionally	15.6%	19.6%	35.2%
	Often	8.8%	21.6%	30.4%
	Frequently	9.5%	12.3%	21.9%
Total		37.9%	62.1%	100.0%

Table VI: Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.993[a]	4	.002
Likelihood Ratio	21.877	4	.000
N of Valid Cases	398		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.31.			

Looking at Table VII which shows the frequency of users based on the region i-e respondents belonging to either of the regions of the state that is Jammu and Kashmir. It can be seen that the majority of respondents from Jammu use the Facebook Marketplace often (21.1%) then comes occasional users (19.3%) followed by frequent users (11.6%). While in Kashmir region the majority of respondents use it occasionally (15.8%), then are the frequent users (10.3%) followed by users who use it often 9.3%) and rare users (8.8%). The P-value portrayed in Table VIII which is again less than the value of 0.05 confirm it that there is a significant difference in the frequency of usage of respondents from the region of Jammu and Kashmir.

Table VII: Crosstab				
% of Total				
		Region		Total
		Jammu	Kashmir	
I use FBMP frequently for shopping purposes	Never	0.5%	3.0%	3.5%
	rarely	0.3%	8.8%	9.0%
	Occasionally	19.3%	15.8%	35.2%
	Often	21.1%	9.3%	30.4%
	Frequently	11.6%	10.3%	21.9%
Total		52.8%	47.2%	100.0%

Table VIII: Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	58.159[a]	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	67.911	4	.000
N of Valid Cases	398		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.61.			

7. Conclusion

From the above results, it is clear that students, when asked about Facebook Marketplace, had a very negative attitude towards it and a majority of the respondents turned out to be using other online classified competitor portals like OLX, Quickr and Facebook Pages. In contrast among the respondents who have accepted Facebook Marketplace use it as a medium for both buying and selling purposes. A vast chunk of respondents also uses it for window shopping in order to see what are the new things on sale. It is very much pertinent to throw light on the fact that even after being an initiative of Facebook, a majority of the students/respondents don't use Facebook Marketplace. There are many reasons for rebuffing of the marketplace and the most important being the absence of the access icon in the Facebook website as well as an app, absence of a large number of users, mistrust and risk etc.

7.1 Suggestions

1) Facebook Marketplace has a good perspective to grow if the icon/link is made available on all mediums be it a desktop or app. With the result, it will be accessible to all. As the user base will increase so will the trade.

2) Facebook must try to convert the window shoppers into actual buyers and sellers by making use of such technology which will make transactions taking place on Marketplace more risk-free.

3) Facebook should make it necessary for every buyer and seller to upload their proper information including an ID proof while posting an ad on the marketplace; it will build trust among the users.

7.2 Limitations and Scope for Future Research

1) This study was confined to university students only and in future, the study can be conducted on a other segments of population of Jammu and Kashmir.

2) The study used basic descriptive statistics to achieve the objective whole in future studies advanced statistical tools can be applied in order to confirm the results achieved by this study.

3) The study can be conducted outside Jammu & Kashmir on larger sample.

8. Acknowledgement

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