CHAPTER-III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Social media generally refer to media used to enable social interaction. The term social media technology refers to web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage and share new user generated or existing content, in digital environments through multi-way communication. The social media are also increasingly used by the teachers, researchers and students in the field of higher education. The social networking sites offer the students greater opportunities to connect with other students, educators, administrators, alumni, both within and outside his current institution. The social media technologies offer the capability to both receive and create content with the hope that a collective intelligence emerges. The social media also improve students’ learning experiences to prepare them to enter a workforce that is not geographically constrained and expects them to have highly developed online collaboration skills. The pursuit of such benefits drives academics to incorporate new technological approaches in their teaching methodology. This chapter presents social media research, conceptual framework of the study, hypotheses of the study, study variables, research design, field of study and sample, pilot study, primary data collection, secondary data collection, computation of data, statistical analysis and operational definitions.

3.2. Social Media Research

Social network sites are web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. Social media are increasingly used by people in all walks of human life. The users are also enabled to identify others in the system with which they have a relationship. The social networking sites are often designed to be widely accessible. These sites are growing in popularity worldwide according to recent empirical evidence. This growth has
prompted many corporations to invest time and money in creating, purchasing, promoting, and advertising SNSs. The rise of SNSs indicates a shift in the organization of online communities. The social media scholarship has emerged from diverse disciplinary and methodological traditions, addresses a range of topics, and builds on a large body of CMC research. In the present times, social media access, social media use patterns, social media advantages, social media threats and social media opportunities are subjected to scientific evaluation all over the world. The social media application in higher education mainstream also assumes great significance from research and development point of view.

3.3. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Social media have revolutionized the life of many people and thus attracted much attention, not only from industry, but also academia. Scholars have examined the role of social media in contemporary society on the basis of certain theories. They have used research constructs and developed conceptual frameworks in their studies. A causal-chain framework was developed based on the input-moderator–mediator–output model to illustrate the causality between the research constructs used and the conceptualization of theoretical models/theories proposed by previous researchers. The social media are all pervasive and cover a wide range of research topics. Social media have become increasingly popular because of the combination of both technological developments and social change. The present investigation was carried out on the basis of a conceptual model which states that an accurate understanding of social media literacy requires more insight into people’s access to social media applications, knowledge, skills, self-efficacy, attitudes and actual media use. The uses and gratifications of social media with reference to Iranian students in Karnataka state was examined on the basis of the theory proposed by Avenade (2008). The scholar observed that social media can be utilized in gaining maximum value of customer relationship management. The theory states: “The emergence of new social media technologies gives businesses the opportunity to change the way they relate to customers, shifting the focus from managing transaction to building deeper relationships”.

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3.4. Hypotheses of the Study

The present investigation was carried out on the basis of the following set of null hypotheses.

\( H1. \text{ The social media habits of Iranian students in Karnataka state are common.} \)

\( H2. \text{ The social media association of Iranian students in Karnataka state is uniform.} \)

\( H3. \text{ The Iranian students in Karnataka state regularly use the social media.} \)

\( H4. \text{ The social media are useful to the Iranian students in Karnataka state.} \)

\( H5. \text{ The social media services are satisfactory to the Iranian students in Karnataka state.} \)

3.5. Study Variables

Keeping the above hypotheses in view, the following variables were selected for the present study on the basis of review of literature and discussion with subject experts.

3.5.1 Independent Variables

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Education
4. Nature of Course
5. Income

3.5.2 Dependent Variables

a. Social media habits
b. Social media association
c. Social media use pattern
d. Uses of social media
e. Gratifications of social media

3.6. Research Design

The major objective of the present study was to examine the impact of social networking sites on the Iranian students who are pursuing higher education in
Karnataka state. The social media habits, association, use patterns, uses and gratifications were systematically evaluated from the point of view of higher education management. The present study was planned and conducted in three stages. In the first stage, a pilot study was conducted in order to examine the feasibility and appropriateness of the tools and procedures of the study. In the second stage, interview schedules were developed and perfected in order to collect authentic primary data from the Iranian students in Karnataka. In the third stage, appropriate scientific statistical analysis procedures were followed to ensure systematic data analysis and interpretation. Overall, the present study approached the problem through a systematic survey method which fits into the context of the present investigation. Before administering the interview schedule to the final respondents of the study, a pre-test was conducted in Mangalore, a non-sample area. Some Iranian students and research scholars were invited for the purpose of conducting interview and filling the interview schedule. The contents of the interview schedule were subjected to suitable changes and modifications in order to avoid ambiguity and inconvenience in the light of pre-test.

3.7. Primary Data Collection

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<th>Management Faculty</th>
<th>Medical/Engineering Faculty</th>
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Primary data were collected through structured, organized and standardized interview schedules which were administered to the Iranian students in Karnataka state. About 480 respondents were approached for the purpose of primary data collection. It was not possible to approach all the Iranian research scholars and students who are pursuing higher education in Karnataka state due to time and financial constraints. Incidental sampling, stratified sampling and purposive sampling techniques were followed in selecting the respondents. These methods of selection also give significantly correct results. Besides survey method, non-participant observation, informal discussions and secondary data analysis were also followed by the researcher. The entire study was exploratory in nature.

3.8. Secondary Data Collection

The present study was also systematically carried out on the basis of relevant secondary data available in different forms such as theses, dissertations, books, professional journals, proceedings of national and inter-national seminars and conferences, media reports and other publications related to the research topic.

3.9. Computation of Data

The primary data gathered from the survey on the impact of social media on the Iranian students who are pursuing higher education in Karnataka state. The
primary data was consolidated and computed by using descriptive analysis which consisted of frequency counts and percentage distribution. These methods revealed the relationship between the independent and dependent variables considered in the study.

3.10. Statistical Analysis

The study being descriptive in nature, no parametric statistical tests were involved to draw inferences based on the sample results. The interpretation of the chi-square and contingency table analysis justify the assumption of independence which was primarily carried out at the 0.05% level of significance. A brief description of the statistical tests applied given below

a. Frequencies and Percentages

The Frequencies procedure provides statistics which are useful for describing many types of variables. The primary data collected on the impact of social media on Iranian students 04 revenue divisions of Karnataka state were analyzed by the researcher. The researcher found that the application of the frequencies procedure which is an appropriate statistical test.

b. P-value

In statistics, the p-value is a function of the observed sample results (a statistic) that is used for testing a statistical hypothesis. The p-test statistic typically follows a standard normal distribution when large sample sizes are used, and researchers use Z-tests to determine whether a hypothesis passes based on a specific significance level will be rejected. The larger the p-value in the p-test, the more likely the hypothesis is true. In statistics, the p-value is a function of the observed sample results (a statistic) that is used for testing a statistical hypothesis.

c. Contingency Table analysis

The Cross tabs procedure forms two-way and multi-way tables and provides a variety of tests and measures of association for two-way tables. The structure of the table and whether categories are ordered determine what test or measure to use. In the present study contingency table analysis was applied to find out the association
between independent variables like—age, gender, education, nature of course and economic status with the responses obtained (5 point scale) under each statement. All the statistical calculations were done through SPSS for Windows software (Version 11.0).

3.11. Operational Definitions

3.11.1 Concept of Social Media

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Social media is becoming an integral part of life online as social websites and applications proliferate. Most traditional online media include social components, such as comment fields for users. In business, social media is used to market products, promote brands, connect to current customers and foster new business. Social networking is the practice of expanding the number of one's business and/or social contacts by making connections through individuals. Depending on the social media platform, members may be able to contact any other member. In other cases, members can contact anyone they have a connection to, and subsequently anyone that contact has a connection to, and so on. Some services require members to have a preexisting connection to contact other members. In the present investigation, the impact of social networking sites on Iranian students studying in Karnataka was primarily examined.

3.11.2 Social Media Habits

There are several social networking sites which are available to the mankind across the globe. In the present investigation, the place of using social media, duration of social media use, purposes of social media use and other aspects were brought under the ‘social media habits’ of Iranian students. These aspects were examined by the researcher.

3.11.3 Social Networking Sites

In the present investigation, the social media association of Iranian students was prominently examined by the researcher. They include - Academia.edu, Blogster, Classmates.com, Cloob.com, Facebook, Flickr, Google+, Hike, Instagram, Line,
LinkedIn, MyLife, MySpace, Orkut, Pintrest, Skype, Snapchat, Talk, Telegram, Tumblr, Twitter, Viber, Whatsapp, We chat, Yahoo.com and YouTube. The respondents were associated with most of the social networking sites which have academic relevance according to the study.

### 3.11.4 Uses of Social Media

The social networking sites serve multi-purposes. They also provide various services to the mankind. There are tools that many of us use on a daily basis that have a 'social' aspect to them. These media also enable many people to simultaneously update and view an online encyclopedia. In the present investigation, there were about 30 statements listed by the researcher pertaining to the uses of social media. Most of the social media have been academically useful to the respondents according to the present investigation.

### 3.11.5 Gratifications of Social Media

Social media serve various purposes and enable the people to develop connectivity in modern times. Social networking sites provide various benefits such as information, education, entertainment, discussion, connectivity, marketing, events management and so on. In the present investigation there were about 15 statements listed by the researcher pertaining to the gratifications of social media among the Iranian students. Most of the respondents have gained several gratifications according to the present investigation.

### 3.11.6 Survey Research

Survey is an art of finding out the inner feelings and expectations of the people who matter most in society. A survey is defined as a brief interview or discussion with individuals about a specific topic. The term survey is often used to mean collect information. Survey research is often used to assess thoughts, opinions, and feelings. Survey research can be specific and limited, or it can have more global, widespread goals. Today, survey research is used by a variety of different groups. Psychologists and sociologists often use survey research to analyze behavior. A survey consists of a predetermined set of questions that is given to a sample. A good sample selection is the key as it allows one to generalize the findings from the sample to the population.
which is the whole purpose of survey research. In the present study, about 480 Iranian students studying in Karnataka were approached by the researcher for the purpose of primary data collection.

3.11.7 Primary Data

The primary data basically represent the first hand experience of the people who are directly associated with a system, process, project and program. The organizers conduct survey to find out the strengths and limitations of their products and services. In the present study, about 480 Iranian students responded to the study on social media habits, social media association, social media uses and social media gratifications from higher education point of view.

3.11.8 Secondary Data

The secondary data represent the scholarship, wisdom and expertise of people on various issues and concerns. The resource persons provide intellectual contributions on the basis of their educational qualification, professional experience and specialization gained over a period of time. They are the competent authorities to make comments and criticisms which sensitize the various stakeholders of national development. In the present study, secondary sources were utilized by the scholar to write introduction and review of literature chapters.

3.12. Summary

Scientific investigations are conducted all over the world to understand the media habits and effects. The social media have come into existence in the new millennium on the basis of revolutionary new media technologies. The uses and gratifications of social media with reference to students of higher education sector are not subjected to adequate scientific evaluation by the researchers in India and abroad. Surprisingly, not even a single scientific investigation has been carried out on the impact of social networking sites on Iranian students studying in Karnataka state. The primary data were gathered from 480 respondents who represented the categories of researchers and students in both professional and non-professional branches of higher education. The present study approached the problem through a systematic survey method. Besides survey method, case study method, non-participant observation,
informal discussion and secondary sources of information were also used as other methods to study the impact of social networking sites on Iranian students pursuing higher education in Karnataka state.