Trust Transfer from Social Networking Sites (SNS) to Fan Page Content in SNS: Examining its Effect on Intention to Visit Fan Page

Soo Il Shin
University of Wisconsin – Green Bay
shins@uwgb.edu

Dianne J. Hall
Auburn University
halldia@auburn.edu

Teresa Lang
Auburn University – Montgomery
tlang@aum.edu

Abstract

Among many sub-communication units in social networking sites (SNSs) (e.g., instant messaging, groups or fan pages), the number of fan pages have increased significantly, especially by companies who have attracted SNS users as page subscribers. Our study focuses on the page subscriber’s intention to visit a fan page from trust-transfer perspective and examining the role of corporate image jointly. In the context of Facebook, we collected survey responses from Facebook users who follow at least one company fan page, and analyzed them to test hypotheses. Our research findings revealed that corporate image significantly affects the trust-transfer process as a moderator, and intention to visit fan page as an antecedent. The trust-transfer process, from trust in an SNS to trust in page posts, also plays a significant role in explaining a page follower’s intention to visit. Further findings and limitations are discussed.

Keywords

Trust, trust-transfer process, social networking sites (SNS), partial least squares (PLS), fan page

Introduction

Over the past 10 years, social networking sites (SNSs) have rapidly increased in popularity. Not only are individuals interested in using the sites, but company marketers have become majority users for communication between SNS members and the companies (Stelzner 2013). A recent survey of 3,205 company marketers responded that over 86% of companies are now considering or have considered SNSs as important tools for their business activities (Stelzner 2013). More than 97% of the total respondents expressed that they consider themselves to be current participants of SNS for business use and those marketers agreed that sales have improved after using SNS.

The current trend for marketing efforts using SNS aims at not only delivering simple promotional messages to SNS users, but also pursuing customers’ understanding or active involvement in the company and promoting events via company-generated content (Chu 2011). As such, marketing efforts are not limited to launching reward programs or improving public relations, as customers become co-creators or multipliers of a company’s marketing messages (Jahn and Kunz 2012). Along with company marketer’s use of SNS for their marketing purposes, the use of fan pages has become one of the most popular marketing tools for companies. Such a fan page on an SNS can be easily created free of charge and has played a significant role in achieving word of mouth advertising as well as launching information regarding new products or services. Additionally, more than 50% of SNS users are fans of a company or organization (de Vries et al. 2012).

Regarding the use of company fan pages in SNS, prior literature found factors affecting fan page subscribers’ various behaviors or perceptions. For example, social interaction ties, trust and shared value were
significant antecedents to explain continued intentions to use fan pages in the context of Facebook (Lin and Lu 2011). For another example, in the context of Facebook, SNS users' participation behavior in the brand community impacts their intention to purchase such brand products (Pöyry et al. 2013). While much research regarding fan pages in SNS has primarily focused on page followers’ direct perceptions regarding products in fan pages, our research approach differs from those studies in terms of the trust-transfer process from an SNS itself to fan page posts in SNS, resulting in increasing intention toward page visiting behaviors. Particularly, our research provides insights that an SNS trust is migrating to the content in SNS page, so that this transferring process influences on behavioral intention.

Since a company always influences its image on customers by products or services, our study also considers how corporate image impacts page subscribers’ intentional behaviors as another important factor. Therefore, we raise the following research questions:

RQ1: How does the trust-transfer process play a role in explaining behavioral intention?

RQ2: How does corporate image influence the trust-transfer process and intention to visit a fan page?

To answer research questions above, we employ the concept of trust and the theoretical lens of the trust-transfer process. Our study also examines the role of corporate image, including how corporate image intervenes in the trust-transfer process and how it impacts a page subscriber’s intention to visit a fan page.

This paper is organized into eight sections. The next section elaborates on the concept of trust and the trust-transfer theory. The third section proposes a research model and hypotheses and the fourth section describes the research method. Results and discussions are stated in the fifth and sixth sections. Limitations and conclusion are discussed in the final two sections.

**Theoretical Background**

*Trust and Trust-transfer Theory*

From information systems (IS) and its user approach, the concept of trust has been employed to explain the adoption of information technology (IT), the relationship development among its users and an evolvement of risk reduction from reciprocal relationships (Wu et al. 2010). Agreed on the complex nature of trust, researchers have defined and categorized trust in several ways. For example, McKnight et al. (2002) categorize trust into three types: *trusting belief, trusting intention and disposition to trust*. Trust was also classified as characteristics-based trust, process-based trust and institution-based trust (Zucker 1986). While defining trust and its dimensions has been anchored in an individual’s rational or cognitive-based evaluation of objects or target persons, Komai and Benbasat (2004) approached the concept of trust in two ways: cognitive and emotional-based trust. They define cognitive trust as “a customer’s rational expectation that a trustee will have the necessary competence, benevolence, and integrity to be relied upon” (p. 187). Cognitive trust relies on the user’s rational choice, which stems from being logically aware of advantages. Emotional trust is defined as “the extent to which one feels secure and comfortable about relying on the trustee” (Komai and Benbasat 2006, p. 943). Emotional trust arises as a supplemental concept to cognitive trust because the underlying nature of “emotion” in emotional trust points to the user’s “feeling toward the behavior of relying on the trustee” (Komai and Benbasat 2006, p. 944).

Based on formed trust in a particular entity or person, there is an interesting social behavioral phenomenon called the *trust-transfer process*. The trust-transfer process is defined as “a cognitive process in which one’s trust in a familiar target can be transferred to another target by virtue of certain associations” (Chen et al. 2015, p. 264). This is a trusting mechanism in which one person’s trust in a particular entity (e.g., person, organization or object) derives from trust in another entity, where another entity is related with that particular entity (Lin et al. 2011). Under the trust-transfer theory, the trust-transfer process is rooted from a person’s trust in a known person or object affecting his or her trusting perceptions of another person who is unknown or object that has not been experienced before (Wang et al. 2013). Prior literature found three actors who are involved in the trust-transfer process: the trustor, the trustee and a third party. The trustor is a person who determines whether or not to trust other parties, the trustee is the person who is assessed by a trustor for trustworthiness, and a third party is the person who brokers trust between the trustor and trustee (Chen et al. 2015; Lin et al. 2011). For example, when one person trusts in the third person, the trustee also trusts in the third person if the trustor’s trust in the third person is transferred to the trustee...
when the third person is closely related to the trustee. The trust-transfer process also points out the importance of similarities between the trusted target and the original trusting source, and business ties (Stewart 2003; Wang et al. 2013). Similarities symbolize internal relationships, which is rooted in sharing “certain same innate features which make people have same perceptions about them” between the target and source (Wang et al. 2013, p. 1396). Business ties, however, stem from an external relationship between the target and source, in which those two entities share common cues externally while there are no innate features (Wang et al. 2013).

According to the trust-transfer studies, there are two types of trust-transfer: intra-channel trust transfer and inter-channel trust transfer (Chen et al. 2015; Lu et al. 2011). First, under intra-channel transfer, one person’s trust in an entity is transferred to another entity within the same channel (Lin et al. 2011). For example, any unknown websites or links are trusted by a web-surfer if those sites are linked to within a trusted website. Second, under inter-channel transfer, one’s trust in a particular context is moved to a different context (Lu et al. 2011). For example, if one customer trusts an offline banking store for his or her financial transactions, his or her trust in the offline bank can transfer to trust in the online-banking website and its counter services (Lu et al. 2011). Prior studies have applied the trust-transfer theory in multiple information systems (IS) contexts. For instance, in terms of inter-channel trust transfer, customers who trust in a particular company’s offline business tend to trust in its online business, in which offline trust is migrated to online trust (Lin et al. 2011). In intra-channel, a customer’s trust in a particular product (e.g., Samsung Galaxy S4) is moved to another product (e.g., Samsung TV) within an offline channel. Stewart (2003) found that any unfamiliar website links are also considered to be trustworthy websites, if those links are embedded in a trusted website.

**Corporate Image**

Corporate image is defined as the “net result of all experiences, impressions, beliefs, feelings and knowledge people have about a company and it is not a single entity” (Kassim and Souiden 2007, p. 220). Generally, image refers to “a hierarchical network of meanings stored in memory that range from holistic general impressions to very elaborate evaluations of objects, and these meanings are proposed to be linked to the individual’s personal values” (Nguyen and LeBlanc 1998, p.55). It means that the formation of image ranges from subjective impression or emotional feeling about products or services to the rational assessment of perceived value regarding products from the flow of information (Walczak and Gregg 2009). Aligning with the definition of image, corporate image can be driven by the flow of information regarding product or services, such that information develops impressions or evaluation of values regarding the company.

Prior literature has regarded corporate image as an intangible asset, which stems from interactions with customers and from an approving attitude toward a company’s belief, credibility and perceptions (Da Silva and Syed Alwi 2008). Therefore, purchasing products or services delivers not only a physical commodity (a tangible asset of the company) to the buyer, but also has inherent, non-monetary value in formulating consumer preferences or likings (an intangible asset of the company). More importantly, corporate image is a consequence of a psychological process that comprises prior experiences and impressions, in which a person’s experience cumulatively retrieves corporate image after interacting with a company for a prolonged period (Nguyen and LeBlanc 1998; Nguyen and Leblanc 2001). Prior empirical studies have identified intention, liking and trustworthiness as factors affecting corporate image, and also considered behavioral aspects such as repeat purchasing and a strong willingness to make voluntary expenditures (Kwon and Lennon 2009).

**Research Model and Hypotheses**

Based on the theoretical arguments, we propose a research model incorporating the trust-transfer theory and corporate image and hypotheses in the context of SNS and its fan page subscribers (Figure 1).
In reference to trust in SNS and its relationship with trust in fan page posts, trust transfer within a channel or intra-channel is convincing. Prior research conducted by Stewart (2003) revealed that web users trust in any unknown websites if those websites contain similarities with an original website that people trust. He also argued that perceived interaction between a trusted website and a linked unknown website plays an important role in deriving a behavioral intention (Stewart 2003). Other studies also claim that even an unknown brand is trusted if consumers perceive any existence of similarities between the known and unknown brands, which also results in increasing purchase intention from the unknown brand in the context of an online store (Delgado-Ballester and Hernández-Espallardo 2008).

Applying the arguments above to the context of SNS and its fan page posts, we posit that an SNS user’s trust in an SNS can be migrated to fan page posts in an SNS in terms of intra-channel trust transfer, and also, trust in SNS leads to an increase in SNS user’s intention to visit a fan page. Additionally, a fan page is a part of a communication channel in an SNS, in which all pages share similar or the same functions of the SNS itself so that very minimal huddles of interactivities exist. Accordingly, we posit that an SNS user’s trust in SNS influences the content in the fan page in the SNS, if he or she voluntarily subscribes to page posts indicating self-interests in the SNS sub units. Since similarity and interactivity are key factors affecting development of trust and behavioral intention, we also argue that SNS page followers will visit more fan pages if their trust in an SNS is higher than in others, because all fan pages utilize SNS functional features. Therefore, we posit that:

In reference to the relationship between trust in the fan page posts and intention to visit the fan page, we claim the positive association between those two constructs for the following reasons. Prior literature argued that behavioral belief (i.e., trusting belief or cognitive trust) positively influences attitudinal behavior, eventually deriving behavioral intention (Chiu et al. 2010). Additionally, from a social psychological perspective, favorable attitudes toward behavior have a significant impact on behavioral intention (Ajzen and Fishbein 1973). Komiak and Benbasat (2006) also claim that any person’s attitude toward behavior is anchored in “the affective evaluation of the total effects of his or her belief that performing the behavior will lead to certain consequences and subsequent evaluation of those consequences” (Komiak and Benbasat 2006, p. 946).

Given the arguments from prior literature, we claim that an individual’s high level of trust in fan page posts reflects the individual’s belief that truthful and objective information is disseminated to the public via the SNS fan page. In the context of online transactions, trusting belief heightens the level of user intention by lessening social complexity and eliminating sellers’ opportunistic behaviors before initiating transactions.
Impact of Trust Transfer Process on Behavioral Intention

(Gefen 2003). Consequently, an individual’s retention of strong beliefs in and a high affective evaluation of his or her trusting belief results in subsequent behavioral actions or intention. Therefore, we posit:

H1: An SNS user’s trust in SNS will be positively associated with the intention to visit the fan page (H1a) and trust in fan page posts partially mediates its effect (H1b).

Regarding corporate image and its relationship with other constructs, we propose both a direct relationship between corporate image and an intention to visit the fan page and a moderating relationship between trust in SNS and trust in the page posts and between trust in the page posts and intention to visit the page.

In focusing on companies’ use of SNS and its fan page as a communication outlet, we claim that the flow of communication creates a better impression of the company and urges more elaboration regarding the company’s products or services. Our research assumes that the flow of communication includes not only information regarding features of products or details of service, but also any feedback from customers or dialogues among customers to share their experiences with others. Thus, page followers are highly likely to build their own level of trust in page posts regarding products or promoted services, using their own judgment. In the context of SNS and its fan page, we also propose that the communication and information acquisition between a company via its fan page and SNS users play an important role in building up affirmative corporate image; thus, it forms favorable feelings toward and rational assessments of a company’s products or services. As a result, the level of trust is accounted by the fact that in-depth elaboration of page posts formed feelings and assessment. Accordingly, given more information and communication, more positive corporate image strengthens the trust-transfer process and the relationship between trust in page posts and the page follower’s intention to visit the fan page. Therefore, we posit:

H2: An SNS user’s corporate image of a company that runs a fan page will moderate the relationships between trust in the SNS and trust in the page posts (H2a) and between trust in the fan page posts and intention to visit the fan page (H2b), and will be positively associated with the intention to visit the fan page (H2c).

Research Method

Research Context

To test hypotheses, we selected a web-based survey method and recruited participants through a contract survey firm (Qualtrics.com). Among many SNSs in public, we chose Facebook as a representative and those survey participants were invited who followed at least one company fan page by clicking “Like” voluntarily to follow up on the company’s new information or promotional posts.

Selection of Measurement Items

For measurement items, we employed a total of four constructs measuring perceptions of Facebook users who subscribe to at least one fan page. All constructs were assessed by survey items rated using a 7-point Likert Scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Three items measuring trust in Facebook were adopted from Fogel and Nehmad (2009). Four items to measure trust in fan page posts were adopted from Komiak and Benbasat (2006). Four survey items measuring intention and three items measuring corporate image were adopted from Lu and Hsiao (2010) and Nguyen and Leblanc (2001), respectively.

All measuring items are specific to use of Facebook and its fan pages only. For example, one of trust in Facebook items was “Facebook is a trustworthy social networking site.” An item of trust in fan page posts was “The companies’ postings on their Facebook fan pages that I Liked or Subscribed regarding products or services are truthful in their dealings with me.” An intention item was, “I intend to visit companies’ fan pages in Facebook to get more information regarding products or services when I need” and an item of corporate image was “I have always had a good impression of my Liked or Subscribed companies that they opened Facebook fan pages.” All measurement items were pilot-tested by a group of graduate students before collecting survey responses from public Facebook users.
Demographics of Survey Participants

Among survey respondents, a total of 178 responses were usable to analyze. Of those, 38.8% were male and 61.2% were female. Approximately, 50% of participants were from 23 to 39 years old at the time of survey. More detailed demographical information is listed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>38.8%</th>
<th>61.2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 – 22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 – 29</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and older</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Demographic Information

In our study, at the time of survey, 50.6% of participants have used Facebook for more than five years and more than 83.7% of total participants have used Facebook for at least three or more years. In terms of subscribing to a company’s fan page in Facebook, 44.3% of the total participants subscribed to more than 11 fan pages in Facebook at the time of the survey (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook use and fan page subscription</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook use experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5 years</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 5 years</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 3 years</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year – 6 months</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of fan page subscription</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 20</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 and more</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The frequency of reading page posts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the time</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Statistics of Facebook Use

Results

To analyze survey responses and test hypotheses, we used the partial least squares (PLS) analysis method using the WarpPLS analysis package (Kock 2015). All latent variables are reflective. Our analysis is based on PLS-SEM instead of CB-SEM because of exploratory nature of our research which our model is not testing rejecting or confirming a theoretical framework and its systematic relationships among constructs (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sartedt, 2016).
**Multicollinearity**

The current study examined the existence of multicollinearity among the construct indicating variance inflation factors (VIFs). Results show that all VIFs ranged between 1.07 and 2.60, which all values are less than recommended threshold of 3.3 (Kock & Lynn, 2012).

**Measurement Model Assessment**

**Convergent Validity**

We examined the convergent validity of all constructs in four ways, examining: 1) factor pattern loadings, 2) composite reliability, 3) average variance extracted (AVE) and 4) Cronbach’s alpha. First, all constructs show acceptable factor pattern loadings, higher than the recommended criterion of 0.7 (Chin 1998). Second, all values of composite reliability are also higher than the acceptable criterion of 0.7, ranging between 0.92 and 0.97 (Hair et al. 2006). Third, all average variances extracted are higher than 0.5, which is the recommended criterion, and Cronbach’s alphas also ranged from 0.87 to 0.95, exceeding the suggested criterion of 0.6 (Hair et al. 2006). All indicators show the convergent validity of this research (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Composite Reliability</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>AVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in SNS</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Page Posts</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to Visit</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Image</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3. Convergent Validity*

**Discriminant Validity**

We assessed discriminant validity two ways: 1) comparing correlation coefficients between two constructs to the square root of each construct’s AVE and 2) examining cross-loadings of each construct across measurement items. Analysis results reveal that all correlation coefficients were less than the square root of the construct’s AVE. All cross-loadings are less than the factor loadings for each item across all constructs. Thus, all analysis results indicate discriminant validity (Table 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Trust in SNS</th>
<th>Trust in Page Posts</th>
<th>Intention to Visit</th>
<th>Corporate Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in SNS</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Page Posts</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to Visit</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Image</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Diagonals indicating the square root of the AVEs.

*Table 4. Discriminant Validity – Correlations Among Constructs*

**Structural Model Assessment and Hypothesis Testing**

Our analysis results of all hypotheses testing are shown in Figure 2 below. The results reveal that trust in SNS is positively associated with trust in the fan page posts (β = 0.43, p < 0.001) and intention to visit the fan page (β = 0.19, p = 0.005). Analysis results also revealed that trust in fan page posts has a significant effect on intention to visit the fan page (β = 0.28, p < 0.001). Corporate image is also positively associated with intention to visit the fan page (β = 0.36, p < 0.001). Trust in SNS explained 28% (adjusted R² = 0.27) of the total variance of trust in fan page posts. Trust in page posts and corporate image explained jointly 50% (adjusted R² = 0.49) of the total variance of intention to visit the fan page.

An examination of the moderating effect of corporate image on H1 shows corporate image negatively moderates only the relationship between trust in SNS and trust in fan page posts (β = -0.21, p = 0.002,
effect size = 7%); however, no moderating effect was found in the relationship between trust in fan page posts and intention to visit the fan page.

![Figure 2. Hypotheses Testing](image)

**Discussion**

In reference to the first hypothesis that linked trust in SNS with intention to visit the fan page (H1a) and partial mediation effect by trust in fan page posts between them (H1b), our research findings support H1 significantly. First, in the context of Facebook and its fan page subscribers, trust in SNS is positively associated with intention to visit the fan page. This finding indicates that trust in SNS plays a salient role in explaining a page subscriber’s behavioral intention, such that high trust in SNS drives more frequent visits to the SNS fan page. Second, our research findings reveal that trust in SNS affects trust in fan page contents in SNS. Within the frame of the trust-transfer theory, this finding can be accounted for by the fact that SNS users’ trust in SNS itself is transferred to SNS’s sub-unit and its content. We believe this phenomenon is insightful not only because there is not much prior research into this phenomenon, but also because trust in SNS is migratory among SNS sub-units. Unlike other studies that deal with SNS and its page separately, our research also implies that those two artifacts are associated closely in terms of sharing trust by one entity to another. Third, trust in page posts significantly influences a page subscriber’s intention to visit the fan page. Thus H1b is supported meaning that partial mediating effect exists. Aligning with other IS research contexts (e.g., Malhotra et al. 2006), our research findings suggest that SNS also brings forth the salient relationship between trust and intensional behavior; SNS users’ high trust in page posts and SNS itself directly affect the page subscriber’s intention to visit the fan pages in the SNS. Also, our research finding shows partial mediation effect among constructs; trust in SNS, trust in page posts and intention to visit page not full mediation effect, which is interesting finding. Since SNS users voluntarily subscribe fan pages, SNS trust itself plays a salient role in explaining SNS users’ intention toward visiting fan page.

In reference to the second hypothesis, H2a and H2c are supported. First, our research findings indicate that corporate image negatively moderates the relationship between trust in an SNS and trust in page posts ($\beta = -0.21, p < 0.002$, effect size = 0.068). Given the existence of a strong main effect, a negative moderating effect is interesting in that a more positive corporate image in fact weakens the effect of trust transfer between the SNS itself and page posts in the SNS. In other words, prior impressions or experiences shaping corporate image dilutes the cognitive transfer process of migrating trust in one entity to the other entity. Second, testing the moderating effect of corporate image on the relationship between trust in page posts and intention to visit the fan page shows as non-significant. It can be explained that corporate image plays a trivial role in explaining the trust effect on behavioral intention; rather, corporate image more likely
involves trusting relationships, not the trust–behavioral intention relationship. Last, our research findings indicate that an SNS user’s intention to visit the fan page is positively associated with his or her corporate image. It means that better corporate image leads to a higher likelihood of visiting fan pages in the context of Facebook, in which improved corporate image plays a salient role in motivating behavioral tendency to visit the fan page.

**Conclusion and Future Research**

The purpose of our study is two-fold, examining: 1) the role of the trust-transfer theory and its process in explaining fan page followers’ intentions to visit fan pages and 2) the impact of corporate image on the trust-transfer process and the relationship between trust in fan page posts and intention. Given the theoretical lens of the trust-transfer theory, our research found significance in the trust-transfer process impacting intention to visit a fan page. Additionally, corporate image plays a significant role in explaining the trust-transfer process and has a direct relationship with intention to visit a fan page. Our research contributes to trust-transfer studies and SNS research in that behavioral intention to visit an SNS page can be rooted not only in direct corporate image but also in trust in an SNS itself. Furthermore, our research provides insight that corporate image rather weakens the trust-transfer process, which is the primary finding in our research. Practically, our research implies that any organizations will enjoy potential benefit in terms of promoting their products and recruiting many fans if they open their pages in well-known or publicly trusted SNS. Our research thus contributes practically in that those any organizations seeking their own pages in SNS should consider SNS users’ level of trust in SNS in terms of the nature of trust migratory between SNS and its sub-units.

Like other research, our study has some limitations. First, our invited survey participants were only Facebook users who subscribed to a Facebook fan page. Therefore, there is little clue as to the applicability of our research design to other types of SNSs. Second, the research design does not clarify which types of products or services are featured. Depending on products or services, it would be arguable that a page subscriber’s intention level may vary. Therefore, a suggestion for future research is to divide fan pages into groups of goods or services to examine how trust transfer eventually affect intention to visit a fan page. Last, our research only assumes the moderating effect of corporate image on the relationship between trust in SNS and trust in fan page. However, because corporate image is an outcome of cumulative emotional responses over the time, it may affect the relationship between trust in fan page and intention to visit the page particularly. Our future research is suggested to examine this additional effect.

**REFERENCES**


Impact of Trust Transfer Process on Behavioral Intention


