

論美國軍人招募廣告的預示效果： 以採用軍人英雄形象為例

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摘 要

美國軍隊嘗試以招募廣告鼓勵潛在的志願役美國公民，期望影響其對軍隊的看法趨於正面，進而增加投入軍旅的意願。英雄式形象是美軍招募廣告過去美軍最常使用的說服策略之一。而媒體的預示效果常被運用在廣告中，探討影響閱聽人對於特定團體的評價與態度。本研究的主要目標為，檢視募兵廣告中的士兵英雄形象，如何正向影響民眾對美國軍隊的態度。本研究使用 3X2 混合式實驗設計 (N=197)，檢驗 2 個受試者本身以外的自變數，包含從軍意向的高低以及英雄招募廣告的接觸程度。研究者設定應變項為受試者對於軍隊的綜合評價（軍隊的優秀程度、軍隊的競爭力、軍隊的廉能程度、軍隊的啟發程度、軍隊的戰力堅實程度、軍隊的倫理水準、軍隊的誠實水準）、對於美軍執行維和任務的評價、對於美軍國土防衛的評價、對於美軍全球部屬的評價。結果發現，對社會大眾而言，招募廣告中的英雄形象確實可以激發受試者的預示效果，進而影響其對於軍隊整體評價與態度趨於正面。英雄形象的密集程度越高預示效果的成效顯著。

關鍵詞：廣告、軍隊說服策略、預示效果、招募

Do we like soldier- heroes? The priming effect of U.S. military recruitment advertising

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Abstract

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has conducted military recruitment advertising to attract potential soldiers and to encourage positive perceptions of the military among the American public. Soldier-hero images are among the most persuasive strategies in the DoD's storytelling pattern in its recruiting commercials. Media priming effects have been shown to influence, or prime, the criteria that the public uses to evaluate the overall performance of a specific group. A primary concern of this research was to determine how the soldier-hero images represented in the U.S. DoD's recruitment ads result in a positive evaluation of military services by the public. This experimental research examined how priming intensity and valence influenced participants' ($N= 197$) evaluations of military services in multiple dimensions, including general evaluations(*how good is the military, how competent is the military, how much integrity does the military have, how inspiring is the military, how strong is the military, how moral is the military, how honest is the military*), evaluations of peacekeeping missions, evaluations of the prevention of U.S. national crises, and evaluations of the concept of worldwide military services. The preliminary results showed that military recruiting commercial with hero-images can trigger participants' priming effect. Hence, a higher intensity level of hero- image would cause a higher priming level. Implications are discussed.

Keywords : advertising, military, persuasive strategy, priming effects, recruiting

Introduction

The primary purpose of U.S. military recruitment advertising is to increase contemporary American youths' propensity to consider military service and to build a positive image and evaluation among the American public during the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) era (Eighmey, 2006). Soldier-hero images are among the most significant advertising icons and persuasive strategies used by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) in its recruitment advertising in the past four decades. For example, the Marines used "Monster Fighter" as a main character in its recruitment advertising during the 1990s. However, research has seldom measured how these soldier-hero images used in recruitment advertising contribute to forming positive evaluations among the American public.

The priming effect is theorized to influence an audience's attitude toward and evaluation of specific groups or concepts. This theory has been widely used in media exposure studies (Brug et al., 2007; Dillman et al., 2008; Stevens et al., 2009). Collins and Quillian (1969) suggested that cues and images in the media activate related concepts and influence subsequent information processing approaches, providing fundamental knowledge for contemporary priming studies. Another vital approach to priming studies involves predicting how information is interpreted and categorized following audience's media exposure (Brug et al., 2007; Stevens et al., 2011; Mucundorfeanu & Vana, 2012; Bilali & Vollhardt, 2013).

Previous priming studies have rarely examined the persuasive strategies used in military recruiting commercials. U.S. military recruiting goals are closely related to the target audience's attitude toward and evaluation of military service (Chu, 2007). Eighmey (2006) indicated that American youths and individuals who evaluate U.S. military missions more positively have less resistance to military service. The U.S. DoD spent approximately \$5 million on its advertising budget for FY2010 seeking approximately 156,000 volunteers to fill the gap in human resources for its worldwide missions (Troy, 2011). To improve its recruiting rate, the U.S. DoD must investigate and understand how to encourage positive evaluations and attitudes in American youth. This project examines how soldier-hero images used in U.S. military recruitment advertising influence the American public and potential enlistees' evaluations of military service.

Literature Review

1 U.S. military recruitment advertising and soldier-hero images

U.S. military enlistment numbers have declined since the 1980s (Eighmey, 2006). The DoD has used recruitment advertising to attract qualified American youths to serve their country and, if necessary, to find those willing to place themselves in harm's way. Specifically, the DoD has two primary purposes for its recruitment advertising: increasing the target audience's propensity to join the military and encouraging the American public to adopt a positive view of military missions (Eighmey, 2006). The current recruiting goals of the U.S. military require approximately 156,000 volunteers each year to maintain an active-duty, enlisted military force of approximately 1.2 million (Dertouzos, 2009). This goal represents a substantial recruiting challenge that is complicated by the high percentage of youths pursuing education beyond high school, cyclical fluctuations in the civilian job market, and the occurrence of international and domestic military events that can lead to periods of heightened concern (Warner & Asch, 2001).

After the U.S. government decided to transform the military into an all-volunteer force system in 1973, the U.S. DoD allowed each branch of the military to determine and attract its own target audience (Bailey, 2007). The Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines each had to identify its own manpower needs and resources and devote its resources to increase enlistment numbers.

The U.S. military believed that advertising could influence public attitudes and behaviors with regard to military service (Moskos, 2005). Previous military recruitment advertising was intended to increase the proportion of the population that had the propensity to enlist at any given time or to increase the likelihood that those with the propensity to serve would actually enlist (Bailey, 2007). Previous studies of military recruitment advertising (see NRC, 2003) showed that most researchers focused on examining the relationship between the proportion of people with the propensity to enlist and the proportion of people who actually enlisted (e.g., percent unemployed; civilian/military pay differentials; educational benefits offered; percentage of the population holding a given belief, attitude, or value) (Bowman et al., 1986; Ash, 1989; Brown, 2006; Bailey, 2007; Caforio, 2009; Dertouzos, 2009; Britt et al., 2011).

According to Eighemy (2006), each service branch of the U.S. DoD has used different persuasive strategies that are created to match its specific service features. For example, Air Force advertising emphasizes high technology. The service branches can use their own advertising storytelling patterns after identifying their own target audience.

Chu (2005) asserted that recruitment advertising with precise persuasive strategies would influence target audiences' propensity to enlist and create a positive evaluation of military services. Potential enlistees' evaluation of military service should be a strong predictor of their enlistment decisions (Nargar, 2009). Thus, the soldier-hero image has been a visible icon in military recruitment advertising and a valuable persuasive technique to achieve the DoD's goals in military recruiting commercials. For instance, the Army used Superman as a celebrity endorsement in 1981 and an image of soldiers fighting in "Army of One" commercials during the 1990s, whereas the Navy used its own vehicle commander who served in the Mideast as a main character in a 1990s enlisting commercial. Since the 1970s, the Marines have continuously used American youths who become soldier-hero after military training with the Marines as their primary advertising storytelling pattern.

Increasingly sophisticated efforts to understand the desires and psychological needs of potential enlistees and the contemporary American public have assisted the U.S. DoD in developing effective persuasive strategies in its advertising to maintain the functions of the U.S. military system. An investigation of how soldier-hero images in U.S. military recruitment advertising influence people's evaluations would assist the U.S. DoD in producing effective advertising with a solid theoretical foundation.

Soldier-hero images were one of significant persuasive strategy in the U.S. military recruitment advertising (Chu, 2005). The types of soldier-hero images were vary during American history, for example, the media depicted hero as a fighting men during the Vietnam War and discoursed hero as a self- scarify soldier during the World War II (Larry, 1993). In addition, the hero image was changed dramatically after the first time Gulf War. The U.S. media, such as CNN shaped American hero image as a professional soldier and operated high technological weapon (Larry, 1993). Thus, this program used soldier-hero images that were recognized during American history as a priming effects trigger to examine how these images influence American public.

2 Priming studies

Media priming refers to a short-term influence of exposure to media content on an individual's subsequent evaluation, attitude, and behavior. The priming effect represents a psychological network related to memory or concepts that can be triggered by another concept and influences subsequent information processing (Brewer et al., 1984).

Collins and Quillian (1969) suggested that the media can evoke previously stored concepts and memories based on past experience or media exposure. That is, concepts are connected and predictable via media stimulation. One of the focal points of priming research is determining how to create an association between concepts. The fundamental priming procedure on media exposure is that media content (Priming event) would activate certain attributes to audience, and guide their interpretation of specific product, services, and information (Mitchell & Olson, 1981). The psychological priming process would also generate audience's evaluations on specific product or brand (Malhotra & Krosnick, 2007). Regarding to the U.S military recruitment advertising, it could influence the American public's psychological attribution and evaluations on military services.

Iyengar and Kinder (1987) provided two assumptions for interpreting the priming effect: (a) the activation of related concepts is dependent on the intensity of the priming events, and (b) the priming effect fades over time. These assumptions indicate that the priming effect is a relatively short-term effect triggered by media content to modify an audience's information processing and cognition network (Dillman et al., 2008).

One of the most significant areas of investigation on the media priming effect is political priming research (e.g., Kelleher & Wolak, 2006; Brug et al., 2007; Malhotra & Krosnick, 2007; Dillman et al., 2008; Lasorsa, 2009; Valenzuela, 2009; Ha, 2011). Political priming studies are concerned with how the media influence the approaches that people use to evaluate candidates. Compared with agenda setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), which focuses on how the mass media influence what people think about, priming effect research emphasizes how media discourse influences the criteria that the public uses to evaluate politicians (Malhotra & Krosnick, 2007). Thus, media priming effects shape the

considerations of the public when evaluating the performance of political candidates. For example, Dragojlovic (2011) examined how priming effects on television influence audiences' perceptions of U.S. presidential candidates. This research demonstrated that discourse on television is a significant factor in activating the priming effect to increase or decrease the public's likelihood of supporting a specific political candidate.

Collins and Loftus (1975) proposed two central assumptions related to the priming effect. First, stronger priming events cause higher levels of priming and slower dissipation of priming activation. Second, the strength of priming activation dissipates over time if the audience's exposure to priming events ceases. The duration of the priming effect activated by the media is highly uncertain. Previous research has shown that the priming effect could last 15 minutes to an hour, but it may be influenced by multiple variables, including an audience's past experience and personal involvement level as well as the strength of priming event exposure (e.g., Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002; Ha, 2011; Stevens et al., 2011; Ashikali & Dittmar, 2012; Bilali & Vollhardt, 2013). A few military studies have investigated how the priming effect dissipates after media exposure. This assumption should be a focal point for the DoD's persuasive strategies when conducting recruitment advertising.

The soldier-hero images used in U.S. military recruitment advertising could be a significant priming event to create a positive evaluation by the American public. The goal of this project is to examine how soldier-hero images influence Americans' evaluations of military service. The following hypotheses and research question are synthesized from the literature review.

H1: A priming event of soldier-hero images used in military advertising will make a stronger contribution to ensuring a positive evaluation of the military than will a priming event with no soldier-hero images.

Macrae and Johnston(1998) indicated that soldier-hero images would trigger audience's primed levels and moral emotions. In addition, soldier-hero images could encourage people's propensity to have helping behavior. This study examined how soldier-hero images contained in U.S. military recruitment advertising influence audience's evaluations of the U.S. military.

Nagar (2009) believed that the levels of intensity on priming cues in television advertising would influence audience's priming conditions. That is, higher intensity of heroism related images would allow audience have greater

chance to act helpful, to show morally courageous or brave (Walker & Hennig, 2004). However, research has seldom measured how different intensity of military related soldier-hero images in recruitment advertising impact audiences primed level. This project measured the relationship between participants' priming effect and their exposure on different intensity of soldier-hero images of U.S military recruiting commercial.

H2: A priming event with soldier-hero images with higher intensity (200 msec for soldier-hero images vs. 1000 msec for soldier-hero images) in military advertising will make a stronger contribution to ensuring a positive evaluation of the military than will a priming event of lower intensity.

H3: Priming of higher intensity levels (0 msec for non- soldier-hero images vs. 200 msec for soldier-hero images vs. 1000 msec for soldier-hero images) will result in slower dissipation of the priming effect over time.

One of the essential priming effect assumption is that primed levels would fade overtime after media exposure (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Malhotra and Krosnick's(2007) investigation on political priming effect and its dissipation conditions provided support to this assumption. This research measured dissipation conditions of priming effect triggered by military recruitment advertising.

RQ1: How does participants' original propensity to enlist in military services have an influence on priming effect after participants' exposure to soldier-hero images in recruitment advertising?

Methodology

1 Participants

The participants included 197 undergraduate students (130 men, 67 women) at a major Midwestern university with majors in political science, psychology, media and cinema studies, and sociology. The study participants received extra credit at the end of the semester. College-age students are the primary potential enlistees of the U.S. DoD (Chu, 2005). Thus, participants selected in this article were appropriate. The primary reason for recruiting undergraduate students on this experimental study was contemporary American youth should be the significant potential enlisting target audience. Eighmey (2006) suggested that the future national defense strategies need

a high quality and professional manpower resource to maintain functions of the Department of Defense. Thus, this program recruited undergraduate students as the participants was valuable for this study.

The students participated in multipart research sections, including priming media content exposure, and provided answers to a questionnaire. At the beginning of the media exposure section, the participants were asked to watch U.S. military recruitment advertising with or without soldier-hero images to investigate their priming reactions to viewing these commercials. In the second part of this experiment, the participants who were assigned to watch soldier-hero images were exposed to 25-minute commercials unrelated to military service, and the researcher distributed a questionnaire to measure their priming levels again.

2 Design

Propensity levels (Higher propensity vs. lower propensity levels on military services) and the strength of priming events (0 msec for non- soldier-hero images vs. 200 msec for soldier-hero images vs. 1000 msec for soldier-hero images) were tested in this 2X3 mix-designed experimental research.

The research used 6-point scale (1= strongly disapprove; 6= strongly approve) to investigate participants' propensity on military services and recomputed into two groups (Higher propensity vs. lower propensity levels) as the first dimension of variable.

The measurement of dependent variables was divided into two parts. First, three major factors related to the evaluation of U.S. military performance were provided, including peacekeeping, national crisis management, and military action abroad. Rostker and Bernard (2006) asserted that the primary missions of the U.S. military are peacekeeping with the United Nations' forces, preventing crises within the U.S. (e.g., the 9/11 event), and providing worldwide services. Each index was constructed on a 6-point scale (1= strongly disapprove; 6= strongly approve).

Concerning the second part of the questionnaire, the research used evaluation indices that have been widely used in studies of the priming effect on general performance in leadership (e.g., Stevens et al., 2011) and politicians (e.g., Dragojlovic, 2011; Ha, 2011) based on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 6 (extremely): *how good is the military, how competent is the military, how much integrity does the*

military have, how inspiring is the military, how strong is the military, how moral is the military, how honest is the military. The detail information about experimental design as Table 1.

Table1 Experiment design

Strength of priming events	0 msec	200 msec	1,000 msec
Higher propensity level	Higher propensity level without hero-images	Higher propensity level with 200 msec hero-images	Higher propensity level with 1,000 msec hero-images
Lower propensity level	Lower propensity level without hero-images	Lower propensity level with 200 msec hero-images	Lower propensity level with 1,000 msec hero-images

3 Stimulus material

The stimulus material consisted of U.S. military recruitment advertising created during the All-Volunteer Force era with soldier-hero images, and advertisements without soldier-hero images were used for priming. The material was randomized from four military branches, including the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. The commercials that contained soldier-hero images were divided into three groups and sorted by the strength of the priming events: 0, 200, and 1000 msec. The researcher inserted 12 military recruiting commercials into a 15-minute re-mix non-military related video for every cell. The cover story of this video was about travel and coking show, and the stimulus material was arranged as usual television watching habits. In addition, the stimulus material was the original U.S. military recruitment advertising and the researcher control the exposure time of priming events, including 0, 200, and 1000 msec.

4 Procedure

The participants were randomly assigned to conditions based on a design of six cells of propensity levels X strength levels of priming events. The experiment was conducted in a computer lab with individual cubicles for each participant. All instructions were presented on the computer screen, and all participants were informed that they were participating in a video recognition experiment.

Each trial began with a ten-minute presentation to illustrate the experimental procedure. After the presentation, the experimenter distributed a questionnaire to each participant and announced that the participants should not begin completing the survey until the end of the video, which was manipulated according to the intensity and valence of the prime. After exposure to the manipulation video, the participants had 20 minutes to complete the first part of the questionnaire. Then, the experimenter showed a 25-minute commercial that was unrelated to this research, such as commercials for Coca-Cola and Skittles candy, to distract the participants. Previous research has found that the priming effect dissipates within 25 minutes. The final part of this procedure was a paper-and-pencil questionnaire addressing the material presented at the beginning of the experiment.

Results

1 Manipulation check

It was important in this study to demonstrate that the portrayal manipulation (soldier-hero images) actually primed the relevant military images. To ensure that this priming had occurred, a pilot test was conducted. After watching U.S. military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images, 34 participants were asked to respond to a bipolar, 6-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disapprove) to 6 (strongly approve) indicating how well the material provided by the experimenter matched the following concepts: soldier-hero images, guarding the United States, peacekeeping, and worldwide services. The result indicated that participants' primed level was influenced by prior U.S military recruitment advertising exposure in multiple factors, soldier-hero concept, $M= 5.65$ versus $M= 3.15$, $t(14)= 3.21$, $p < .01$; guarding the United States, $M= 5.13$ versus $M= 4.58$, $t(14)= 3.03$, $p < .05$; peacekeeping, $M= 5.01$ versus $M= 2.98$, $t(14)= 3.69$, $p < .001$; and worldwide services, $M= 5.56$ versus $M= 4.23$, $t(14)= 3.81$, $p < .01$. Thus, the results indicated that the participants had been primed by the military recruitment advertising containing soldier-hero images.

2 Research hypotheses and question

The first two hypotheses and the research question concerned whether soldier-

hero images, people's propensity toward military service and the intensity of priming effect contribute to overall evaluations of the U.S. military. To address the mean differences between the priming effect and military evaluations, a factorial ANOVA procedure was used with participants' evaluations of the U.S. military as the dependent variables. Each scale for general evaluation, peacekeeping, preventing crisis, and worldwide services was tested independently. The strength level of priming events (0 msec for non- soldier-hero images vs. 200 msec for soldier-hero images vs. 1000 msec for soldier-hero images) and the participants' propensity levels with respect to military services were used as the independent variables.

Concerning the concept of general evaluation, the researcher used the following variables on the questionnaire: *how good is the military, how competent is the military, how much integrity does the military have, how inspiring is the military, how strong is the military, how moral is the military, and how honest is the military.*

A factorial ANOVA revealed that there was a significant main effect of soldier-hero images on general evaluations of the U.S. military ($F(2,16) = 22.63, p < .001, \eta^2 = .83$). Scheffe's post hoc paired comparisons indicated that people who watched U.S. military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images ($M = 5.15, SD = 1.01$) evaluated the U.S. military more positively on average than people who watched commercials without soldier-hero images ($M = 3.13, SD = .91$) and that people who watched commercials with stronger soldier-hero image cues ($M = 5.75, SD = 1.17$) showed higher levels of priming than those who watched commercials with weaker soldier-hero image cues ($M = 4.64, SD = .94$).

There was a significant interaction between the public's propensity toward military service and exposure to military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images ($F(6,18) = 36.54, p < .001, \eta^2 = .75$). Scheffe's post hoc paired comparisons of this interaction suggested that for people who have a stronger propensity toward military services, watching advertising with greater priming effects would result in more effective priming ($M = 5.95, SD = 2.20$) than it would for those with a lower propensity ($M = 3.12, SD = 1.01$).

In the case of the public's evaluation of peacekeeping missions ($F(2, 16) = 18.15, p < .05, \eta^2 = .71$), Scheffe's post hoc paired comparisons indicated that people who watched U.S. military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images ($M = 4.01, SD = 1.89$) provided more positive evaluations on average than people who watched commercials without soldier-hero images ($M = 2.60, SD = 2.18$). However,

there was no significant difference in the priming levels between people who watched commercials with stronger soldier-hero image cues ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.56$) and those who watched commercials with weaker cues ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.40$). There was no significant interaction effect of the public's propensity and media exposure on the priming events when we measured the participants' evaluations of U.S. military peacekeeping missions.

With regard to the examination of the concept of preventing crises in the U.S. ($F(2, 16) = 26.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .92$), Scheffe's post hoc paired comparisons indicated that people who watched U.S. military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images ($M = 5.78$, $SD = .65$) evaluated the DoD's performance in preventing U.S. crises more positively than people who watched commercials without soldier-hero images ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.01$). Furthermore, people who watched commercials with hero image cues with stronger (1000 msec) priming levels ($M = 5.96$, $SD = .25$) experienced greater priming effects than those who watched commercials with weaker (200 msec) soldier-hero image cues ($M = 5.56$, $SD = 1.14$).

The results revealed a significant interaction between the public's propensity toward military service and exposure to military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images in preventing U.S. crises ($F(6, 18) = 25.11$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .66$). Scheffe's post hoc paired comparisons of this interaction suggested that for people who have a stronger propensity toward military service, exposure to higher-level priming events would result in more effective priming ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 3.15$) than it would for people with a lower propensity ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 2.22$) when the participants rated the performance of the U.S. military in preventing U.S. crises.

For the concept of providing services worldwide ($F(2, 16) = 19.67$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .78$), Scheffe's post hoc paired comparisons indicated that people who watched U.S. military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.88$) evaluated the U.S. military's worldwide service performance more positively than people who watched commercials without soldier-hero images ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.95$). Furthermore, people who watched commercials with stronger (1000 msec) soldier-hero image cues ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 1.51$) had greater priming effects than those who watched commercials with weaker (200 msec) soldier-hero image cues ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.65$). However, the results revealed no effect of the interaction between the public's propensity and media exposure on the priming events when we measured the participants' evaluations of U.S. military worldwide services.

A factorial ANOVA demonstrated that the first and second research hypotheses were confirmed. People who watched U.S. military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images evaluated U.S. military performance more positively than people who watched military recruiting commercials without soldier-hero images. Another crucial result was that people who had stronger media exposure to soldier-hero images experienced stronger priming effects than people who watched U.S. military recruitment advertising with weaker soldier-hero images.

Concerning the audience's propensity toward military service as a variable, this examination also indicated that the participants' propensity was a significant index influencing their priming levels when viewing military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images. Specifically, the results showed that this propensity interacted with three primary concepts following exposure to priming events: general evaluations of the military, the prevention of U.S. national crises, and the U.S. military's worldwide services.

For the third research hypothesis, the experimenter predicted that stronger levels of priming events would result in slower dissipation of primed levels over time. To examine this hypothesis, a repeated-measures *t*-test was used to compare the valence levels of primed effects on participants immediately after watching U.S. military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images with the valence levels of the effects on participants who experienced a 25-minute delay in testing (after exposure to irrelevant media content). The independent variable was the intensity of priming events, and the dependent variable was the valence of the participants' primed levels.

Four paired-samples *t*-tests were used to compare the means of primed valence between commercial exposure with higher-intensity (1000 msec) soldier-hero images and commercial exposure with lower-intensity (200 msec) images. The first paired *t*-test of the general military performance condition indicated that there was a significant difference in the participants' primed valence between the high-intensity ($M=0.13$, $SD=0.18$) and low-intensity ($M=3.25$, $SD=1.14$) conditions: $t(2) = 3.66$, $p < .01$. The second paired *t*-test of the public's evaluation of peacekeeping missions demonstrated that there was no significant difference in the participants' primed valence between the high-intensity ($M=3.10$, $SD=2.45$) and low-intensity ($M=3.06$, $SD=1.87$) conditions: $t(2) = 1.03$, $p > .05$. The third paired *t*-test regarding the prevention of U.S. national crises showed that there was a significant difference in the participants' primed valence between the high-intensity ($M=0.85$, $SD=0.66$) and low-

intensity ($M=1.74$, $SD=1.87$) conditions: $t(2) = 3.33$, $p < .05$. The fourth paired t -test of the public's evaluation of U.S. military worldwide services indicated that there was a significant difference in the participants' primed valence between the high-intensity ($M=0.77$, $SD=1.01$) and low-intensity ($M=0.81$, $SD=2.14$) conditions: $t(2) = 3.87$, $p < .05$.

These results suggest that the third hypothesis was partially confirmed. Higher-intensity soldier-hero images in U.S. military recruitment advertising appear to result in slower dissipation of participants' primed levels in multiple conditions, including the public's general evaluations, the prevention of U.S. national crises, and the evaluation of U.S. military worldwide services.

Discussion

This research has tried to establish the priming effect procedure that influenced by soldier-hero images in U.S. military recruitment advertising. The fundamental argument is that soldier-hero images would cause priming effect and evoke positive evaluations to the U.S. military. Past research projects related to U.S. military recruitment advertising were conducted to determine the effects based on several approaches, including econometrics, potential recruits' information-seeking behaviors, and peer group influence on military services to explore the vital components of attracting contemporary American youths who are willing to serve their country and fostering positive evaluations by the U.S. public. By investigating priming levels and the timing of their dissipation for participants after watching U.S. military recruitment advertising in order to demonstrate how soldier-hero images influence the public's evaluations of military performance, the findings of this study provide the U.S. DoD with an effective storytelling pattern for future commercials.

The results indicate that soldier-hero images influence the public's evaluations of military service in multiple dimensions, including general evaluations (*how good is the military, how competent is the military, how much integrity does the military have, how inspiring is the military, how strong is the military, how moral is the military, how honest is the military*), evaluations of peacekeeping missions, the prevention of U.S. national crises, and evaluations of the military's worldwide services. The post hoc analysis showed that people who watched military recruiting commercials with higher-intensity soldier-hero images evaluated the performance of the U.S. military

more positively than those who watched commercials with less intense soldier-hero images.

This research also found that the public's propensity toward military service is a valuable variable that interacts with people's priming levels. Thus, people who have a stronger propensity to join the military tend to evaluate military performance more positively from specific perspectives, including the perspectives of general evaluation and the prevention of U.S. national crises, after watching military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images.

The results also demonstrate that the priming levels of participants who watched commercials with higher-intensity soldier-hero images did not fade after 25 minutes of distraction with respect to general evaluations, the prevention of national crises, and the provision of worldwide services. Previous research on the timing of priming dissipation indicated that the priming effect would fade within 25 minutes (see Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002). However, the current study showed that the priming level that was triggered by military recruitment advertising with soldier-hero images lasted longer than suggested by previous priming research. The hypothesis testing procedure also indicated that the priming effects experienced by people who watched U.S. military commercials with higher-intensity soldier-hero images dissipated more slowly. Thus, the use of more intense soldier-hero images in recruitment advertising could provide the U.S. DoD with an opportunity not only to gain the public's support of military services but also to maintain this positive evaluation for a longer period.

Concerning the implications, past studies indicated that the American public's attitude, belief, and norms are the primary variables to influence youth's enlisting decision (Bailey, 2007), however, there had seldom research provided storytelling patterns about improving recruiting rate of the U.S. military. The U.S. military could use soldier-hero images as a significant persuasive technique in their military advertising.

Former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld (2003) asserted that communicating with the public to increase their support and encouraging a positive evaluation of national defense missions are important to the contemporary American military. In the AVF era, serving in the military could simply be another category in the job market (Moskos, 2005). The U.S. DoD needs to compete with other employers to offer its soldiers a bright future and valuable career development opportunities. Advertising is recognized as one of the elements needed to communicate with the public and to

attract American youths to serve their country (Eighmey, 2006; Farrell, 2008; Dertouzos, 2009). Thus, the U.S. DoD uses soldier-hero images in its recruitment advertising as an effective storytelling strategy for attracting potential enlistees and improving public evaluations of military services.

Segal (1989) suggested that the job of serving in the U.S. DoD in the AVF era has shifted from a purely occupational job to a mixed model that includes an institutional job. For an occupational job, potential enlistees consider only external compensation, such as salary and retirement plan, whereas for an institutional job, duty to one's country and serving society are considered when American youths choose their careers. The U.S. DoD has primarily used external cue messages (Chu, 2005) for recruiting soldiers and has spent nearly \$5 million per year to produce recruitment advertising in order to fill approximately 156,000 volunteer soldier positions each year (Dertouzos, 2009). The use of soldier-hero images as a priming event represents an effective storytelling pattern for U.S. military recruitment advertising to encourage positive evaluations of military services by potential enlistees and by the general American public.

The national defense human power structure in Taiwan is transforming from a requirement services to volunteer force system. Hence, recruiting advertisement is a crux channel to motive potential soldiers serving for their country. The RAND think tank concluded the U.S. military recruiting experience for the past 40 years to suggest three primary factors that would influence youth's enlisting behavior, including norms, attitudes, and control beliefs (Rostker & Bernard, 2006). Eighmey (2006) believed that priming effect is a valuable condition that could improve people's attitudes and control beliefs toward military services. Thus, using hero-images could be a significant strategy to allow youth generating a positive attitude and believing they would have a successful career in military services. That is a useful persuasive strategy on producing military recruiting advertisements for a country that is transforming military human power structure to a volunteer force system such as Taiwan.

Study Limitations

When interpreting the findings of this study, one must consider its limitations. This research suggested that using soldier-hero images as priming events in U.S.

military recruitment advertising could trigger positive evaluations of military services. However, the public's evaluation of military services could not be fully explored in this research. Some variables, such as participants' previous experience in the military and peer group influence, should be clarified in future studies.

In addition, this research could not provide explanations for the timing of the dissipation of priming levels. This research project indicated that priming effects triggered by soldier-hero images can last longer than was predicted in previous studies of the political priming effect. Future studies should investigate the factors that influence the timing of the dissipation of participants' priming levels.

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Do we like soldier- heroes? The priming effect of U.S. military recruitment advertising

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