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THESIS

**REBUILDING PUBLIC TRUST IN THE TAIWAN
MILITARY: A SYSTEMS APPROACH**

by

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June 2016

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**REBUILDING PUBLIC TRUST IN THE TAIWAN MILITARY: A SYSTEMS
APPROACH**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on how the Taiwan military can improve public perception by changing its posting strategies on the Taiwanese Ministry of Defense Facebook page. By enhancing public trust through social media, the military would be better positioned to increase recruitment, funding, and morale. First, the research analyzes the application of Facebook and use of the “Like” button as an indicator of public trust levels. Then it employs content analysis methods, to evaluate which posting formats and writing approaches would lead to various trust levels. The findings reveal that the Taiwan military can improve public perception through its use of Facebook by publicizing cultural events such as the Lunar New Year, creating surprising content for followers, managing the trust-building process, and using Facebook’s text and picture format with a proactive content strategy.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. CURRENT TAIWAN MILITARY DILEMMAS IN SOCIETY

The need for better relations between the Taiwan military and Taiwanese society stems from three primary circumstances. First, Taiwan has experienced a period of peace for more than 60 years, since Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek's retreat to the island in 1949. Because of duration of this relatively conflict-free time, many citizens question the military's strategic necessity, as it seems that war with China is unlikely to rekindle anytime soon. Second, recent scandals have undermined public support for the military. For example, on August 3, 2013, nearly 250,000 demonstrators joined a rally in front of the Presidential Office Building, pressing for human rights improvements in the Taiwan military and justice for the death by hazing of Corporal Hung Chung-Chu. Just a few years later, another scandal came to light. On April 6, 2015, the news website NewsAsia posted that Taiwan's president, Ma Ying-jeou, had officially commanded a complete review of military discipline after an army lieutenant colonel illegally brought a group of civilians onto a military base, sparking public outcry. The same website described the defense minister bowing in apology during a press conference about this issue. These events reveal the Taiwanese people's growing disenchantment with the military. Third, good news is seldom reported by the military effectively. For example, during annual natural disasters, such as typhoons, floods, and earthquakes, the military is always first at the scene to assist with rescue, recovery, and reconstruction, but such operations are rarely touted in the media. Similarly, in 2013, the Discovery Channel made a video highlighting the tough training process of the Navy Underwater Operation Unit, and the integrity and national pride of unit members. Unfortunately, the military never seized the opportunity to promote this success properly. Positive events like these normally appear in the media for only a short period. Soon after, they are forgotten or overshadowed by another military scandal.

These situations not only erode public trust in the military in qualitative terms, but also they create quantifiable dilemmas in terms of recruiting and budgeting (Enav, 2013; Murray & Churchman, 2013). In conjunction with traditional types of media, modern

social media may be a highly effective medium for addressing these shortfalls by improving positive communication and transparent relationships between the military and the people. In other applications, social media has proven to be a great tool for marketing and influencing public thinking. However, the Taiwan military currently uses only limited media sources—internal newspapers, a weekly military television show, a few official websites, and some disorganized websites—which are not sufficient to build and defend the military’s reputation. This thesis will propose specific ways to close this gap.

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Taiwan military lacks public trust, resulting in poor public relations, decreased recruitment, and subsequently decreased combat readiness.

C. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this systematic study is to better understand how the Taiwan military can regain the public’s trust. If successful, the military stands to increase recruitment, funding, and public regard as well as morale among military members and civilians. This research will analyze how to achieve these tasks by building public trust in the Taiwan military.

D. AREA OF RESEARCH

This thesis focuses on image construction strategies, using social media and other approaches, to build a trustworthy image for the Taiwan military and influence public attitude. As a potential indicator of trust in the military, the recruitment rate also will be analyzed.

E. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The following issues will be addressed in this research:

1. What components comprise the Taiwan social system impact recruitment, retention, and force morale?
2. What correlation, if any, exists between publicly available information, public opinion, and military morale?

3. What information interfaces are the most effective in inducing change in public opinion?
4. What is the benefit/risk tradeoff for the Taiwan military in the implementation of a comprehensive information interface to rebuild public trust?

F. RESEARCH METHODS

Descriptions of social media vary depending on the source. For the purposes of this research, we will use the definition established by the Federal Web Managers Council interagency group, which describes social media as the integration of “technology, social interaction, and content creation using the ‘wisdom of crowds’ to collaboratively connect online information. Through social media, people or groups can create, organize, edit, comment on, combine, and share content” (Thomas, 2012, p. 2). This research explores image construction, which involves the collection and shaping of information; use of persuasion and media propaganda products; and evaluation of disinformation. The research uses online data extracted from the Taiwanese MND Facebook page databases and other resources. Then, these data are analyzed with respect to the recruitment rate in order to offer approaches to increase this number. The research is conducted via the Internet, articles, books, which includes but is not limited to those listed in the literature review. The systematic approach to the research encompasses the following steps:

1. Analyzing the image configuration and representative material to conduct the image construction.
2. Examining the components of information propagation and advertisement strategies to find a feasible approach to improve the reputation of Taiwan military.
3. Studying the media usage spectrum and finding the most effective medium in Taiwan society among different populations to support the military image construction process.
4. Conducting surveys or interviews to evaluate the media/information purposes or influence.
5. Proposing methods to increase the recruitment rate, which could be an assessment of trust in the Taiwan military. The belief is that the rate will increase with an increase of trust the military.

G. POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

This thesis identifies the underlying causes of the poor relationship between the Taiwanese public and military. It analyzes similar cases identified in the literature, examining media and user-behavior with the understanding that localized modifications and alternatives may be needed to apply these analyses to the Taiwan situation. The methods of the systematic approach are discussed with the goal of optimizing influence with key target groups. This approach, if enacted, could lead to a friendlier working environment within the Taiwan military. Ultimately, it may also increase recruitment efficiency and the annual military budget, as well as improve the Taiwan military relationship with the public

One of the limitations of this analysis is its shelf life. Due to the rapid progress in technology and popular media, recommendations may quickly become outdated, and future research would need to account for this. Furthermore, this study is specifically tailored to fit the Taiwan military environment. Similar organizations may use these recommendations as a blueprint for localized applications with the understanding that situational variables and causal factors are likely to be different from Taiwan's to some degree.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. IMAGE CONSTRUCTION

The first step for the Taiwan military to win over the public is to project an image that is worthy of trust. The following sections define and assess concepts relevant to image construction.

1. Definitions of Image

Image, in the context of this thesis, is an attitude and a kind of mental representation (Chen, 1976). It also represents someone's cognition after a series of outside continuous stimulation and life experiences. This cognition will disappear once the stimulation stops but will be recalled from the memory if the same stimulation occurs again. Comparing the image with knowledge, there are some differences between the two ideas; knowledge is composed of the truth; however, images are another truth based on personal preference which is also called the subject knowledge (Boulding, 1956).

Another definition for image is that it is a standard value set for certain objects by evaluating relevant information and is affected by components, such as frame of reference, personnel values, desires and expectations (Zhu, 1973). People evaluate and judge different information pertaining to those objects with reference to previous images in their minds. Meanwhile, people choose to either re-organize or maintain the image by judging the new information in the context of the previously established images.

In this research, image is defined as a person's overall cognition, attitude, thinking, or picture toward the specific objects due to the outside stimulation and personal experience. Those components are sometimes blurred and hard to define, but the images are powerful enough to influence behavior.

2. Functions of Image

The functions of image can be generalized into several aspects depending on different situations, such as creating sympathy between people, increasing reliability and winning people's trust (Nimmo & Savage, 1976).

Other research points out that the image includes four functions (Deng, 1987) as follows:

- **Improve Cognition**—Image can offset the flaws, defects and limitations caused by experience. It can greatly simplify the process of forming the cognition and also provide a reference in different situations to help people exploring the external world.
- **Influence Attitude**—Lippmann (1922) points out that a person's image is the main determinant that influences the expression of opinion. This means people's attitudes will change when their image is changed.
- **Guide Behavior**—Image influences human behavior. When the outside environment changes someone's image, the person's behavior will also change accordingly. This statement asserts that personal behavior will change when the image is modified or re-organized.
- **Unify groups**—Image is a result of socialization. If a group of people experience the same socialized process, they will form a similar image for each individual person within that group. This image will enhance the recognition between each other and also increase loyalty for the group (Deng, 1987).

3. Political Candidate Image Construction Process

Boulding (1956) points out there are four stages in the candidate's image transformation process during an election.

- **Stage 1:** The candidate's information is propagated via the media. In this stage, people have not formed fully-developed explanations or opinions on the information.
- **Stage 2:** People start to form the preliminary cognition toward the candidate, but they have not formed any preference or attitude (good or bad) yet.
- **Stage 3:** People have formed revolutionary cognition toward the candidate. In this stage, cognition transformation, and changes in attitude and acceptance are initiated. This phenomenon usually starts from some changes in information that is relevant to the image of the candidate. Then, people adjust their cognition to accommodate the received information accordingly.
- **Stage 4:** People rebuild their cognition toward the candidate. This cognition could be certain/uncertain, possible/impossible, or clear/unclear. Some new information may make the candidate's image clearer, in other respects, it could blur that image. (1956)

To summarize, Boulding states that the process of image construction can be simplified. A candidate's image construction starts without any effect but gradually shifts as uncertainty and confusion are encountered until the candidate's image is entirely changed or rebuilt. During this process, the image is a variable that is continuously changing with time, outside information, and the image itself. Furthermore, Boulding emphasizes that the causes for a changing image is not the information itself but rather the meaning attached to the information.

4. Methods of Image Rebuilding

In some cases, when there is a need to modify the constructed image, this rebuilding must occur in a short amount of time especially when a crisis in an organization happened. Boulding discusses three methods to rebuild the image: addition, reorganization and clarification (Zhu, 1973).

a. Addition

This method includes the attachment of new information and the expansion of the original information. This means that the new image we want to build with new information does not conflict with the original image; therefore, the new information will extend the image influence without conflicting with the original information.

b. Reorganization

Under the premise of reorganization, people will reorganize a new image of an object after they receive new information that is inconsistent with the original image of the object. This new information will cause a change to the original image and transform it into a new image in the new environment, accordingly.

c. Clarification

Clarification means people get a much clearer and stable image in their minds after they receive new information to clarify unclear information.

New information can have one of two possible effects on images. It either redefines or maintains the image. The former means that the image undergoes

transformation; the latter means that while the outside environment causing the image change remains, there is no need to change this image within the outside environment. However, the result of maintaining the image does not mean the new information has no influence on people; the image will still consistently influence people and have the same effect. The advantage to maintaining the image is that is not necessary to rebuild the image by adding new information.

B. CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND IMAGE RESTORATION STRATEGY

In general, people and organizations want to maintain a positive image, which is consistent with society's values, morals and ethics. For the Ministry of National Defense (MND) in Taiwan, projecting a positive military image, which includes integrity, professionalism and strict discipline, is not only essential to winning the people's trust and support of military policy making but also way to encourage more qualified young people to join the military. In modern times, the government is under more scrutiny than ever by the media and the public. People expect military personnel to have a higher ethical standard than those who are not tasked with defending the nation and taking human life when necessary. This scrutiny results in the detailed examination of all members of the military. High-ranking military personnel are scrutinized to a greater degree than other government members or society as a whole. Due to this, the military should be very careful to maintain its own image, which can easily collapse when there is negative press. Maintaining a positive image is not an easy task. The Taiwan military is an organization that includes more than 100,000 employees, and it is impossible to prevent negative media attention. In addition to focusing on image construction, the military must also learn how to respond to bad press.

Above all, approaches to how the Taiwan military deals with any crisis and how it can restore its image become an important task for public relations and communications.

1. Definition of a Crisis

According to Coombs, a crisis could be a turning point that will make things either better or worse. A crisis is an event that includes how negative information will affect public image and the reputation of the organization, company or enterprise (2002).

In general, a crisis can also be defined as a sense of uncertainty and threat; a specific event will endanger the high-level goals of the organization and also will force the organization to respond immediately. If there is no adequate response, the public will have a negative view.

In this research, a crisis is defined as a sudden event that will potentially threaten an organization and can also be a turning point that can change an organization's image (military or otherwise) for the worse. Most of the time, in this research, a crisis can be treated as a negative military-related news event or scandal that is likely to be disseminated via public or social media.

2. Image Restoration Theory

The relevant reference for crisis communication strategy can be traced back to Ware and Linkugel, who generalize the four apologia for people attempting self-explanation as denying, bolstering, differentiation and transcendence (1973).

a. Response

According to Sturges, the organization should respond with appropriate information with respect to the crisis stage for damage control (1994). The organization should provide information that conforms to one of the three following types:

1. Instructing information

Instructing information implies that the crisis is under the organization's control by telling the public what affects or influence the crisis may have and how the organization will react to defend itself.

2. Adjusting information

Adjusting information relieves the uncertainty and pressure within the public and also brings forth empathetic concerns and feelings from the organization by manipulating the truth.

3. Internalizing information

Internalizing information assists the organization in managing its reputation and image. The purpose of this information is to help with image restoration.

Benoit believes the image restoration theory is based on the process of information propagation, which is a target-oriented activity (1995). Moreover, the purpose of the theory is to maintain a positive image for the organization. Before discussing the kinds of strategy to use, there are two criteria that need to be met in advance: first, all communications and negotiations are target-oriented activities intended to persuade the target audience; second, the purpose of the communications and negotiations is to maintain a positive image for the person or organization. Image restoration strategies can be applied to protect or defend the organization's internal and public image when the image is damaged.

b. Counter Attack

To properly counter an attack on an organization's image, the attacker's purpose must be understood so as to prioritize and manage the response processes. Benoit classifies the strategies to counter those attacks into five categories as follows:

1. Denial

This includes simple denial, which declares an event or issue never happened, cutting off any relationship between the organization and the crisis and shifting the blame to someone or something else.

2. Evading responsibility

This approach is used by those who cannot deny the responsibility for the situation. They claim the reason for the mistake is caused by provocation, accident or good intentions to lessen the organization's responsibility.

3. Reducing offensiveness

The defender may use the bolstering strategy to lessen the negative images or connect a positive image from the past with the current negative image to mitigate the public's negative reaction. By comparison, the defender can also use the differentiation strategy to compare the current situation with a worse situation that happened earlier show the current situation is not as serious as people think. The transcendence strategy is another option, where the defender puts the current situation onto a high-level frame to minimize the negative effects by reviewing the whole issue or crisis from a different

point of view. Finally, the organization can defend its reputation and reduce the credibility of the bad image by accusing the attacker.

4. Corrective action

In this strategy, the defender has the option to restore the situation by promising to mend the mistake and prevent the recurrence. By using this strategy, the defender also points out why the crisis happened and promises it will not happen again instead of merely lessening the bad situation by reducing offensiveness.

5. Mortification

In this strategy the defender admits the fault and takes full responsibility for any failures, asking for forgiveness by the public. This strategy can be combined together with the corrective action strategy (1995).

Above all, Benoit thinks the critical issue in dealing with a crisis is how to appropriately respond, regardless of the type of crisis or the stage the crisis is in (Benoit, 1995). Coombs points out that the crisis communication strategy is chosen by the defender only after the crisis evaluation has been done, at which point the defender can effectively control the crisis situation and propagate the proper response (2002).

C. MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND EVALUATION

Considering the assumptions mentioned earlier, if the Taiwan military is treated as an organization that understands the importance of and the strategies to build and maintain a trust worthy image, the following step is to choose effective marketing communication strategies via the proper mediums and set up the relevant strategies to influence Taiwanese society to achieve the military's goals and win the people's trust. By enhancing the marketing communications, the MND can effectively reduce the time spent conducting image construction. By choosing the proper media, the Taiwan MND might be able to predict and curtail the public's reaction by monitoring their response.

1. Definitions and Functions of Marketing Communications

By definition, "marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for

customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2015). Marketing is a socialized management system that can satisfy the desire for the group or individual by the process of creating, providing and exchanging the product or its value. For the Taiwan military, the products could be morale, retirement welfare, an improved working environment; any supporting factors to win the public’s trust or increase the recruitment rate.

The American Marketing Association defines Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) as “a planning process designed to assure that all brand contacts received by a customer or prospect for a product, service, or organization are relevant to that person and consistent over time” (as cited in West Virginia University, n.d.). Drucker indicates there are two basic functions for any organization: marketing and innovation. The purpose of marketing is to make the selling process become as unnecessary as possible, which means if the product fits the desire of the customers the product will sell itself. Therefore, any enterprise should not view marketing as a standalone function but rather as the connection between the meeting the customers’ values and satisfying the customers’ desires. From a customer’s point of view, the marketing strategy represents the enterprise. The purpose of any enterprise is to create and maintain the satisfaction of the customer (Drucker, 1954).

Based on the previous ideas and the concept of marketing, we can think of the Taiwan MND as an organization and the public (including potential recruits) is the customer base for whom the MND is trying to build a positive image and increase the recruitment rate. In this scenario, the working conditions, welfare, serving limitations and the relevant military news are the products or services the organization provides. The MND creates its value by providing those products and services. Meanwhile, the public or potential recruits will “buy” those products and provide feedback once they agree with the value the MND offers by reciprocating with a positive image or increased recruitment rate.

2. Components and Development of Marketing

Continuing with the scenario, we need to analyze the components and the development of the marketing process. By studying this, we will understand, control and manipulate marketing skills and foresee or predict marketing trends. Kotler and Armstrong state the idea of marketing is composed of seven components: markets, needs, wants, demands, products, exchanges and transactions (2012). Marketing stems from personal needs and experiences and is followed by wants and demands and then produces the products to satisfy the customers' desires. After the products transition through a process of exchange and transaction, they will be categorized into certain types of product in the market and serve to satisfy the potential needs of customers.

In addition, Kotler and Armstrong state that there are five steps to develop marketing processes.

1. Understand the needs and desire of the customers.
2. Conceive a feasible customer-oriented marketing strategy.
3. Enact the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) plan to transmit the effective information.
4. Build a profitable relationship with customers to derive customer satisfaction.
5. Obtain customer loyalty resulting in increased market share, sales, and profits. (2012)

3. Social Media and the Media Usage Spectrum in Taiwan

In modern times, social media has proven to be an efficient marketing tool. It functions as more than just a communications medium. Since there are so many definitions of social media from various sources, we use the definition from the U.S. government Federal Web Managers Council: "social media integrates technology, social interaction, and content creation using the 'wisdom of crowds' to collaboratively connect online information. Through social media, people or groups can create, organize, edit, comment on, combine, and share content" (Thomas, 2012, p. 2). This purely describes the communicative facet of social media. Moreover, social media is capable of being communicated over various platforms and simultaneously linking to any users via the

Internet, resulting in more widespread sharing of information than traditional communication means. Per Thomas, it serves as a huge strategic asset for the military nowadays and includes some critical identities and influences as follows (2012).

a. *State-like Identity and Influence*

According to Thomas, the term “state” is interchangeable with “nation” and “country.” Depending on the size, area and components of the population in the cyber domain, social media demonstrates that its power and influence residing in the cyber domain will provide similar influence as that provided by the state in the physical geographical domain (2012).

b. *Institution-like Identity and Influence*

Conventionally, Thomas states that institutions, such as religious and educational institutions, normally communicate an identity in order to influence certain populations. In modern times, people frequently use network and mobile devices to communicate, meaning that social media often replaces the functions of traditional institutions as a means to influence populations (2012).

c. *Disruptive and Weapon-Like Instrument*

As Thomas has noted, social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter can gather and coordinate crowd power to disrupt political power, as vividly demonstrated by the 2011 Arab Spring, initiated in Tunisia. Moreover, social media can trigger the flash mob or flash mob by directing online members to meet at certain places and initiate violent activities (2012).

In Taiwan, the news media, now a computer-based network media, has greatly changed its media usage spectrum in the past years through various mechanisms such as email, blogs, Twitter and Facebook. According to the *Insight Xplorer Report*, there are three significant findings with regard to Taiwan media usage as follows, as translated by the author:

1. On average, a Taiwanese person searches 2,606.8 web pages per month, which is also the highest in Asia.

2. In Taiwan, currently the most common type of website that Internet users access is the “portal site,” and social media websites have the highest average use time.
3. Within those social media websites, Facebook is the most visited site for Internet users, either judged by the overall use time or the number of searched pages. (ixresearch, 2015)

Moreover, the study also points out the most common Internet users are the dual-device users (44.9%) who use both PC/laptop and smartphones together to retrieve information and the multi-device user (31.6%) who use PC/smart phone/tablet at the same time. With increased online resources, many people search, find valuable information and conduct social activities via the Internet. If the Taiwan MND wants to recruit people by using new media, they can focus on the social media communication channels and adjust their strategy to adapt to new media usage trends in the future. In Taiwan, the most popular social media website is Facebook (Table 1) and no matter which other social media platform people choose, most people still use Facebook (Table 2).

Table 1. Taiwan Social Media Usage Rate. Source: Ixresearch (2015).

Media		% Reach	Average Minutes per Visitor	Average Pages per Visitor
	Total Internet : Total Audience	100.0	1,516.1	2,625
	Social Media - Social Networking	92.4	377.0	571
1 [P]	FACEBOOK.COM	79.0	405.3	586
2 [M]	Yahoo! Wretch	53.6	18.5	44
	WRECH.CC	53.6	18.5	44
3 [M]	PIXNET	40.2	5.3	17
	PIXNET.NET	40.2	5.3	17
	PIXNET.CC	0.0	-	-
4 [P]	PLURK.COM	8.2	160.7	236
5 [P]	TWITTER.COM	4.8	10.0	12

Table 2. Taiwan Social Media Overlapping Visiting Analysis.
Source: Ixresearch (2015).

Media in Rows	[P] FACEBOOK.COM		[M] Yahoo! Wretch		[M] PIXNET		[P] PLURK.COM		[P] TWITTER.COM	
	Shared Audience (000)	% Vertical	Shared Audience (000)	% Vertical	Shared Audience (000)	% Vertical	Shared Audience (000)	% Vertical	Shared Audience (000)	% Vertical
FACEBOOK.COM	9,257	100.0	5,830	92.9	4,395	93.4	937	97.0	546	96.4
Yahoo! Wretch	5,830	63.0	6,276	100.0	3,953	84.0	801	82.9	481	84.9
PIXNET	4,395	47.5	3,953	63.0	4,707	100.0	758	78.5	450	79.5
PLURK.COM	937	10.1	801	12.8	758	16.1	966	100.0	189	33.4
TWITTER.COM	546	5.9	481	7.7	450	9.6	189	19.6	566	100.0

D. COMPONENTS IMPACTING RECRUITMENT IN THE TAIWAN MILITARY

In this thesis, the recruitment rate is used as an indicator of the public's trust toward the Taiwan military. Normally, people will join an organization only when they have trust in it. To test this assumption, the trend of recruitment rates is compared with social media feedback within given timelines to see if there is a correlation between a trustworthy military image (in people's minds) and an increased recruitment rate. Moreover, a positive image could also satisfy the requirements to increase the recruitment rate if there is a strong relationship between positive image of the military and the recruitment rate. According to the Taiwan Military Elite Recruiting Center, there are four factors that have significant impact on recruitment and retention rates (translated by the author):

1. Welfare

- Provide reasonable salary and subsidy
- Provide reasonable work hours and vacation
- Combine family residence with deployment locations
- Receive retention bonus

2. Work Future Plan

- Smooth promotion and service changes

- Provide advanced study and learning programs
- Help personnel receive professional license training

3. Environment and Facility

- Improve campus and living facilities
- Build military houses and dormitories
- Enhance medical and spouse care
- Build child care centers

4. Retire Welfare

- Help with retirement and job transfers
- Enhance the re-entry recruitment (2015)

A successful recruitment campaign must, therefore, have instilled a sense of trust in potential recruits that the MND will meet their expectations in these areas. Going back to our marketing concept, the purpose of marketing is to make customers recognize the products' values and benefit from it. In addition, a good product also needs to be supported by a good marketing strategy.

This research analyzes some parts of the relationship between a positive image and an increasing recruitment rate (or vice versa) to provide a conclusion or a reference for future research in this field. However, how to successfully develop the military welfare and salary structure mentioned earlier have become a critical lesson the Taiwan MND must learn.

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III. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The main purpose of this research is to find a feasible approach to build public trust in the Taiwan military by establishing a positive image. According to the previous study mentioned in Chapter II, social media could be a possible shortcut to achieving this goal. Facebook is the most popular social media in Taiwan, with respect to both reach rate and overlapping rate. The Taiwan MND has established its own Facebook page. The following research discussion will take a closer look to see what influence the MND has had or how the MND can improve upon its influence and trust in Taiwanese society by analyzing those posts on its Facebook page in the past years.

In June 2011, the Taiwan MND established a Spokesman's Facebook fan page, and the spokesman of the Taiwan MND has posted, replied, linked or clarified different comments to various types of readers through the years since. Based on this idea, it will be a good approach to find some clues to do image building, image rebuilding or image restoration by digging through and analyzing the available online data. Before we systematically collect the various types of online posts, we need to define several content types in order to clearly categorize the post content while collecting the data.

A. THE WRITING ANALYSIS APPROACH

This research categorizes the content by its writing approach. According to the *Communication Year Book*, the most famous example of analyzing the political communication is Lasswell's rule of communication process, "who says what in which channel to whom with what effects." This sentence can be divided into five elements: who, says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effects. Moreover, the "what" in this structure normally means the political information in mass media (cited in Nimmo, 1980, p. 450). Cheng Zhi-long believes that the best defense is attacking during a political election campaign (1992). Moreover, Huang states the main purpose in a political campaign is to seek, gain, and maintain voter support, and he generalizes that there are four strategies to achieve this goal in this attacking election campaign process:

- initiating/being proactive: maximize our own superiority
- defending: defend our own shortage and give public a reasonable explanation
- defeating: attack the shortage on a specific target and weaken our opponents
- clarifying: to undo the effect when someone else attacks us (2013)

In this research, even though the study objective is not the political campaign process, we shall use and adapt these four strategies for the analysis. However, like a political candidate, the spokesman's Facebook fan page can leverage its government service with the populace to gain favor. For example, while the Taiwan MND seeks public support for national defense policies, which in turn helps the MND improve recruitment, the political candidate seeks votes from voters by gaining their support. Both the MND and a political candidate need a good positive image to help them to achieve their goal. Moreover, both the MND and politicians act on at the national level, which means their behaviors are reviewed and examined by both the mass media and the public. They all need a good set of strategies to respond to different issues, corresponding to different situations. This research collects the online data by classifying those contents into these four writing strategies discussed earlier.

B. CONTENT ANALYSIS METHOD

The follow-up step is to apply the "content analysis" method, which originates from Sweden in the 18th century and is acknowledged as an important approach for content analysis (Montgomery and Duck, 1993). However, the latest social scientists connect the origin of this approach with the analysis of propaganda in World War II and with Bernard Berelson's publication in 1952. Berelson emphasizes content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (1993, p.18). Moreover, Fred N. Kerlinger states "content analysis as a method of studying communications in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring the variables" (1993, p.146). We can see the definitions of content analysis for both Berelson and Kerlinger all involve the

three common attributes: objective, systematic and quantitative, which are defined as follows (cited in Krippendorff, 2012):

1. Objective

The purpose is to ensure that the research is replicable, which means each research result should be the same regardless of who conducts the research. Since personal attributes and bias could affect the results, the rules/parameters need to be clearly defined in order to apply them on every unit in this analysis.

2. Systematic

To make the research valid, each sample should have the same probability to be selected by following an exact and consistent procedure. Moreover, the procedure must follow common rules to systematically conduct the analysis process, which means all the contents are analyzed in a consistent manner.

3. Quantitative

One purpose of content analysis is to accurately display information, so it is important to describe the information with a quantified approach that will enhance the accuracy of the result.

Another potential function of content analysis is to foresee the trend of information, which is same as the “what” element mentioned earlier. Moreover, this research compares the differences among posts and helps us to do further analysis. The following data collection will focus on the content of Taiwan MND Spokesman’s Facebook fan page and evaluate the expected results the MND wants with the reality, by analyzing the posting strategies.

C. RESEARCH COVERAGE AND DESIGN

1. Object of Study

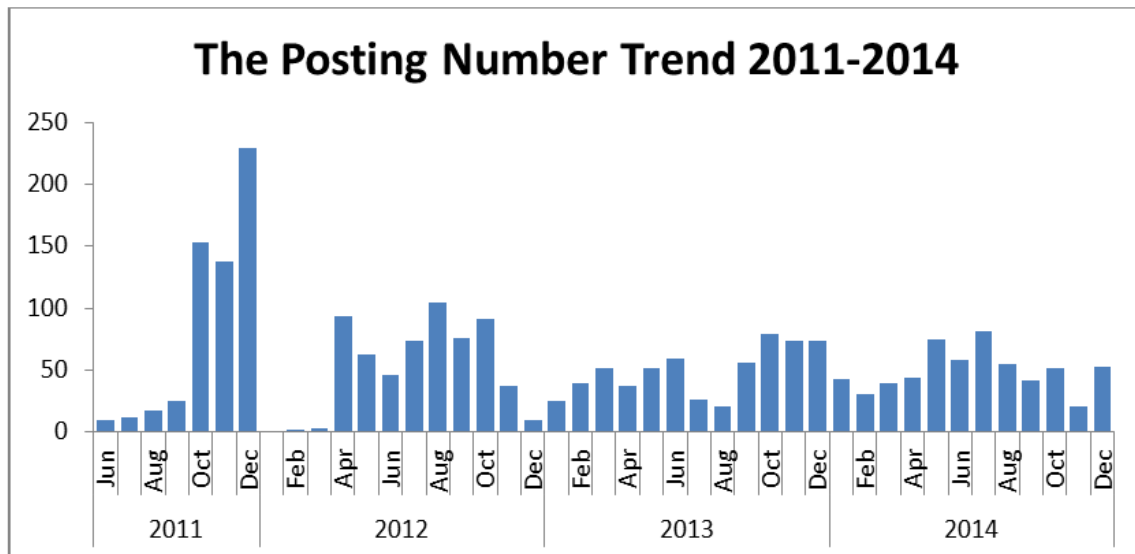
The following research focuses on the content of the Taiwan MND Spokesman’s Facebook fan page as the main source of data to discuss how the Taiwan MND uses social media to build and manage the Taiwan military’s image. Also, this research

intends to find a systematic approach to explain the MND's image type and writing approaches.

2. Research Coverage

This Facebook page was established in June 2011. According to the data collected, the MND has posted 2368 posts through December of 2014. There are two reasons for choosing this time period. First, data is objectively collected by setting the standard data sampling categories and ensuring its accuracy by collecting a sufficient quantity of data; using a longer period of time provides the volume of data we need for analysis. Second, based on observations, the MND military news division normally updates posts according to annual routine activities, such as certain holidays and important military exercises. The relationship between those annual routines and its corresponding recruitment data will be examined by using several years of data to reveal any repetition and correlation in the analysis. Figure 1 shows the posting trend on this page from 2011 to 2014.

Figure 1. The Posting Number Trend 2011–2014. Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook Page (2016).



3. Research Design

This research is using both the content analysis method and an interview as the research methodology. Utilizing the content on the Facebook page, this research generalizes all the posted information into two categories: posting strategies (on the MND side) and image display (on the public side). The posting strategy includes its writing approach, which can be further classified into initiating, defeating, defending and clarifying, the four categories which were mentioned previously in the section of writing analysis approaches. It also includes the posted format types, such as text, picture or video. The image display could be generalized into six categories: outstanding personnel, sacrificed hero, emotional outreach, professional troop, recruitment and unknown (undefined). After sampling the data by the standard categories, this research also counts the number of “Like” buttons of each post as an indicator of the public’s response to each image. Finally, we can compare the results from the collected data and the responses to interview questions to do further data analysis, which will be discussed in Chapter IV.

a. Posting Strategy

- (1) Writing approach: the same four strategies were mentioned in Section A of this chapter. Each category is clarified by giving a specific example, as follows:

Initiating: a proactive post, such as propagating activity information, schedule of ceremonies, and general affairs (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Example of “Initiating” Writing Approach.
Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: The first of two air warning planes of the “Eagle Eyes No. 3” plane, which belongs to the Air Force, has arrived in Taiwan from U.S. After the Air Force finished the function testing, the two planes flew back to base in Ping-tung on the morning of the 26th. It will join the combat-ready force soon after finishing the all functions testing to improve the air-warning capability of the Air Force.

Defending: a very prudent statement or reply with a conservative display approach. The post may not clearly state its own point or any outcome, but normally the content includes correcting a mistake, asking for forgiveness or regretful expression (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Example of “Defending” Writing Approach.
Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: Some members of the Army Shan-long sky diving group could not accurately land in front of the president's house since the weather turned windy before they landed. Even though the performance was not perfect, please still give your support to those members.

Defeating: a post included certain aggressive content in order to attack or accuse a specific target (Figure 4).

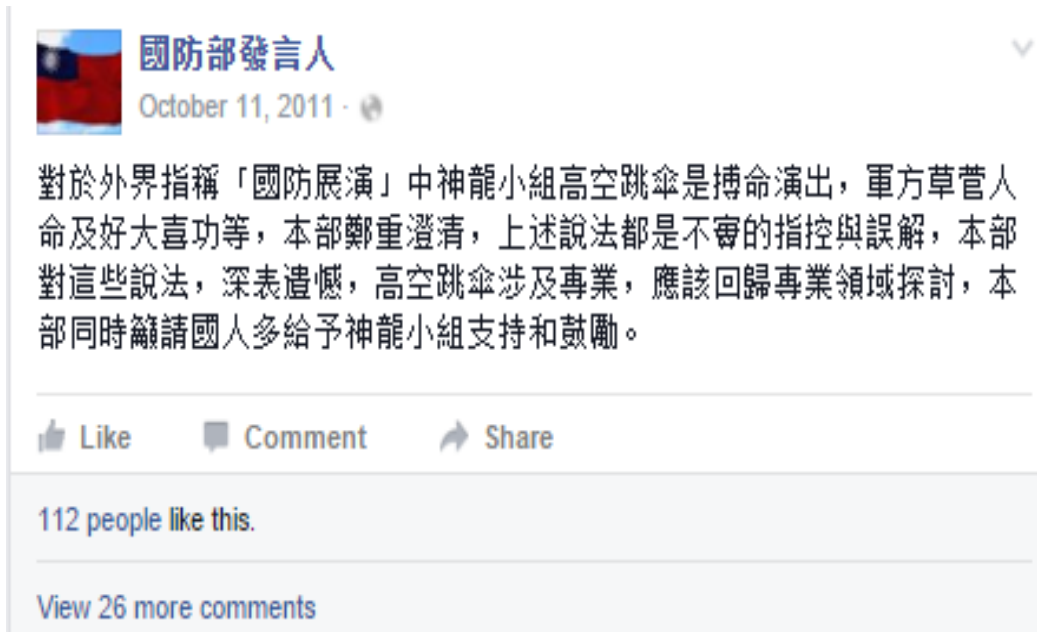
Figure 4. Example of “Defeating” Writing Approach.
Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: Received a phone call from my U.S. friend. He pointed out that the Apple Newspaper made a mistake by publishing a news article about the ex-minister of the U.S. Department of Defense, Mr. Donald Henry Rumsfeld. Apple Newspaper wrongly stated that Mr. Rumsfeld was 69 years old, which is 10 years less than his real age. My friend was surprised. Even though people like to be younger than their age in the Western culture, this is still impolite. This reflects that Apple Newspaper did not pay enough attention to the content before publishing. However, Apple Newspaper is the largest and most influential newspaper whose managers are all well respected in the press media, unbelievably they still made this mistake. Same issue happened to the military, the mistakes from those few people were overly exaggerated; on the other hand, those great efforts made by most of people were minimized. Mostly, certain media published a negative image to represent the whole military and used the extremely high standard to examine the military members, but they did not even give the military the “extreme basic” treatment. It is not a good sign for a nation if their military members were suppressed in such a bad environment for a long time. Even though with there’s a lump in my throat, we still encourage all military members to make an effort in their jobs.

Clarifying: to undo the effect when a specific opponent attacks this page (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Example of “Clarifying” Writing Approach.
Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: For the public who accused the sky diving performance of the Shan-long group at the “National Defense Exhibition” as a high-risk performance, and the MND should not ... do grandiose things to impress people, the MND here prudently replies that those accusations above are not true. The MND does not agree with those statements. The sky diving was a performance that should be discussed in its professional field. Please give the San-long group your support and encouragement.

- (2) Content formats: include pure text, picture, text and picture, and link formats.

b. Image Display

Outstanding personnel: for those posts that introduce the military excellent elites or honor certain personnel behavior (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Example of “Outstanding Personnel” Image Display.
Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: The minister of MND awarded the director of the military news research institute with the “Military First Class Medal.”

Sacrificed hero: for those posts related to someone who made a sacrifice (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Example of “Sacrificed Hero” Image Display. Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: The minister of MDN went to the military hospital and expressed sympathy to an Army soldier who was injured on duty. We hope he recovers soon and continues his effort after full recovery.

Emotional outreach: for posts related to interactive activities between the military and the public such as opening military bases for the public to visit or helping people rebuild their hometown after a natural disaster (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Example of “Emotional Outreach” Image Display. Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: In preparation for possible disaster from the typhoon, the MND and each level of the command chain today continues to provide first-class emergency relief and advance evacuations. Moreover, we not only help people evacuate, set up sand bags, clean trash, help emergent harvest but also open several military bases as shelters for people.

Professional troop: for posts related to military training, weapon introduction, commander speech/visiting, important ceremony and anything emphasized on military modernizing and training programs news (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Example of “Professional Troop” Image Display.
Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: The deputy minister of MND hosted the “Industrial Safety Supervision Review in 2012,” and he reminded all members that they must follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), risk management processes and remind ourselves of some important lessons based on the past experience in order to successfully complete our missions. He also pointed out that we must follow SOP especially for any fire-related operations to ensure working efficiency and safety. All the supervisors must keep learning new information, accept suggestions and experience from the experts, renew the operation procedure and enhance the education training in order to overall improve the working efficiency.

Image Restoration: for image recovery purpose after the occurrence of negative news (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Example of “Image Restoration” Image Display. Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: Ministry of National Defense, Production Center, Factory # 204 had an explosion accident on the 28th while they were doing the TC-68 flashing grenade destroying process. The minister of MND ordered the commanders to investigate what caused this accident in all equitable and justice manners.

Recruitment: for posts related to any recruiting information or any activity to attract young people's attention, such as exam schedule or combat summer camp (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Example of “Recruitment” Image Display. Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: The 11th College and Graduate School Exhibition was held at Taiwan University on [December] 17th and 18th. The military recruiting center also joined this event in order to answer questions so the youth population can receive the latest recruitment information.

Unknown/undefined: for posts that their image types not related to any types above or hard to define its image type (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Example of “Unknown/Undefined” Image Display. Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2011).



As translated by the author: Factory # 202 of MND Production Center posted “the beauty of nature” pictures.

D. INTERVIEW DESIGN

As we mentioned above, this research will conduct the writing and content analysis and also an interview of the director of the MND military news division. The results will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV. The following is an outline of the interview design.

1. Interview Method

Kvale used a metaphor between buried metal and a miner to describe the relationship to an interview:

Knowledge is understood as buried metal and interview is a miner who unearths the valuable metal...The knowledge is waiting in the subject's interior to be uncovered uncontaminated by the miner. The interviewer digs nuggets of data meanings out of a subject's pure experiences, unpolluted by any leading questions. (1996, p. 3)

Normally, all the interviews could be based on the number of interviewers, the interview content and the interview medium to be generalized into different types, names and methods. Here, we will conduct the in-depth interview as our interview method. According to Bruce Burgess, an in-depth interview is normally conducted in a conversation-type structure, but what is different from a normal conversation is that there is a purpose and role of the researcher and the participant within the discussion (Legard, Keegan and Ward, 2003). Basically, this interview method is using conversation and discussion as its approach to form an interactive model between the interviewer and the interviewee, which provides for a two-way information exchange and is frequently used in modern society.

Moreover, if we classify this interview by its structure, this research will conduct a structured interview, which is also called a standardized interview. According to the definition of the structured interview by BusinessDictionary.com, the structured interview is "Fixed format interview in which all questions are prepared beforehand and are put in the same order to each interviewee" (2016). Also, the advantages of conducting the structured interview are that it can possibly get a representative sample or result that can be used to make statements and it is easier to answer the questions for each and to make sure those questions are fully understood (Primary Data Collection, 2016)

2. Objective of Interview

This author interviewed the director of the military news division of Taiwanese MND and expects to get available and useful answers about the management and strategies for maintaining the Facebook page. Also, this research reorganizes the results

from the interview in order to conduct content comparison, implementations and further analysis.

3. Interview Questions

The interview consisted of six specific interview questions based on the research objectives. This questionnaire also helped the interviewee to get a broad picture for this purpose of the interview and to systematically to answer those questions. The Appendix shows the interview questions specifically designed for this research.

4. Recruitment Rate

One purpose of this research is to analyze the online Facebook data and the recruitment rate statistics to see if there is a correlation between them. Furthermore, with this research, we also investigate the most important components that affect recruitment rates, searching for strong correlations and suggesting the best approach to increase the recruitment rate for Taiwanese MND. According to the MND Personnel Staff Office annual statistics, we can get the recruitment numbers of volunteer soldiers from 2008 to 2014 and apply this statistics data to our research (Table 3).

Table 3. Taiwan Military Recruitment Numbers of Volunteer Soldiers 2008–2014. Source: Taiwanese MND Personnel Staff Office, personal communication (2016).

Year	Planned Recruit Number	Achieved Recruit Number	Achievement Rate
2008	13801	17776	128.80%
2009	14707	15110	102.74%
2010	25000	13768	55.07%
2011	11580	5033	43.46%
2012	15311	11069	72.29%
2013	28531	10942	38.35%
2014	10557	15024	142.31%

By applying the online Facebook data and the recruitment numbers, this research could conduct the further study, which will be mentioned in Chapter IV.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

A. SAMPLE STRUCTURE DESCRIPTION AND STATISTICS ANALYSIS

After collecting the MND Facebook data in Chapter III, the following content focuses on the data analysis in different approaches.

1. Monthly and Daily Sample Distribution

This research collects data of the Taiwanese MND Facebook fan page from June 2011 to December 2014. The tabulated data that was used to develop Figure 1 (Chapter III) is presented in Table 4.

According to Table 4, the data showed the MND Facebook page had 1.84 posts as an overall daily average and the average number of daily posts in each month varied from 0.03% (January 2012) to 7.63% (December 2011). Interestingly, both the highest and lowest posting numbers occurred next to each other in two consecutive months. Upon a closer look at the posted content in Dec. 2011, many posted topics were about the 101st anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of China (R.O.C. was established in 1911). This makes sense because the number “101” means a lot to the Taiwanese people, not only as a number that exceeds 100 (the new start for another new cycle), but it also matches the name of Taiwan’s highest building “Taipei 101,” which is a symbol of national pride for most Taiwanese. There were many slogans and advertisements developed for commercials in that period promoting their products by using the term “transcend 100, welcome 101.” One possible reason for the peak posting rate here is that the Taiwan military was trying to build a positive image by taking advantage of the event.

Table 4. Posting Distribution and Average Daily Post Numbers. Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook (2016).

Years	Month	Number of posts	Percentage	Average daily post
2011	Jun	10	0.42%	0.33
	Jul	12	0.51%	0.40
	Aug	17	0.72%	0.57
	Sep	25	1.06%	0.83
	Oct	153	6.46%	5.10
	Nov	138	5.83%	4.60
2012	Dec	229	9.67%	7.63
	Jan	1	0.04%	0.03
	Feb	2	0.08%	0.07
	Mar	3	0.13%	0.10
	Apr	93	3.93%	3.10
	May	62	2.62%	2.07
	Jun	46	1.94%	1.53
	Jul	74	3.13%	2.47
	Aug	104	4.39%	3.47
	Sep	76	3.21%	2.53
	Oct	91	3.84%	3.03
	Nov	37	1.56%	1.23
2013	Dec	10	0.42%	0.33
	Jan	25	1.06%	0.83
	Feb	39	1.65%	1.30
	Mar	52	2.20%	1.73
	Apr	37	1.56%	1.23
	May	51	2.15%	1.70
	Jun	59	2.49%	1.97
	Jul	26	1.10%	0.87
	Aug	21	0.89%	0.70
	Sep	56	2.36%	1.87
	Oct	79	3.34%	2.63
	Nov	73	3.08%	2.43
2014	Dec	74	3.13%	2.47
	Jan	43	1.82%	1.43
	Feb	30	1.27%	1.00
	Mar	39	1.65%	1.30
	Apr	44	1.86%	1.47
	May	75	3.17%	2.50
	Jun	58	2.45%	1.93
	Jul	81	3.42%	2.70
	Aug	55	2.32%	1.83
	Sep	42	1.77%	1.40
	Oct	52	2.20%	1.73
	Nov	21	0.89%	0.70
Grand Total		2368	100.00%	
Average				1.84

The average daily post percentage suddenly went down to 0.03% in January 2012 and it continued likewise through February and March (the second and the third lowest percentage). In examining this issue, statistics reflect that the Facebook page varied greatly in its posting attitude, from very vigorous (highest posting rate) to very dull (lowest posting rate). Moreover, statistics also show a common attribute that the post percentage was very low at the start of every year. This can likely be correlated to preparations for the Lunar New Year celebrations; the military division was focusing on other big annual affairs and media interactions, such as press media visits, instead of focusing on Facebook postings.

2. Annual Sample Distribution

Table 5 depicts the filtered data for each year.

Table 5. Annual Data Distribution. Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

Annual Data Distribution		
Years 	Number of posts	Percentage
2011	584	24.66%
2012	599	25.30%
2013	592	25.00%
2014	593	25.04%
Grand Total	2368	100.00%

Surprisingly, according to the data in Table 5, the total number of posts in each of the four years studied was very evenly distributed. This was not expected since the MND Facebook page was established in June 2011. Since this is mid-year 2011, the post count should have been half of the subsequent full calendar years if a standard annual distribution of postings by the MND is assumed. One possible reason for this is that the MND military news division set a requirement for an annual number of posts and did not adjust this number for a mid-year initiation of the webpage. Another possibility is that the enthusiasm for a new means of communicating with the public was higher in the initial year than in subsequent years.

3. Posting Strategy

As discussed in Chapter III, posting strategy is classified into writing approaches and content formats.

a. Writing Approach

Table 6 shows the posting distribution categorized by the writing approach, which includes initiate/proactive, defending, defeating and clarifying.

Table 6. Writing Approach Distribution (Counted by Posting Number).
Adapted from Taiwanese Facebook page (2016).

Distribution of Writing Strategy		
Writing Strategy	Count of Writing Strategy	Percentage
Initiate/proactive	2352	99.32%
Defending	10	0.42%
Defeating	1	0.04%
Clarifying	5	0.21%
Grand Total	2368	100.00%

Obviously, the most common writing approach on the MND Facebook page was the initiate/proactive approach, which was 99.32% of the total; the sum of the remaining approaches was less than 1%. This shows the purpose of this Facebook page was to actively propagate military-related information instead of defending the shortage, defeating certain targets or clarifying certain issues. These statistics show that the MND Facebook page did not sufficiently and efficiently use this powerful tool to clarify some negative scandals. For instance, an event happened in July 2013 when an army corporal was bullied to death, mentioned in Chapter I, which produced a big public outcry and served as a decisive turning point between the military and the public. We would expect the MND to use the page to conduct its defending or clarifying approach. Unfortunately, we find less than five issue-related posts in the same month. Furthermore, those posts did not offer details explaining how or what the MND was going to do or what the next step would be; instead the post provided some general ideas, such as showing sympathy to victim's family and continuing the investigation process with justice. This appears to demonstrate that the MND lacked a systematic strategy to deal with the crisis, at least in the social media/Facebook domain. In contrast to this, the posted contents in the initiate/proactive writing strategy are almost all positive news, which not only means the information was filtered before being posted but implies that the MND only wants people to see good news on this page, leaving dormant a powerful tool to affect public discontent. According to Pratkanis, trustworthy or credible information is more influential in secure persuasion to various issues. There are 17 techniques to create a credible source and one

of them is “admit a small flaw to establish overall credibility” to build public trust (2007, p. 31). However, the MND Facebook page operates in a manner counter to this principle by only providing partially true and positive information, which is not likely to build the image of MND as a credible communicator to the public.

Table 7 analyzes the impact of the writing approach on the public by using the number of Like buttons.

Table 7. Writing Approach Distribution (Counted by Like Buttons).
Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

Distribution of Writing Strategy		
Writing Strategy	Count of Writing Strategy	Percentage
Initiate/proactive	1821469	99.59%
Defending	6321	0.35%
Defeating	94	0.01%
Clarifying	1013	0.06%
Grand Total	1828897	100.00%

Again, the initiate/proactive writing approach was still the most dominant approach for receiving Like buttons, however, the posting rates on other writing approaches were too low to judge if they also could be an influential writing approach. Also, along with the posting rates being too low, the distribution of Like buttons is very close to the distribution of writing strategies being used. This potentially shows us that

- Followers of the MND Facebook page are mostly groupies.
- MND has failed to capture a larger audience other than those who are naturally attracted to the site.

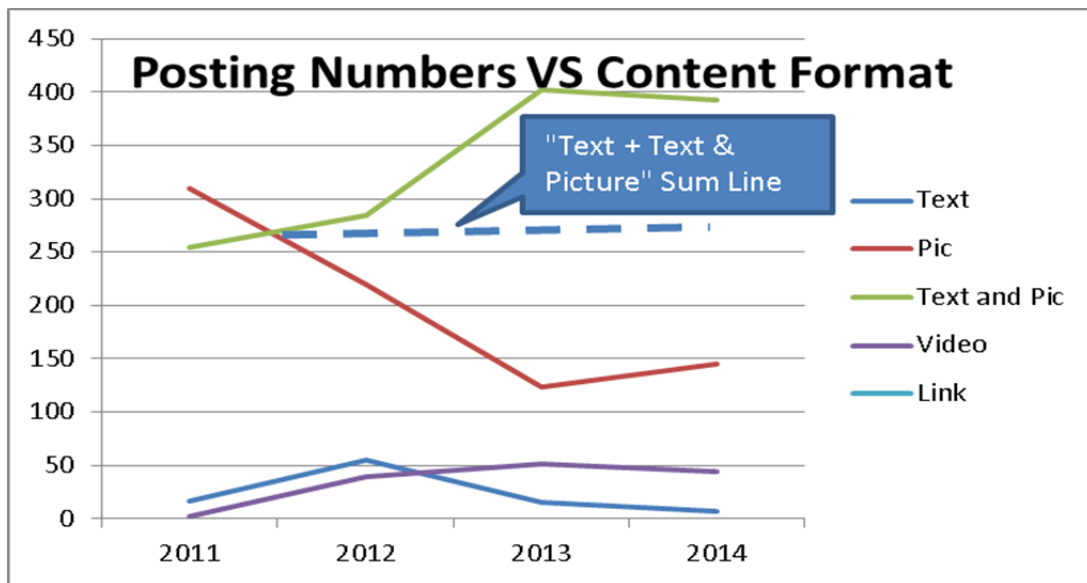
b. Format Types

Table 8 and Figure 13 show the posting distribution categorized by the content format to include text, picture, text and picture, video and link.

Table 8. Posted Format Distribution (Counted By Posting Number).
Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

Distribution of format type		
Format	Count of Format	Count of Format2
Text	93	3.93%
Picture	799	33.74%
Text and Picture	1333	56.29%
Video	137	5.79%
Link	6	0.25%
Grand Total	2368	100.00%

Figure 13. Posted Format Distribution Chart (Counted By Posting Number).
Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).



According to Table 8 and Figure 13, the two most popular formats in the Facebook page chosen by the MND were “picture” and “text and picture” formats. The data shows that the MND was using the more static (text and picture) format as its dominant posting format rather than the dynamic (video and link) formats. Moreover, Figure 13 also shows that the MND became more comfortable with Facebook and the MND personnel began to add some textual content to each posted picture, rather than just

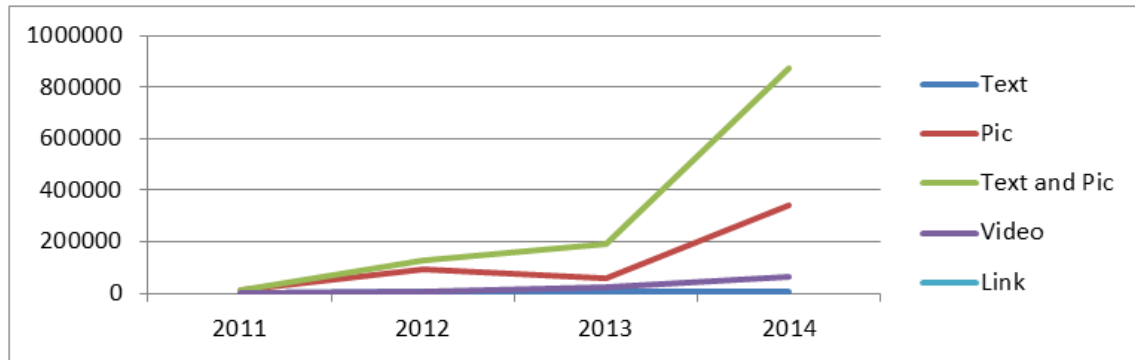
posting a picture. Adding together the data for picture and the data for text and picture reveals little deviation or slope.

Furthermore, analysis of this data by using the number of Like buttons in each format gives the following distribution (Table 9 and Figure 14):

Table 9. Posted Format Distribution (Counted By The Number Of Like Buttons). Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

Years	Format		Data							
	Text		Pic		Text and Pic		Video		Link	
	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%
2011	2293	0.13%	13748	0.75%	13237	0.72%	58	0.00%	200	0.01%
2012	6194	0.34%	95490	5.22%	126515	6.92%	8773	0.48%		0.00%
2013	6060	0.33%	56758	3.10%	189074	10.34%	22419	1.23%		0.00%
2014	5875	0.32%	343285	18.77%	873255	47.75%	64151	3.51%	1512	0.08%
Grand Total	20422	1.12%	509281	27.85%	1202081	65.73%	95401	5.22%	1712	0.09%

Figure 14. Posted Format Distribution Chart (Counted By the Number of “Likes”). Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).



Based on Table 9 and Figure 14, the largest portion of the total Like buttons was the “text and picture” format, which was the same format with the highest posting rate. The 65.73% was almost 10% more than its posting percentage (56.29%), which was also the only format that the percentage of Like buttons was higher than the posting percentage. This means the “text and picture” format is the most influential format to the public in this Facebook page. However, the Facebook page seldom posted dynamic

(video and link) format content; with less than 10% of its overall postings in these categories, there was not sufficient data to indicate whether these formats could be influential. The reason for this may be due to the lack of available bandwidth to upload dynamic posting content before 2014. The MND may need to post more dynamic content in the future to determine the influence of both formats on public.

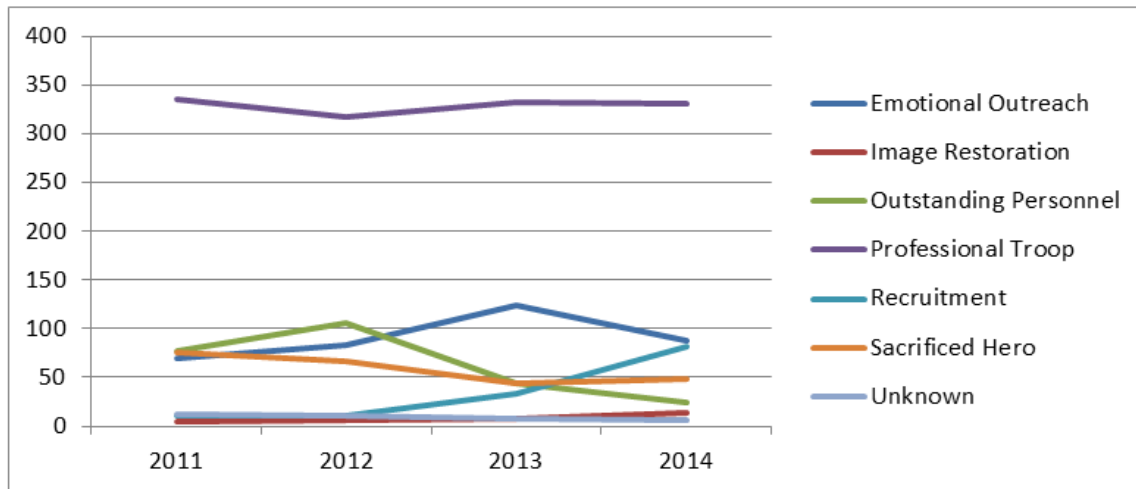
4. Image Display

Table 10 and Figure 15 show the distribution categorized by the image type, which includes emotional outreach, image restoration, outstanding personnel, professional troop, recruitment, sacrificed hero and unknown images.

Table 10. Image Display Distribution (Counted By Posting Number).
Adopted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

	Data	
Image Type 	Count of Image Type	Count of Image Type2
Emotional Outreach	364	15.37%
Image Restoration	30	1.27%
Outstanding Personnel	252	10.64%
Professional Troop	1316	55.57%
Recruitment	136	5.74%
Sacrificed Hero	234	9.88%
Unknown	36	1.52%
Grand Total	2368	100.00%

Figure 15. Image Display Distribution Chart (Counted By Posting Number).
Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).



According to Table 10 and Figure 15, the MND Facebook page was obviously focusing on the “professional troop” image building, which was 55.57% of the overall image types. Moreover, by ordering the percentage of each image type, we can assume the priority of those images that the MND wanted to build was professional troop, emotional outreach, outstanding personnel/sacrificed hero and recruitment, which was a movement from group domain (professional troop and emotional outreach) to personal (outstanding personnel) and mission (recruitment) domain. When we look at the recruitment image type, we can find that the percentage (5.74%) of the recruit-type posting was probably not sufficient to increase the recruitment number if the MND was using this page as a critical part of a recruitment campaign; however, the posting number obviously went up in the past years. This trend combined with actual recruitment number will be discussed in later sections of this research in order to analyze the correlation. Moreover, the “unknown” image type was only 1.52%, which means most of the content was very clear in its image type and would not confuse the public.

Analyzing the same data by counting the number of Like buttons shows the correlation between each image type and its sum/percentage of overall Like buttons (Table 11 and Figure 16).

Table 11. Image Display Distribution (Counted By Like Buttons). Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

	Emotional Outreach		Image Restoration		Outstanding Personnel		Professional Troop		Recruitment		Sacrificed Hero		Unknown	
Years	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%
2011	3454	0.19%	332	0.02%	3890	0.21%	17721	0.97%	512	0.03%	2743	0.15%	884	0.05%
2012	27145	1.48%	530	0.03%	51719	2.83%	127358	6.96%	2379	0.13%	25665	1.40%	2176	0.12%
2013	53886	2.95%	15495	0.85%	23334	1.28%	147815	8.08%	11023	0.60%	19388	1.06%	3370	0.18%
2014	257265	14.07%	8035	0.44%	59528	3.25%	743945	40.68%	119529	6.54%	90437	4.94%	9339	0.51%
Grand Total	341750	18.69%	24392	1.33%	138471	7.57%	1036839	56.69%	133443	7.30%	138233	7.56%	15769	0.86%

Figure 16. Display Distribution Chart (Counted By Like Buttons). Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

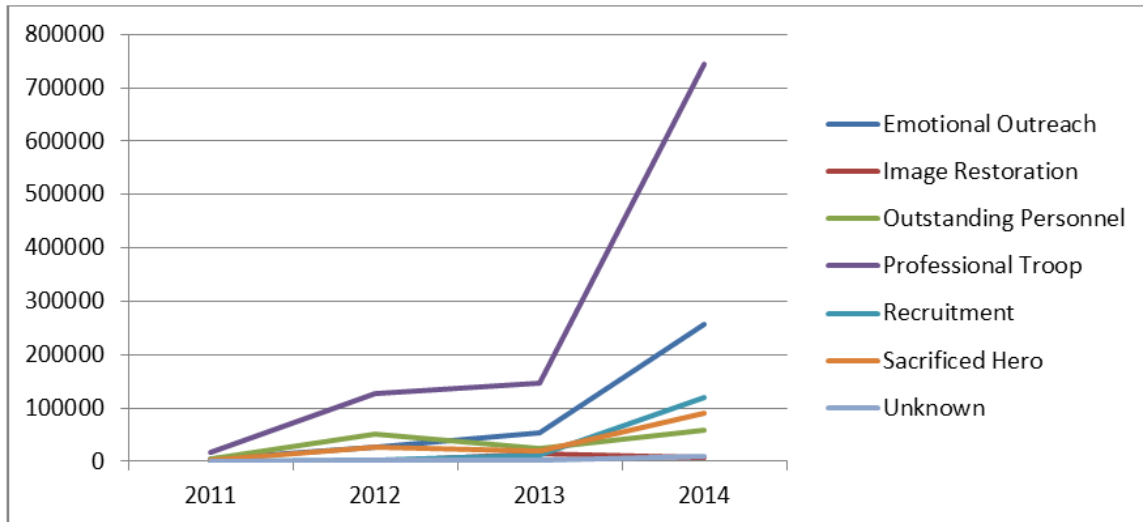


Table 11 and Figure 16 show the highest percentage of overall Like buttons was the “professional troop” image type, which was same image type of the highest posting rate. Furthermore, comparing Table 10 with Table 11 shows if there is a correlation between the posting percentage and the overall Like button rate in each image type. The comparison is shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Comparison between Posting Percentage and Like Button. Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

	Overall Posting Percentage	Overall Like Button Rate
Emotional Outreach	15.37%	18.69%
Image Restoration	1.27%	1.33%
Outstanding Personnel	10.64%	7.57%
Professional Troop	55.57%	56.69%
Recruitment	5.74%	7.30%
Sacrificed Hero	9.88%	7.56%
Unknown	1.52%	0.86%

Table 12 shows that the overall posting percentage for each image type almost matches the number of its own overall Like button rate; this may be an indicator of poor image building. If an organization wants to build certain image type, the better scenario is that the feedback (percentage of Like buttons) of this image type would be obviously higher than its posting percentage, which means this content is more attractive to the public and people are paying more attention on the content the organization desired. This data shows people did not pay particular attention to any image types of the posted content on this page; therefore, the number of Like buttons would be only proportional to the number of posts. On the other hand, it could also show that there were certain “groupies”¹ in the population who did not care about the posting content but always faithfully follow this page and clicked the Like button on each post. Figure 16 reveals the Like button trend for each image type increasing after 2013, which likely means the population of “groupies” is growing through the years.

5. Correlation in Image Type and Writing Strategy

Since the most important purpose of this research is to analyze how certain images created by the MND could potentially influence public readers and find a feasible way to build people’s trust, this section of the research will further analyze the correlation

¹ Groupies in this research are defined as certain online populations who faithfully follow certain websites based on their personal preference and typically give positive feedback on the posted content.

within the outside influence (image type) as the dependent variables and the inside influence (content format and writing approach) as the independent variables

a. Content Format and Image Type

To analyze the correlation between image type and writing strategy, the image types and the content formats are placed together in Table 13.

Table 13. Correlation between Content Format and Image Type (Count By Posting Number). Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

	Image Type													
	Emotional Outreach		Image Restoration		Outstanding Personnel		Professional Troop		Recruitment		Sacrificed Hero		Unknown	
Format	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Text	12	3.30%	16	53.33%	14	5.56%	23	1.75%	1	0.74%	16	6.84%	11	30.56%
Pic	104	28.57%	1	3.33%	55	21.83%	545	41.41%	43	31.62%	44	18.80%	7	19.44%
Text and Pic	236	64.84%	4	13.33%	180	71.43%	664	50.46%	79	58.09%	153	65.38%	17	47.22%
Video	11	3.02%	8	26.67%	3	1.19%	80	6.08%	13	9.56%	21	8.97%	1	2.78%
Link	1	0.27%	1	3.33%		0.00%	4	0.30%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%
Grand Total	364	100.00%	30	100.00%	252	100.00%	1316	100.00%	136	100.00%	234	100.00%	36	100.00%

Based on what the previous data has shown, the “text and picture” was the most influential and the most popular content format on this page. According to the Table 13, those distributions in the emotional outreach, outstanding personnel, professional troop, recruitment and sacrificed hero match these data, and over 50% of the overall posts used the “text and picture” format. However, in the image restoration part, only 13.33% of postings used this posting format. Of interest, the MND was mainly using the “pure text” format (53.33%) to conduct image restoration. In today’s image-rich society, it is difficult to persuade readers by using a pure text format; not only is pure text tedious when people read through an entire paragraph, but it also is not easy to produce credible information while there is no auxiliary supporting content, such as pictures and videos, to offer as visual evidence. The image restoration posts normally come up after certain negative news happened when the public was looking to find truthful information from the MND.

Table 14 shows the data analysis using the number of Like buttons as an indicator of image building.

Table 14. Correlation between Content Format and Image Type (Count by Number of Like Buttons). Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

	Image Type													
	Emotional Outreach		Image Restoration		Outstanding Personnel		Professional Troop		Recruitment		Sacrificed Hero		Unknown	
Format	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Text	1788	0.52%	5204	21.33%	3111	2.25%	3352	0.32%	64	0.05%	4317	3.12%	2586	16.40%
Pic	46547	13.62%	27	0.11%	11660	8.42%	383269	36.97%	55127	41.31%	11658	8.43%	993	6.30%
Text and Pic	280397	82.05%	14064	57.66%	122836	88.71%	588661	56.77%	72488	54.32%	111553	80.70%	12082	76.62%
Video	12745	3.73%	4881	20.01%	864	0.62%	60334	5.82%	5764	4.32%	10705	7.74%	108	0.68%
Link	273	0.08%	216	0.89%		0.00%	1223	0.12%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%
Grand Total	341750	100.00%	24392	100.00%	138471	100.00%	1036839	100.00%	133443	100.00%	138233	100.00%	15769	100.00%

The “pure text” format normally received a low number of Like buttons among any format types, except for image restoration. Comparing the information in Table 14 with Table 13, posting percentages shows that the image restoration type was using 53.33% pure text format as its overall posting content but only received 21.33% of the overall Like buttons for this image. Moreover, a comparison of the two tables again by the text and picture format shows that the text and picture format had 57.66% of the overall Like buttons, even though the number of posts in this format was only 13.33%. Both types of feedback demonstrate not only that pure text is an ineffective posting format, but also reconfirmed that the text and picture format was the most influential format on this Facebook page.

b. Writing Approach and Image Type

The writing approaches and image types were analyzed together to examine the correlation between the inside and outside affects. This is displayed in Table 15.

Table 15. Correlation between Writing Strategy and Image Type (Count by Number of Posts). Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

	Image Type													
	Emotional Outreach		Image Restoration		Outstanding Personnel		Professional Troop		Recruitment		Sacrificed Hero		Unknown	
Writing Strategy	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Initiate/proactive	364	100.00%	19	63.33%	252	100.00%	1315	99.92%	135	99.26%	233	99.57%	34	94.44%
defeating		0.00%	1	3.33%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%
defending		0.00%	7	23.33%		0.00%	1	0.08%	1	0.74%	1	0.43%		0.00%
Clarifying		0.00%	3	10.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	2	5.56%
Grand Total	364	100.00%	30	100.00%	252	100.00%	1316	100.00%	136	100.00%	234	100.00%	36	100.00%

As previously discussed in the writing approach section, 99.32% of overall posts were of the initiate/proactive writing approach. Table 15 shows each image type almost solely used this writing approach except for image restoration. For image restoration, the MND posts were categorized as 63.33% initiate/proactive, 3.33% defeating, 23.33% defending and 10% clarifying. Counting the number of Like buttons, Table 16 shows the same approach using the data.

Table 16. Correlation between Writing Strategy and Image Type (Count by Number of Like Buttons). Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

	Image Type													
	Emotional Outreach		Image Restoration		Outstanding Personnel		Professional Troop		Recruitment		Sacrificed Hero		Unknown	
Writing Strategy	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Initiate/proactive	341750	100.00%	19720	80.85%	138471	100.00%	1036197	99.94%	132840	99.55%	136971	99.09%	15520	98.42%
defeating		0.00%	94	0.39%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%
defending		0.00%	3814	15.64%		0.00%	642	0.06%	603	0.45%	1262	0.91%		0.00%
Clarifying		0.00%	764	3.13%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	249	1.58%
Grand Total	341750	100.00%	24392	100.00%	138471	100.00%	1036839	100.00%	133443	100.00%	138233	100.00%	15769	100.00%

Normally, the clarifying strategy is the first method people will reasonably choose in order to conduct image restoration since image restoration typically happens after the occurrence of negative news events or stories and the MND is trying to clarify the impact for the public. Interestingly, Table 16 shows that the overall percentage of the Like buttons on clarifying strategy is (3.13%) lower than the ratio of its posting percentage (10%). The differences between both percentages are not obvious, but at least this shows

that the clarifying writing strategy may not be an efficient method to conduct image restoration. Furthermore, the percentage of overall Like buttons (80.85%) for the initiative/proactive writing approach was significantly higher than the number of its posting ratio (63.33 %). This result shows the initiate/proactive writing strategy was still the dominant approach to conduct image restoration postings on this Facebook page, and that the MND may want to more efficiently conduct image restoration by increasing the usage of this writing strategy.

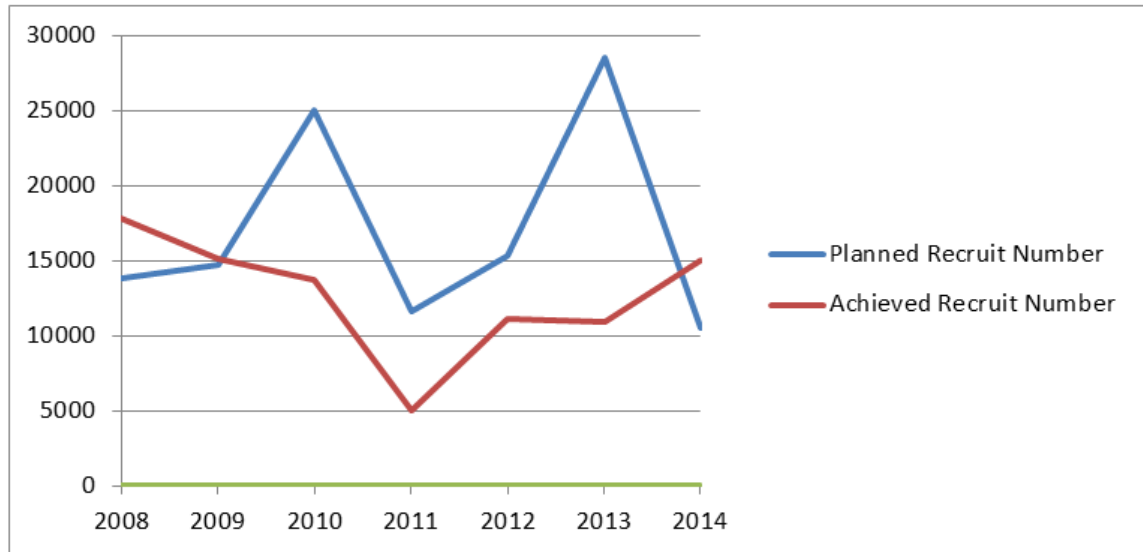
6. Recruitment Data Analysis

Besides examining how to gain public trust, an additional benefit of this research is in trying to seek a feasible solution to increase the Taiwanese military recruitment rate. Since the Taiwan military is currently facing a transformation from a combined conscription and volunteer force to a force that is wholly made up of volunteers, it will facilitate efficiency if the MND can find methods to improve recruitment numbers by comparing achieved numbers with online recruitment data on this Facebook page. According to the statistics of the personnel affairs division of the MND, Table 17 and Figure 17 present the distribution of the Taiwan military recruit number from 2008 to 2014.

Table 17. Taiwan Military Recruitment Number Distribution 2008–2014.
Adapted from Taiwanese MND personnel staff office, personal communication (2016).

Year	Planned Recruit Number	Achieved Recruit Number	Achievement Rate
2008	13801	17776	128.80%
2009	14707	15110	102.74%
2010	25000	13768	55.07%
2011	11580	5033	43.46%
2012	15311	11069	72.29%
2013	28531	10942	38.35%
2014	10557	15024	142.31%

Figure 17. Taiwan Military Recruitment Number Distribution Chart 2008–2014.
Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).



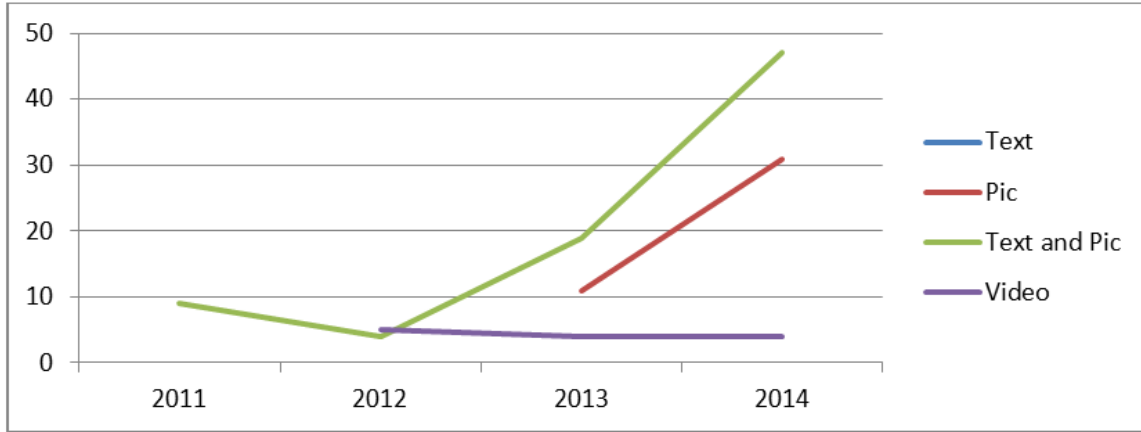
In Table 17 and Figure 17, the focus is on the number and pattern of the achieved recruitment numbers from 2011 to 2014 corresponding to our online Facebook data coverage. The Taiwan military had the lowest number of new recruits (5033) in 2011. The number increased to 11069 recruits in 2012 and stayed almost the same in 2013 at 10942. In 2014, the numbers increased again to 15024 recruits.

The following analysis is designed to determine if there is any correlation between the posting numbers of recruit type information and the actual recruit number (Table 18 and Figure 18).

Table 18. Posting Distribution of the Recruitment Image. Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

Count of Image Type	Format				
Years	Text	Pic	Text and Pic	Video	Grand Total
2011		1	9		10
2012	1		4	5	10
2013		11	19	4	34
2014		31	47	4	82
Grand Total	1	43	79	13	136

Figure 18. Posting Distribution Chart of the Recruitment Image. Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).



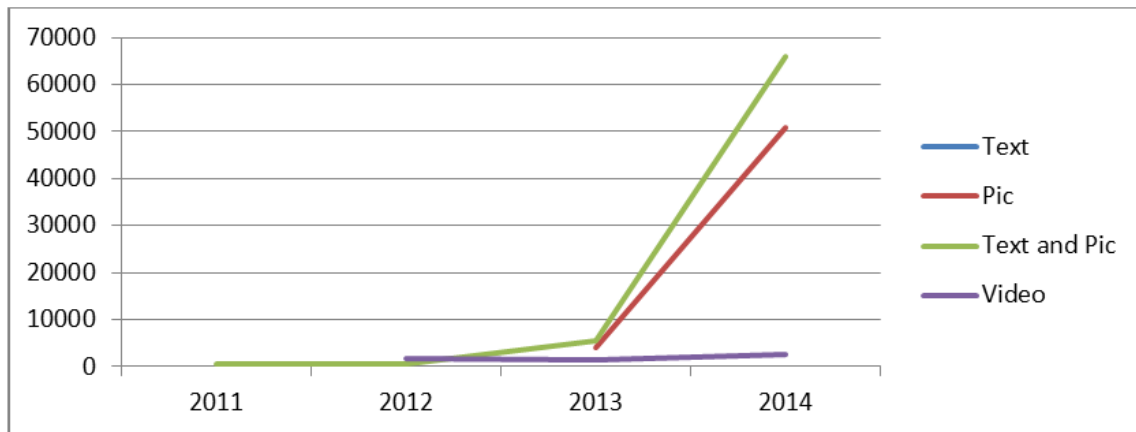
From Table 18 and Figure 18, the posting number on both the picture and the text and picture formats were increasing after 2012. Based on the previous analysis, the two formats were the most influential formats on this Facebook page. This may match the pattern of the increasing achieved recruit number after 2012 in Figure 17, but this data does not explain why the number remained steady from 2012 to 2013. In addition, it does not explain the inconsistency where the text and picture format postings went down and the achieved recruit number still went up in 2011. This level of analysis is outside the scope of this study and is left for future research.

Table 19 and Figure 19 show that the text and the text and picture formats were still the most consistent content formats to receive “Likes.”

Table 19. Like Buttons Distribution of the Recruitment Image. Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).

Sum of Like Button Years	Format Text	Pic	Text and Pic	Video	Grand Total
2011		37	475		512
2012	64		679	1636	2379
2013		4175	5355	1493	11023
2014		50915	65979	2635	119529
Grand Total	64	55127	72488	5764	133443

Figure 19. Like Buttons Distribution Chart of the Recruitment Image. Adapted from Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).



Furthermore, taking a closer look, the pattern of the text and picture format steadily increased from 2011, and the slope increased after 2013, which matched the pattern of the achieved recruitment number increasing from 2011 to 2014. However, there is still no evidence to conclude that the achieved recruitment number has a strong correlation with the number of Like buttons on the text and picture format, since it is still unclear how to account for the unchanged recruitment number between 2012 and 2013 as displayed in Figure 17. In addition, similar to what was shown in Table 18, the posting number of the recruitment image was only 136 posts in the past 4 years, which was only 5.74% of the overall posts and may not be a sufficiently large sample to generalize credible conclusions.

B. FEEDBACK ON INTERVIEW

In order to find a feasible solution to build a trustworthy image for the Taiwan military, in addition to analyzing the Facebook online data, we also interviewed Taiwan Army Major General Shao-Ho Luo, the director of the military division of the Taiwan MND. The following discussion outlines the main points developed from the interview answers that correspond to the interview questions in the Appendix.

The following statements are a synopsis of what was derived from the interview answers and are translated by the author.

1. The purpose of this Facebook page is to effectively use online resources, enhance network propaganda efficiency, collect public opinions, propagate military-related policies and more directly communicate with the public. Meanwhile, the Taiwanese MND wants to gain public support by using this page to provide accurate military-associated information and clarify for the public the ideas behind the policies and behaviors of the Taiwan military.
2. The procedure to reply the online questions can be divided into two steps:
 - To reply general questions: the staffs will generalize those questions and answers on a daily basis and online reply each question after receiving approval from the director or deputy director of the military news division.
 - To reply questions which may potentially cause controversial situations: the staffs of the military news division will refer these questions to related-divisions (J1, J2, etc.) based on the questions types and each division will answer the questions based on their professions, and the director or deputy director of the military news division will online answer those questions after receiving feedback from each division. Staffs will generalize the answering report each week and report to the director and the MND spokesman.
3. The posting and replying time/frequency on this page is based on the typical user's visit time. The post contents are often composed of the submitted articles from different units and combined with "military news club" (a news media owned by military) and "youth newspaper" (a military owned newspaper) to propagate the news. The MND sets an average of ten posts per day as the desired posting rate to provide sufficient content for the public.
4. Three content types, current newsletters, news releases and festival celebrations, will be posted in certain periods and MND also posts this content during peak usage hours to achieve the best propaganda efficiency.
5. Since the purpose of the Facebook page is to seek public support and agreement, most of the posted content largely focuses on daily military life, training and military activities in order to provide the public a closer look into the Taiwanese military and reduce obsolete impressions in the public's mind. The Taiwanese military is currently transforming its inner management, personal equipment and facilities. This is a challenging time for the Taiwanese military and the MND understands some questioning, irony or even sarcastic posts will appear in the public comments during this period. Those conflicts occur when the MND posted content is different from the reader's beliefs. So this Facebook page is making an effort to propagate positive news and clarify negative news. The MND

does not address efforts on any specific image-type building since it will cause a negative effect if the MND focuses on specific image type of propaganda.

6. This Facebook page is using pure text, picture and both text and picture as the main posting formats, which are also the three main format types on most other Facebook pages. Sometimes we also upload video format content in order to provide a more dynamic content type to interact with public readers as permitted by our information security policy.
7. To respond to major issues, the MND will propagate the news release via media press releases and also post associated content on the Facebook page in order to ensure people understand the issues and to gain public support. Moreover, for those meaningless, repeated or intentionally hurtful posts, the MND will react based on the principle of respect to each post and will deal with those posts accordingly.
8. This Facebook page is designed and intended to conduct public outreach and to interact with the public. By posting multi-dimensional, energetic and knowledgeable information and establishing an interactive propagation interface, it not only stimulates people's interest in military-related affairs but also lets people know the latest military news. These actions all have a more positive influence improving the military's relationship with the public than we saw before. Also, by hosting the "Fans" Activities," interacting with online fans can potentially build a positive image as well.

C. CONCLUSIONS

The following are general conclusions based on the data analysis; comparison to Facebook online content with the answers provided on the MND Facebook page's designed purposes and the process of how the MND deals with the online information.

1. **The MND could improve its trust building capabilities by taking advantage of Lunar New Year to conduct trust building.** According to Table 4, the lowest posting rate normally happened during the Lunar New Year season and the number of data distribution in each month was severely changing especially comparing the posting rates of the last few months with the rates of the first few months in each year and the MND may set a limit for each annual posting number around 600 posts.
2. **The MND could improve its approach to clarification by resolving conflict on image type with the actual image building and the actual posting rates.** According to the interview answers above, on this page, the MND did not mean to build any specific image type in order to prevent from causing negative effect to public, in fact, if we take a look at Table

10, more than half of the posted content was focusing on the “professional troop” image type. In addition, the desired daily posting rate was 10 posts per day, however, from Table 4, the number of the overall daily posts was only 1.84 posts on average.

3. **The MND should clearly articulate a desired image type and then focus all energy on building the specific image type.** From the actual online data, the main posted image was the “professional troop” image type at over 50%. However, the MND created multiple image types, making it difficult for the audience to develop a single positive image of MND. On the other hand, this phenomenon also shows there were certain loyal followers of this page who always clicked the Like button after the content was posted.
4. **The MND should exploit the capability of dynamic posting formats to better understand the public’s image of the MND.** According to Table 8, the dynamic posting formats (video or link) were only 6.04% of its overall postings. There is not enough data to determine if the dynamic formats are an efficient approach to conduct image building.
5. **The proactive and the text and picture dominated approaches:** According to Table 7 and Table 9, the most dominant and influential writing strategy was the initiate/proactive approach even when it was used for image restoration, and the most efficient content format was the text and picture format among any types of image building. The pure text format was always the worst format with regard to the distribution of Like buttons.
6. **MND should increase the number of recruitment type postings:** According to Table 10, the number of recruitment image postings was only 5.74% among the total and may not be sufficient to generalize credible conclusions.
7. MND should build its credibility through techniques described by Pratkanis (2011).

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V. SUGGESTIONS

According to the analysis we have done and the conclusions presented in Chapter IV, the Taiwan military still has a long way to go in order to build a trustworthy image with the public. However, we may find a feasible way to help the MND facilitate this process by addressing the shortcomings we have seen in its outreach and reduce the time necessary to achieve this goal.

This section will advise the Taiwan military about how to redirect posting strategies on this page to build people's trust by receiving more Like buttons from public readers. Moreover, this section will discuss some topics to consider for future research to aid the trust building progress in this Facebook domain.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS ON POSTING STRATEGY

1. Taking Advantage of the Lunar New Year (Adaptable to Any Holiday/Occasion)

Since the months with the lowest posting number on this page were usually around the Lunar New Year season, the MND may want to post more material related to the Lunar New Year during this period, or find some other interesting military-related topics in order to maintain the number of postings. The magazine *Sports Illustrated* could serve as a good example of a solution to fix the problem under the similar circumstances. *Sports Illustrated* is a magazine that publishes sports-related news on a weekly basis. Every year there is a period after the end of Super Bowl when every major type of seasonal professional sport is dormant. To stimulate interest in the magazine when there is not much sporting news to report, once a year *Sports Illustrated* famously changes its focus from sports-related news to photos of fashion models clad only in the season's newest beachwear in its Swimsuit Issue. This strategy has worked quite well. The annual feature successfully caught the attention of the public and now allows the magazine to maintain a high sales number until the regular sports seasons resume. Based on what we know on this page, the number of Like button was always proportional to the number of postings; if the Taiwanese MND could use this successful example as a model to attract

people's attention by posting New Year related topics or other interesting news, it will maintain the number of Like buttons during the Lunar New Year season.

2. Create New, Surprising Content for the Public and Focus on the Quality of the Content Instead of the Quantity

According to the interview answers, the MND wanted to have 10 posts daily on average to provide military-related news for public readers. However, people normally only want to read new, unusual and interesting information instead of boring, regular and routine postings. For instance, Donald Trump, the U.S. Republican presidential candidate, received a high level of support in public opinion polls during the presidential campaign and the Republican nomination process. The main reason he accomplished this was not because he is rich, but the way he acted and talked was different from other politicians and presidential candidates, which made him more interesting than everyone else in this U.S. campaign. We can imagine if Donald Trump acted and talked like every other political candidate we have seen, he would not have received such attention from the public, especially since he has no any political background or experience. Likewise, if the Taiwanese MND increases their content by increasing the number of posts on the military daily life and the regular training, it may not have a significant impact on receiving the number of Like buttons. Instead, if the MND can find an approach to conduct the image-building process with stylish or sophisticated, surprising and interesting content on the Facebook postings, it may greatly improve the public support by receiving more Like buttons. For example, when the MND is choosing the pictures as the posting content for military professionals, the surprising, interesting and stunning photos should be selected at the top priority instead of normal pictures. Figure 20 and Figure 21 serve as examples on conducting this approach.

Figure 20. Example of a Normal Picture. Source: Taiwanese MND Facebook page (2016).



Figure 21. Example of a Creative Picture. Source: Google Image Search (2016).



As we can see here, both Figure 20 and Figure 21 are pictures representing a professional troop image by posed salutes. In Figure 20, the MND Facebook page just put a snapshot of two military members in front of a normal helicopter; however, Figure 21 depicts a U.S. soldier in the first Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) saluting in mid-air while jumping out of a C-130 Hercules aircraft. By looking at this example, we can see the impact could be dramatically different by replacing the photo in Figure 20 with something similar to that of Figure 21. The photo in Figure 21 is much more powerful, impressive and influential than Figure 20, especially when both images were trying to send the same information.

3. Carefully Manage the Trust-Building Process and Create Trustworthy Information

According to answers from the interview, the MND did not mean to build any specific image types on this page since it may cause negative influence on the public if the MND was purposely creating certain images. However, in the real world, image building is a complicated process that involves many variables, and it is very challenging for anyone to be able to build certain images they desire or certain images they do not want. For example, based on the online data analysis from the MND's Facebook page, most of the content was trying to create a professional troop image even though the MND claimed it was an unintentional result.

Instead of limiting itself and not creating certain images to prevent the potential bias, the more feasible approach for the MND would be to more carefully manage the image-building process and create trustworthy information on this page. To carefully manage the image-building process, the MND should regularly analyze the correlation between the posting content and the feedback from public, as in Chapter IV. Once the MND has the long-term data, they can adjust the unintentional bias more efficiently by reviewing the analysis report, and it would be able to decide the best approach to conduct specific image building. Based on the analysis we currently have in Chapter IV, we know the groupies click the Like button no matter what the content, but we do not know which image of the Taiwanese military would be the most influential to the public. The MND may need to pay more attention to this analysis to find out which image would be the best approach to conduct trust building. Furthermore, most of content on this page was positive news, which was not wholly appropriate for the creation of credible information to win people's trust. The MND has to appropriately admit small shortcomings under certain situations to improve trust overall.

4. Increase the Number of Dynamic Postings and the Number of Groupies

The posting rate of the dynamic type (video and link) content was obviously lower than the static type (text and picture) content on the Facebook page. The reason for this may be due to the lack of available bandwidth to upload dynamic posting content

before 2014. However, the dynamic type content provides a more interactive interface with public readers. The MND may need to post more dynamic content in the future to determine the influence of both formats on the public. Moreover, since the groupies are the main population who clicked the Like button, the MND should be able to learn why makes a person become a groupie; what is the common denominator. Once that is determined, the MND may be able to cater to that component to create a larger number of groupies, which is also another way to influence the public. Another likely result is that the content may prove attractive not just to a widened audience of groupies, but to a larger audience overall when the public's attention is drawn to military matters.

5. Sufficiently Use the Text and Picture Format and the Proactive Writing Strategy

Even though we do not know how influential the dynamic type content could be, we know for sure the text and picture format and the proactive writing strategy are the most powerful approaches on this Facebook page based on our analysis. The MND should try to efficiently use this finding to propagate the credible information in order to attract more number of Like buttons before the dynamic type content are proven to be a more influential interface.

6. Increase the Recruitment-Related Postings

If the MND really considers using this page as an interface to improve the recruitment rate, they have to increase the number of postings on this content type. The overall 136 posts which was only 5.74% of total postings over the four years studied was not sufficient to realize any credible conclusions. Once the MND increases the posting number of this content type, it provides a further look to decide if this page would be a valuable interface to apply the recruitment propaganda.

B. FUTURE RESEARCH TOPICS

Since this research cannot provide a detailed analysis of every component with regard to each variable of the online data, the following comments serve as a suggestion for future research topics in order to make this research more credible and relevant, and

may help the Taiwanese MND to find other approaches to facilitate the trust-building process.

1. Analyze the Reason Viewers Click the Like Button

In this research, we use the number of Like buttons as an indicator to find a feasible approach to examine the trust-building process; however, the reason why people clicked the Like button likely varies from person to person. If the MND can get an in-depth look on what factors make people like certain posts, it may greatly improve the trust-building process by posting content the public likes and reach more agreement.

2. The Components of Groupies Populations

During the examination of the MND Facebook page, we noted that most of the time the number of Like buttons was proportional to the number of postings for each image type. With an average of 75 likes for each post, we can infer that most likes were provided by MND advocates, labeled “groupies,” who were loyally following this page and clicked the Like button regardless of content type. However, in this research we cannot identify the relationship between the groupies and the Taiwan military. They could be military spouses, college students, veterans, etc. If the MND could find out the common attributes in this population, the MND may have a better chance to get those groupies to influence other members of the public. For instance, if most groupies were composed of college students, the MND may post content about college instructors as the next population that may be influenced by students and become another groupie.

APPENDIX. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions for the Taiwan Ministry of National Defense (MND) Spokesman's Facebook Page

Thesis Title: Rebuilding Public Trust in the Taiwan Military: A Systems Approach.

Interviewer: Tzu-Lun, Chen. Taiwan Navy LT (IWSE student at NPS)

Interviewee: Army Major General, Shao-Ho, Luo. Director of the Military News Division of the Taiwan MND.

Question 1:

What is the purpose behind the establishment of the Taiwan MND Spokesman's Fans Facebook page? What kinds of feedback (or contributions) to this page are expected? What is done with the feedback? Who gets the report?

Question 2:

Does this Facebook page have any requirements (or limitations) on the frequency (or numbers) of daily posts? Or on certain types of content that must be posted during a certain time?

Question 3:

Since most of the posts on this page are related to military affairs, how are appropriate posts chosen for the site? Does your staff also anticipate the effect of official postings on the feelings of potential viewers? Are they trying to build up a positive military image in public by using this page? What is the review process for the questions before posting?

Question 4:

Does this page have any requirements (or limitations) on the post formats (text, picture, video or outer link)? If it does, what is the relationship between the contents (topics) and the post formats? What are the components (considerations) about the format that will be used?

Question 5:

Since responding to the negative military-related news stories and general public misinformation and negative feelings toward the Taiwan military is part of the MND mission, what mechanism does MND have in place to ensure that news stories and negative posts are responded to in a quick and informative manner? In other words, how does MND currently handle informational crisis management? How does MND determine which stories or postings to respond to, and which to not?

Question 6:

The Facebook page was established almost five years ago, in June 2011. What effects (positive or negative) has MND gained from having this page available to the public? Does the existence of this page and its use by MND help to achieve any significant

M.N.S goes better than before the page was established. For example, has recruitment improved in the intervening period? Similarly, what other effects have been noted?

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