

Peer-review report of

Jacob, S., Mehran, W., Tong, J. & Lemieux, A. (2026). A Behavior-Change model of jihadi media: The Information-Motivation-Behavioral skills framework and TTP video propaganda. *advances.in/psychology*, 1, e486994. <https://doi.org/10.56296/aip00071>

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Round 1

Editor

Date: 2026-03-20

Dear Authors,

Thank you for submitting your manuscript, "Teaching Jihad: TTP Video Propaganda and the IMB Model," for consideration in our special issue, *Advances in the Psychology of Violent Extremism*. First off, please accept my apologies for the delay. One of our initial reviewers was unexpectedly affected by the escalation of the conflict in the Middle East and had to relocate. Thus, I had to find a replacement on short notice. That said, I have now received feedback from two long-term experts with highly relevant knowledge in this area. I am grateful for their thorough review. As is standard for this journal, I assessed the manuscript independently before reading the evaluations.

We all agree that your manuscript has several strengths and topic-wise fits well with the special issue. For instance, Reviewer 1 highlights that "the manuscript addresses an important and timely topic, and the focus on TTP propaganda in the Pakistani context represents a valuable and relatively underexplored contribution, particularly within Western academic literature on extremism." They further state that "The effort to apply the IMB framework to this material is also commendable and has the potential to offer useful insights." Reviewer 2 similarly applauds the interesting data material (45 videos) and states that your "paper has the potential to be published." My independent evaluation concurs closely with this assessment. I liked the original and creative application of the IMB to this new context and see the paper as having the potential to contribute to the literature with a novel perspective. I also found the description of the TTP neat and informative.

Simultaneously, both reviewers identify notable issues that require your attention. My reading converges closely with their evaluation, and I therefore invite you to submit a (major) revised version of your manuscript. Please note that to reach the level of quality we aim for in this special issue, this will require substantial improvements of all parts of your manuscript.

The reviewers devoted considerable effort to providing detailed feedback; while I ask that you respond to each of their points, I will not reiterate them in full here. Instead, I will highlight overarching issues that I and the reviewers consider critical in a revision. However, the revised manuscript should address every of the points highlighted by me and the reviewers. You will see that this review letter is detailed and extensive. This is because I want to make sure the paper becomes as strong as possible and my aim is to work productively with you to realize that goal.

The paper would generally profit from more clarity and this pertains to all aspects of it. At a higher level, please implement a standard Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, structure.

Regarding the introduction and general framing, both reviewers make important points regarding your theoretical framework. For instance, Reviewer 1 requests more theoretical depths in your arguments. You need to better specify why you chose the IMB, what it adds to existing work, and

how it should be seen relative to the other established frameworks that have been used productively in the past to analyze violent extremist video propaganda. One question I have is whether you see it as a competing framework or as a type of meta-framework that helps us organize many of the existing frameworks in the analyses of video propaganda? If the latter is the case, you need to link back to these other frameworks when outlining your theoretical framework. Reviewer 2 likewise asks “what does this study aim to offer by using the IMB Model framework” beyond existing work?

The manuscript provides an interesting application of the IMB model, but there is a general ambivalence and lack of consistency in how the model components are operationalized throughout the text as both reviewers note. For instance, the boundary between the information component, which includes political goals and worldview, and the motivation component, which encompasses moral and anti-democratic framing, is quite diffuse. Because a worldview inherently possesses motivating properties, the authors need to provide significantly more elaboration to justify how they conceptualize the difference between simply informing an audience and actively motivating them. I understand that the videos often appeal to both via the same theme, but conceptually, you need to spend time explicating how the I and the M components can be distinctively operationalized.

Critically, this theoretical looseness leads to shifting definitions and contradictory categorizations later in the manuscript. Early in the text, motivation is characterized by moral framing, but the authors later redefine the construct around personal and collective drivers, emphasizing social support, the glorification of jihad, and desirable community will. This internal inconsistency becomes particularly apparent in the results section. The authors analyze injustice against Muslims as a function of motivation, even though Table 1 explicitly lists historical accounts of Muslim mistreatment and grievance as an indicator of information.

To resolve these conceptual overlaps, the authors should lean heavily on the structure provided in Table 1 (and make adjustments to it first if needed), which offers a much clearer and more reliable operationalization of the constructs. Introducing this table, or its explicit definitions, much earlier in the introduction would effectively anchor the theoretical framework. Consistently applying these firm boundaries throughout the text and the results section will resolve the current contradictions and greatly strengthen the analytical rigor of the paper. Make sure to set the operationalization early and then stick very strictly to it.

The structure of the introduction also needs to be streamlined. Presenting the research objectives early in the introduction is an effective strategy because it immediately anchors the reader and sets clear expectations for the manuscript. However, this early presentation would benefit from remaining more general. Currently, the text introduces the specific application of the IMB skills model and detailed video analysis parameters almost instantly. Softening this initial hook to focus broadly on the overarching goals of the study will effectively stage the narrative without

overwhelming the reader with methodological specifics before the scholarly gap has been fully contextualized.

To optimize the remainder of the introduction, the authors should smooth the current transitions and consolidate their theoretical exposition. The current narrative flow creates a jarring effect by moving from the specific research aims directly into a generalized literature review covering the media strategies of entirely different organizations. Additionally, the introduction becomes bogged down by front-loading dense theoretical mechanics, particularly the deep dive into vicarious online efficacy and the granular mapping of model components early in the text. Reorganizing the text to follow a traditional funnel structure will resolve these issues. The authors should connect their early objectives directly to the specific literature gap regarding the focal group, briefly introduce their chosen model as the analytical tool, and strictly relocate the detailed operationalization to the formal theoretical framework section. As Reviewer 2 states, please also avoid reporting general findings in the introduction. I understand that this differs by fields, but in psychology the introduction typically presents the objective(s) without alluding to the results.

Beyond reorganizing the introduction, the authors must address the significant fragmentation and redundancy present throughout the entire front half of the manuscript. Rather than progressing linearly, the narrative continuously circles back to previously discussed topics. For instance, the focal group is introduced early in the text, detailed extensively in the background section, and then justified and described once again under case selection. Similarly, the theoretical mechanics of the information-motivation-behavioral skills model are detailed in the opening pages, touched upon again at the end of the literature review, and finally formalized in a dedicated theoretical framework section. To resolve this cyclical pacing, the authors should consolidate all historical and contextual information regarding the group into a single background section, removing the redundant case selection justification. Grouping related information together rather than scattering it across the opening sections will create a much more cohesive and professionally paced manuscript.

We need more details regarding the methodology. First, as Reviewer 1 states, explain the sampling procedure in much more detail. Do these 45 videos constitute everything published on the relevant media pages from 2011 to 2020? If not, how was a selection made? On what criteria and by whom? How was it validated? Was the selection random (your limitations section suggests it wasn't)? This is very important as it could invalidate or at least weaken the informational value of any quantified overview of the data as in Figures 1 and 2. Related to this, it does not seem as if you formally assessed reliability. This is especially problematic since you quantify themes as in Figures 1 and 2. Please provide a formal test of reliability by letting a second coder rate all or a meaningful subset of videos and estimate standard reliability statistics (e.g., Cohen's Kappa).

While the premise of your study is compelling, the current manuscript lacks critical methodological details necessary for evaluating qualitative research. Specifically, please revise the manuscript to

explicitly state your underlying epistemology and methodological framework. It is also essential that you provide detailed descriptions of researcher characteristics and reflexivity/positionality.

The section detailing the coding process currently suffers from significant redundancy and a confusing chronological flow, which obscures the actual methodology. In the opening paragraph of this section, the explanation that the coding scheme was developed through a combination of deductive and inductive strategies is stated and then immediately repeated just two sentences later. Consolidating these duplicate explanations into a single, clear sentence will immediately improve the readability of this section. Furthermore, the phrasing creates a contradiction regarding the exact timeline of the codebook creation. The text states that inductive codes emerged from the initial coding of the material, which implies a fluid and ongoing development process. However, the very next sentence claims that the videos were analyzed using a previously defined codebook. To resolve this, please clarify whether the researchers used a rigid, pre-existing tool from the start or if the tool was iteratively built while examining the data. A clear and linear step-by-step description of how and when the codes were finalized will greatly strengthen the methodological transparency of the paper. Reviewer 1 provides further important perspectives related to this point.

Please add a dedicated Results section. The results also need to be restructured as it currently dilutes the theoretical application of the IMB model. I recommend beginning the results with a dedicated section and its own header describing the general themes that were most frequent across the dataset. Following this overview, the results should be organized strictly under three main headers, one for each component of the model. Within each of these sections, you can then describe your respective findings. Currently, the text uses subthemes as the primary organizing units, which makes the analytical contribution of the theoretical framework rather diffuse. Presenting your findings specifically within the distinct boundaries of the three model pillars will greatly improve the clarity and impact of the analysis.

The inclusion of direct quote examples is very helpful and provides necessary grounding for each theme. However, if you wish to present these excerpts in text, they must be formatted according to APA7 guidelines, which requires indenting quotes that are over forty words as block quotes. Furthermore, these quotes need to be properly introduced in the narrative text rather than simply dropped into the paragraphs. For example, instead of a standalone quote, you should introduce it by stating that in the 02-09-2013 “Don’t Wait Don’t Stop” video, a scene involved the following narration, followed by the indented quote.

However, a likely far better way to present the excerpts from your material and to further clarify the qualitative findings would be to include tables that organize the subthemes under the three main theoretical pillars. I suggest providing one table per model component. These tables should contain three columns detailing the theme name, the essence of the theme description, and an example excerpt from the qualitative data. Additionally, while visualizations like Figure 2 are very useful (but see methods issues highlighted earlier), the manuscript would be strengthened by presenting a

similar thematic mention histogram for each of the three theoretical components, rather than only displaying the B component.

The manuscript currently lacks a dedicated discussion section. Please add this crucial component (I would prefer this option) or dedicate much more time to a merged “Results and Discussion” section. A robust discussion is needed to articulate exactly what we learn from this study and to explicitly evaluate how your findings align with or diverge from previous work on jihadi propaganda as well as the IMB in non-health settings. In it, you need to critically assess the extent to which the model was useful for this analysis. What novel insights does applying this specific framework contribute to the literature that was not previously known? Conversely, it is equally important to acknowledge the limitations of your theoretical approach by noting which aspects of the group's media strategy are not well covered by the model. There likely are several elements that fall outside its scope (if not, that would raise questions about the analysis), and these should be explicitly noted.

Finally, to maintain analytical consistency with the rest of the manuscript, this (new) discussion should be clearly structured into three distinct subsections dedicated to the information, motivation, and behavioral skills components respectively, in addition to other subsections. By having the same distinct IMB headings repeat from the Intro through the Discussion, you create cohesiveness and facilitate comprehension of your complex material.

The language needs a major overhaul. I won't go into all details, but already in the first paragraph, there are sentences with extra words (“in” twice in the first sentence) and missing verbs (last sentence). Some arguments also lack a logical connection. For instance, it is unclear how the sentence “Groups grounded in religious ideology and supported by...” is connected to the previous sentences that describe the TTP. Please create a bridge or make it a new paragraph.

You also need to give better justifications for the case selection. For instance, you write “Yet systematic analysis of TTP video propaganda remains sparse compared with work on ISIS and Al-Qaeda, making this case well suited for examining how IMB components appear in contemporary jihadi messaging.” There seems to be a logical disconnect in this sentence. Just because analyses of TTP video propaganda is sparse does not mean it is suited for a test of the IMB.

In addition to these broader, substantial points, please address the following in your revision.

METHOD

The data collection section should be moved from the Introduction to the Method section.

Including a video of Al-Qaeda seems misplaced given that the focus is on the TTP; I recommend removing this case.

Please clarify whether the translation from Urdu was into English, as this is not explicitly stated (unless I missed it). Furthermore, as Reviewer 1 notes, details about who performed the translations are needed. If official licensed translators were not used, please explain the process for verifying the translation accuracy.

STYLISTIC

Please integrate all footnote content into the main text rather than formatting it as footnotes. Additionally, the following footnote requires clarification: “Highly skilled individuals are recruited for specialized departments like media and messaging (Omenma, 2020). They point to the importance of religious motivation in recruitment and outlining rivals.” It is unclear how the recruitment of highly skilled individuals relates to religious motivation in recruitment.

In the introduction, the statement “The IMB model categorizes terrorist propaganda into three domains.” implies that the IMB model was developed or explicitly used for this purpose. Please revise this phrasing to prevent misinterpretation.

In the sentence “This media effort articulates political goals, outlines strategies, and promotes the legitimacy.”, it is unclear what legitimacy is being promoted. Please clarify this point.

The journal’s style guidelines do not permit standalone, full-sentence quotations such as: ““Democracy is articulated as dark and evil, and its principal organs, such as media, NGOs, Western knowledge, and democratic parties, are articulated as the pillars of the dark system” (Khan, 2024).” Please integrate the quote into the text, for instance: ‘As Khuran states “[and then the quote]” (p. xx).’

The use of the dash in the following sentence is unclear and should be revised: “The role of self-efficacy in behavioral psychology is well researched. Bandura cites vicarious experiences – as one of the four sources of self-efficacy beliefs where successful modeling of a certain behavior enables change (Bandura, 1997).”

Please ensure all parentheses or brackets are properly closed, as seen in this instance: “(e.g., Hofstetter et al., 2001; Lemieux & Mehran, 2021; Oser et al. 2022.”.

Please strictly adhere to APA 7 formatting for all headings.

Once an acronym is defined, such as TTP, use only the acronym in subsequent mentions rather than spelling it out again.

The reference list and citations require significant revision:

- Ensure that multiple citations within a single parenthesis are separated by semicolons, as this is occasionally missed, for example: “(Lemieux et al., 2014, Mehran & Lemieux, 2021)”.
- Press media content must be properly cited and formatted according to APA 7 guidelines in the reference list.
- Please also provide page numbers for all direct quotations.
- Present DOI numbers in URL format for all journal articles.
- For reports lacking a DOI, provide the direct URL rather than a general link to the publishing research institute or similar.
- Please remove duplicate entries in the reference list.
- Certain references are missing commas between author names, such as “Gaibullov K. Piazza J. & Sandler T. (2024)”.
- Ensure that multiple citations within a single set of parentheses are ordered alphabetically.
- Several works are cited in the text but missing from the reference list, such as Sayed and Jadoon (2021).
- Correct instances where misplaced commas appear after author names, such as “(Crenshaw, & Robinson, 2025)”.
- Verify author name spellings, as some contain errors, such as “Rethmeyer”.
- Maintain exact consistency in the author order for dual-author publications; for example, the manuscript alternates between “Snow & Benford” and “Benford & Snow”.
- Ensure publication years in the in-text citations exactly match those in the reference list, as there is a discrepancy for instance for “Wilson & Lemieux, 2021”.
- Finally, remove entries from the reference list that are not cited in the main text, such as “Akhavi” or cite in the main text.
- Please note that the issues highlighted above are indicative and not exhaustive. Carefully review and resolve *all* formatting and stylistic issues during your revision. You may find it helpful to use our free formatting tool, available at <https://apa.advances.in>. Because the tool is probabilistic, it may identify false positives and miss certain errors, so a thorough manual check is still required.

In summary, I see unrealized value in this manuscript and believe it can become an important contribution after thorough revisions. Thus, I invite you to submit a revised version that addresses the points outlined in this letter. Please submit your revision by May 20. Should you require additional time or wish to discuss how best to address these comments, do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to receiving your revised work.

Best regards,

Jonas R. Kunst

Reviewer 1

This study analyzes a dataset of 45 TTP videos, which represents a key strength of the paper. The selection criteria underlying the inclusion of these videos are not clearly defined, and the authors need to explain the variations included in this study to support the analytical strategy and sample representation.

The author stated, “we clarify how TTP’s rhetoric articulates key dimensions of behavioral change, specifically illuminating its use of anti-democracy rhetoric and appeals for recruitment within the Muslim community,” and then formulated the core questions to address the main research question:

- What is the core appeal of the TTP? How does the group present its ideology and vision?
- How do they construct an effective call to action?
- What role does anti-democracy sentiment play in their messaging?
- How does the TTP communicate behavioral skills?

Which of these questions addresses the key dimensions of behavioral change?

Previous studies using thematic analysis have already explained this. As stated by the author, studies comparing videos of jihadi groups show significant differences in their appeals and thematic focus. Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan relies on sectarian politics and blasphemy issues to galvanize support (Basit, 2020).

Again, the question is, what does this study aim to offer by using the IMB Model framework? For example, how can “the nexus between group ideology, media output, and public support is vital to understanding TTP’s messaging and persistence” be addressed using the IMB Model?

The author also stated, ‘our research distinguishes three key aspects of TTP messaging we analyze and map onto the IMB model: first the scope and discursive elements of the groups’ communication, which specify the types of information the group provides; second the role of anti-democratic sentiment appeals to elements Muslim identity constituting the motivational framing; and third the use of repetition and exposure in cultivating behavioral skills crucial to supporting the TTP’. – The author needs to clearly specify which IMB components are being examined—namely, what forms of information, what types of motivation (e.g., personal or social motivation), and which behavioral skills are identified and analyzed. Conceptual precision and operational clarity are required. The analysis shows that TTP cultivates this vicarious self-efficacy by (1) repeatedly displaying violent operations and weapons use (Razzaque, 2008), (2) deconstructing the Pakistani state and its security forces as vulnerable targets, and (3) citing divine favor to assure viewers that such action will succeed. Overall, the analysis shows TTP videos informing audiences about world view, political goals (information), framing those goals in anti-democratic and moral terms (motivation), and depict concrete behavioral requirements for enacting the group’s vision (behavioral skills/competence)- *I find the structure of the paper somewhat confusing. Why are the main findings presented at the outset, before the argument is fully developed? The author should more systematically construct the argument to clarify the study’s theoretical contribution and situate it within the existing literature on this topic. Moreover, the findings presented appear to be rather general and applicable to many radical groups. The manuscript needs to more clearly articulate its original contribution and specify what this study uniquely offers to the field.*

Three strands are especially relevant to TTP and this study: (1) work on jihadi framing and enemy construction, (2) research on TTP's own ideological and media output, and (3) studies linking digital propaganda to self-efficacy and behavioral skills – *As the author states, the focus of this paper is the TTP using the IMB Model. Therefore, the author also needs to clarify the relevance of TTP to the IMB Model and explain how TTP's rhetoric may offer a distinct contribution to understanding the dimensions of behavioral change within the IMB framework.*

This concern aligns with the inconsistency between the abstract and the main text. The abstract stated that the authors “expand on the psychological theory by foregrounding the behavioral skills component of the IMB model” and argue that “dimension is crucial for organizations like the TTP, as it fosters 'digital efficacy.’” Nevertheless, there is not much discussion on digital efficacy in the analysis. The result section was structured with a series of codings and their explanation, hardly expanding the psychological theory or the concept of digital efficacy (it was only mentioned once in the footnote). Furthermore, the abstract stated that “Our contribution challenges extant research portrayals of the TTP as unsavvy in their narratives,” but I find difficulty in finding these assumptions stated in the main text. On the contrary, the main text discusses how TTP controls a plethora of media, which doesn't suggest unsaviness in narratives.

Overall, I believe that the data used in this paper has the potential to be published. However, at the current form, I am not sure if it is fit for publication. I think the authors need to restructure the paper: single out the main contribution that they really want to make, and present the data for such a contribution.

Reviewer 1

This study analyzes a dataset of 45 TTP videos, which represents a key strength of the paper. The selection criteria underlying the inclusion of these videos are not clearly defined, the author should clarified the diverse range of variations, ensuring broad representation and analytical strategies uses in this paper.

The author stated, “we clarify how TTP's rhetoric articulates key dimensions of behavioral change, specifically illuminating its use of anti-democracy rhetoric and appeals for recruitment within the Muslim community,” and then formulated the core questions to address the main research question:

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Overall, I believe that the data used in this paper has the potential to be published. However, at the current form, I am not sure if it is fit for publication. I think the authors need to restructure the paper: single out the main contribution that they really want to make, and present the data for such a contribution.

Reviewer 2

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The manuscript addresses an important and timely topic, and the focus on TTP propaganda in the Pakistani context represents a valuable and relatively underexplored contribution, particularly within Western academic literature on extremism. The effort to apply the IMB framework to this material is also commendable and has the potential to offer useful insights.

That said, the manuscript would benefit from further development in several key areas. In particular, there are concerns related to the clarity and depth of the theoretical framework, the operationalization of core constructs, and aspects of the methodological approach, especially regarding coding procedures and transparency. Addressing these issues would substantially strengthen the manuscript's conceptual coherence and analytical rigor.

Below, I outline specific comments and suggestions that I hope will be helpful in guiding further revisions.

The manuscript identifies the IMB model as its theoretical framework and supplements the behavioral skills component with Bandura's self-efficacy theory and the authors' notion of 'vicarious online efficacy.' However, the theoretical development remains relatively limited. The framework section is largely descriptive, focusing on defining the three IMB components and illustrating them with examples, rather than engaging more deeply with why IMB is theoretically the most appropriate framework for this case, how it relates to other models of radicalization and propaganda, or what its limitations are in the context of terrorist media.

The manuscript provides a detailed analysis of TTP propaganda videos using the IMB framework. However, it remains somewhat unclear how this contribution advances existing research on extremist media and online radicalization. A substantial body of work has already examined how jihadist organizations such as ISIS use videos, magazines such as Dabiq and Inspire, and online platforms to inform, motivate, and mobilize audiences. The manuscript would benefit from more clearly articulating what the IMB model captures that is not already addressed by existing frameworks in this literature, such as framing theory, social identity approaches, grievance-based models, and broader propaganda studies, and why TTP propaganda represents a theoretically distinct or especially informative case.

Relatedly, the operationalization of the IMB components in Table 1 raises concerns about conceptual overlap and discriminant validity. Several elements coded under the 'information' component, for example historical accounts of Muslim mistreatment, closely align with well-established constructs such as grievance, injustice, and victimization, while elements such as identifying allies and enemies map directly onto in-group and out-group categorization central to social identity theory. Importantly, these same themes appear across multiple IMB domains. For

instance, narratives of injustice and victimization are treated as informational content but also function as motivational drivers, and in-group and out-group distinctions are similarly present across both domains.

More broadly, ideology appears to cut across all three components, information, motivation, and behavioral skills, suggesting that it operates as a cross-cutting mechanism rather than a dimension that can be cleanly located within a single domain. This pattern indicates that the same underlying constructs are being captured across different components of the model.

While such overlap may reflect the multifunctional nature of propaganda, meaning that the same message can inform, motivate, and facilitate action simultaneously, it raises questions about whether the IMB components are analytically distinct in this context. If similar constructs operate across domains, it becomes difficult to determine what is uniquely contributed by each component, and whether the framework offers added explanatory value beyond existing theories such as social identity or grievance-based approaches. Greater conceptual clarification of how the IMB dimensions are differentiated would strengthen the manuscript's theoretical contribution.

The description of the data collection and video selection process would benefit from greater clarity. While the manuscript states that 45 videos, 44 produced by TTP, from 2011 to 2020 were analyzed, the criteria for inclusion are not clearly specified. It remains unclear how these videos were identified and selected, for example in terms of sampling strategy, source verification, thematic relevance, language, or length constraints, especially given the wide variation in video duration. Providing more explicit selection criteria would improve transparency and allow readers to better assess potential selection bias and the reproducibility of the analysis.

The description of the coding procedure would benefit from greater clarity and precision. While the manuscript states that the codebook was developed using both deductive approaches, based on the IMB components and prior research on jihadi propaganda, and inductive strategies, it remains unclear how these elements are operationalized in practice. In particular, the manuscript does not clearly specify which themes derived from prior research were included as deductive codes, nor how these are reflected in the final coding scheme or results.

Moreover, although inductive codes are said to emerge from the data, it is not clear how these are distinguished from deductive codes or how they relate to the overarching IMB categories. As presented, most results appear to be organized within the IMB framework, which raises the question of whether inductive insights are meaningfully separate or ultimately subsumed under predefined categories.

The manuscript on page 15 states that the analysis relied on a 'previously defined codebook' mapping individual codes to parent categories. However, it is not entirely clear what this codebook

refers to or how it was developed. As currently presented, there is limited information on how this codebook relates to the deductive and inductive coding procedures described earlier, which makes it difficult to fully assess the transparency of the analytic approach.

The manuscript refers to a coding structure in which individual codes are mapped onto 'parent categories', for example Anti-democracy, Personal Attitudes, and Social Normative Support. However, it is not entirely clear how these parent categories are defined or how they relate to the IMB framework described earlier. In particular, the manuscript does not specify what constitutes the underlying codes within each category, nor how these categories were derived, for example from prior literature, the IMB model, or inductive coding.

The manuscript describes an iterative coding process in which a preliminary codebook was applied to a subset of videos and subsequently refined. However, the nature of this preliminary codebook and the process by which it was developed are not fully specified. In addition, while the manuscript notes that codes were added, dropped, or consolidated, it remains unclear how these decisions were made and whether this process involved multiple coders or consistency checks. Clarifying these aspects would strengthen the transparency and methodological rigor of the study.

The manuscript states that thematic saturation was achieved when no new themes emerged after multiple viewings. However, this claim remains somewhat under-specified. It is unclear how saturation was operationalized in this context, how many iterations of coding were conducted, and at what stage it was determined that no new themes were emerging.

The manuscript states that the ideology code comprises four subcodes. However, only three, for example Islamic governance, justification for goals, and jihad, are described in the text, and it is unclear what the fourth subcode entails.

More broadly, the introduction of subcodes appears primarily in the findings and interpretation section, with limited prior specification in the coding or methods section. It would strengthen the manuscript to more clearly define the full coding hierarchy, including subcodes, earlier, so that readers can better follow how the analysis is structured and how specific interpretations are derived.

The manuscript presents an extensive 'Findings and Interpretation' section but does not include a distinct discussion section. While integrating findings and interpretation is common in qualitative research, the current structure makes it somewhat difficult to distinguish between descriptive results and higher-level theoretical implications. The manuscript could benefit from either a clearer separation between empirical findings and interpretive claims within the section, or a brief discussion section that synthesizes the main insights, situates them within existing literature, and outlines their broader theoretical contribution.

While the manuscript provides a detailed analysis, it offers limited reflection on its methodological and conceptual limitations. Given the complexity of the coding process and the scope of the data, a more explicit discussion of potential constraints would strengthen the overall rigor and transparency of the study.

Minor comments:

The manuscript provides a thorough background on TTP, which is helpful for contextualizing the analysis. However, the subsequent section on case selection appears to partially reiterate descriptive elements already covered earlier.

The manuscript provides a description of the translation process, for example initial viewing, transcription, and translation into English. However, it remains somewhat unclear how translation accuracy and consistency were ensured across stages.

The description of the coding procedure on page 15 is somewhat repetitive, with similar points regarding deductive and inductive coding reiterated across multiple sentences. Streamlining this section could improve clarity and readability without loss of content.

The manuscript on page 16 notes that analytic memos were used to document coding decisions and were revisited during later stages of analysis. While this is a valuable practice, providing a brief illustration of how these memos informed coding refinements or interpretive decisions would further enhance transparency.

Attachment: Comments to authors.docx — appended at the end of this report.

Round 2

Editor

Date: 2026-07-13

Dear Authors,

Thank you for submitting the revised version of your manuscript, "Teaching Jihad: TTP Video Propaganda and the IMB Model," for our special issue, *Advances in the Psychology of Violent Extremism*. Both reviewers from the first round evaluated your revision, and, as before, I assessed the manuscript independently before reading their evaluations.

Let me say clearly at the outset: I really like this work. I remain positive toward the manuscript and continue to value its methodologically creative and applied angle. The revision reflects substantive effort, and, as Reviewer 1 notes, "the manuscript is meaningfully stronger as a result." Reviewer 2

likewise acknowledges that you “have strengthened the literature review by providing further justification for the use of the IMB framework and its theoretical contribution.” Precisely because I see this potential, it would be unfortunate if the one central remaining problem could not be solved and would prevent publication. I therefore ask you to read the following carefully, as it is intended to give you a clear and achievable path forward.

Based on the reviews and my own reading, I invite you to submit another (major) revised version of your manuscript. I plan to not send it out for another round of external reviews, but this of course depends on how thoroughly you address the comments. Especially, a much more defensible qualitative coding will be decisive. Please respond to every point raised by the reviewers and by me; below I highlight the overarching issues, ordered by importance.

THE MAIN POINT: INTERCODER RELIABILITY AND RECODING OF THE CORPUS

The clearly most significant concern with the manuscript, echoed across by Reviewer 1, is the reported intercoder reliability, and I want to be explicit that resolving this point, by achieving acceptable kappas, is the condition on which acceptance depends. While $\kappa = .53$ for the behavioral codes is acceptable for interpretive material of this kind, the coefficients for the informational and motivational codes ($\kappa = .18$ and $\kappa = .22$) fall well below conventional thresholds, and these are precisely the dimensions on which the paper’s central claims about anti-democratic framing, victimhood narratives, and a coherent mobilization strategy rest. Reviewer 1 applies the benchmarks of Landis and Koch (1977) and concludes that both values indicate slight agreement, “meaning the two coders disagreed on how to classify clips into Information versus Motivation at a rate only marginally above chance.”

The implication must be stated plainly. As Reviewer 1 observes, “The low kappas for Information and Motivation indicate that a second coder, working independently on the same nine videos, would have produced substantially different coding for those two dimensions.” In other words, the current coding does not replicate, and this is very problematic. Because the full corpus of 45 videos was coded by a single coder and the reliability check was conducted post hoc on nine videos, there is no basis for assuming that the remaining 36 videos would fare better. The entire coding must therefore be regarded as likely not reliable in its current form, and the frequency counts and code-prevalence figures compound this: they invite evaluation by quantitative content-analytic standards, under which the reported reliability cannot support the conclusions drawn. The current framing, which attributes the low coefficients to the inherent complexity of the constructs, does not adequately address the problem. You write as an explanation: “Distinctions between informational framing and motivational appeals in TTP discourse depend heavily on familiarity with the group’s rhetorical conventions, Islamic political terminology, and Pakistani political context that cannot be fully conveyed through brief coder training. This underscores a broader methodological challenge in coding ideologically complex material and points to the value of domain-specific expertise in qualitative content analysis of terrorist media.” But this is precisely a challenge a research paper of this kind is expected to solve.

What this means for the revision is the following, and I ask you to commit to it fully. First, both coders need to improve the coding scheme together, iteratively: jointly refine the codebook and, in particular, formulate explicit decision rules for codes where informational and motivational functions overlap, calibrate on fresh material, discuss disagreements, refine again, and repeat until reliability

reaches an acceptable level (Reviewer 1 specifies $\kappa \geq .60$ for Information and Motivation). Second, once high levels of agreement have been achieved on a fresh reliability sample, the full dataset needs to be coded again with the finalized scheme, so that the results reported in the manuscript rest on demonstrably reliable coding rather than on the current single-coder analysis. Third, please report the reliability results in full. We will also need a complete overview of all kappas. Alongside kappa, report percent agreement and a prevalence-adjusted coefficient (e.g., Gwet's AC1 or PABAK), since skewed code prevalence may be deflating kappa, and consider reporting reliability at the parent-dimension level, which is arguably the level at which your claims are made. Relatedly, please provide the results of the "code–recode procedure (...) to check coding-stability" if you intend to conduct this again.

TITLE AND ABSTRACT

The title undersells the contribution and is quite vague for readers unfamiliar with the term "IMB". To ensure impact, I suggest the following title that emphasizes the novelty: "A Behavior-Change Model of Jihadi Media: The Information-Motivation-Behavioral Skills Framework and TTP Video Propaganda".

The same applies to the abstract. I suggest a revision to something like: "Terrorist propaganda is typically studied for its narratives; this study analyzes it as a behavioral intervention. We apply the Information-Motivation-Behavioral Skills (IMB) model, developed in health psychology to explain behavior change, to a corpus of 45 videos produced by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) between 2011 and 2020. Using qualitative content analysis, we examine how TTP videos simultaneously inform audiences about the group's political vision, motivate participation through appeals to religious duty and community identity, and build the perceived capacity to act through repeated vicarious exposure to jihadi operations. We extend the IMB framework by reconceptualizing the behavioral skills component as vicarious online efficacy transmission, the process by which media consumption strengthens audience beliefs in their capacity to participate in jihad. Findings reveal a coherent mobilization strategy that deploys anti-democratic framing, Muslim victimhood narratives, and normalization of violence integrated across the IMB components, challenging characterizations of the TTP as unsophisticated in its propaganda. More broadly, the analysis demonstrates that a behavior-change framework can move the study of jihadi media beyond descriptive themes to the functional mechanisms through which propaganda seeks to produce action."

METHOD

Reviewer 1 asks you to specify the corpus inclusion criteria. The Data Collection section now identifies the Mobilizing Media Project archive as the source and characterizes the dataset as a convenience sample, but it remains unspecified how the 45 videos were identified within that archive. The phrase "based on availability and relevance to TTP messaging" does not define what made a video relevant or irrelevant. Please specify, even briefly, whether the full archive was used, and if not, what the inclusion/exclusion criterion was. This was a request already in the first review round. Please make sure it will be addressed now.

You have still not presented a reflexivity statement as requested in the first round. This should be more than half a sentence.

RESULTS AND STRUCTURE

In the results section, the part that contains “Three archetypes emerge from videos in the dataset. Generally, these fall into 1) Informative, 2) Skills and 3) Operations videos.” is confusing. Right after, you focus on Propaganda, Training, and Operations, which thus diverges from the three names first introduced. It is also not clear why this typology is presented at all, and it seems to diverge from the IMB categorization. Please either align the labels and motivate the typology's function in the analysis, or remove it.

Limitations need to be moved before the conclusion.

STYLISTIC, PROOFING, AND REFERENCES

You mention framing theory several times but never seem to cite it. Please make sure to do so. The same goes for social identity theory.

Reviewer 1 flags a duplicated sentence in the Theory section: the phrase “Here we refer to self-efficacy through consumption of online propaganda as vicarious online efficacy transmission” appears twice in consecutive sentences, with the second appearing to be a drafting residue. Please remove the redundant instance. I am also attaching edits, since there were many incomplete sentences and additional surprising oversights such as double sentences. Make sure to proofread carefully for the next time. There will not be room for such oversights again.

A reference check using apa.advances.in still shows several APA 7 related issues as well as inconsistencies (e.g., a wrong year for a reference). Note that some of the tool's flagged issues relate to the videos and can be ignored, but many points are valid and need thorough attention. Also, DOI numbers should be presented in the <https://doi.org/xxxx/xx> URL format, not as bare DOI numbers. Please use the free tool to improve your references.

This link does not work: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/01/pakistan-poised-take-ttp>

Make sure all figures are saved as SVG files directly from the software they were created in and then added into the Word file. This will ensure high resolution. Attempting to convert the files to SVG is not adequate.

In summary, I continue to see real value in this manuscript, and I would like to see it succeed. The path to publication runs through the recalibrated and fully recoded analysis described above; the remaining points are important but manageable. I invite you to submit a revised version that addresses all points outlined in this letter and in the reviews. Should you require additional time for the recoding, or wish to discuss how best to address these comments, do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to receiving your revised work.

Best regards,

Jonas R. Kunst

Reviewer 2

Thank you for submitting your revised manuscript. The revisions represent a genuine and substantive effort, and the manuscript is meaningfully stronger as a result.

However, after examining the revised manuscript directly against the prior round of comments, I find that a few concerns remain unresolved. Two of these bears directly on the interpretive validity

of the study's central empirical claims and I suggest they must be addressed before I can recommend the manuscript for publication.

1. Discriminant validity of the Information/Motivation distinction

I still have concerns about the diffuse conceptual boundary between the Information (I) and Motivation (M) components of the IMB as operationalized in this study. The author(s) have provided a thoughtful response: they argue that the distinction is functional rather than topical (page 11), with Information coding the "facts of the case" and Motivation coding emotional and obligatory appeals. This conceptual clarification is an improvement.

The problem is that the empirical coding data do not support it. The reported intercoder kappas for Information ($\kappa = .18$) and Motivation ($\kappa = .22$) fall below any standard threshold for acceptable agreement. According to the widely applied benchmarks of Landis and Koch (1977), both values indicate slight agreement, meaning the two coders disagreed on how to classify clips into Information versus Motivation at a rate only marginally above chance.

I ask the authors to either (a) report revised kappas following a more structured calibration procedure that brings reliability to an acceptable level ($\kappa \geq .60$) for Information and Motivation, or (b) acknowledge explicitly in both the Method and Limitations sections that the Information/Motivation distinction could not be reliably operationalized and qualify all inferential claims about informational versus motivational content accordingly.

2. Single-coder status of the primary analysis

The intercoder reliability exercise was conducted on nine videos (20% of the corpus) after the primary analysis was complete. The full corpus of 45 videos was coded by a single coder. This design choice may be appropriate in some qualitative traditions, but it is directly relevant to the interpretation of the reliability results reported here. The low kappas for Information and Motivation indicate that a second coder, working independently on the same nine videos, would have produced substantially different coding for those two dimensions. The manuscript does not acknowledge what this implies for the 36 videos coded only by the primary researcher.

I ask the authors to add an explicit acknowledgment in the Limitations section that the primary analysis is single-coder, that the reliability check was post-hoc rather than iterative, and that findings for the I and M dimensions should therefore be interpreted with appropriate caution.

3. Corpus inclusion criteria

The Data Collection section now clearly identifies the Mobilizing Media Project archive as the source and characterizes the dataset as a convenience sample. What remains unspecified is how the 45 videos were identified within that archive. The text on page 17 states the corpus was drawn from a project that sought to collect "as many TTP-linked videos as possible," but does not clarify whether the 45 videos represent the full available archive or a subset, and if a subset, what criterion of relevance governed selection. The phrase "based on availability and relevance to TTP messaging" (page 17) does not define what made a video relevant or irrelevant. Please specify, even briefly, whether the full archive was used, and if not, what the inclusion/exclusion criterion was

Additional Proofing Note

There is a duplicated sentence in the Theory section. The phrase “Here we refer to self-efficacy through consumption of online propaganda as vicarious online efficacy transmission” appears twice in consecutive sentences, with the second appearing to be a drafting residue (see page 12). Please remove the redundant instance.

Reviewer 1

The authors have strengthened the literature review by providing further justification for the use of the IMB framework and its theoretical contribution. However, in presenting the thematic analysis findings, the authors still rely on broad and general themes, such as motivation, behavioral skills, and information. This appears insufficient to support the stronger theoretical claims made in the manuscript, particularly the argument that “IMB identifies what messages say and Social Identity Theory explains how group boundaries are constructed, while the IMB framework theorizes the psychological mechanisms through which ideology translates into behavioral intent.” To substantiate this claim, the authors need to provide a more precise conceptualization of the psychological mechanisms involved. For example, what specific types of motivation are identified and how do they operate within the IMB framework? What forms of behavioral skills are relevant in this context? Furthermore, what specific information processes within the Social Identity Theory framework contribute to explaining the proposed mechanisms?

At present, the data interpretation remains largely descriptive, with limited theoretical elaboration connecting the empirical themes to the underlying psychological processes. The theoretical discussion would benefit from a deeper integration between the findings and the proposed frameworks, as the current discussion still leaves significant conceptual gaps regarding how ideology is translated into behavioral intentions through these mechanisms.

Round 3

Editor

Date: 2026-10-10

Dear Authors,

I appreciate your submission of the revised manuscript, titled “A Behavior-Change Model of Jihadi Media: The Information-Motivation-Behavioral Skills Framework and TTP Video Propaganda.” This revision demonstrates substantial effort, particularly regarding the expanded reflexivity statement, the new section connecting IMB components to specific psychological processes, the independent double-coding of the remaining videos, and the recalibration of the codebook. I am pleased to note that we are now very close to completion. I have attached a copy of the manuscript with comments highlighting the main points and summarize the remaining issues below. Please note that I also made changes to some of the references (mostly formatting), so please use this file as you implement the hopefully last set of revisions.

1. Reliability reporting. The assertion that “Agreement was substantial across the 44 videos (533 clips)” is flawed because agreement estimates must rely solely on the 30 videos coded after

codebook finalization, excluding calibration videos. Although Table 2 utilizes the correct 30-video sample, its values conflict with those in this paragraph and Appendix 2.

- Information: $\kappa = .62$ in the paragraph vs. $.57$ in Table 2
- Prescribed Conduct and Ideas: $.59$ vs. $.49$
- Proscribed Conduct and Ideas: $.51$ vs. $.42$
- Support for Traditional Government: $.42$ vs. $.24$

Also, the final paragraph of this section incorrectly claims that double-coding with the finalized codebook applied to the entire corpus; in reality, only 30 of the 44 videos were subjected to this process. This error also affects the sentence terminating the preceding paragraph (“the full corpus was instead double-coded”). Please revise both instances.

2. Open data and code. All data and code utilized to compute agreement statistics and code frequencies should be archived on a repository like Zenodo, with a link (ideally a DOI) included in the manuscript.

3. Front and back matter. Each of the disclosure, funding, and conflict-of-interest statements appears twice; please retain only one instance of each. Furthermore, the disclosure statement references a Figure 2 that is absent.

4. Duplicated sentence. “The TTP construes Jihad as a religious duty and article of faith” appears twice in consecutive paragraphs in the Motivation section. Please remove one instance.

Given the minor nature of these revisions, please submit your revisions with one week. When doing so, kindly provide both a clean version and one containing tracked changes to facilitate a swift review of the modifications.

Thank you again for your careful work on this manuscript. I look forward to receiving the final version.

Best,

Jonas R. Kunst

Round 4

Editor

Date: 2026-10-19

Dear Authors,

Thank you for addressing this last set of requests. I am happy to accept the paper in its current form. Congrats on a fine on an innovative contribution to the field.

Best,

Jonas R. Kunst

Editor-in-Chief

APPENDED DOCUMENT

Round 1 — Reviewer 2

Comments to authors.docx

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The manuscript addresses an important and timely topic, and the focus on TTP propaganda in the Pakistani context represents a valuable and relatively underexplored contribution, particularly within Western academic literature on extremism. The effort to apply the IMB framework to this material is also commendable and has the potential to offer useful insights.

That said, the manuscript would benefit from further development in several key areas. In particular, there are concerns related to the clarity and depth of the theoretical framework, the operationalization of core constructs, and aspects of the methodological approach, especially regarding coding procedures and transparency. Addressing these issues would substantially strengthen the manuscript's conceptual coherence and analytical rigor.

Below, I outline specific comments and suggestions that I hope will be helpful in guiding further revisions.

The manuscript identifies the IMB model as its theoretical framework and supplements the behavioral skills component with Bandura's self-efficacy theory and the authors' notion of 'vicarious online efficacy.' However, the theoretical development remains relatively limited. The framework section is largely descriptive, focusing on defining the three IMB components and illustrating them with examples, rather than engaging more deeply with why IMB is theoretically the most appropriate framework for this case, how it relates to other models of radicalization and propaganda, or what its limitations are in the context of terrorist media.

The manuscript provides a detailed analysis of TTP propaganda videos using the IMB framework. However, it remains somewhat unclear how this contribution advances existing research on extremist media and online radicalization. A substantial body of work has already examined how jihadist organizations such as ISIS use videos, magazines such as Dabiq and Inspire, and online platforms to inform, motivate, and mobilize audiences. The manuscript would benefit from more clearly articulating what the IMB model captures that is not already addressed by existing frameworks in this literature, such as framing theory, social identity approaches, grievance-based models, and broader propaganda studies, and why TTP propaganda represents a theoretically distinct or especially informative case.

Relatedly, the operationalization of the IMB components in Table 1 raises concerns about conceptual overlap and discriminant validity. Several elements coded under the 'information' component, for example historical accounts of Muslim mistreatment, closely align with well-established constructs such as grievance, injustice, and victimization, while elements such as identifying allies and enemies map directly onto in-group and out-group categorization central to social identity theory. Importantly, these

same themes appear across multiple IMB domains. For instance, narratives of injustice and victimization are treated as informational content but also function as motivational drivers, and in-group and out-group distinctions are similarly present across both domains.

More broadly, ideology appears to cut across all three components, information, motivation, and behavioral skills, suggesting that it operates as a cross-cutting mechanism rather than a dimension that can be cleanly located within a single domain. This pattern indicates that the same underlying constructs are being captured across different components of the model.

While such overlap may reflect the multifunctional nature of propaganda, meaning that the same message can inform, motivate, and facilitate action simultaneously, it raises questions about whether the IMB components are analytically distinct in this context. If similar constructs operate across domains, it becomes difficult to determine what is uniquely contributed by each component, and whether the framework offers added explanatory value beyond existing theories such as social identity or grievance-based approaches. Greater conceptual clarification of how the IMB dimensions are differentiated would strengthen the manuscript's theoretical contribution.

The description of the data collection and video selection process would benefit from greater clarity. While the manuscript states that 45 videos, 44 produced by TTP, from 2011 to 2020 were analyzed, the criteria for inclusion are not clearly specified. It remains unclear how these videos were identified and selected, for example in terms of sampling strategy, source verification, thematic relevance, language, or length constraints, especially given the wide variation in video duration. Providing more explicit selection criteria would improve transparency and allow readers to better assess potential selection bias and the reproducibility of the analysis.

The description of the coding procedure would benefit from greater clarity and precision. While the manuscript states that the codebook was developed using both deductive approaches, based on the IMB components and prior research on jihadi propaganda, and inductive strategies, it remains unclear how these elements are operationalized in practice. In particular, the manuscript does not clearly specify which themes derived from prior research were included as deductive codes, nor how these are reflected in the final coding scheme or results.

Moreover, although inductive codes are said to emerge from the data, it is not clear how these are distinguished from deductive codes or how they relate to the overarching IMB categories. As presented, most results appear to be organized within the IMB framework, which raises the question of whether inductive insights are meaningfully separate or ultimately subsumed under predefined categories.

The manuscript on page 15 states that the analysis relied on a 'previously defined codebook' mapping individual codes to parent categories. However, it is not entirely clear what this codebook refers to or how it was developed. As currently presented, there is limited information on how this codebook relates to the deductive and inductive coding procedures described earlier, which makes it difficult to fully assess the transparency of the analytic approach.

The manuscript refers to a coding structure in which individual codes are mapped onto 'parent categories', for example Anti-democracy, Personal Attitudes, and Social Normative Support. However, it is not entirely clear how these parent categories are defined or how they relate to the IMB framework described earlier. In particular, the manuscript does not specify what constitutes the underlying codes within each category, nor how these categories were derived, for example from prior literature, the IMB model, or inductive coding.

The manuscript describes an iterative coding process in which a preliminary codebook was applied to a subset of videos and subsequently refined. However, the nature of this preliminary codebook and the process by which it was developed are not fully specified. In addition, while the manuscript notes that codes were added, dropped, or consolidated, it remains unclear how these decisions were made and whether this process involved multiple coders or consistency checks. Clarifying these aspects would strengthen the transparency and methodological rigor of the study.

The manuscript states that thematic saturation was achieved when no new themes emerged after multiple viewings. However, this claim remains somewhat under-specified. It is unclear how saturation was operationalized in this context, how many iterations of coding were conducted, and at what stage it was determined that no new themes were emerging.

The manuscript states that the ideology code comprises four subcodes. However, only three, for example Islamic governance, justification for goals, and jihad, are described in the text, and it is unclear what the fourth subcode entails.

More broadly, the introduction of subcodes appears primarily in the findings and interpretation section, with limited prior specification in the coding or methods section. It would strengthen the manuscript to more clearly define the full coding hierarchy, including subcodes, earlier, so that readers can better follow how the analysis is structured and how specific interpretations are derived.

The manuscript presents an extensive 'Findings and Interpretation' section but does not include a distinct discussion section. While integrating findings and interpretation is common in qualitative research, the current

structure makes it somewhat difficult to distinguish between descriptive results and higher-level theoretical implications. The manuscript could benefit from either a clearer separation between empirical findings and interpretive claims within the section, or a brief discussion section that synthesizes the main insights, situates them within existing literature, and outlines their broader theoretical contribution.

While the manuscript provides a detailed analysis, it offers limited reflection on its methodological and conceptual limitations. Given the complexity of the coding process and the scope of the data, a more explicit discussion of potential constraints would strengthen the overall rigor and transparency of the study.

Minor comments:

The manuscript provides a thorough background on TTP, which is helpful for contextualizing the analysis. However, the subsequent section on case selection appears to partially reiterate descriptive elements already covered earlier.

The manuscript provides a description of the translation process, for example initial viewing, transcription, and translation into English. However, it remains somewhat unclear how translation accuracy and consistency were ensured across stages.

The description of the coding procedure on page 15 is somewhat repetitive, with similar points regarding deductive and inductive coding reiterated across multiple sentences. Streamlining this section could improve clarity and readability without loss of content.

The manuscript on page 16 notes that analytic memos were used to document coding decisions and were revisited during later stages of analysis. While this is a valuable practice, providing a brief illustration of how these memos informed coding refinements or interpretive decisions would further enhance transparency.