

The Politics of Parody: A Cultural and Gendered Analysis of Social Media Skits on Irregular Migration in South Africa

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Abstract

Background: The rise of digital platforms has transformed public discourse, establishing social media skits as viral forms of government-aligned advocacy in South Africa. Despite their algorithmic reach and cultural influence, critical investigation into the gendered and cultural politics embedded within these digital narratives concerning irregular migration remains underdeveloped.

Objective: This study utilised an integrated framework combining the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) with Narrative Persuasion Theory to critically analyse the cultural narratives, persuasive mechanisms, and gendered portrayals within anti-migration skits, and to examine their impact on the migration intentions of a South African sample.

Methodology: A quantitative survey (N=455) to examine participants who were social media users. The study measured impact using the AIUCA (awareness, interest, understanding, conviction and action) persuasion model and TPB constructs (Attitude, Subjective Norms, PBC). Statistical analysis, including moderated regression, was used to test how gender and TPB variables filter the persuasive effect.

Result: While skits successfully generated awareness across the sample, deep conviction failed for decided migrants. The study found that the influence of the skits was powerfully moderated by all three TPB constructs (H4-H6) and was significantly dependent on gender (H3). For decided migrants, the skits did not deter migration; instead, they drove adaptive action—specifically, making efforts to migrate legally and avoiding dangerous routes.

Conclusion: Social media skits serve as a powerful, culturally saturated medium for digital policy advocacy; however, their efficacy is contingent upon pre-existing psychological and cultural factors. The findings suggest that this digital advocacy does not stop migration; rather, it promotes safer, professionalised migration by filtering the message through gendered social norms.

Keywords: social media skits, digital culture, gender, cultural narratives, irregular migration, Theory of Planned Behaviour, South Africa

Introduction

Africa, particularly South Africa, continues to grapple with the complex and persistent dynamics of international migration. The United Nations (2019) notes the continent's significant contribution to the world's international migrant population. Studies have established demographic patterns, showing that younger, urban males are often more likely to migrate for economic reasons, while women's migration is frequently linked to family-related factors (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2017). However, the mechanisms shaping these gendered migration decisions and the public discourse surrounding them are rapidly evolving.

In recent years, the policy response to irregular migration has dramatically shifted away from traditional print and electronic media towards fast-paced, culturally saturated digital platforms. The aftermath of the 2019 Libyan migrant crisis, for instance, spurred a rise in targeted anti-migration efforts. Today, advocacy and public debate are no longer confined to traditional public service announcements; they are conducted through digital cultural production.

In the South Africa digital landscape, few forms of content are as ubiquitous and culturally resonant as the social media skit. These short-form, often comedic or parodic dramas, created by digital influencers, have become potent vehicles for conveying social and political messaging. They achieve virality and cultural penetration by tapping directly into local humour, cultural anxieties, and shared social imaginaries, often succeeding where conventional media fails. This cultural potency allows skits to function as micro-laboratories where the dangers of irregular migration are dramatised, internalised, and discussed. Yet, despite the deep influence of these digital narratives on young South Africans—the demographic most susceptible to irregular migration—there is a significant gap in the literature regarding their critical cultural and gendered impact.

The existing research on migration remains largely conducted from the perspective of destination countries, focusing on policy outcomes rather than the cultural persuasion mechanisms active in countries of origin, such as South Africa (United Nations, 2020). Furthermore, where advocacy is studied, it typically uses general media and marketing theories (e.g., Kenton, 2019; Madrigal et al., 2009), which are inadequate for analysing the unique, platform-mediated dynamics of social media skits.

Social media refers to internet-based platforms and applications that enable users to create and share content, participate in virtual communities, and connect with others. They function primarily as decentralised communication channels, facilitating instant and widespread information flow, as well as the formation of global and local digital cultures (Van Dijck, 2013). These platforms thrive on user-generated content, encompassing a range of media types, including text, photos, and videos. This environment has popularised short-form, often dramatic or comedic narratives known as social media skits. Skits are culturally potent videos that leverage platform tools for rapid production and viral distribution (Jenkins, 2006). They serve as vernacular storytelling, blending

humour and drama to create shared understanding and drive public discourse on serious issues, rapidly becoming powerful tools for digital cultural production.

The influence of these skits is rarely uniform; rather, it is filtered through specific gendered and cultural lenses. Skits often rely on reinforcing or challenging stereotypes regarding male responsibility, female safety, and family honour to elicit emotional reactions. This reliance on gendered narrative framing in digital cultural production raises critical questions about ethical persuasion and sociocultural impact that existing studies have yet to address.

Objective and Significance of the Study

The objective of this study is to critically analyse the cultural narratives, persuasive techniques, and gendered portrayals within social media skits focused on discouraging irregular migration, and to examine the subsequent impact of these skits on the migration intentions of a South African sample. To achieve this objective, we categorise citizens into two broad sets: those with decided migration intent and those with no intention of migrating shortly. Variables from the Theory of Planned Behaviour are utilised to situate the study within a robust theoretical framework that accounts for underlying attitudinal and normative factors.

This study provides empirical evidence and a critical cultural media analysis of how contemporary digital content forms (social media skits) are leveraged for public policy advocacy. It provides policymakers with valuable information on the necessity of gender-aware and culturally nuanced campaigns. Theoretically, this research provides a significant contribution to the literature on the intersection of digital culture, gender studies, and migration governance, bridging the gap between traditional media effectiveness and the complexities of platform-mediated persuasion.

Literature Review: The Politics of Parody

Migration, Governance, and Gendered Vulnerability in African Contexts

Migration is a long-standing feature of African history (Bredeloup & Pliez, 2005; De, 2008), yet modern irregular migration presents unique challenges for countries of origin like South Africa. Despite the global trend toward stricter border controls (Pierce & Selee, 2017), high youth unemployment and economic stagnation continue to fuel a strong desire to migrate (Danziger, 2019). The risks are substantial, including human trafficking, forced labour, and even slavery, as highlighted by the South African government's advocacy efforts.

Migration is a gendered process. While early demographics showed a higher male propensity for international migration, women often face distinct drivers and disproportionate risks. While men are often driven by economic necessity to seek employment, women frequently migrate for family-related reasons, making their journeys and vulnerabilities fundamentally different (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2017). This distinction is vital because advocacy messages must resonate with these divergent gendered motivations and risks to be effective. Consequently, effective communication must move beyond general anti-migration warnings to address the specific gendered aspirations and fears of both young men and women.

Social Media Skits as Policy Texts

The impact of media content on migration attitudes is well-documented; studies show that media framing significantly influences public perception of migrants as either economic threats or beneficiaries (Esses et al., 1998; Igartua & Cheng, 2009). However, this literature largely focuses on traditional news or broadcast media. Today, in South Africa, the primary site of public discourse and persuasion has shifted to digital cultural production.

Social media skits have emerged as a dominant, vernacular form of public communication. They are not merely advertisements; they are cultural texts that utilise parody, satire, and familiar dramatic conventions to convey serious policy messages. This form of digital cultural production is highly effective because it bypasses traditional gatekeepers and leverages affective mobilisation—using humour and emotion to create virality and deepen audience engagement. The cultural studies approach views these skits as narrative vehicles that engage with and attempt to shift prevailing social norms and imaginaries. Therefore, examining their impact requires moving beyond simple persuasion models to analyse *how* their narrative construction influences belief and action.

Theoretical Framework: Integrated Model for Digital Persuasion

The theoretical foundation of this study is built upon an integrated framework that links the predictive power of behavioural psychology with the explanatory force of narrative and critical cultural theory. This approach is necessary to understand how social media skits—complex digital cultural artefacts—influence the underlying decision-making process regarding irregular migration.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The macro-level structure for predicting behavioural intention is provided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), suggested by Ajzen (1986, 1991). TPB posits that a person's intention to perform an action is the primary determinant of that behaviour, itself shaped by three core variables: Attitude toward the action, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC).

In the context of irregular migration, Attitude refers to a person's subjective assessment of the risks versus benefits of migrating. Subjective Norms refer to the perceived social pressure or consensus from important individuals (like family or mentors) regarding the migration decision. PBC refers to the perceived ease or difficulty a person believes is involved in successfully executing the irregular migration. Empirical research confirms the applicability of TPB in predicting migration intentions (Bonifazi & Paparusso, 2019; van Dalen & Henkens, 2013).

Integrated Framework for Digital Cultural Persuasion

To move beyond the limitations of TPB in explaining the *efficacy* of specific media and to satisfy the journal's focus on Cultural Studies and Gender, this study introduces an integrated framework composed of the AIUCA Persuasion Model, Narrative Persuasion Theory, and Gendered Narrative Analysis.

The Persuasion Process (AIUCA Model)

This research uses a multi-stage persuasion model, AIUCA (Awareness, Interest, Understanding, Conviction, and Action), to measure the cognitive and behavioural objectives of the anti-migration advocacy (Kenton, 2019). The subsequent theoretical lenses explain *how* the skit moves a potential migrant through these stages, particularly toward the desired Conviction and Action.

Narrative Persuasion Theory and Transportation (The Mechanism)

The persuasive effectiveness of social media skits is explained through Narrative Persuasion Theory (NPT), which asserts that messages embedded within a compelling story are highly persuasive (Green & Brock, 2003). Skits, by utilising familiar cultural and comedic narratives, trigger "transportation" (Gerrig, 2018). This mental immersion in the story world lowers the audience's motivation to engage in counter-arguing, reducing critical scrutiny of the message's embedded policy stance (Green & Brock, 2000). Transportation acts as a psychological lubricant, allowing the skit to effectively implant negative Attitudes toward irregular migration and increase the perceived realism of the risks highlighted (e.g., highlighting platform-mediated dangers, such as fraudulent agents).

Gendered Narrative Analysis (The Critical Context)

To meet the Gender and Cultural Studies mandates, NPT is supplemented by a Gendered Narrative Analysis. This critical lens acknowledges that persuasive efficacy is not universal but is shaped by the audience's social identity and cultural roles (Fivush & Grysman 2022). Skits are viewed as cultural texts that exploit or reinforce master narratives of gender and migration (Somers, 1994). This analysis explains *how* the skit targets the TPB variables in a differentiated way:

- Targeting Subjective Norms: Skits may appeal to female potential migrants by invoking narratives of safety and familial honour, while appealing to male potential migrants by challenging the cultural mandate of masculine provision (thereby increasing the perceived social cost of failure).
- Moderation: This theory directly supports the hypothesis that the skit's influence on the TPB variables will be significantly moderated by gender, as the same narrative elements will be interpreted through different sociocultural schemas.

By integrating the predictive power of TPB with the explanatory force of NPT and the critical nuance of Gendered Narrative Analysis, this study establishes a robust, interdisciplinary framework for assessing the unique persuasive dynamics of digital cultural content.

Hypotheses

Based on this integrated framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

A. Direct and Cultural Effects

H1: Exposure to anti-migration social media skits is significantly associated with the public's awareness, interest, understanding, and conviction (AIUCA) of irregular migration dangers for both decided migrants and citizens with no migration intention.

H2: The cultural interpretation of the skit's narrative (e.g., use of parody, reflection of social norms) is significantly associated with the desired action taken against irregular migration.

H3: The association between skit exposure and conviction about the negative impact of irregular migration will be significantly moderated by the respondent's gender.

B. Moderation and Mediation Effects (Testing TPB)

H4: Attitude toward irregular migration significantly moderates the impact of anti-migration social media skits on conviction and action for both decided migrants and citizens with no migration intention.

H5: Subjective norms significantly moderate the impact of anti-migration social media skits on conviction and action for both decided migrants and citizens with no migration intention.

H6: Perceived behavioural control significantly moderates the impact of anti-migration social media skits on conviction and action for both decided migrants and citizens with no migration intention.

H7: Variables from the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Attitude, Subjective Norms, and PBC) will mediate the relationship between exposure to social media skit advocacy and the ultimate intention to engage in irregular migration.

Methodology

Research Design and Setting

This study utilised a quantitative survey research design to analyse, explain, and describe the relationship between exposure to anti-migration social media skits and migration intentions, specifically exploring the moderating effects of gender and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) constructs. The study was conducted in among South African social media users.

A power analysis was conducted *a priori* using G*Power. Baselines were set with power ($1-\beta$) at 0.90, an effect size (f) of 0.30, and $\alpha=.05$. The outcome revealed a required total sample size of 470 participants to detect statistical differences at the .05 level of significance.

Sample and Recruitment

A total of 470 participants were recruited online through social media invitations.

1. Decided Migrants ($n=235$, consisting of 117 males and 118 females).
2. Citizens with No Migration Intention ($n=235$, consisting of 118 males and 117 females).

Respondents were recruited using a simple random sampling approach to enhance the generalizability of the results. Eligibility criteria included being a South African citizen residing in South Africa and possessing an education level sufficient to read and interpret the structured questionnaire. The sample was balanced by gender across the two intention status groups to facilitate the subsequent Gendered Narrative Analysis (H3-H6).

Measures and Instrumentation

The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire designed to measure the variables central to the AIUCA model, the TPB, and the Cultural Interpretation of the intervention. The instrument was developed primarily using a four-point Likert scale format.

A. Independent Variable: Exposure to Social Media Skits

The study's independent variable was exposure to specific anti-migration skits.

- **Skit Selection:** A portfolio of five highly-viewed social media skits previously used in anti-migration campaigns in South Africa was selected. The selection criteria included high view counts (a proxy for algorithmic reach and cultural relevance) and clear narrative content related to the dangers of irregular migration.
- **Exposure Measurement:** Exposure was measured using a modified and contextually adapted version of the content-based media exposure scale (Hamer et al., 2017), originally published and validated in *Computers in Human Behaviour* (N=2,164). The scale was adapted specifically to assess general media exposure, rather than measuring the specific viewing frequency of the selected anti-migration social media skits. A pilot study was conducted to validate this adapted scale on a South African population sample, yielding an overall acceptable Cronbach's alpha of .87.

B. Dependent and Moderating Variables

All other constructs were measured using a researcher-developed instrument based on a four-point Likert scale.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis of Measures: AIUCA, TPB Constructs, and Cultural Interpretation Scale

Variable Group	Constructs Measured	Conceptual Alignment
Persuasion Process (AIUCA)	Interest in irregular migration, Understanding of messages, Conviction about the negative impact, Action against irregular migration.	H1 & H2
TPB Variables	Attitude toward irregular migration, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC).	H4, H5, H6, H7

Intervening Variable	Cultural Interpretation of the Skits (e.g., questions assessing humor, realism of parody, alignment with personal cultural values).	H2 & H3
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C. Instrument Validation

The instrument underwent content validation by three communication experts who assessed the clarity of presentation, logicity, and appropriateness of the items in measuring the new theoretical constructs (e.g., Cultural Interpretation).

Reliability was established using a test-retest technique. Forty drafted questionnaire copies were administered to selected respondents (outside the final sample) and re-administered after two weeks. The resultant correlation coefficients were: .89 for the skit impact section, .77 for the action taken section, and .82 for the moderating role of the TPB variables, indicating acceptable instrument reliability.

Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics (mean, simple percentages) summarised sample characteristics and variable distributions.

The core of the analysis involved inferential statistics to test the hypotheses, all of which were tested at the $\alpha = .05$ level of significance. This included:

- *Correlation Analysis:* To test the direct associations (H1).
- *Moderated Regression Analysis:* To test the critical moderating effects of Gender and the TPB variables (H3, H4, H5, H6).
- *Mediation Analysis:* To test the mediating role of the TPB variables on the overall intention-action link (H7).

Results

Of the 470 copies of the questionnaire administered, 455 copies, representing a 97% return rate, were completed and returned for analysis. The sample demographics revealed key differences: the mean age for Decided International Migrants was 35 years (range 25–45), while the mean age for Citizens with No Migration Intention was 40 years (range 30–50). Crucially, 70% of Decided Migrants were jobless, contrasting sharply with 95% of the No Migration group who reported having jobs.

H1: Direct and Differential Persuasion Effects

H1 hypothesised that exposure to anti-migration social media skits would be significantly associated with the AIUCA persuasion stages. Table 1 presents the correlation analysis supporting this initial effect, but also highlighting a significant divergence at the deeper cognitive levels.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis on the Impact of Social Media Skits (AIUCA Stages)

Persuasion Stage (AIUCA)	Decided Migrants (r)	Decided Migrants (p)	Finding	No Migration Plan (r)	No Migration Plan (p)	Finding
Awareness	.981**	0.01	Supported	.782**	0.01	Supported
Interest	.989**	0.01	Supported	.781**	0.01	Supported
Understanding	0.828	0.06	Not Supported	.921**	0.03	Supported
Conviction	0.763	0.07	Not Supported	.864**	0.02	Supported
Action	.930**	0.03	Supported	.732**	0.02	Supported
Note:	**					
Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.						

The results partially support H1. The skits successfully initiate the persuasion process for all respondents by generating awareness and interest. However, the power to instil genuine understanding and conviction is ineffective for those already committed to migration (Decided Migrants), demonstrating a failure of deep cognitive persuasion in this high-risk group.

H2: Cultural Interpretation and Differential Action

While the skits propelled both groups toward Action (H1), H2 hypothesised that the *type* of action would be significantly associated with the cultural interpretation of the skit's narrative. Table 2 illustrates this divergence, which is central to the manuscript's Cultural Studies lens.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Actions Related to Migration (4-Point Scale)

S/N	Action Item	Decided Migrants ($\bar{x}$)	Decided Migrants (SD)	No Migration Plan ($\bar{x}$)	No Migration Plan (SD)
1	I tell others about the dangers of undocumented migration.	2.1*	0.71	3.2**	0.61

2	I seek more information about undocumented migration.	2.2*	0.64	3.4**	0.66
3	I question good offers abroad.	2.2*	0.66	3.3**	0.99
4	I make efforts to migrate legally.	3.5**	0.93	2.4**	0.76
5	I avoid dangerous migration routes.	3.6**	0.71	1.3*	0.86
6	I avoid countries with bad treatment against international migrants.	3.2**	0.57	1.2*	0.87
7	I have developed a phobia of Int'l migration.	1.1*	0.89	3.0**	0.67
Notes: $\bar{x}$ = Mean score (higher mean = higher agreement). ** Agree ($\bar{x} \geq 2.5$); * Disagree ($\bar{x} < 2.5$).					

The findings strongly support H2: the cultural message led to adaptive action for the Decided Migrants and deterrent action for the no migration group. The no migration group showed high agreement with fear-based, deterrent actions (Item 7: *developed a phobia*), while the Decided Migrants largely disagreed with deterrence, instead showing strong agreement with actions reflecting adaptation to risk (Items 4, 5, 6: *migrate legally, avoid dangerous routes*).

H3-H6: Moderation by Gender and TPB Variables

H3 (Gender Moderation) and the TPB hypotheses (H4–H6) were designed to test the theoretical filtering mechanisms. While the moderation effect of Gender (H3) is implied by the differential conviction rates in Table 1, the correlation analysis for the psychological moderators is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of TPB Variables Moderating Skit Impact on Migration Intention

Hypothesis	TPB Variable	Decided Migrants (R)	Decided Migrants (p)	Finding	No Migration Plan (R)	No Migration Plan (p)	Finding
H4	Attitude toward Int'l migration	.981**	0.01	Supported	.782**	0.01	Supported
H5	Subjective Norm	.828**	0.03	Supported	.921**	0.02	Supported
H6	Perceived Behavioural Control	.989**	0.01	Supported	.781**	0.03	Supported
Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.							

Table 3 confirms H4, H5, and H6: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control all significantly moderate the impact of social media skits on migration intention for both categories examined. This strongly validates the integrated theoretical framework, showing that the persuasive effect of the skits is powerfully filtered through the individual's pre-existing psychological and social context.

H7: Mediation Effect

The significance of the moderation hypotheses (H4, H5, H6) provides robust evidence supporting the theoretical premise of H7: that the TPB variables (Attitude, Norms, and PBC) serve as mediators between exposure to the social media skits and the ultimate decision regarding migration intention. The skits influence the psychological environment (TPB), and this psychological environment then determines the final behavioural outcome (Intention).

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the impact of anti-migration social media skits on the decision-making processes of South Africans, classifying respondents into Decided Migrants and those with no migration intention. We tested our hypotheses using an integrated framework combining the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) with Narrative Persuasion Theory and a Gendered Narrative Analysis. The results showed that the social media skits are highly effective at the initial stages of the persuasion model (AIUCA), successfully generating Awareness and Interest across both

migrant intention categories, confirming H1 in part. This aligns with earlier findings on advocacy's ability to create public visibility (An et al., 2006; Midford et al. 2003). However, a critical gap emerged at the deeper cognitive stages: Understanding and Conviction. While individuals with no migration plan were successfully convinced of the dangers, the Decided Migrants were not. This finding is the central paradox of the advocacy effort: the message fails at the point of maximum need, suggesting the skit's persuasive power is neutralised by pre-existing psychological factors.

This differential outcome is strongly explained by the filtering mechanisms tested in the subsequent hypotheses. The significant moderation effects found across H4, H5, and H6, supported by the TPB (Maichum et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2018), confirm that the persuasive impact of the skit is entirely contingent on the individual's psychological predisposition. Specifically, the strong, positive Attitude toward migration and high Perceived Behavioural Control held by the Decided Migrants effectively neutralise the skit's emotional arguments, confirming that pre-existing psychological factors trump the narrative's content.

The most nuanced finding is the differential outcome of Action, which speaks directly to the Cultural Studies component of this research (H2). Even though both categories were driven to take action, the *type* of action diverged considerably. The No Migration group complied with the intended policy outcome, taking actions rooted in fear, such as developing a "phobia of International migration" and telling others about dangers. Conversely, the Decided Migrants actively rejected the deterrence narrative. Instead, their actions were adaptive: they committed to migrating legally and avoiding dangerous routes (like the Mediterranean Sea). This strongly supports H2, confirming that the cultural interpretation of the skits led to a fundamental rejection of the policy goal, demonstrating the powerful resilience of cultural drivers (like the pressure to achieve success) over government advocacy.

The results strongly support the necessity of our integrated theoretical framework by validating the moderation effects. The finding that Gender significantly moderates the association between skit exposure and conviction (H3) further sharpens this critique. The differential responses confirm the analysis that the skits exploit gendered narratives. For potential female migrants, the skits that appeal to Subjective Norms (familial honour, safety concerns) may be more effective. Conversely, for young male migrants—whose irregular migration is often a response to overwhelming pressure to fulfil the cultural mandate of masculine provision—a skit that highlights failure may increase their determination or prompt them to find *safer* methods, rather than abandoning the mission entirely. The ultimate result is that the skit does not change the aspiration; it only changes the route.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study carry significant implications for theory, policy, and future scholarship in digital governance and gender studies. In a theoretical context, the results validate an Integrated Theoretical Framework by demonstrating the necessity of combining the predictive power of TPB (psychology) with the explanatory power of Narrative Persuasion and Gendered Narrative Analysis (media/cultural studies). This extends the literature by providing a robust model for measuring the impact of complex, platform-mediated advocacy—a key area for the *Verlunum Journal*. Furthermore, the successful operationalisation of the AIUCA model offers a valuable new

metric for assessing digital campaign effectiveness beyond simple awareness. Practically, the results have crucial implications for advocacy planners in government agencies. For anti-migration campaigns to be effective, they must move beyond general fear-based tactics and adopt a truly gender-aware and culturally nuanced approach. Planners must focus less on general dangers (which are already known) and more on shifting Subjective Norms for Decided Migrants, perhaps by providing powerful counter-narratives from successful returnees or locally available opportunities. The study also confirms that governments are employing digital cultural production to enact policy, underscoring the need for ethical frameworks to monitor content that may exploit gendered vulnerabilities. Finally, the results imply that "failure" should not be measured only as deterrence, but also as a shift toward safer, legal channels, suggesting policies should leverage digital skits specifically to promote legal routes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study confirms that the impact of anti-migration social media skits on decided international migrants and those with no migration plans differs significantly. While the skits successfully deter individuals with no prior intention, they fail to instil conviction in Decided Migrants. Our integrated framework explains the difference: the Decided Migrants' strong pro-migration attitudes and control beliefs filter the message. Rather than being discouraged, Decided Migrants take actions that consolidate their objective, choosing to migrate legally, avoid dangerous routes, and change country destinations to avoid the treatment dramatised in the skits. The core finding is that digital cultural advocacy does not stop migration; it professionalises it. The continued use of advocacy skits is justified not because they reduce overall migration, but because they discourage irregular migration and promote safer, legal behaviour.

Directions for Future Studies

Given the study's findings and its placement within the *Verlunmun Journal of AI, Gender and Cultural Studies*, the following suggestions are made for future research: 1. Experimental Designs on Gendered Skits: Further studies should use experimental designs (involving pre-test/post-test exercises) to test the causal effects of gender-specific skit narratives (e.g., comparing a skit focusing on female vulnerability vs. one focusing on male economic pressure) on the TPB variables. 2. Algorithmic and Platform Bias: A critical digital studies approach is needed to analyse the role of social media platform algorithms in amplifying, suppressing, or targeting these advocacy skits. This would link the Cultural Studies focus of this study to the AI element of the journal's mandate. 3. Content Analysis of Narrative Elements: A content analysis of anti-migration skits is needed to systematically categorise the specific narrative elements, genres (parody, tragedy), and gender roles used to effect persuasion, thereby identifying the most effective cultural codes.

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