

# Influence of Ghosting Experiences on Attachment Insecurity (Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance) and Rejection Sensitivity Among Young Adults Using Dating Applications

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## ABSTRACT

The growing prevalence of online dating applications has drastically changed how young adults initiate and maintain romantic relationships. However, online dating relationship practices such as ghosting, defined as a sudden termination of communication without explanation, may have significant psychological implications. The aim of the present study is to examine the influence of being ghosted on dating applications on attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity among young adults. A quantitative cross-sectional correlational research design was used on a sample size of 149 young adults aged 18–30 years who had experience using online dating applications. Data were collected using the Romantic Ghosting Scale – Colombia (RG-C) by Herrera-López et al., the Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised Scale (ECR-R) by Fraley et al. and the Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (A-RSQ) by Downey et al. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression analysis were used for examining the relationships between research variables. The results revealed significant positive relationships between ghosting victimisation and attachment anxiety ( $r = .387, p < .001$ ), attachment avoidance ( $r = .206, p = .012$ ), and rejection sensitivity ( $r = .373, p < .001$ ). Regression analyses further showed that ghosting victimisation significantly predicted attachment anxiety ( $R^2 = .15$ ), attachment avoidance ( $R^2 = .043$ ), and rejection sensitivity ( $R^2 = .139$ ). These findings suggest that experiences of being ghosted are meaningfully associated with attachment insecurity and increased rejection sensitivity among young adults in online dating contexts.

**Keywords:** *ghosting, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, rejection sensitivity, online dating, young adults*

## INTRODUCTION

In the current digital advancement the increasing use of dating applications & platforms shows the broader approach of social and technological shifts in relationships initiating and flourishing. Powell and Freedman (2024) mentioned that these applications & platforms significantly advantage the couples in accessibility, convenience, and the ability to connect fearlessly with potential partners who share common traits & interests. Due to this technological advancement and evolving relationship norms, using dating applications has become a common and accepted form for youngsters to find romantic partners (Finkel et al., 2012; Rosenfeld et al., 2019). As a response, online dating has become so prevalent in modern relationship culture, particularly among young individuals who are more comfortable with digital communication and virtual interactions in day-to-day life (Chan, 2017; Potarca, 2020).

However, the prevalence of online communication has also introduced new interpersonal behaviours, i.e., ghosting. The increasing usage of social media and cell phones has made ghosting the path of least resistance (Farber et al., 2022), the reason being to end a relationship without the unpleasantness of a face-to-face meeting (Jahrami et al., 2023). Ghosting is very common in young adults. According to Koessler et al. (2019b), 65% of adults aged 18-35 have ghosted a romantic relationship or interest, while 72% have been ghosted. According to Kay & Courtice, (2022) ghosting, the sudden and unjustified end of a relationship by ignoring another person's

communication attempts, is a growing trend in modern relationships. Ghosting involves ending the relationship without direct explanation, usually characterised by ignoring messages from a partner, avoiding phone calls, or even blocking the other partner on dating platforms & social media (LeFebvre et al., 2019).

According to Ganguly (2024), ghosting is frequently viewed as an immature or passive-aggressive approach to ending a relationship, and in some cases, it may even be considered a form of emotional abuse. Although ghosting looks to be a straightforward manner to end a relationship, research suggests that it can have major emotional and psychological consequences for individuals who go through it. Unlike vocal rejection, ghosting leaves the recipient with no clear explanation for why communication ended, leading to confusion and uncertainty. People who lack closure may stress out, blame themselves, and have poor self-evaluations (Szczesniak, Pierce, & Spielmann, 2025). Ghosting victims suffer from emotional distress, including anguish, uncertainty, despair, and an increased risk of self-injury (Ding et al., 2024; Leckfor et al., 2023; Timmermans et al., 2021). Ghosters may experience negative psychological repercussions, such as feelings of regret and guilt (Freedman et al., 2024; Yap et al., 2021).

Even though ghosting is common, few studies have been done on it, especially in close relationships such as interpersonal bonds marked by meaningful connections, emotional intimacy, and trust. Whether sexual or platonic, close relationships need constant maintenance and are particularly susceptible to the distress caused by ghosting (Oswald, 2017; Perlman, 2017).

Leah E. LeFebvre and Xiaoti Fan (2020) revealed in their study that victims of ghosting are unwilling to engage with others and reveal themselves. They are constantly nervous or anxious to open themselves to others. In their study, participants said they tend to reserve personal information to avoid future pain and sadness. Some people had given up on dating and forming a relationship. They didn't want to repeat the effects of their earlier ghosting in future communication and romantic relationships. Jahrami et al. (2023) expressed concern about the long-term consequences of ghosting on ghostees, that they may fear increasing intimacy or closeness in their relationships in the future.

Bowlby's attachment theory contributes to understanding people's reactions to interpersonal rejection by explaining secure and insecure attachments, whereas Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues discovered three major types of attachment through their Strange Situation Experiment (Ainsworth et al., 1978): secure attachment, anxious or ambivalent attachment, and avoidant attachment. Adult attachment behaviours, such as attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance, are commonly observed in insecure attachment styles. In romantic partnerships, three adult attachment types might be used: security, anxiety, and avoidance (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). According to Mikulincer and Shaver (2016), attachment anxiety is the inclination to worry about abandonment and seek reassurance from partners, whereas attachment avoidance implies being uncomfortable with intimacy and dependency on others. These attachment orientations shape how people interpret and respond to relational events. In the context of online dating, attachment orientations may influence how people perceive and react to situations like ghosting.

According to Richardson et al. (2023), attachment theory suggests that attachment anxiety is linked to a desire for ongoing validation. Additionally, a history of unexplained intimacy withdrawal is a risk factor for attachment avoidance. According to Leckfor et al. (2023), ghosting behaviours may stem from attachment anxiety and avoidance in order to maintain a weak self-image.

Another psychological variable that is responsible for interpersonal rejection is rejection sensitivity. According to Downey & Feldman (1996), rejection sensitivity is the dispositional tendency to anticipate, perceive, and react strongly to rejection. It is part of the personality dimension of neuroticism (Tackett & Lahey, 2017) and was originally studied in the context of interpersonal and romantic interactions (Erikson, 1950). Kaur (2025) suggests that in a collectivist culture, individuals may be more sensitive to rejection, as disruptions in social harmony, such as rejection or ghosting, might be perceived as challenges to their social identity and standing. Individuals high in rejection sensitivity are more likely to interpret ambiguous social cues as rejection and may experience stronger emotional responses when they perceive signs of interpersonal exclusion (Downey & Feldman, 1996). According to Mahdavifar (2020), online dating users have emphasised the importance of rejection sensitivity in determining emotional responses to interpersonal encounters in digital contexts.

## Rationale for the Present Study

Young adulthood represents a critical developmental stage for studying interpersonal and relational constructs such as attachment and rejection sensitivity. This is the period where young individuals usually engage in exploration of romantic relationships while at the same time developing traits of emotional attachment and interpersonal expectations. Similarly, young individuals are the most frequent users of online dating apps, making them more prone to facing situations like ghosting (Kaur, 2025).

Despite the rise of ghosting in modern dating culture, empirical research into its psychological effects is rare. While more past research studies on ghosting conduct, views, and intentions exist, few studies have considered how being ghosted affects psychological dimensions such as attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity. The present research study investigates these influences for gaining a better understanding of how being ghosted on dating apps influences attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and rejection sensitivity among young adults.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Online Dating Culture and Digital Relationships

Finkel et al. (2012) conducted an analysis on a global population of millions of users, with a specific focus on the practices and site types prevalent in the United States and other Western countries, and wrote one of the influential reviews on Critical Analysis From the Perspective of Psychological Science on online dating and revealed that online dating on one side helps to find romance, but at the same time it often leads to "relationshopping", where humans can be treated like products and have so many choices, which can actually cause poorer decision-making. The researcher also stated that there is no scientific evidence that the matching algorithms used by these sites are effective in predicting long-term success, owing to their inability to account for the complex interaction dynamics and unpredictable life stressors that truly determine relationship longevity in humans.

Sumter et al. (2017) also conducted a study on identifying the primary motivations of emerging adults to use Tinder among 163 Dutch 18-30-year-old emerging adults and uncovered the six motivations to use Tinder in their research, such as love, casual sex, ease of communication, self-worth validation, thrill of excitement, and trendiness.

Similarly, Chan (2017) conducted a survey on 257 heterosexual men and women that revealed that individual attitudes and their perceived social norms significantly impact the intentions to use dating apps for romantic relationships. The results of their study also showed that sensation-seeking behaviour and smartphone use were directly associated with the intention to use dating applications. Potarca (2020) conducted a survey on couples in Switzerland and found the similarity in facilitating meaningful relationships in traditional offline and online dating apps. Xiao (2020) conducted qualitative interviews with 29 university-educated online daters in Shanghai and revealed that individuals selected partners based on educational background, lifestyle compatibility, and social status.

### Concept and Prevalence of Ghosting

LeFebvre et al. (2019) studied the ghosting behaviour and experiences among emerging adults and revealed that ghosting has become one of the strategies to end romantic relationships without direct confrontation with another partner and also mentioned that communication on digital platforms even makes it easier. Similarly, Koessler, Kohut, and Campbell (2019) conducted a study on romantic relationship dissolution and found that ghosting became a common way for breakups in the contemporary dating era. Freedman et al. (2019) studied the personal belief in ghosting and revealed that individuals who more believe in destiny are more likely to view ghosting as an acceptable method of ending a relationship.

Timmermans, Hermans, and Oprea (2020) investigated ghosting experiences and concluded that ghosting in the mobile dating environment became normalised behaviour. Pancani et al. (2021) conducted qualitative thematic content analysis on 208 young adults and described stages of reactions of ghosting such as 1) surprise and confusion, 2) anger, sadness, and guilt, 3) attempts of relational repair, and 4) acceptance. In this study participants who were ghosted showed the feelings of confusion, rejection, and emotional distress. Freedman et al. (2022) aimed to investigate the emotional responses of both persons who ghosted and those who received it. Their findings found that ghosting perpetrators felt guilty and relieved, whereas those who were ghosted felt unhappy, which led to lower self-esteem and the development of a sense of belonging. Jonason et al. 2021 revealed that persons with dark triad traits (i.e., psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and narcissism) tend to engage in ghosting others more likely.

## Psychological Impact of Ghosting

Several researches have found that ghosting is frequently connected with mental distress, feelings of rejection, anxiety, and melancholy (Wittek et al., 2019; Eisenberger & Lieberman, 2004). Research by Navarro et al. (2020) conducted a study on psychological correlates of ghosting and breadcrumbing experiences among 626 adults (303 males and 323 females), aged from 18 to 40 years. Results revealed that high ghosting and breadcrumbing individuals reported less satisfaction with life and more helplessness and self-perceived loneliness.

Timmermans et al. (2020) conducted a study on 328 mobile daters' (63% females; 86% heterosexuals) experiences with ghosting and revealed that being ghosted has a negative impact on self-esteem and mental well-being. Similarly, Forrai et al. (2023), cited by Jain (2024), found that ghosting incidents negatively influenced the ghosted person's self-esteem, mental wellbeing, and belief in others.

Sukri (2025) conducted a correlational study on 254 emerging adults who use dating applications and showed that attachment style had a significant negative relation to ghosting behaviour, which indicates that individuals with secure attachment are less likely to engage in ghosting. Conversely, dark triad personality traits had a significant positive effect on ghosting behaviour, where the dimensions of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy increased the likelihood of ghosting.

## Attachment & Ghosting

According to Simpson and Rholes (2017), anxious/preoccupied attachment styles develop as a result of high anxiety and poor avoidance. Regarding the dismissive-avoidant attachment patterns, they are common among children whose caretakers were expressively aloof or inaccessible throughout their childhood (Bowlby, 1969; Dagan et al., 2021). The dismissive-avoidant attachment style is marked by low anxiety levels and very high levels of avoidance; individuals who developed this attachment style are likely to avoid closure with others and do not trust easily. Individuals with the unique attachment type are known to respect independence and seldom seek or need assistance from others (APA, 2018).

Powell et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis study on anxious and avoidant attachment types and ghosting experiences and reported that being ghosted or engaged in ghosting behaviour had higher levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance than those who had not been ghosted. Researchers also mentioned that attachment style influences relationship stability and closeness (Dominique & Mollen, 2009). According to Mosley et al. (2020), avoidant individuals prefer using digital communication since it provides a safe distance. Another potential research by Lad and Mansukhani (2023) on the relationship between ghosting behaviour and its effects on mental health, such as depression, anxiety, and stress, and attachment styles among the Indian population with ages ranging from 20 to 45. And found that there was a positive relationship between ghosting behaviour and levels of stress, anxiety and depression. The result also indicated a positive correlation between ghosting and attachment styles of close and dependent and a negative correlation between ghosting and attachment styles of anxiety.

According to Richardson et al. (2023) & Leckfor et al. (2023), ghosting behaviours may stem from attachment anxiety and avoidance as a way to maintain a vulnerable self-image. Whereas Khattar et al. (2023) revealed that individuals that prioritise self-interest over cooperation appear to be prone to abruptly disengaging from

partnerships. According to Weisskirch and Delevi (2012), people who are more prone to avoidance and anxiety may find it more acceptable to end relationships using technology. Ganguly (2024) conducted a correlational study on 110 persons aged 22-30 years and demonstrated that there was a negative link between ghosting experience and adult anxious attachment style. High adult anxious attachment style is associated with a decreased likelihood of having ghosting experiences. Di Santo et al. (2022) conducted a study on 292 participants and found a significant association between adult attachment, sociosexuality and ghosting experiences.

## Rejection Sensitivity as a Psychological Factor

Research indicated that rejection-sensitive individuals are more likely to utilise online dating sites than those who are less sensitive to rejection (Blackhart et al., 2014). Researchers also mentioned that internet dating may benefit rejection-sensitive individuals (Lomanowska & Guitton, 2016).

Watson and Nesdale (2012) found that rejection sensitivity can lead to anger, hurt, and anxiety, as well as a decline in mental and physical well-being and disruption of social functioning. Leary et al. (1995), in their classic study, mentioned that there was a close association between rejection sensitivity and individual self-esteem (Harter, 1993).

Researchers revealed in their study that rejection sensitivity is related to more loneliness, feelings of hostility, depression, emotional distress, and withdrawal from relationships (Watson & Nesdale, 2012). Hafen et al. (2014) found that individuals with higher rejection sensitivity have a lower likelihood of participating in romantic relationships compared to people with lower rejection sensitivity.

## METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

### Aim of the Study

The aim of the present study is to examine the influence of being ghosted on dating applications on attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity among young adults.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of being ghosted, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and rejection sensitivity among young adults.
2. To assess the relationship between being ghosted (victimized) on level of attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and rejection sensitivity among adults using a standardized measure.
3. To examine whether experiences of being ghosted predict attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity among young adults.

### Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant relationship between experiences of being ghosted on dating applications and attachment insecurity (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) as well as rejection sensitivity among young adults
2. Experiences of being ghosted on dating applications will significantly predict attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity among young adults.

### Research Design

The present study used the quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design to study the relationship between being ghosted, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and rejection sensitivity among young adults as the study examines relationships rather than causation.

### Sample

The sample size of 149 young adults, including both males and females, was collected using dating applications recruited through convenience sampling, primarily using online platforms and social media networks. The age range of participants was 18 to 30 years.

## **Inclusion Criteria.**

Participants included in the study were young adults aged between 18 and 30 years who had experience using online dating applications & platforms. Also those who engaged in romantic interactions through these platforms. Only individuals who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study were included.

## **Exclusion Criteria.**

Individuals who did not fall within the 18-30years age range and had no experience using dating applications. Also those individuals excluded from the study who did not voluntarily participate and did not complete the questionnaire properly.

## **Description of Tools**

**The Romantic Ghosting Scale – Colombia (RG-C)** tool developed by Herrera-López et al. (2024) is used for measuring ghosting behaviour in romantic relationships. This consisted of 18 Likert-type items which measured the three dimensions separately: the role of the aggressor (initiating ghosting behaviour), the role of the victim (being ghosting), and the emotional impact of ghosting responses ranging from “never” to “always.” The scale showed internal consistency reliability, which has Cronbach’s alpha values of .90 for victimization, .86 for aggressor role, and .87 for emotional impact.

**Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised (ECR-R)** developed by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000). This scale consists of 36 items for two dimensions of attachment: attachment anxiety (fear of rejection and abandonment) and attachment avoidance (discomfort with closeness and dependence on others). Participants respond to each statement on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree including the reverse scoring also.

**Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (A-RSQ)** developed by Downey, Berenson and Kang (2009) consisted of 9 situations in which responses are given on a 6-point Likert scale very unconcerned/unlikely to very concerned/likely. In this final rejection sensitivity score can be calculated by combining concern about rejection and expectation of rejection for each situation and then taking the mean. Reliability of the scale is calculated through Internal consistency (alpha) = .89 (for each administration) and test–retest reliability (spearman–brown coefficient) = .91.

## **Procedure**

Participants' responses for the study were collected using an online Google survey questionnaire which was distributed through social media platforms and online communication community groups or channels. Before this, participants were provided a description of the study first and were asked to give their informed consent. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information, the Romantic Ghosting Scale, the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale, and the Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire. Participants completed the survey anonymously, and confidentiality of their responses was maintained. Then data were analysed using JASP statistical software. First, descriptive statistics were calculated to summarise the data, and the assumption of normality was tested using the Shapiro–Wilk test, along with the analysis of skewness and kurtosis values. The results showed that the data was normally distributed; hence, parametric statistical tests were applied for inferential analysis, such as Pearson correlation and linear regression, conducted to determine whether experiences of ghosting predict attachment insecurity and rejection sensitivity

## **RESULT**

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all study variables including experiences of being ghosted, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity. The results indicated that participants reported a moderate level of ghosting victimization ( $M = 21.42$ ,  $SD = 8.14$ ). The mean score for attachment anxiety was 3.68 ( $SD = 1.29$ ), while attachment avoidance had a mean score of 3.76 ( $SD = 0.50$ ). The average rejection sensitivity score was 10.13 ( $SD = 2.85$ ).

Skewness, kurtosis, and the Shapiro-Wilk test were performed to check the data's normality before proceeding with the major inferential analyses. Skewness values varied from -0.048 to 0.498, while kurtosis values ranged from -0.676 to 2.071, showing the variables were roughly regularly distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test yielded some significant results, although the skewness and kurtosis values were within normal bounds.

**Table 1- Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 149)**

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max
Ghosting Victimization	21.42	8.14	9	45
Attachment Anxiety	3.68	1.29	1.00	6.67
Attachment Avoidance	3.76	0.50	2.67	5.61
Rejection Sensitivity	10.13	2.85	1.00	20.67

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

**Correlation Analysis - Table 2- Pearson Correlation Matrix (N = 149)**

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Ghosting Victimization	—			
2. Attachment Anxiety	.387	—		
3. Attachment Avoidance	.206	.079	—	
4. Rejection Sensitivity	.373	.406	.098	—

Note. \*p < .05. \*\*\*p < .001.

Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between ghosting victimization and attachment anxiety (r = .387, p < .001), attachment avoidance (r = .206, p = .012), and rejection sensitivity (r = .373, p < .001). Attachment anxiety was also positively correlated with rejection sensitivity (r = .406, p < .001).

**Regression Analysis**

Simple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine whether ghosting victimization predicted attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity.

**Table 3- Linear Regression Predicting Attachment Anxiety**

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
<b>Intercept</b>	2.37	0.28	—	8.57	< .001
<b>Ghosting Victimization</b>	0.061	0.012	.387	5.09	< .001

Note. Model statistics: R<sup>2</sup> = .15, F(1,147) = 25.90, p < .001.

**Ghosting Victimization Predicting Attachment Anxiety-**

A simple linear regression analysis revealed that ghosting victimization significantly predicted attachment anxiety, F(1,147) = 25.90, p < .001. The model explained approximately 15% of the variance in attachment anxiety (R<sup>2</sup> = .15). Ghosting victimization was a significant positive predictor of attachment anxiety (β = .387, p < .001). These findings suggest that individuals who reported higher levels of ghosting also reported higher attachment anxiety. Hypothesis, which proposed that experiences of being ghosted would significantly influence attachment anxiety, was supported.

**Table 4- Linear Regression Predicting Attachment Avoidance**

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
<b>Intercept</b>	3.49	0.11	—	30.50	< .001
<b>Ghosting Victimization</b>	0.013	0.005	.206	2.56	.012

Note. Model statistics: R<sup>2</sup> = .043, F(1,147) = 6.55, p = .012.

**Ghosting Victimization Predicting Attachment Avoidance-**

Regression analysis revealed that ghosting victimization significantly predicted attachment avoidance, F(1,147) = 6.55, p = .012. The model accounted for approximately 4.3% of the variance in attachment avoidance (R<sup>2</sup> = .043). Ghosting victimization was a significant positive predictor of attachment avoidance (β = .206, p = .012). This suggests that individuals who experience higher levels of ghosting may also demonstrate slightly higher attachment avoidance. Hypothesis, which proposed that experiences of being ghosted would significantly influence attachment avoidance, was supported.

**Table 5- Linear Regression Predicting Rejection Sensitivity**

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Intercept	7.34	0.61	—	11.96	< .001
Ghosting Victimization	0.131	0.027	.373	4.87	< .001

Note. Model statistics:  $R^2 = .139$ ,  $F(1,147) = 23.75$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Ghosting Victimization Predicting Rejection Sensitivity-**

A further regression analysis showed that ghosting victimization significantly predicted rejection sensitivity,  $F(1,147) = 23.75$ ,  $p < .001$ . The model explained approximately 13.9% of the variance in rejection sensitivity ( $R^2 = .139$ ). Ghosting victimization was a significant positive predictor of rejection sensitivity ( $\beta = .373$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results indicate that individuals who report greater experiences of ghosting tend to exhibit higher levels of rejection sensitivity. Hypothesis, which proposed that experiences of being ghosted would significantly influence rejection sensitivity, was supported.

**DISCUSSION**

This present research studies the experiences of being ghosted on dating applications are associated with attachment insecurity (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) and rejection sensitivity among young adults. The first hypothesis emphasized that experiences of being ghosted have significant relation with attachment insecurity and rejection sensitivity. The second hypothesis proposed that experiences of being ghosted have significant predicted attachment insecurity (attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance), and rejection sensitivity. The results supported both these hypotheses.

The results showed a significant positive relationship between being ghosted (victimization) and attachment anxiety. This reflects that adults who have higher levels of ghosting are more likely to show high fears of abandonment and need for reassurance in relationships.

As per the attachment theory there is also mentioned that individuals with anxious attachment tend to be more sensitive to relational threats and fear rejection or abandonment in relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Because ghosting behaviour usually involves the sudden ending of communication without even saying anything by another partner. Due this person who is being ghosted may experience uncertainty and emotional distress, which may enhance the anxious attachment responses. These findings are similar with previous studies conducted by LeFebvre et al. (2019), which revealed that persons who face ghosting more are likely to have high feelings of rejection, confusion, and relational insecurity.

The study also found a substantial link between ghosting victimisation and attachment avoidance. Although the correlation was smaller than that of attachment anxiety, the study found that ghosting events can cause some people to emotionally detach from their relationships.

Individuals with avoidant attachment typically attempt to reduce emotional dependence while maintaining psychological distance from others. Ghosting can foster avoidant tendencies as a coping mechanism against future rejection. Richardson et al. (2023) discovered that interpersonal rejection can foster protective attachment patterns marked by emotional disengagement.

The study also showed a significant positive correlation between ghosting victimisation and rejection sensitivity. Individuals who reported more levels of being ghosted had higher levels of rejection sensitivity. Previous study has also indicated that ghosting victims frequently experience emotional discomfort, perplexity, and increased susceptibility to rejection (Timmermans et al., 2021; Pancani et al., 2021, Kaur, 2024). Individuals who are rejection sensitive may display anger, jealousy, and controlling behaviour in reaction to little rejection signals from their spouse (Downey & Feldmann, 1996).

The regression study also revealed that being ghosted strongly predicted attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity in young adults. This shows that ghosting may function as an interpersonal experience that shapes how people view and respond to relationships. Ghosting is becoming more widespread in today's digital dating culture, as communication may be readily established and cancelled via online platforms (Finkel et al., 2012). However, the current data indicate that such events may have significant psychological

consequences for those who go through them. Overall, the study's findings show that ghosting is more than just a casual digital behaviour; it can influence young people's emotional responses and relational expectations.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The present research study assessed the relationship between experiences of being ghosted (victimization) on dating applications and psychological constructs such as attachment insecurity (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) and rejection sensitivity among young adults. The findings indicated that experiences of being ghosted were significantly associated with higher levels of attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity. Individuals who reported more experiences of ghosting also tended to report greater insecurity in relationships and increased sensitivity to interpersonal rejection. Furthermore, regression analyses revealed that experiences of being ghosted significantly predicted attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and rejection sensitivity among young adults, indicating that ghosting experiences were a significant statistical predictor of these psychological variables.

Overall, the findings suggest that ghosting experiences in online dating environments are meaningfully related to important relational and emotional tendencies among young adults. As online dating applications continue to play an increasing role in relationship formation, understanding how experiences such as ghosting are associated with attachment insecurity and rejection sensitivity may provide valuable insight into contemporary relationship dynamics and emotional responses in digital interpersonal contexts

### **Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.**

Despite its merits, this study has certain limitations. First, the study used self-report questionnaires, which could be influenced by participants' personal beliefs and answer biases. Second, the sample only included young individuals, which may limit the findings' applicability to other age groups or demographics. Third, the study's cross-sectional methodology limits the capacity to determine causal links between ghosting events and psychological characteristics.

Future study could address these limitations by using larger and more diverse age groups and cultural situations. For the long-term psychological effects longitudinal research designs may be used for better results on ghosting on people's attachment patterns and sensitivity to rejection. Future research may study the other psychological characteristics such as self-esteem, emotional well-being, relationship satisfaction, and interventions in relation to ghosting situations. Such research will reveal the larger psychological implications of ghosting in modern AI digital relationships.

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