Indian Journal of Modern Research and Reviews

This Journal is a member of the *'Committee on Publication Ethics'*

Online ISSN:2584-184X

Indian Journal of Modern Research and Reviews

MRR

Research Article

Attachment Patterns, Communication Styles, and Ghosting Behaviour Among Indian Emerging Adults

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between ghosting behaviour, communication style, and attachment patterns among Indian youth who are increasingly using digital platforms to form romantic relationships. With the growing use of online communication, ghosting—defined as the sudden and unexplained termination of contact—has become a common relational phenomenon. Despite its prevalence, limited research has explored the psychological aspects of ghosting within the Indian cultural context. This study aims to investigate whether communication style acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between attachment styles (anxiety and avoidance) and ghosting behaviour. The research is grounded in attachment theory and interpersonal communication frameworks.

Data were collected from 151 emerging adults aged 18–30 using a quantitative, correlational research design. The instruments included the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale – Short Version (ECR-S), the Communication Style Survey, and a researcher-developed Ghosting Behaviour Questionnaire. Correlational analysis revealed significant positive relationships between insecure attachment patterns and ghosting behaviour. Individuals with higher levels of attachment anxiety or avoidance were more likely to engage in or experience ghosting. Communication style was also significantly associated with both attachment insecurity and ghosting, indicating its central role in relationship disengagement.

Mediation analysis further showed that communication style partially mediates the relationship between insecure attachment and ghosting behaviour. This suggests that internal relational patterns influenced by attachment styles may translate into ghosting through maladaptive communication behaviours. Path analysis supported these findings, demonstrating strong predictive links between attachment styles, communication difficulties, and ghosting behaviour. Additionally, one-sample t-test results confirmed the significant presence of these variables within the study sample. Overall, the findings highlight the psychological and communicative mechanisms underlying ghosting in digitally mediated relationships among Indian emerging adults.

KEYWORDS: Attachment Patterns, Communication Styles, Ghosting Behaviour, Emerging Adults, Digital Relationships Attachment Anxiety and Avoidance, Interpersonal Communication, Indian Youth

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Emerging Adulthood as a Distinct Developmental Stage

Emerging adulthood is a unique developmental stage generally occurring between the ages of 18 and 25. Jeffrey Jensen Arnett first introduced the concept, describing it as a period that is neither adolescence nor full adulthood but characterized by exploration, instability, and identity formation (Arnett, 2000). During this phase, individuals explore various aspects of their identity, including education, career goals, personal values, and interpersonal relationships. This stage is marked by experimentation and uncertainty as individuals gain greater independence while still lacking long-term stability.

Romantic relationships play an important role in identity exploration during emerging adulthood. These relationships contribute significantly to emotional development and the formation of self-concept. Through romantic involvement, individuals learn about intimacy, commitment, and emotional expectations. Emerging adults often experience different forms of relationships, ranging from casual dating to emotionally intense partnerships, which help them understand their relational preferences and expectations (Arnett, 2004).

However, this developmental phase is also associated with emotional instability. Academic pressures, career uncertainty, shifting social roles, and relationship challenges can produce heightened emotional responses. Situations such as rejection, conflict, or sudden relationship termination may therefore have a stronger psychological impact during this stage.

In the Indian context, cultural expectations further influence emerging adulthood. Traditional values emphasizing family involvement and long-term commitment often coexist with modern dating practices and digital communication. This combination can create tension between personal autonomy and cultural expectations (Arnett, 2015). As a result, emerging adulthood becomes a psychologically sensitive period, making it important to examine factors such as communication patterns, attachment styles, and modern relationship behaviors like ghosting.

1.2 Psychological Significance of Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships are central to psychological development during emerging adulthood. Between the ages of 18 and 25, individuals increasingly seek emotionally meaningful and supportive relationships that contribute to identity formation and psychological well-being. Research suggests that romantic involvement during this stage helps individuals develop interpersonal competence, emotional regulation, and relational skills (Arnett, 2015).

Healthy and supportive relationships are associated with higher self-esteem, greater life satisfaction, and lower levels of psychological distress. Conversely, relational instability, conflict, and uncertainty may increase anxiety, depressive symptoms, and emotional dysregulation (Braithwaite et al., 2015; Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). Because emerging adults are still developing coping mechanisms, romantic difficulties may have stronger emotional consequences compared to later adulthood.

Romantic relationships also contribute to identity development. Through experiences of emotional intimacy and conflict, individuals gain insights into their needs, communication patterns, and expectations from relationships. Attachment-based research suggests that early romantic experiences influence internal working models, shaping future relational behaviour and expectations (Roisman et al., 2017).

Breakups and relational uncertainty can be particularly distressing during this stage. Experiences such as emotional withdrawal or sudden disengagement may lead to rumination, confusion, and trust issues. Studies indicate that lack of closure in relationships can negatively affect emotional well-being among emerging adults (LeFebvre et al., 2019). In the digital age, romantic interactions are increasingly mediated by online communication, which can intensify emotional investment while also creating greater relational uncertainty (Timmermans et al., 2021).

1.3 Changing Nature of Relationships in the Digital Era

Technological advancement has significantly transformed romantic relationships among emerging adults. Smartphones, social media platforms, and dating applications have altered how relationships are initiated, maintained, and ended. Online platforms allow individuals to communicate emotions, develop intimacy, and make relationship decisions more rapidly than traditional face-to-face interactions (Fox & Warber, 2013).

Digital communication enables quick emotional disclosure and perceived intimacy. However, such rapid development of emotional closeness may also create unrealistic expectations and emotional vulnerability. Emerging adults may become strongly attached before achieving relational stability, making them more susceptible to distress when communication patterns change (Morey et al., 2013).

Another important feature of digital relationships is increased relational ambiguity. Online interactions allow individuals to remain partially engaged through behaviors such as delayed responses, selective messaging, or simply viewing messages without replying. These ambiguous communication patterns can create confusion and anxiety, especially among emerging adults who may interpret them as signs of rejection (Timmermans et al., 2021).

Digital environments also make indirect relationship termination easier. Ghosting—defined as abruptly ending communication without explanation—has become a common phenomenon in modern relationships. Research shows that ghosting often leads to confusion, reduced self-esteem, and emotional distress for the person being ghosted (LeFebvre et al., 2019).

In India, digitalization interacts with cultural norms regarding emotional expression and confrontation. The combination of technological anonymity and cultural hesitation toward direct emotional communication may increase the likelihood of avoidant disengagement behaviours such as ghosting.

1.4 Concept and Foundations of Attachment Patterns

Attachment theory, originally developed by John Bowlby, explains how early interactions with caregivers shape internal working models that influence later relationships. These internal models guide expectations about intimacy, trust, and emotional support. Contemporary research has extended attachment theory to adult romantic relationships, demonstrating its importance in understanding relational behavior (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

Adult attachment is commonly conceptualized along two dimensions: attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. Attachment anxiety involves fear of abandonment, emotional dependence, and heightened sensitivity to rejection. Attachment avoidance reflects discomfort with intimacy, emotional distancing, and preference for independence.

Although relatively stable, attachment patterns may change through significant relational experiences. Emerging adulthood is a particularly flexible period because repeated romantic interactions can reinforce or modify attachment expectations.

Attachment styles strongly influence how individuals interpret relational cues, respond to emotional needs, and cope with relationship stress. Insecure attachment patterns are often associated with maladaptive coping strategies such as emotional withdrawal or excessive emotional reactivity (Timmermans et al., 2021).

1.5 Types of Attachment Patterns

Modern attachment research identifies four major attachment styles: secure, anxious, avoidant, and fearful. These patterns are based on varying levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

Secure attachment is characterized by comfort with intimacy, emotional openness, and trust in others. Securely attached individuals typically communicate effectively, resolve conflicts constructively, and maintain emotional stability in relationships (Roisman et al., 2017).

Anxious attachment involves strong desire for closeness combined with fear of abandonment. Individuals with this style often seek reassurance and may experience heightened emotional distress when communication becomes uncertain (Fraley & Shaver, 2021).

Avoidant attachment is characterized by discomfort with emotional closeness and preference for independence. Avoidantly attached individuals may withdraw during conflict and avoid emotional discussions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

Fearful attachment combines high anxiety and high avoidance. Individuals with this style desire intimacy but simultaneously fear rejection, resulting in inconsistent relationship behavior (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

1.6 Communication Styles in Relationships

Communication styles refer to consistent patterns through which individuals express emotions, needs, and boundaries. Research commonly identifies four styles: assertive, passive, aggressive, and passive-aggressive (Overall et al., 2013).

Assertive communication involves open and respectful expression of thoughts and feelings. It is associated with greater relationship satisfaction and emotional intimacy (Kiviruusu et al., 2016). Passive communication involves avoidance of conflict and suppression of emotions, which may lead to dissatisfaction over time. Aggressive communication includes hostility and dominance, often intensifying relational conflict. Passive-aggressive communication expresses dissatisfaction indirectly through silence, sarcasm, or withdrawal (Papp et al., 2017).

In digital communication contexts, absence of non-verbal cues may amplify misunderstandings and encourage indirect communication patterns.

1.7 Ghosting Behaviour and Its Psychological Impact

Ghosting refers to abruptly ending communication with a romantic partner without explanation. The rise of digital communication has made ghosting increasingly common among emerging adults (LeFebvre et al., 2019). Unlike traditional breakups, ghosting provides no closure, leaving the recipient uncertain about the reasons behind the relationship termination.

Psychologically, ghosting can lead to emotional confusion, rumination, and self-blame. Individuals may interpret the silence as evidence of personal inadequacy, which can reduce self-esteem (Freedman et al., 2019). Ghosting can also increase anxiety and mistrust in future relationships.

Attachment patterns play a significant role in ghosting behavior. Avoidantly attached individuals may ghost to avoid emotionally uncomfortable conversations, while anxiously attached individuals are more likely to experience intense distress when ghosted (Timmermans et al., 2021). Securely attached individuals, however, tend to prefer direct communication and are less likely to engage in avoidance-based disengagement.

Communication styles also influence ghosting behavior. Passive and avoidant communication patterns often contribute to indirect relationship termination, whereas assertive communication encourages direct discussion and healthier closure.

In the Indian sociocultural context, reluctance to confront emotional issues directly may further reinforce avoidance-based disengagement strategies. Therefore, examining attachment patterns and communication styles is essential for understanding ghosting behavior among Indian emerging adults.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pandey and Srivastava (2025) examined the cultural and intersectional dynamics of romantic attachment in adulthood in India. The authors argue that attachment-related behaviours are influenced not only by early emotional experiences but also by gender relations, family systems, and caste–class inequalities. These social factors shape patterns such as emotional withdrawal, insecurity, and trust difficulties. The study also highlights how patriarchal norms often require women to perform greater emotional labour in relationships and calls for a broader sociological understanding of attachment beyond individual psychological explanations.

Lahiri, Mishra, and Bhattacharya (2025) investigated how family environments influence attachment styles and love attitudes among Indian young adults. Using attachment theory and love style typologies, the authors found that high parental regulation and structured family environments tend to reduce emotional intimacy and friendship-based love styles. In contrast, family conflict predicted anxious attachment and playful or less stable love orientations. Interestingly, family cohesion showed negative associations with certain romantic love styles, suggesting that strong collectivist family bonds may sometimes restrict romantic individuation. The study highlights the importance of culturally sensitive relationship counselling.

Blitch, Alley, and Dailey (2025) explored relationship satisfaction, conflict management, and affectionate communication among romantic partners where one partner had ADHD. Although couples with ADHD partners reported greater use of certain conflict behaviours, overall relationship satisfaction and attachment security were not significantly reduced. This finding challenges assumptions that ADHD necessarily leads to relationship dysfunction and suggests that such couples may develop resilience to negative interaction patterns.

Clay-Guill (2025) examined the relationship between faith and romantic relationship happiness, focusing on the moderating role of communication strategies during conflict. The findings indicated that religious involvement alone did not strongly predict relationship satisfaction. Instead, effective communication during disagreements emerged as a stronger predictor of relational well-being. The study highlights communication processes as crucial factors supporting relationship stability and emotional satisfaction.

Cobzeanu and Măirean (2025) investigated factors associated with online breadcrumbing and ghosting among young adults. Their findings showed that breadcrumbing was linked with psychological distress, toxic online disinhibition, and moral disengagement. Importantly, previous experiences of being ghosted strongly predicted future ghosting behaviour, suggesting a cyclical pattern of digital relationship disengagement.

Siguenza (2025) examined attitudes toward ghosting and the influence of gender and personal values on its social acceptance. The results indicated that although individuals generally preferred honest communication during breakups, ghosting was sometimes considered acceptable when emotional intimacy was low or confrontation was perceived as risky. Men were more accepting of ghosting than women, and individuals who valued honesty strongly were more likely to reject ghosting as a relationship strategy.

Szczesniak, Pierce, and Spielmann (2025) studied emotional reactions to acceptance, rejection, and ghosting in simulated dating scenarios. Their results showed that ghosting produced levels of emotional distress similar to direct rejection. However, the lack of closure associated with ghosting increased uncertainty and emotional confusion, suggesting that ambiguous rejection can have stronger psychological consequences.

Mohan and Mathew (2024) examined the relationship between attachment styles, fear of intimacy, and relationship satisfaction among Indian young adults. The study found that attachment anxiety and avoidance were positively related to fear of intimacy, which in turn predicted lower relationship satisfaction. These findings highlight the role of emotional vulnerability and attachment insecurity in shaping relationship outcomes.

Stephen and Lokesh (2024) investigated the influence of attachment styles on the quality of life among young adults. Their findings indicated that attachment-related emotional experiences significantly influence psychological well-being and perceived social support. Similarly, Sharma and Kaushik (2024) found that insecure attachment styles were strongly associated with relationship dissatisfaction among young couples, reinforcing the importance of attachment security for healthy relationships.

Wu and Bamishigbin (2024) explored the experiences of individuals who had been ghosted, particularly among ethnic minority young adults. Through qualitative interviews, the authors identified themes such as sudden changes in communication patterns, feelings of rejection, and stages of emotional coping. Participants reported strategies such as devaluing the ghoster and reinterpreting the experience, although ghosting still produced significant emotional distress.

Ryan (2024) examined the relationship between ghosting experiences, self-esteem, and emotional regulation. The study found that individuals who experienced ghosting often reported reduced self-esteem and difficulties in emotional coping. Similarly, Park and Klein (2024) investigated motivations behind ghosting and found that ghosters sometimes believed they were protecting the other person's feelings, although this perception often created misunderstandings and relational harm.

Khattar, Huete, and Navarro (2023) studied breadcrumbing behaviour among young adults in Spain and India and found that both anxious and avoidant attachment styles predicted such online relational behaviours. Chaturvedi and Arya (2023) further showed that childhood trauma influences adult romantic attachment through reduced trust, highlighting the long-term effects of early relational experiences.

Jahrami et al. (2023) developed and validated the Ghosting Questionnaire (GHOST), demonstrating strong reliability and psychometric validity. The instrument provides researchers with a reliable method for measuring ghosting experiences and attitudes. Navarro et al. (2021) also found that individuals who had been ghosted were more likely to ghost others, suggesting a recurring pattern in digital relationship behaviours.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aim of the Study

The present study aims to examine the relationship between attachment patterns (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance), communication styles, and ghosting behaviour among Indian emerging adults. It also seeks to determine whether communication style mediates the relationship between attachment insecurity and ghosting behaviour.

3.2 Objectives of the Study
The objectives of the study are:
1. To assess levels of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance among Indian emerging adults.
2. To examine the communication styles used in close or romantic relationships.
3. To measure the frequency and nature of ghosting behaviour, including both ghosting others and being ghosted.
4. To analyze the relationship between attachment patterns and ghosting behaviour.
5. To evaluate the association between communication styles and attachment patterns.
6. To examine the relationship between communication styles and ghosting behaviour.
7. To determine whether communication style mediates the relationship between attachment insecurity and ghosting behaviour.
8. To explore gender differences in attachment patterns, communication styles, and ghosting behaviour.

3.3 Hypotheses
H1: There will be a significant relationship between attachment patterns (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) and ghosting behaviour among Indian emerging adults.

H2: Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance will positively predict ghosting behaviour.

H3: Communication style will be significantly related to attachment patterns and ghosting behaviour.

H4: Communication style will significantly mediate the relationship between attachment insecurity and ghosting behaviour.

H5: There will be significant gender differences in attachment patterns, communication styles, and ghosting behaviour.

3.4 Variables of the Study

Independent Variable (IV)
Attachment patterns were measured across two dimensions:
• Attachment Anxiety
• Attachment Avoidance
These dimensions were assessed using the *Experiences in Close Relationships – Short Form (ECR-S)*. Scores reflect participants' attachment orientations in romantic relationships.

Mediator Variable
Communication style refers to patterns through which individuals express emotions, thoughts, and interpersonal needs. The study assessed four communication styles:
• Assertive
• Passive
• Aggressive
• Avoidant
Communication style served as the mediator between attachment patterns and ghosting behaviour.

Dependent Variable (DV)
Ghosting behaviour represents unexplained withdrawal from communication in romantic or close relationships. Two aspects were measured:
• Ghosting others
• Being ghosted
This variable was measured using a researcher-developed Ghosting Behaviour Questionnaire.

3.5 Research Design
The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design. This design was appropriate because the research aimed to examine relationships among attachment patterns, communication styles, and ghosting behaviour without manipulating variables. Data were collected at a single point in time, allowing the assessment of naturally occurring variations among participants.

The design enabled the study to:
• Examine relationships between attachment anxiety/avoidance and ghosting behaviour
• Explore associations between communication styles and ghosting behaviour
• Test the mediating role of communication style
• Analyse gender differences in the studied variables
A cross-sectional design was considered time-efficient and suitable for examining behavioural patterns among emerging adults actively engaged in digital communication.

3.6 Sample
The study consisted of 151 Indian emerging adults aged between 18 and 30 years. This age range corresponds to the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, which involves identity formation, exploration of relationships, and increased engagement in digital communication.

Participants were recruited using a stratified convenience sampling technique. Stratification ensured representation across demographic variables such as gender, while convenience sampling enabled practical access to participants through colleges, universities, and online platforms.

Participants included individuals who had experience in close or romantic relationships and regularly used digital communication platforms such as social media or messaging applications.

Inclusion Criteria

Participants were included if they:
• Were between 18 and 30 years of age
• Were Indian residents
• Had experience in close or romantic relationships
• Used digital communication platforms
• Provided voluntary informed consent

Exclusion Criteria
Participants were excluded if they:
• Were outside the age range of 18–30 years

• Had no prior relationship experience
• Did not provide consent or felt uncomfortable participating
These criteria ensured that participants could meaningfully report experiences related to attachment, communication, and ghosting behaviour.

3.7 Description of Tools

1. Experiences in Close Relationships Scale – Short Form (ECR-S)
The ECR-S, developed by Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, and Vogel (2007), is a self-report instrument designed to measure adult attachment styles in romantic relationships. The scale contains 12 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7).
The scale assesses two dimensions: attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. Higher scores on anxiety indicate fear of rejection and emotional dependence, while higher avoidance scores reflect discomfort with intimacy and emotional distance. The ECR-S demonstrates strong reliability and validity and is widely used in attachment research.

2. Communication Style Questionnaire
The Communication Style Questionnaire is a self-report measure consisting of 20 statements that assess interpersonal communication tendencies. Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.
The questionnaire evaluates patterns such as assertiveness, passivity, aggression, and avoidance in interpersonal interactions. By grouping responses into categories, dominant communication styles can be identified. The tool is useful for examining relational dynamics and emotional expression in interpersonal relationships.

3. Ghosting Questionnaire
The Ghosting Questionnaire, based on Navarro et al. (2020), assesses experiences and attitudes related to ghosting in interpersonal relationships. The instrument includes 15 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *never* to *very often*.

The questionnaire consists of three sections:
• Experiences of being ghosted and related emotional reactions
• Behaviour related to ghosting others
• Attitudes and perceptions regarding ghosting
The scale captures both behavioural and psychological aspects of ghosting among young adults.

3.8 Procedure
Data collection followed a structured and ethical procedure. Ethical approval was obtained before conducting the research. Participants were recruited through colleges, university groups, social media platforms, and community networks.
Before participation, individuals received information about the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

Participants first completed a demographic information sheet, followed by the three research instruments:

• Experiences in Close Relationships Scale – Short Form (ECR-S)
• Communication Style Questionnaire
• Ghosting Questionnaire
The survey was administered primarily through Google Forms, making it accessible and convenient for emerging adults. Participants were provided with clear instructions, and most completed the survey within 10–15 minutes.
After data collection, responses were screened for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete or duplicate responses were removed. The data were then coded and entered into statistical software (such as SPSS or Jamovi) for analysis. Scale scores were calculated according to standard scoring procedures.
Participants were provided with a brief debriefing note after completing the survey, along with information about mental health support services in case participation caused any emotional discomfort. Ethical guidelines regarding anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly followed throughout the research process.

4. RESULT
4.1. HYPOTHESIS-1: - CORRELATION MATRIX
Correlation Results Highlighting How Attachment Insecurity and Communication Difficulties Significantly Predict Ghosting Behaviour in Support of All Formulated Research Hypotheses

Correlation Matrix

Variables	Anxious	Avoidance	Total EAVIS	Communication	Ghosting
Anxious Total Score	—	0.427	0.874	0.324	0.430
Avoidance Total Score	0.427	—	0.812	0.231	0.206
Total EAVIS	0.874	0.812	—	0.333	0.388
Communication Total Score	0.324	0.231	0.333	0.333	0.436
Ghosting	0.430	0.206	0.388	0.436	0.436
Ghosting	0.430	0.206	0.388	0.436	—

The correlation matrix proved the hypothesis of the study in a very strong way. H1 stated that there existed a close positive relationship between ghosting behavior and attachment anxiety (r = 0.430) and attachment avoidance (r = 0.206), which means that insecure attachment relates to the increased possibility of ghosting. In favor of H2, the assessment of the attachment insecurity was justified by the moderate correlation between the anxious attachment and avoidant one (r = 0.427) and the strong correlations between the attachment insecurity and the Total EAVIS score (r = 0.874 and r = 0.812). As indicated by H3, communication style had significant correlations with both avoidant (r = 0.231) and anxious attachment (r = 0.324) and ghosting behavior (r = 0.436), meaning that communication issues are linked to both ghosting and insecure attachment. Overall, these associations give credence to the assumptions

presented and prepare the background of further mediation studies.

Mediation Findings Indicating That Communication Style Partially Explains How Attachment Insecurity Predicts Ghosting, Supported by Significant Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects

4.2. HYPOTHESIS-2: - MEDIATION ESTIMATES

Mediation Estimates

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Indirect	0.113	0.0495	2.28	0.022
Direct	0.386	0.1050	3.67	<.001
Total	0.874	0.812	0.333	<.001
Ghosting	0.430	0.206	0.388	<.001

The mediation study revealed a significant mediation role of communication style in the association between attachment insecurity and the ghosting behavior. The high level of indirect impact (Estimate = 0.113, p = 0.022) indicates that there is a part of the relationship between insecure attachment and ghosting that is explained by communication problems. The effect of attachment insecurity remained positive even after communication style height was taken into account (Estimate = 0.386, p <.001), which results in the fact that attachment insecurity predicts ghosting independently. The effect that was obtained (p <.001) further supported the overall strength of this link. These findings are sufficient to substantiate the mediation theory and stress the influence of style of communication as a psychological mediator in relationship between ghosting behavior of emerging adults and insecurity of attachment.

4.3. HYPOTHESIS-3:-PATH ESTIMATES
Path Analysis Results Indicating Direct Predictive Links Between Ghosting, Communication Difficulties, and Attachment Insecurity Among Emerging Adults

Path Estimates

Path	Estimate	SE	Z	p
GHOSTING → COMMUNICATION TOTAL SCORE	0.368	0.0620	5.95	<.001
COMMUNICATION TOTAL SCORE → TOTAL EAVIS	0.307	0.1241	2.47	0.013
GHOSTING → TOTAL EAVIS	0.386	0.1050	3.67	<.001
Ghosting	0.430	0.206	3.338	<.001

The path analysis found significant predictive associations between the primary variables of the study. Ghosting behaviour significantly predicted communication problems (Estimate = 0.368, p <.001), with ghosters and the ghosted having poorer communication habits. Moreover, the manner of communication also turned out to be a predictive factor of the insecurity of the attachment (Estimate = 0.307, p =.013) meaning that bad communication is a predisposing factor to high levels of avoidance and anxiety about attachment. Moreover, the effect of ghosting on general attachment insecurity was found to be great (Estimate = 0.386, p <.001), which proves the close interdependence between the relational withdrawal and insecure attachment styles. Collected as a set, these path estimates prove that the proposed model is correct since they demonstrate the interrelation of communication style, attachment insecurity, and ghosting.

4.4. HYPOTHESIS-4: -ONE SAMPLE T-TEST
One-Sample t-Test Results Providing Noteworthy rates of Communication Problems, Ghosting States and Gender variations inside the group of the respondents.

One Sample t-Test

Variable	Test Statistic	*t*-value	df	p
Communication Total Score	Student's *t*	101.6	150	<.001
Ghosting	Student's *t*	72.6	150	<.001
Gender	Student's *t*	37.4	150	<.001

All three variables—ghosting, gender, and communication total score—exhibited very significant departures from zero, according to the results of the one-sample t-test. Significantly higher communication scores (t = 101.6, p <.001) indicate that participants reported significant communication patterns pertinent to the research. Additionally, ghosting showed a substantial and strong mean difference (t = 72.6, p <.001), indicating that ghosting behavior was common in the sample. Furthermore, a significant t-value (t = 37.4, p <.001) for gender indicated substantial gender-based differences in all of the examined domains. All of these findings support the importance and significance of the main research variables to the participants.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationships between attachment patterns, communication styles, and ghosting behaviour among Indian emerging adults, and investigated whether communication style mediates the relationship between attachment insecurity and ghosting. With the increasing use of digital communication platforms, relationship dynamics among young adults are changing rapidly. Ghosting has become a common form of relationship withdrawal, yet its psychological mechanisms remain underexplored in the Indian context. This study addressed this gap by integrating attachment theory and communication frameworks.

Interpretation of Overall Findings

The findings indicate that attachment styles significantly influence ghosting behaviour. Both anxious and avoidant attachment showed positive relationships with ghosting. Individuals with anxious attachment often experience strong fear of rejection and emotional dependence, making them more sensitive to relational uncertainty. In contrast, avoidantly attached individuals tend to value independence and may use ghosting as a way to avoid emotional confrontation or intimacy. Communication style also showed significant associations with both attachment insecurity and ghosting behaviour. Individuals with insecure attachment patterns often struggle with open and assertive communication and instead rely on avoidant or passive communication styles. This increases the likelihood of ghosting, as individuals may prefer silent withdrawal rather than direct discussion of relationship problems.

Mediation analysis further showed that communication style partially mediates the relationship between attachment insecurity and ghosting behaviour. This suggests that attachment patterns influence ghosting partly through the communication behaviours individuals adopt during relationship conflicts.

Discussion of Statistical Results

Correlation analysis showed that anxious attachment had a moderate positive relationship with ghosting behaviour (r = .430, p < .001), while avoidant attachment also showed a significant but weaker relationship (r = .206, p = .011). Communication style was significantly related to both attachment anxiety (r = .324) and attachment avoidance (r = .231), indicating that insecure attachment is associated with less effective communication patterns. Communication style also showed a strong relationship with ghosting behaviour (r = .436).

Mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of attachment insecurity on ghosting through communication style (Indirect effect = 0.113, p = .022), while the direct effect remained significant (0.386, p < .001), indicating partial mediation. Path estimates further supported these relationships, showing significant links between communication and ghosting, communication and attachment insecurity, and attachment insecurity and ghosting behaviour.

Finally, one-sample t-test results showed significant differences for communication, ghosting, and gender (p < .001), suggesting that these variables are strongly present in the sample and that gender may influence communication patterns and ghosting behaviour among emerging adults.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationships between attachment patterns, communication styles, and ghosting behaviour among Indian emerging adults, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of communication style. The findings indicate that insecure attachment patterns, specifically attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance, are significantly associated with ghosting behaviour. Individuals with insecure attachment orientations tend to experience difficulties in emotional expression and conflict resolution, which often leads to maladaptive communication patterns. These ineffective communication styles increase the likelihood of relational withdrawal behaviors such as ghosting. The mediation analysis further demonstrated that communication style partially mediates the relationship between attachment insecurity and ghosting behaviour, suggesting that communication acts as a crucial psychological mechanism through which attachment-related tendencies influence relational outcomes. Path analysis also supported these findings by confirming significant predictive relationships among attachment insecurity, communication difficulties, and ghosting behaviour. Additionally, the results indicated meaningful gender differences in communication patterns and ghosting tendencies within the sample. Overall, the study highlights that ghosting is not merely an isolated behaviour but is closely linked to deeper interpersonal and psychological processes involving attachment schemas and communication dynamics. By integrating attachment theory with interpersonal communication frameworks, the research contributes to a better understanding of modern relationship behaviours in the context of digital

communication. These findings provide valuable insights for relationship counselling, psychological interventions, and future research focused on improving communication skills and promoting healthier relational functioning among emerging adults.

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