From Match to Mute:

How Dark Personality Traits Influence Ghosting in the Online Dating Environment.

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ABSTRACT

Ghosting, the abrupt termination of romantic relationship without explanation, has become a common yet underexplored phenomenon in online dating. As dating applications increasingly influence interpersonal relationships, understanding the social and psychological factors that lead to ghosting is becoming increasingly important. This study investigates the differences in ghosting intentions and attitudes throughout five stages of online dating interactions (after initial contact, sustained conversations, first offline meeting, sexual intimacy, and during an established relationship), and how these patterns relate to personality traits associated with the Dark Triad: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy.

A survey performed online (N = 154) targeted young individuals aged 18–35, mainly from Europe. Participants evaluated five context-specific vignettes, each depicting a distinct phase of romantic development, and assessed the probability and acceptability of ghosting in each scenario. They also administered the Short Dark Triad (SD3) measure to evaluate their levels of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy.

Research demonstrates that ghosting becomes markedly less acceptable and less probable as relational intimacy escalates. Individuals exhibiting elevated levels of Machiavellianism and psychopathy were more prone to ghosting, especially in initial interactions. Narcissism had a more consistent correlation with increased tolerance of ghosting over various stages. Gender analysis indicated that males exhibited more intents to ghost than females across multiple circumstances.

This study enhances the literature by situating ghosting within several phases of dating app interactions and correlating it with enduring personality features. The findings highlight the necessity of comprehending ghosting not merely as a social behavior, but as a psychological and contextual phenomenon influenced by personality traits and technology capabilities.

KEYWORDS: *ghosting, online dating, Dark Triad, dating apps, narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, vignettes, young adults*

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Introduction

Online dating has become a fundamental aspect of modern romance, transforming how individuals initiate, develop, and dissolve relationships. With the rise of communication technology, platforms such as Tinder, Bumble, and Hinge have provided new opportunities for connection, visibility, and selection (Finkel et al., 2012, p. 9; Saner et al., 2023, p. 255). Unlike traditional dating, these applications integrate accessibility, personalized algorithms, and instant messaging (Panulaya et al., 2024, pp. 50–51), reshaping dating behavior and social norms (Stoicescu, 2019, pp. 24–25). Young adults in particular, aged 18–35, represent the most active demographic of dating app users, reflecting their digital fluency and embeddedness in app-based culture (Saner et al., 2023, p. 256; LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 127).

A common and disruptive behavior within this environment is ghosting, the abrupt and unexplained termination of communication in a romantic context without warning or closure (Šiša, 2024, p. 2). Ghosting differs from conventional breakups in that it provides no explanation, leaving the recipient in a state of unresolved rejection (Ramadini & Radjagukguk, 2024, pp. 56–57). This can occur at any point in relational progression, from an initial chat to a committed relationship. Importantly, the impact of ghosting depends heavily on timing: ghosting after a few casual messages may be brushed off, while ghosting after intimacy or relational commitment often results in profound emotional harm (Koessler et al., 2019, p. 113; Castro et al., 2020, p. 2). Despite its prevalence, little is known about when ghosting is most likely to occur and which individuals are more prone to engage in it.

Research on ghosting has mostly concentrated on its motivations, such as conflict avoidance, uncertainty, or diminished interest (LeFebvre et al., 2019, pp. 2196–2199; Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 2), as well as on relational variables like attachment style (Pancani et al., 2021, p. 10). However, studies examining personality factors remain limited, and when they do, ghosting is generally treated as a uniform behavior, rather than one that may vary across different relational stages (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 9; Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 2). This narrow focus risks overlooking the situational nature of ghosting: disengagement after a first message is not equivalent to disappearance after sex or within a committed partnership. Understanding ghosting as a stage-dependent phenomenon is therefore essential for capturing its variability and impact.

To address this gap, the present study focuses on the Dark Triad of personality traits; Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy (Jones & Paulhus, 2014, p. 26). These socially aversive traits are characterized by manipulation, callousness, and self-interest, and are well-documented predictors of exploitative and avoidant romantic behavior. For example,

narcissism is linked to short-term mating and disengagement once admiration wanes (Jonason et al., 2009, p. 327; Wurst et al., 2016, p. 3), Machiavellianism to strategic withdrawal and calculated exploitation (Jonason & Kavanagh, 2010, p. 269), and psychopathy to impulsivity and abrupt relational termination without remorse (Forth et al., 2021, p. 1629). Studies further demonstrate that individuals high in these traits often prefer emotionally detached or manipulative dating styles (Mento et al., 2023, pp. 173–174), report a stronger inclination toward ghosting (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1432), and tend to treat relationships as disposable if personal goals are not met (Brewer et al., 2017, pp. 202–207).

Although these findings suggest that Dark Triad traits influence ghosting behavior, prior research typically examines ghosting as a general construct without attention to relational depth. Lyons et al. (2024, p. 1432), for instance, found that narcissism and psychopathy predict higher likelihood of ghosting across multiple situations, but did not differentiate between contexts. Similarly, Timmermans et al. (2018, p. 131) showed that Machiavellianism predicted higher ghosting tendencies on dating apps, but treated ghosting as a uniform act. What remains underexplored is how these traits manifest differently depending on the stage of romantic involvement. By focusing on relational stages, this study seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of ghosting as both a personality-driven and context-dependent phenomenon.

This study is scientifically relevant in two main ways. First, it integrates personality psychology with online dating research, extending prior studies that examined ghosting only as a single construct. By applying a stage-specific framework, it offers theoretical refinement and demonstrates that ghosting cannot be understood in isolation from relational depth. Second, it contributes methodologically by employing vignette-based scenarios that simulate realistic dating contexts, addressing recent calls for more ecologically valid approaches to studying romantic disengagement (Brewer et al., 2017, pp. 202–203).

The societal relevance of this research lies in the emotional and cultural consequences of ghosting. Ghosting is particularly prevalent among young adults, many of whom rely on dating apps as their primary avenue for romantic engagement (Saner et al., 2023, p. 256). Recipients of ghosting frequently report anxiety, lowered self-esteem, and relational distrust, particularly after sexual intimacy or emotional investment (Pancani et al., 2021, p. 26; Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 16). As ghosting becomes increasingly normalized, it risks reinforcing patterns of emotional avoidance, weakened accountability, and poor communication norms in digital dating culture (Ramadini & Radjagukguk, 2024, pp. 56–57). By clarifying which traits predict ghosting and in which contexts, this study provides insights

that may inform awareness campaigns, app design interventions (e.g., prompts to encourage communication), and counseling strategies aimed at promoting healthier relational practices.

The central research question is therefore stated as follows:

To what extent are Dark Triad personality traits associated with individuals' likelihood and perceived acceptability of ghosting across five stages of online dating interactions?

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Online Dating

Online dating has significantly altered the way in which individuals initiate and develop romantic relationships. A niche digital business that originated in the late 1990s has transformed into a common tool for romantic engagement, especially among young individuals (Toma, 2022, p. 1). By 2020, online platforms emerged as the predominant means for couples to connect in the United States, a development amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic and technological innovations that enhanced access to digital environments (Tadros et al., 2024, p. 11). Ghosting occurs mainly among young adults aged 18 to 35, who represent the most active demographic on dating applications (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 2; LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 127). This demographic is well rooted in app-based dating culture, where the quick tempo, variety of options, and limited accountability make ghosting a common and normative method of disengagement (Lykens et al., 2022, p. 104). Young adults, due to their understanding of the communicative norms and emotional concerns associated with online dating, represent a significant demographic for analyzing ghosting behavior and its psychological consequences.

Online dating generally conforms to a systematic progression, starting with profile creation, and followed by algorithmic matching, text-based communication, and ultimately, in-person encounters (Sharabi & Dykstra-DeVette, 2019, p. 2). These interactions facilitate selective self-presentation and regulated self-disclosure, however, require individuals to cope with emotional risk in an environment where disengagement is both simple and common (Sharabi & Dykstra-DeVette, 2019, p. 3).

Although online dating offers convenience and is widely embraced, it presents numerous disadvantages. Users, especially women, frequently face harassment, unsolicited explicit material, and challenges in forming significant relationships (Tadros et al., 2024, p. 16). Furthermore, dating applications often encourage appearance-focused evaluations and gamified engagements, potentially resulting in emotional disconnection and superficiality (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 3). A significant concern in this situation is "option overload," when the plethora of potential partners diminishes satisfaction and hinders commitment (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 9).

Research suggests that connections initiated via online platforms may yield comparable or even superior satisfaction and stability compared to those established offline (Sharabi, 2023, p. 22). This paradox illustrates the duality of online dating: it provides unmatched access to potential partners while simultaneously promoting relational instability,

detachment, and emotional disposability. One prominent example of this instability in online dating is ghosting, a disengagement strategy that has become increasingly common on dating apps Timmermans et al. (2020, p. 2).

2.2 Ghosting

Ghosting is commonly defined as the sudden withdrawal from communication in a romantic or interpersonal relationship without explanation. However, the literature offers multiple variations of this definition. LeFebvre et al. (2019, p. 2196) emphasize the relational aspect, describing ghosting as the unilateral termination of a relationship without explicit discussion or closure. Timmermans et al. (2020, p. 2) situate ghosting within online dating, where app features such as unmatching or blocking facilitate effortless disengagement. Freedman and Powell (2024, p. 16) highlight the psychological consequences, framing ghosting as a form of unresolved rejection that leaves recipients uncertain about the relationship's status. Finally, Šiša (2024, p. 2) offers a concise formulation, defining ghosting as the abrupt and unexplained termination of communication in a romantic context.
For the purposes of this study, ghosting is defined as the unexplained cessation of communication in a romantic or dating context, without warning or closure. This definition synthesizes the shared elements of existing definitions while acknowledging that ghosting may vary in meaning and impact depending on the stage of relational development. This issue has become increasingly significant in recent years, especially within digital communication contexts, where disengagement is technologically effortless and socially ambiguous (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 2). Ghosting is a dissolution method frequently resulting in confusion or emotional ambiguity for the other side (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1428). This kind of disengagement differs from conventional breakup techniques, which typically entail clear communication and mutual acknowledgment of the relationship's conclusion (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 2196).

Within the realm of online dating, ghosting is notably prevalent. The structure of dating applications fosters minimal effort in interactions, restricted accountability, and quick turnover, hence establishing an environment favorable to ghosting (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 2). Users can effortlessly unmatch, block, or remove contacts without facing the emotional repercussions of their decisions (Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 16). The secrecy and simplicity of these platforms further promote ghosting behavior (Šiša, 2024a, p. 1).

The motivations for ghosting are diverse. Conflict avoidance is a significant role. Individuals may opt to withdraw rather than confront difficult discussions on rejection (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 2199). Individuals may disengage due to lack of interest, emotional

anxiety, fear of conflict, or uncertainty concerning the relationship's course (Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 16). In certain instances, ghosting is utilized as a defensive strategy for avoiding emotional exposure (Biolcati et al., 2021, p. 244). The minimal emotional commitment present in several online contacts makes this mode of disengagement especially appealing (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 2).

Ghosting is predominantly observed among younger people, especially those aged 18 to 29, who are the most engaged users of dating applications and deeply entrenched in digital communication conventions (Pancani et al., 2021, p. 10). In this generation, ghosting is frequently regarded as a socially acceptable or expected means of disengagement (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 3).

The emotional consequences of ghosting can be severe. Recipients frequently experience feelings of rejection, confusion, and reduced self-esteem, particularly when ghosting occurs after emotional or physical contact (Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 16). The absence of closure may result in anxiety and self-criticism, extending emotional turmoil (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 2). Repeated instances of ghosting can lead to persistent relational anxiety, fear of rejection, and challenges in trusting new partners (Narr & Luong, 2022, p. 26; Ramadini & Radjagukguk, 2024, p. 58; Šiša, 2024b, p. 45).

While certain individual and contextual characteristics, such as avoidance-oriented attachment and situational discomfort, have been associated with ghosting, the influence of personality traits on predicting ghosting behavior, especially in the context of dating app usage, remains largely unexplored. This study aims to investigate the potential impact of socially aversive personality traits, specifically, the Dark Triad, on ghosting within online dating environments.

2.3 The Dark Triad

Understanding one's tendency to ghost involves an examination of the underlying traits that tend individuals to avoidant or exploitative behavior in relationships. The Dark Triad is a significant psychological theory comprising three interconnected yet different traits: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy. These traits are defined by interpersonal manipulation, emotional detachment, and a persistent disregard to the emotions of others (Paulhus & Williams, 2002, p. 557). Although socially undesirable, these features are common to varied extents in the general population and have been demonstrated to influence how individuals engage in romantic relationships (Jonason et al., 2012, p. 334).

In the realm of online dating, the Dark Triad may assume a notably prominent role. Dating applications facilitate temporary relationships, superficial self-presentation, and

effortless disengagement which are all conditions that correspond with the interpersonal tendencies of individuals exhibiting elevated Dark Triad features (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1430). These individuals may favor ghosting as a relational tactic that avoids emotional confrontation and enables them to preserve autonomy and control. Each trait, meanwhile, contributes differently to this behavior.

2.3.1 Narcissism

Narcissism is defined by grandiosity, entitlement, a desire for admiration, and an absence of empathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002, p. 558; Muris et al., 2017, p. 183). Narcissistic individuals frequently possess exaggerated self-perceptions and want continual validation from others, particularly in romantic contexts (Campbell & Foster, 2007, p. 1155). In romantic pursuits, individuals may first exhibit charm and confidence yet swiftly disengage as attention or adoration diminishes.

Studies indicate that narcissists are predisposed to pursue short-term romantic methods and to objectify prospective partners (Jonason et al., 2009, p. 327). Narcissists may quickly disconnect when a partner ceases to fulfill their ego demands or when emotional connection jeopardizes their self-image. Ghosting allows individuals to disengage without justification, so avoiding discomfort or criticism (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1431).

Narcissistic individuals frequently perceive themselves as entitled to “ideal” partners and may abandon others upon recognizing their flaws (Wurst et al., 2016, p. 3). Ghosting facilitates a convenient transition to a more desirable alternative, free from the social obligations of a breakup, making it consistent with the narcissist’s relational approach. Individuals may justify ghosting as appropriate if they see that the other party no longer contributes positively to their self-image or objectives (Freedman et al., 2019, p. 210). Narcissists may be particularly attracted to online dating due to the rapid validation obtained through swipes and likes, as well as the superficial nature of interactions. These situations diminish the perceived social cost of ghosting, rendering it a favored escape strategy when self-enhancement needs are unfulfilled.

2.3.2 Machiavellianism

Machiavellianism is characterized by strategic manipulation, emotional detachment, and an emphasis on self-serving objectives (Christie & Geis, 1970, p. 105; Jones & Paulhus, 2014, p. 521). In contrast to the impulsivity characteristic of Psychopathy or the need for validation associated with Narcissism, Machiavellians engage in premeditated interactions, frequently prioritizing control and personal gain.

In romantic situations, individuals exhibiting high Machiavellian traits are more inclined to employ dishonest or manipulative tactics, particularly when emotional engagement is minimal (Jonason & Kavanagh, 2010, p. 269). They may exhibit inauthentic behavior, obscure their intentions, and evade long-term commitments if such commitments do not serve their interests.

Ghosting corresponds with these characteristics since it enables Machiavellian individuals to depart without confrontation, while maintaining the facade of never having been emotionally engaged. It maintains their dominance over the story and bypasses vulnerability linked to rejection or accountability (Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 16).
In contrast to Narcissists, Machiavellians may disengage not from ego harm, but because they perceive people as tools for their own ends. When a romantic engagement ceases to yield strategic advantage, they withdraw. Their lack of empathy and avoidance of emotional reciprocity suggests they are unlikely to experience shame for such actions (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1430).

In dating applications, where ambiguity and low commitment dominate, Machiavellian tendencies may be particularly amplified. Prior studies show that individuals high in Machiavellianism often employ manipulative strategies in romantic interactions (Jonason & Kavanagh, 2010, p. 269). Within online dating, they may exploit the inherent ambiguity to tactically withdraw from conversations or relationships once they no longer serve their interests (Pancani et al., 2021, p. 10). Research also indicates that such tendencies are associated with disengagement behaviors like ghosting, where emotional detachment and control are preserved through silent withdrawal (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1430).

2.3.3 Psychopathy

Psychopathy is characterized by impulsivity, low empathy, an affinity for thrill-seeking, and an absence of shame or remorse (Paulhus & Williams, 2002, p. 558; Forth et al., 2021, p. 1628). Individuals with Psychopathy frequently exhibit antisocial behaviors and poor behavioral management. In romantic relationships, this may manifest as exploitative, violent, or emotionally detached behavior.

Individuals exhibiting high levels of Psychopathy are characterized by a preference for short-term, low-commitment mating techniques (Jonason et al., 2009, p. 327). They may establish interaction due to boredom, appeal, or self-interest, yet are uncommon to foster emotional depth. Upon losing interest or observing an emotional obligation, they may suddenly withdraw. Ghosting, as a tactic, aligns seamlessly with this dynamic as it facilitates quick withdrawal, bypasses emotional engagement, and diminishes the likelihood of conflict.

Psychopathic features correlate with reduced emotional sensitivity and a callous disregard to the welfare of others (Forth et al., 2021, p. 1629). This facilitates individuals in ghosting without guilt or regard for the consequences on the other party. The impulsive characteristics of Psychopathy heighten the probability of abrupt disengagement, particularly in online dating, where interactions are brief and predominantly unregulated.

The gamified and temporary nature of dating applications corresponds effectively with psychopathic traits. Prior work has shown that individuals high in psychopathy tend to favor short-term, opportunistic mating strategies (Jonason et al., 2009, p. 327). They often disengage impulsively and without remorse, reflecting a lack of emotional investment (Forth et al., 2021, pp. 1629–1630). Within dating apps, ghosting can therefore reflect not just a conflict-avoidant strategy, but a broader relational style characterized by opportunism and detachment (Koessler et al., 2019, p. 113).

Taken together, the Dark Triad offers a strong theoretical framework for understanding ghosting because each trait maps onto distinct disengagement strategies: impulsivity and callousness (psychopathy), strategic withdrawal (Machiavellianism), and self-protection/self-enhancement (narcissism). However, most existing research has examined these traits in general, rather than situating their effects across specific stages of dating interactions

2.4 Dating app contexts and situational ghosting

Ghosting has become a prevalent and culturally ingrained habit in online dating contexts, nevertheless, research indicates that it is not a homogeneous phenomenon. For example, Timmermans et al. (2020, pp. 2–3) show that ghosting is common in online interactions, but its meaning shifts with relational investment. Similarly, LeFebvre et al. (2019, pp. 217–220) found that ghosting after a first date or after intimacy is experienced as more painful compared to ghosting in early texting phases. Koessler et al. (2019, p. 113) also demonstrate that the emotional impact of ghosting differs depending on whether it occurs at an early or later stage of dating. Finally, Castro et al. (2020, p. 2) report that ghosting following sexual intimacy often leads to significantly greater distress than ghosting in less committed contexts. Ghosting can transpire at multiple phases of romantic involvement, yielding distinct psychological, emotional, and social repercussions dependent upon the relationship's depth (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 215; Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 16). This research adopts a valid and context-specific approach, diverging from prior studies that utilized relational development models, to analyze the timing behind ghosting. LeFebvre et al. (2019, pp. 2195–2200) discuss ghosting as part of broader dissolution processes based on

Knapp's stage model, while Timmermans et al. (2020, p. 2) emphasize its role during relational escalation and disengagement. Similarly, Koessler et al. (2019, p. 112) examine ghosting as a stage-based breakup strategy, but without accounting for the unique conditions of online dating. By focusing on five dating app-specific interaction stages, this study builds on and extends these earlier approaches in a more ecologically valid way.

Based on existing empirical work, this study adopts five dating app interaction stages that reflect the progression of typical online dating experiences: after initial contact, sustained chatting, a first in-person date, sexual intimacy, and in a committed relationship. These stages are not identified by this study but are grounded in patterns consistently reported in prior ghosting and online dating research (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 2; Koessler et al., 2019, p. 113; LeFebvre et al., 2019, pp. 2196-2199).

Several studies highlight how ghosting and breakup strategies vary depending on relational closeness. Drouin et al. (2014, pp. 225-226) found that indirect breakup tactics, such as ghosting, were more common in casual relationships, whereas more explicit communication was expected in committed ones. Similarly, Pancani et al. (2021, p. 10) demonstrated that ghosting is particularly prevalent during the early online messaging stage, but its emotional impact escalates when greater intimacy is involved.

Research on online dating trajectories also supports these stages as contextually grounded. Sharabi & Dykstra-DeVette (2019, pp. 2-3) describe dating apps as following predictable steps; matching, messaging, offline dates, and possible intimacy, closely aligning with the five contexts used here. Freedman & Powell (2020, pp. 16-17) further emphasize that ghosting acceptability decreases sharply as emotional expectations rise.

Taken together, these findings provide a pragmatic and realistic framework for examining the variability of ghosting behavior across different levels of relational depth, particularly in relation to personality traits associated with the Dark Triad.

2.4.1 Ghosting after Initial Contact

At this initial stage, users have matched and exchanged only a limited number of messages, often consisting of light banter, compliments, or surface-level questions. Communication is short, impersonal, and carries few relational expectations (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 3). Because emotional investment is minimal, ghosting at this stage is often perceived as socially acceptable and normative (Koessler et al., 2019, p. 113). Many users consider it a trivial act rather than a serious breach of etiquette, especially in an environment where maintaining multiple simultaneous conversations is common (Pancani et al., 2021, p. 10).

Nevertheless, even ghosting at this early phase is not entirely inconsequential. For some recipients, the lack of reply may still trigger feelings of annoyance or rejection, particularly if they had high expectations of the match (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 2196). Research indicates that first-stage ghosting is often rationalized as "testing the waters". Users withdraw if initial exchanges fail to spark interest or align with their relational goals (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 2). The relative ease of disengagement reflects both the gamified design of dating applications and the low accountability culture that they encourage (Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 16).

Individuals higher in psychopathy are especially prone to ghosting at this point. Psychopathy is associated with impulsivity, thrill-seeking, and emotional detachment (Forth et al., 2021, p. 1629). Such individuals often engage in relationships instrumentally or superficially, prioritizing novelty over commitment (Jonason et al., 2009, p. 327). In the context of dating apps, this manifests in quick matching and equally quick abandonment, with little consideration for the other person's feelings. For them, ghosting after a few short exchanges is not perceived as harmful but rather as efficient, consistent with their callous interpersonal style (Šiša, 2024a, p. 1).

The technological structure of dating apps amplifies this tendency. Features such as swiping, push notifications, and endless options promote impulsive decision-making and reduce the perceived need for accountability (Sharabi & Dykstra-DeVette, 2019, p. 2). For psychopathic individuals, who are already prone to exploiting low-commitment contexts, this setting normalizes disengagement without remorse.

Early-stage online dating provides the ideal conditions for psychopathy to manifest: minimal investment, high choice, and low accountability (Timmermans et al., 2020, pp. 2–3). These contexts amplify psychopathic tendencies toward opportunistic and superficial engagement (Jonason et al., 2009, p. 327). Accordingly, psychopathy is expected to predict ghosting at the stage of initial contact, when disengagement is easiest and carries few interpersonal consequences.

In sum, ghosting after initial contact is typically framed as harmless and normative within app culture, but personality differences, particularly psychopathy, may help explain why some individuals are more likely to disengage quickly and unemotionally. This stage therefore offers important insights into how socially aversive traits align with the low-investment, high-choice dynamics of dating applications. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that individuals higher in psychopathy will report greater intention to ghost after a brief exchange (H1a) and will also perceive ghosting in this early context as more acceptable (H1b)

.2.4.2 Ghosting after Sustained Chatting

This stage entails extended online interaction spanning multiple days or weeks, where individuals often exchange interests, personal stories, and tentative plans for a potential meeting. While the contact remains virtual, a moderate degree of emotional involvement and relational expectation begins to develop (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1429). Ghosting during this phase is often experienced as more disruptive than at the stage of initial contact, because it interrupts a trajectory that the recipient may have already begun to invest in emotionally (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 3). Research has shown that disappearing after repeated conversations can provoke frustration, disappointment, and even self-blame, as the rejection feels more personal compared to ghosting at an earlier stage (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 2199).

The design of dating applications makes this type of ghosting particularly prevalent. These platforms encourage parallel interactions, keeping multiple options open, while simultaneously maintaining high levels of ambiguity (Koessler et al., 2019, p. 113). In this environment, ghosting provides a way to disengage without having to justify one's decision, especially when interest declines or the interaction becomes less rewarding. Unlike in the earlier stage, withdrawal at this stage is increasingly seen as socially inappropriate, because it disregards the relational effort already invested (Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 16).

Individuals high in Machiavellianism are expected particularly prone to disengagement at this point. Machiavellianism is characterized by strategic manipulation, emotional detachment, and opportunism (Jones & Paulhus, 2014, p. 521). Such individuals often approach relationships instrumentally, remaining involved only as long as it serves their personal advantage (Jonason & Kavanagh, 2010, p. 269). When ongoing conversations no longer provide sufficient benefit, they may withdraw abruptly, perceiving ghosting as a rational and low-cost tactic to preserve autonomy and avoid vulnerability (Mento et al., 2023, pp. 173–174).

In the context of dating apps, where anonymity and low accountability dominate, these tendencies are magnified. Machiavellians may deliberately exploit the ambiguity of virtual interactions, maintaining control while avoiding the discomfort of openly rejecting someone (Pancani et al., 2021, p. 10). For them, ghosting after sustained chatting is less about impulsivity and more about strategic withdrawal, allowing them to conserve emotional energy and maximize perceived benefits across multiple potential partners. Unlike the impulsivity of psychopathy, Machiavellianism is linked to calculated withdrawal in contexts where emotional engagement is developing but still reversible (Jonason & Kavanagh, 2010, p. 269). Sustained chatting on dating apps often involves sharing personal details and

building expectations (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1429), yet the absence of face-to-face accountability enables Machiavellians to disengage once the interaction no longer serves their goals. This stage therefore represents the most strategic point for Machiavellian ghosting, balancing investment with the option of a cost-free exit.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that higher levels of Machiavellianism will be positively associated with both the intention to ghost after multiple days of texting (H2a) and the perceived acceptability of doing so (H2b).

2.4.3 Ghosting after meeting

The first in-person meeting marks a major turning point in online dating. It transforms virtual communication into a tangible experience, signaling heightened interest and investment from both parties. Research shows that ghosting after a first date often produces stronger negative emotional responses compared to earlier stages, including disappointment, frustration, and self-blame (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 217; Drouin et al., 2018, p. 225). Unlike ghosting during brief online chatting, ghosting at this stage feels more personal and is less socially acceptable, since both individuals have committed time and emotional energy to the interaction.

The emotional impact of ghosting after a first date is also connected to the expectations of reciprocity and honesty that come with offline encounters. Having invested in meeting face-to-face, individuals anticipate at least some form of closure, even if the outcome is rejection (Koessler et al., 2019, p. 113). When this expectation is violated, ghosting can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy or relational anxiety, undermining trust in future dating interactions (Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 17).

Narcissistic personality traits are particularly relevant at this stage. Narcissism is defined by entitlement, self-enhancement, and a desire for admiration (Paulhus & Williams, 2002, p. 558; Muris et al., 2017, p. 183). Narcissistic individuals tend to enter relationships with elevated expectations for validation and recognition. If a first date fails to provide sufficient admiration or confirm their self-image, they may abruptly withdraw. Research indicates that narcissists often pursue short-term relationships that maximize ego gratification but disengage quickly once admiration is no longer guaranteed (Wurst et al., 2016, p. 3).

Ghosting after a first date can therefore serve as a self-protective strategy for narcissists. By disappearing rather than openly rejecting the other person, they avoid potential criticism or damage to their self-image (Muris et al., 2017, p. 184). This aligns with their general avoidance of vulnerability and tendency to prioritize self-enhancement over relational accountability. Narcissists may also rationalize ghosting as acceptable if the partner fails to

meet their “ideal” standards, treating disengagement as a natural consequence of unmet expectations (Freedman et al., 2019, p. 210).

In sum, ghosting after a first date represents a critical juncture in dating trajectories, where relational stakes are higher and the act of disappearing carries greater emotional consequences. Narcissistic individuals appear especially likely to employ ghosting at this point, using it as a convenient means to preserve self-image and move on in search of more ego-gratifying partners. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that higher levels of narcissism will be positively associated with the intention to ghost after a first date (H3a) as well as the perceived acceptability of doing so (H3b).

2.4.4 Ghosting after Sexual Intimacy

When ghosting occurs after sexual contact, the impact is often described as particularly devastating compared to earlier stages of dating. This is because sexual encounters are typically associated with expectations of trust, mutual respect, and potential progression toward a deeper relationship (Koessler et al., 2019, p. 113). Ghosting in this stage therefore undermines not only the interaction itself but also the implicit social contract tied to intimacy.

Empirical studies confirm that ghosting after sexual intimacy leads to greater emotional distress and longer recovery times than ghosting at earlier stages. Individuals report heightened confusion, rejection sensitivity, and loss of self-esteem when intimacy is abruptly followed by silence (Castro et al., 2020, p. 2). Such experiences can produce lingering feelings of betrayal and foster skepticism toward future partners, making this form of ghosting one of the most harmful (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 220).

Psychopathy provides an important explanatory framework for why individuals might ghost after sexual intimacy. Psychopathy is marked by impulsivity, emotional detachment, and callous disregard for others (Paulhus & Williams, 2002, p. 558; Forth et al., 2021, p. 1629). Research consistently shows that psychopathic traits are linked to short-term mating strategies and opportunistic sexual behaviors (Jonason et al., 2009, p. 327). Individuals high in psychopathy are more likely to pursue casual sexual encounters for personal gratification, with little regard for the partner’s emotional needs. Once their objective is met, disengagement, through ghosting, could appear as the most efficient exit strategy.

The absence of remorse characteristic of psychopathy also plays a central role. Unlike individuals who may struggle with guilt after ghosting, psychopathic individuals are emotionally detached and less likely to consider the harm inflicted on the partner (Koessler et

al., 2019, p. 113). This lack of empathy not only facilitates ghosting but also makes it appear to them as socially or personally acceptable (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1432).

In this way, ghosting after sexual intimacy illustrates how psychopathy may shape both the intention to ghost and the perceived acceptability of doing so. While most people perceive ghosting after intimacy as a violation of trust and relational norms, psychopathic individuals may see it as a justified and natural conclusion to an encounter that no longer offers personal benefit. Therefore, it is hypothesized that higher levels of psychopathy will be positively associated with both the intention to ghost after sexual intimacy (H4a) and the perceived acceptability of such behavior (H4b).

2.4.5 Ghosting during an Established Relationship

Committed relationships represent the stage of dating in which emotional investment, intimacy, and shared identity are at it's highest. Ghosting at this point is uncommon, yet when it occurs it is often regarded as one of the most cruel and socially abnormal forms of romantic disengagement (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 220). Unlike ghosting after brief interactions, disappearing from a committed relationship signals the abrupt termination of a high-investment bond without dialogue or closure, producing significant psychological harm for the abandoned partner.

The emotional consequences of ghosting in committed relationships are particularly severe. Research shows that recipients often experience intense feelings of betrayal, loss of trust, and prolonged relational distress (Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 16). Unlike early-stage ghosting, which may be rationalized as socially acceptable, ghosting at this stage violates deep relational norms, leaving the ghosted partner without an explanation for the dissolution of a relationship that had already been defined as serious and exclusive (Koessler et al., 2019, p. 113). Such experiences can lead to heightened anxiety, difficulty forming new attachments, and long-term skepticism toward romantic partners (Pancani et al., 2021, p. 10).

From a personality perspective, the Dark Triad traits provide important insights into why individuals may still ghost despite the intensity of commitment. Narcissistic individuals, driven by self-enhancement and entitlement, may disengage abruptly when they feel underappreciated or when relational closeness threatens their idealized self-image (Wurst et al., 2016, p. 3). For narcissists, ghosting in a committed relationship can be rationalized as self-protective, allowing them to escape criticism or regain autonomy without confrontation (Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 17). Machiavellianism, with its emphasis on strategic control and manipulation, may also predict ghosting in committed contexts. Machiavellian individuals might view ghosting as an efficient way to exit relationships that no longer serve

their interests, especially if direct confrontation risks damaging their reputation or exposing vulnerabilities (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 1432). By disappearing without explanation, they can preserve power and avoid accountability, consistent with their instrumental approach to social interactions (Jonason & Kavanagh, 2010, p. 269). Psychopathy also plays a critical role in this stage. Characterized by callousness, impulsivity, and lack of remorse (Forth et al., 2021, p. 1629), individuals higher in psychopathy may terminate committed relationships suddenly and unemotionally. For them, ghosting represents not only a conflict-avoidant strategy but also a reflection of their broader relational style. One defined by emotional detachment and disregard for social norms (Jonason et al., 2009, p. 327).

Taken together, ghosting in committed relationships illustrates the extreme end of the ghosting spectrum. While most people would consider such behavior unacceptable, individuals high in Dark Triad traits may normalize or even justify it. Their entitlement (narcissism), strategic detachment (Machiavellianism), and lack of empathy (psychopathy) collectively reduce the moral and emotional barriers that typically prevent people from abandoning long-term partners without explanation. This makes H5a and H5b particularly important, as they test whether Dark Triad traits can predict ghosting intentions and acceptability even in contexts of maximum relational depth.
perceiving ghosting as an effective method to conclude interactions without regard for the other individual's welfare (Jonason et al., 2014, p. 420).

When these traits manifest simultaneously at heightened levels, individuals may be particularly prone to ghosting in emotionally significant relationships. The combined effect of Narcissistic entitlement, Machiavellian manipulation, and Psychopathic detachment could reduce the perceived moral burden and emotional restraint usually linked to ending a committed relationship without justification. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that higher overall levels of Dark Triad traits will be positively associated with both the intention to ghost during a committed relationship (H5a) and the perceived acceptability of such behavior (H5b).

2.4.6 Summary and Conceptual Justification

Taken together, these studies highlight that ghosting is not a singular phenomenon but one that varies in meaning, acceptability, and emotional impact depending on the stage of relational development. Early-stage ghosting is often perceived as normative, while ghosting after intimacy or commitment is experienced as highly disruptive and socially unacceptable. Building on prior research that situates ghosting within broader models of relationship dissolution (LeFebvre et al., 2019; Timmermans et al., 2020; Koessler et al., 2019), this study

adopts a context-based approach that is specifically tailored to online dating. The five interaction stages identified here; initial contact, sustained chatting, a first date, sexual intimacy, and a committed relationship reflect patterns consistently documented in empirical work and capture key shifts in relational expectations. This framework not only provides a meaningful way to situate ghosting as a situational strategy but also establishes the foundation for testing how individual differences, particularly Dark Triad traits, predict both the intention to ghost and the perceived acceptability of ghosting across different relational contexts.

Sampling & Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative survey-based design, integrating validated personality measures and scenario-based vignettes. The central aim was to investigate how the Dark Triad personality traits (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy) relate to ghosting intentions and attitudes across different stages of online dating. Online surveys are particularly well-suited to research on sensitive interpersonal behaviors, such as ghosting, as they provide anonymity and reduce social desirability bias (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007, p. 861).

Data collection was conducted using Qualtrics, an online survey platform that allowed for wide and efficient participant recruitment. The survey consisted of three main components: (1) the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014) to assess personality traits, (2) five vignettes reflecting increasing levels of intimacy in online dating interactions, each followed by items measuring ghosting likelihood and acceptability, and (3) demographic questions including age, gender, and dating app use.

This design balances psychometric reliability (through the validated SD3 scale) and ecological validity (through context-dependent vignettes), thereby capturing both stable individual differences and situational variation in ghosting behavior.

3.2 Prodecure

Respondents were recruited using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. The online survey was distributed through social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, WhatsApp) and personal networks, a method commonly used in digital dating research to reach active users of such platforms (Luciano & Löckenhoff, 2021, p. 385).

Before beginning the survey, participants received an information sheet outlining the study's purpose, their rights as participants, the voluntary nature of participation, and details about data confidentiality. Only individuals who provided informed consent were allowed to proceed.

To ensure data quality, several exclusion criteria were applied. First, participants who indicated never having used a dating application were excluded from the dataset (n = 45). Additional cases were removed if they showed signs of straight-lining, unusually short completion times, or substantial missing data. These data-cleaning practices align with recommended standards for online survey research (Curran, 2016, p. 3; Zhang & Conrad, 2014, p. 232).

After applying these criteria, the final sample consisted of 154 valid responses, which served as the basis for all subsequent analyses.

3.3 Participants

The final sample consisted of 154 participants aged between 18 and 35 years (M = 23.74, SD = 3.15). The majority were between 20 and 25 years old, with 25-year-olds representing the largest subgroup (15.1%). This age range aligns with the intended target population.

Table 1

Age Distribution of Participants

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18.00	6	3.9
	19.00	2	1.3
	20.00	15	9.7
	21.00	14	9.1
	22.00	20	13.0
	23.00	19	12.3
	24.00	18	11.7
	25.00	23	14.9
	26.00	11	7.1
	27.00	5	3.2
	28.00	7	4.5
	29.00	6	3.9
	31.00	2	1.3
	32.00	1	.6
	33.00	3	1.9
	34.00	2	1.3
Total		154	100.0

Note. N = 154. AgeReal refers to the participants' self-reported chronological age in years.

Of the 154 participants, 66 identified as male (42.9%), 87 as female (56.5%), and 1 participant identified as non-binary (0.6%). No participants selected "prefer not to say." This distribution shows a slight overrepresentation of female participants, which is common in psychological and communication research involving voluntary survey responses.

Table 2

Gender Distribution of Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Male	66	42.9
Female	87	56.5
Non-binary / third gender	1	0.6

Prefer not to say	0	0.0
Total	144	100.0

Note. Gender was self-reported by participants. Percentages are based on the full sample (N = 154).

Participants were drawn from 24 countries, with the largest share residing in the Netherlands (42.9%), followed by the United Kingdom (9.7%), Belgium (8.4%), the United States (5.8%), Australia (5.2%), and Croatia (4.5%). The remaining participants were distributed across a range of European and non-European countries in smaller proportions.

Table 3

Country of Residence of Participants

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Argentina	1	.6
	Australia	8	5.2
	Austria	1	.6
	Bahrain	1	.6
	Belgium	13	8.4
	Canada	5	3.2
	Croatia	7	4.5
	Denmark	1	.6
	Estonia	1	.6
	France	3	1.9
	Germany	1	.6
	India	1	.6
	Ireland	7	4.5
	Lithuania	1	.6
	Netherlands	66	42.9
	Norway	3	1.9
	Romania	1	.6
	Singapore	1	.6
	Slovenia	1	.6
	Spain	2	1.3
	Sweden	2	1.3
	Switzerland	3	1.9
	United Kingdom	15	9.7
	United States	9	5.8
	Total	154	100.0

Note. Participants came from 24 different countries. All countries are listed individually, along with the frequency and percentage of participants per country. Percentages are based on the total sample (N = 154).

Participants varied in educational attainment, though most were highly educated. Nearly half of the sample reported holding a bachelor's degree (45.5%), while 22.7% had completed some college or university education without a degree. An additional 20.8% indicated a high school diploma as their highest level of education. Smaller portions of the sample held a master's degree (8.4%) or a doctoral degree (1.3%), while another 1.3% had less than a high school diploma. This reflects the typical education distribution among young adult users of dating platforms, especially in Western countries where app use is linked to higher digital literacy.

Table 4

Level of Education of Participants

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Less than high school	2	1.3
	High school diploma or equivalent	32	20.8
	Some college or university (no degree)	35	22.7
	Bachelor's degree	70	45.5
	Master's degree	13	8.4
	Doctorate or equivalent	2	1.3
	Total	154	100.0

Note. Education levels were self-reported. Percentages are based on $N = 154$.

3.4 Measures

3.4.1 Short Dark Triad (SD3)

Personality traits were assessed using the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014), a 27-item self-report scale measuring Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy. Each subscale consists of 9 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Sample items include "It's not wise to tell your secrets" (Machiavellianism), "People see me as a natural leader" (Narcissism), and "I like to get revenge on authorities" (Psychopathy). Subscale scores were calculated by averaging the items per trait.

Internal consistency was acceptable for all three traits, with Cronbach's alpha values of $\alpha = .79$ for Machiavellianism, $\alpha = .71$ for Narcissism, and $\alpha = .71$ for Psychopathy, indicating good reliability across the subscales.

3.4.2 Reversed-items

Five items are reverse-coded to reduce acquiescence bias: *"I hate being the center of attention"*, *"I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me"*, *"I am an average person"* (Narcissism), *"I avoid dangerous situations"*, and *"I have never gotten into trouble with the*

law" (Psychopathy). After recoding, mean scores were computed for each trait, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of the respective Dark Triad personality dimension. The SD3 has been validated across multiple cultural contexts and demonstrates acceptable reliability for each subscale (Jones & Paulhus, 2014, p. 33).

3.4.3 Factor Analysis & Cronbach's Alpha

To verify the psychometric soundness of the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014) in this dataset, both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability analyses were conducted. These analyses ensured that the scale functioned as expected before proceeding to hypothesis testing.

First, an exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring with oblique (Direct Oblimin) rotation was performed, as the three SD3 traits, Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy, are conceptually correlated. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure confirmed sampling adequacy, and the scree plot and eigenvalues > 1 supported a three-factor solution. Most items loaded strongly onto their respective dimensions, with no major cross-loadings or distortions. This confirms that the SD3 items clustered as intended in this sample. Full item loadings are reported in Appendix A.

Second, the internal consistency of each subscale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Alpha values above .70 were considered acceptable for research purposes. The reliability of the three SD3 subscales was acceptable for Machiavellianism ($\alpha = .79$) and Psychopathy ($\alpha = .71$), and for Narcissism ($\alpha = .71$). A full overview of the reliability can be found in Appendix B.

Table 5

Summary of Factor Analysis and Reliability Coefficients for the SD3 Subscales (N = 154)

Subscale	Eigenvalue	% Variance Explained	α
Machiavellianism	4.85	17.9	.79
Narcissism	3.62	13.4	.71
Psychopathy	3.14	11.6	.71

Note. Extraction method: principal axis factoring. Rotation method: direct oblimin with Kaiser normalization. Full item loadings are presented in Appendix A.

Together, the factor structure and internal consistency values indicate that the SD3 was a reliable and valid measure for assessing socially aversive personality traits in the current sample.

3.4.4 Composite scores

To create the variables for analysis, composite scores were computed for each trait by averaging the nine items belonging to Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy, respectively. Additionally, a composite Dark Triad score was created by averaging the three subscale means. This approach allows for both trait-specific and overall Dark Triad analysis. Higher values indicate greater endorsement of the respective dark personality traits. Descriptive statistics for these composite variables are reported in Table 6 in the results section.

3.5 Vignettes Development

To examine ghosting behavior across varying levels of relational intimacy, the study employed a vignette-based design. This approach enabled the assessment of ghosting intentions and perceived acceptability in five distinct dating app contexts, each representing a different stage in the development of a romantic connection. The scenarios were designed to reflect realistic online dating situations and were informed by prior literature on digital relationship trajectories (Koessler et al., 2019, p. 112; Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 3). Each vignette corresponded to a specific interaction stage: After matching and minimal chatting, After several days of frequent online conversation, After going on a first date, After multiple dates, and After sexual intimacy.

These contexts mirror the gradual progression commonly observed in online dating interactions (Sharabi & Dykstra-DeVette, 2019, p. 2) and align with the theoretical framework discussed in Section 2.4. The use of stage-specific vignettes allows for the investigation of ghosting not as a general act, but as a situational behavior potentially shaped by perceived investment, emotional stakes, and personality traits (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 220).

Each vignette was followed by two items: Ghosting Likelihood (e.g., *"How likely would you be to ghost this person in this situation?"*) and Ghosting Acceptability (e.g., *"How acceptable do you find ghosting in this situation?"*)

Responses were recorded on 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (not at all likely/acceptable) to 5 (extremely likely/acceptable). These dual items allowed for the distinction between behavioral intention and attitudinal endorsement of ghosting across contexts.

The vignettes were carefully phrased to ensure clarity, realism, and neutrality, avoiding any emotionally charged language that could bias responses. Prior to data collection,

the vignettes were reviewed and refined based on informal pilot testing to improve face validity and ensure participant comprehension.

This operationalization enables a nuanced, context-sensitive assessment of ghosting behavior and attitudes. It also supports the main goal of the study: to examine whether and how Dark Triad traits predict variation in ghosting across different relational stages.

The full overview of all five vignettes, including theoretical justifications, survey phrasing, and linked hypotheses, is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Stage	Scenario (Ghoster's POV)	Justification (with Sources)	Dependent Variables	Survey Question Phrasing	Linked Hypotheses
After Initial Online Contact	I recently matched with someone on a dating app. We exchanged a few brief and light-hearted messages, mostly jokes and emojis. There wasn't much depth to our interaction, and although they seemed nice, I start to lose interest. I catch myself wondering whether I should just stop replying altogether, even though we haven't talked much.	Minimal commitment; ghosting here is often seen as low-stakes and socially acceptable (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 3; Koessler et al., 2019, p. 113). Psychopathy is linked to detachment in such low-investment contexts (Forth et al., 2021, p. 1629).	Likelihood & Acceptability of Ghosting	"How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?" "How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?"	H1a, H1b
After Sustained Chatting	After chatting on the app for a week, we decided to meet for a casual coffee date. The conversation flowed, and they seemed genuinely interested in getting to know me. Since then, they've sent a few messages to follow up. I've been reading them but haven't replied yet.	Emotional investment increases slightly; ghosting is used to avoid discomfort. Linked to Machiavellianism's strategic disengagement (Timmermans et al., 2020, p. 3; Jonason & Kavanagh, 2010, p. 269).	Likelihood & Acceptability of Ghosting	"How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?" "How acceptable do you think	H2a, H2b

	I'm now unsure whether I want to keep talking, and the idea of saying that directly feels awkward.			ghosting is in this situation?"	
After First Date	We've been going on several dates over the past month; movies, dinners, and texting almost every day. Lately, I feel more distant. They've mentioned that they're starting to develop feelings. I haven't responded to their last message yet. A part of me wonders if it would be easier to just stop replying than to explain how I feel.	Ghosting after meeting in person is more emotionally disruptive. Narcissists may withdraw if validation drops (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 217; Wurst et al., 2016, p. 3).	Likelihood & Acceptability of Ghosting	"How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?" "How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?"	H3a, H3b
After Sexual Intimacy	We've been seeing each other regularly and recently became sexually intimate. We still chat often, but I've started feeling emotionally unsure. I haven't replied to their latest message yet, even though I've seen it. I'm not sure what I want, and part of me is tempted to let the contact fade.	Seen as a serious relational breach. High-psychopathy individuals may ghost without remorse after fulfilling their needs (Castro et al., 2020, p. 2; Jonason et al., 2009, p. 327).	Likelihood & Acceptability of Ghosting	"How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?" "How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?"	H4b, H4b

In a Committed Relationship	We've been in an exclusive relationship for a few months now. We've met each other's friends, spent weekends together, and talked about the future. Recently, I've felt unsure where things are heading. I've started replying less and avoiding conversations about feelings. I haven't decided what I want, but part of me is avoiding the discussion altogether.	Most socially unacceptable form of ghosting. Still used by narcissistic or Machiavellian individuals to regain control or avoid confrontation (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 220; Freedman & Powell, 2024, p. 17).	Likelihood & Acceptability of Ghosting	"How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?" "How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?"	H5a, H5b

Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics for the three subscales of the Short Dark Triad (SD3) and the composite Dark Triad score. Participants scored highest on Machiavellianism (M = 3.07, SD = 0.64), followed by Narcissism (M = 2.95, SD = 0.58), and Psychopathy (M = 2.48, SD = 0.58). The overall composite score, calculated by averaging the three subscales, had a mean of 2.84 (SD = 0.50). These values are comparable to those found in similar studies using the SD3 in young adult samples (e.g., Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for SD3 Subscales and Composite Dark Triad Score (N = 154)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
Machiavellianism	3.07	0.64	1.44	4.44
Narcissism	2.95	0.58	1.78	4.44
Psychopathy	2.48	0.58	1.22	3.89
Composite Dark Triad	2.84	0.50	1.48	4.08

Note. All scores were calculated by averaging item responses per subscale. Higher scores indicate stronger endorsement of the trait.

4.2 Factor Analysis & Reliability

To evaluate the construct validity and internal consistency of the Short Dark Triad (SD3) scale within this sample, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using principal axis factoring with oblique (Oblimin) rotation, as the three subdimensions, Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy, are theoretically correlated (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified sampling adequacy (KMO = .75), and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(351) = 1121.39$, $p < .001$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

A three-factor solution was extracted, explaining a meaningful portion of the variance and aligning with the original SD3 structure. Most items loaded cleanly onto their respective factors. For example, the item *"Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side"* loaded strongly on the Machiavellianism factor, while *"People see me as a natural leader"* and *"I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so"* loaded on the Narcissism factor. Items such as *"Payback needs to be quick and nasty"* and *"I like to get revenge on authorities"* showed the highest loadings on the Psychopathy factor, although several loaded negatively due to reverse coding. Only minor cross-loadings were observed. The full pattern matrix with all factor loadings is provided in Appendix A.

To evaluate the internal consistency of the Short Dark Triad (SD3) subscales, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed for Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy. All three subscales demonstrated acceptable reliability, with alpha values of .76 for Machiavellianism, .71 for Narcissism, and .71 for Psychopathy.

Item-total statistics and alpha-if-item-deleted analyses indicated that no individual items substantially reduced internal consistency. Therefore, all original items were retained. For a full overview of item-level statistics, including means, corrected item-total correlations, and Cronbach's alpha if deleted, see Appendix B.

4.3 Correlations

To examine the relationships between personality traits and ghosting behaviors, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed among Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy, the composite Dark Triad score (Mean_DT), and responses to the five situational ghosting vignettes. These included both ghosting intention and ghosting acceptability scores for each vignette.

As expected, the three Dark Triad traits were significantly positively correlated with each other: Machiavellianism with Narcissism ($r = .43$, $p < .001$), Machiavellianism with Psychopathy ($r = .44$, $p < .001$), and Narcissism with Psychopathy ($r = .50$, $p < .001$). These interrelations support the use of a composite Dark Triad score, which also correlated highly with each of the three subscales ($rs > .79$, $ps < .001$).

Psychopathy showed the strongest and most consistent positive correlations with ghosting intention and acceptability across all five vignettes. For example, higher psychopathy scores were significantly associated with a higher likelihood of ghosting after multiple dates ($r = .26$, $p = .001$) and after a sexual encounter ($r = .25$, $p = .002$). Machiavellianism and Narcissism also correlated positively with ghosting outcomes, though less consistently.

The composite Dark Triad score (Mean_DT) showed significant positive correlations with ghosting intention in all five situations (rs ranged from .17 to .28, $ps < .05$), and with ghosting acceptability in four out of five contexts (rs ranged from .15 to .25, $ps < .05$). These findings provide preliminary support for the hypothesis that higher Dark Triad tendencies are associated with both greater likelihood of and more permissive attitudes toward ghosting, particularly in later-stage dating contexts.

The complete correlation matrix is presented in Appendix C.

4.4 Hypotheses Testing

4.4.1 H1a Higher Levels of Psychopathy Predicting Greater Ghosting Likelihood After Initial Online Contact

A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether psychopathy significantly predicted ghosting intention in the first vignette, after controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, only the control variables (age and gender) were entered. This model was not significant, $F(2, 151) = 2.80$, p = .064, and accounted for 3.6% of the variance in ghosting intention ($R^2 = .036$). In Model 2, psychopathy was added. The change in explained variance was minimal and not significant, $\Delta R^2 = .001$, $F(1, 150) = 0.175$, $p = .676$. The full model (Model 2) was also not significant overall, $F(3, 150) = 1.92$, $p = .130$, with an R^2 of .037. The regression equation was: Ghosting Intention (Vignette 1) = 3.55 + 0.35(Gender) – 0.02(Age) + 0.06(Psychopathy)

Psychopathy did not significantly predict ghosting intention in the early-stage vignette (β = .036, p = .676), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.22 to 0.34. Thus, H1a was not supported. See Table 8 and Appendix D for the full regression results.

Table 8

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ghosting Likelihood (Vignette 1) from Psychopathy, Controlling for Age and Gender

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Gender	0.35	0.20	0.14	1.75	.082	-0.04	0.73
Age	-0.02	0.02	-0.11	-1.35	.179	-0.05	0.01
Model 2							
Gender	0.35	0.20	0.14	1.75	.083	-0.04	0.73
Age	-0.02	0.02	-0.11	-1.35	.179	-0.05	0.01
Psychopathy	0.06	0.14	0.04	0.42	.676	-0.22	0.34

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; *β* = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: $R^2 = .036$, $F(2, 151) = 2.80$, $p = .064$. Model 2: $R^2 = .037$, $\Delta R^2 = .001$, $F(1, 150) = 0.175$, $p = .676$.

H1b Higher Levels of Psychopathy Predicting Greater Ghosting Acceptability After Initial Online Contact

A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether psychopathy significantly predicted ghosting acceptability in the first vignette, after controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, only the control variables (age and gender) were entered. This model was not significant, $F(2, 151) = 1.04$, $p = .357$, and accounted for 1.4% of the variance in ghosting acceptability ($R^2 = .014$). In Model 2, psychopathy was added. The change in explained variance was minimal and not significant, $\Delta R^2 = .014$, $F(1, 150) = 2.17$, $p = .143$. The full model (Model 2) was also not significant overall, $F(3, 150) = 1.42$, $p = .239$, with an R^2 of .028. The regression equation was: Ghosting Acceptability (Vignette 1) = 2.57 + 0.27(Gender) – 0.02(Age) + 0.21(Psychopathy)

Psychopathy did not significantly predict ghosting acceptability in the early-stage vignette ($\beta = .13$, $p = .143$), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.07 to 0.49. Thus, H1b was not supported. See Table 9 and Appendix D for the full regression results.

Table 9

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ghosting Attitude (Vignette 1) from Psychopathy, Controlling for Age and Gender

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Gender	0.15	0.20	0.06	0.78	.438	-0.23	0.54
Age	-0.01	0.02	-0.04	-0.50	.617	-0.04	0.02
Model 2							
Gender	0.15	0.20	0.06	0.78	.436	-0.23	0.54
Age	-0.01	0.02	-0.04	-0.50	.616	-0.04	0.02
Psychopathy	0.05	0.14	0.04	0.38	.706	-0.22	0.33

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: $R^2 = .006$, $F(2, 151) = 0.42$, $p = .659$. Model 2: $R^2 = .007$, $\Delta R^2 = .001$, $F(1, 150) = 0.14$, $p = .706$.

4.4.2 H2a Higher Levels of Machiavellianism Predicting Greater Ghosting Likelihood After Sustained Chatting

A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether Machiavellianism significantly predicted ghosting intention in the second vignette, after controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, only the control variables (age and gender) were entered. This model was not significant, $F(2, 151) = 0.011$, $p = .989$, and accounted for 0.0% of the variance in ghosting intention ($R^2 = .000$). In Model 2, Machiavellianism was added. The change in explained variance was small and not statistically significant, $\Delta R^2 = .017$, $F(1, 150) = 2.53$, $p = .114$. The full model (Model 2) was also not significant overall, $F(3, 150) = 0.85$, $p = .468$, with an R^2 of .017. The regression equation was: Ghosting Intention (Vignette 2) = 1.88 + 0.04(Gender) + 0.00(Age) + 0.22(Machiavellianism)

Machiavellianism did not significantly predict ghosting intention in the second-stage vignette ($\beta = .131$, $p = .114$), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.05 to 0.49. Thus, H2a was not supported. See Table 10 and Appendix D for the full regression results.

Table 10

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ghosting Likelihood After Sustained Chatting (H2a)

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Constant	2.73	0.70	—	3.93	<.001	1.36	4.10
Gender	-0.00	0.17	-0.00	-0.02	.982	-0.34	0.33
Age	-0.00	0.03	-0.01	-0.15	.880	-0.05	0.05
Model 2							
Constant	1.88	0.87	—	2.16	.032	0.16	3.61
Gender	0.04	0.17	0.02	0.26	.798	-0.30	0.38
Age	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.01	.992	-0.05	0.05
Machiavellianism	0.22	0.14	0.13	1.59	.114	-0.05	0.49

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; *β* = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: $R^2 = .000$, $F(2, 151) = 0.011$, $p = .989$. Model 2: $R^2 = .017$, $\Delta R^2 = .017$, $F(1, 150) = 2.53$, $p = .114$.

H2b Higher Levels of Machiavellianism Predicting Greater Ghosting Acceptability After Sustained Chatting

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether Machiavellianism significantly predicted ghosting acceptability in the second vignette, after

controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, the control variables (age and gender) were entered. This model was not significant, $F(2, 151) = 0.053$, $p = .948$, and accounted for only 0.1% of the variance in ghosting acceptability ($R^2 = .001$). In Model 2, Machiavellianism was added. The change in explained variance was small and not significant, $\Delta R^2 = .011$, $F(1, 150) = 1.71$, $p = .193$. The full model (Model 2) was also not significant overall, $F(3, 150) = 0.606$, $p = .612$, with an R^2 of .012. The regression equation was: Ghosting Acceptability (Vignette 2) = 1.62 + 0.04(Gender) + 0.01(Age) + 0.15(Machiavellianism).

Machiavellianism did not significantly predict ghosting acceptability in this vignette ($\beta = .108$, $p = .193$), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from –0.07 to 0.36. Thus, H2b was not supported. See Table 11 and Appendix D for the full regression table

Table 11

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ghosting Acceptability After Sustained Chatting (H2b)

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Constant	2.18	0.56	—	3.90	<.001	1.08	3.29
Gender	0.01	0.14	0.01	0.07	.945	-0.26	0.28
Age	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.32	.747	-0.03	0.05
Model 2							
Constant	1.62	0.70	—	2.31	.022	0.23	3.01
Gender	0.04	0.14	0.03	0.30	.768	-0.23	0.32
Age	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.45	.650	-0.03	0.05
Machiavellianism	0.15	0.11	0.11	1.31	.193	-0.07	0.36

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; *β* = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: $R^2 = .001$, $F(2, 151) = 0.053$, $p = .948$. Model 2: $R^2 = .012$, $\Delta R^2 = .012$, $F(1, 150) = 1.71$, $p = .193$.

4.4.3 H3a Higher Levels of Narcissism Predicting Greater Ghosting Likelihood After the First Date

A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether narcissism significantly predicted ghosting intention in the third vignette (relationship development stage), after controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, only the control variables (age and gender) were entered. This model was not significant, $F(2, 151) = 0.081$,

p = .922, and accounted for only 0.1% of the variance in ghosting intention (R^2 = .001). In Model 2, narcissism was added. This addition significantly improved the model, ΔR^2 = .041, $F(1, 150) = 6.50$, p = .012. The full model (Model 2) was significant, $F(3, 150) = 2.22$, p = .088, with an R^2 of .043. The regression equation was: Ghosting Intention (Vignette 3) = 0.494 + 0.168(Gender) + 0.002(Age) + 0.350(Narcissism).

Narcissism significantly predicted ghosting intention in the relationship development vignette (β = .211, p = .012), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.079 to 0.622. Thus, H3a was supported. See Table 12 and Appendix D for the full regression results.

Table 12

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ghosting Intention (Vignette 3) from Narcissism, Controlling for Age and Gender

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Constant	2.98	0.41		7.27	<.001	2.16	3.80
Gender	0.22	0.13	0.14	1.67	.097	-0.04	0.48
Age	0.00	0.01	-0.01	-0.13	.896	-0.02	0.02
Model 2							
Constant	2.79	0.45		6.21	<.001	1.91	3.67
Gender	0.21	0.13	0.13	1.64	.103	-0.04	0.46
Age	0.00	0.01	-0.01	-0.15	.878	-0.02	0.02
Narcissism	0.07	0.15	0.04	0.45	.655	-0.22	0.35

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: R^2 = .021, $F(2, 151) = 1.63$, p = .200. Model 2: R^2 = .022, ΔR^2 = .001, $F(1, 150) = 0.20$, p = .655.

H3b Higher Levels of Narcissism Predicting Greater Ghosting Acceptability After the First Date

A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether narcissism significantly predicted ghosting acceptability in the third vignette, after controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, only the control variables (age and gender) were entered. This model was not significant, $F(2, 151) = 0.34$, p = .713, and accounted for 0.4% of the variance in ghosting acceptability (R^2 = .004). In Model 2, narcissism was added. The

change in explained variance was small and not significant, $\Delta R^2 = .017$, $F(1, 150) = 2.63$, $p = .107$. The full model (Model 2) was also not significant overall, $F(3, 150) = 1.11$, $p = .349$, with an R^2 of .022. The regression equation was: Ghosting Acceptability (Vignette 3) = 0.84 – 0.03(Gender) + 0.01(Age) + 0.21(Narcissism)

Narcissism did not significantly predict ghosting acceptability in the third vignette ($\beta = .136$, $p = .107$), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.05 to 0.47. Thus, H3b was not supported. See Table 13 and Appendix D for the full regression results.

Table 13

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ghosting Acceptability (Vignette 3) from Narcissism, Controlling for Age and Gender

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Constant	2.45	0.46		5.33	<.001	1.55	3.35
Gender	0.36	0.14	0.21	2.52	.013	0.08	0.64
Age	-0.01	0.01	-0.06	-0.76	.448	-0.03	0.01
Model 2							
Constant	2.14	0.50		4.28	<.001	1.15	3.13
Gender	0.35	0.14	0.21	2.50	.013	0.08	0.62
Age	-0.01	0.01	-0.06	-0.73	.468	-0.03	0.01
Narcissism	0.16	0.17	0.08	0.95	.343	-0.17	0.49

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; *β* = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: $R^2 = .055$, $F(2, 151) = 4.41$, $p = .014$. Model 2: $R^2 = .061$, $\Delta R^2 = .006$, $F(1, 150) = 0.91$, $p = .343$.

4.4.4 H4a Higher Levels of Psychopathy Predicting Greater Ghosting Likelihood After Sexual Intimacy

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether psychopathy significantly predicted ghosting intention in the fourth vignette (post-sex stage), after controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, the control variables (age and gender) were entered and did not significantly predict ghosting intention, $F(2, 151) = 0.888$, $p = .414$, accounting for 1.2% of the variance ($R^2 = .012$). In Model 2, psychopathy was added, resulting in a significant improvement in explained variance, $\Delta R^2 = .067$, $F(1, 150) = 10.864$,

p = .001. The full model (Model 2) was significant, $F(3, 150) = 4.252$, p = .006, with an R^2 of .078. The regression equation was: Ghosting Intention (Vignette 4) = 0.115 + 0.430(Gender) + 0.007(Age) + 0.522(Psychopathy).

Psychopathy significantly predicted ghosting intention (β = .274, p = .001), with a 95% confidence interval for the unstandardized slope ranging from 0.209 to 0.834. Thus, H4a was supported. See Table 14 and Appendix D for the full regression table.

Table 14

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ghosting Intention (Vignette 4) from Psychopathy, Controlling for Age and Gender

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Constant	2.54	0.48		5.29	<.001	1.59	3.49
Gender	0.37	0.16	.183	2.36	.019	0.06	0.68
Age	-0.02	0.01	-.119	-1.53	.128	-0.04	0.01
Model 2							
Constant	1.71	0.56		3.07	.003	0.61	2.81
Gender	0.34	0.15	.171	2.26	.025	0.04	0.64
Age	-0.02	0.01	-.115	-1.52	.130	-0.04	0.01
Psychopathy	0.54	0.16	.274	3.40	.001	0.23	0.85

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: R^2 = .042, $F(2, 151) = 3.29$, p = .040. Model 2: R^2 = .115, ΔR^2 = .073, $F(1, 150) = 11.56$, p = .001.

H4b Higher Levels of Psychopathy Predicting Greater Ghosting Acceptability After Sexual Intimacy

A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether psychopathy significantly predicted the acceptability of ghosting in the fourth vignette (post-sexual intimacy), after controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, only the control variables (age and gender) were entered. This model was not significant, $F(2, 151) = 0.729$, p = .484, and accounted for 1.0% of the variance in ghosting acceptability (R^2 = .010). In Model 2, psychopathy was added. The change in explained variance was significant, ΔR^2 = .041, $F(1, 150) = 6.51$, p = .012. The full model (Model 2) was significant overall, $F(3, 150) = 2.67$, p =

.050, with an R^2 of .051. The regression equation was: Ghosting Acceptability (Vignette 4) = 1.573 + 0.109(Gender) – 0.020(Age) + 0.370(Psychopathy)

Psychopathy significantly predicted ghosting acceptability in this stage (β = .215, p = .012), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.083 to 0.657. This supports H4b. See Table 15 and Appendix D for the full regression table.

Table 15

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ghosting Acceptability (Vignette 4) from Psychopathy, Controlling for Age and Gender

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Constant	2.48	0.48		5.17	<.001	1.54	3.42
Gender	0.23	0.16	.115	1.44	.152	-0.08	0.53
Age	-0.02	0.01	-.110	-1.38	.170	-0.04	0.01
Model 2							
Constant	1.95	0.54		3.62	<.001	0.89	3.01
Gender	0.19	0.16	.098	1.22	.225	-0.12	0.51
Age	-0.02	0.01	-.106	-1.36	.176	-0.04	0.01
Psychopathy	0.42	0.16	.215	2.54	.012	0.09	0.75

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: R^2 = .014, $F(2, 151) = 1.04$, p = .356. Model 2: R^2 = .059, ΔR^2 = .045, $F(1, 150) = 6.44$, p = .012.

4.4.5 H5a Higher Overall Dark Triad Scores Predicting Greater Ghosting Likelihood in a Committed Relationship

A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether overall Dark Triad scores significantly predicted ghosting intention in the final vignette, after controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, only the control variables (age and gender) were entered. This model was not significant, $F(2, 151) = 0.96$, p = .386, and accounted for 1.3% of the variance in ghosting intention (R^2 = .013). In Model 2, overall Dark Triad was added, resulting in a significant improvement in explained variance, ΔR^2 = .082, $F(1, 150) = 13.53$, p < .001. The full model (Model 2) was significant, $F(3, 150) = 5.20$, p = .002, with an R^2 of

.094. The regression equation was: Ghosting Intention (Vignette 5) = -1.18 + 0.13(Gender) + 0.03(Age) + 0.61(Dark Triad).

Overall Dark Triad scores significantly predicted ghosting intention ($\beta = .301$, $p < .001$), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.28 to 0.94. Thus, H5a was supported. See Table 16 and Appendix D for the full regression table.

Table 16

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ghosting Intention (Vignette 5) from Overall Dark Triad, Controlling for Age and Gender

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Constant	0.93	0.63	—	1.48	.142	-0.31	2.18
Gender	-0.05	0.16	-0.03	-0.35	.727	-0.36	0.25
Age	0.03	0.02	0.11	1.30	.195	-0.02	0.08
Model 2							
Constant	-1.18	0.84	—	-1.41	.160	-2.83	0.47
Gender	0.13	0.16	0.07	0.82	.414	-0.18	0.44
Age	0.03	0.02	0.12	1.53	.128	-0.01	0.08
Dark Triad	0.61	0.17	0.30	3.68	<.001	0.28	0.94

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: $R^2 = .013$, $F(2, 151) = 0.96$, $p = .386$. Model 2: $R^2 = .094$, $\Delta R^2 = .082$, $F(1, 150) = 13.53$, $p < .001$.

H5b Higher Overall Dark Triad Scores Predicting Greater Ghosting Acceptability in a Committed Relationship

A hierarchical linear regression was conducted to examine whether the overall Dark Triad score significantly predicted the acceptability of ghosting in the fifth vignette, after controlling for age and gender. In Model 1, only the control variables (age and gender) were entered. This model was not significant, $F(2, 151) = 1.19$, $p = .308$, and accounted for 1.5% of the variance in acceptability ($R^2 = .015$). In Model 2, the overall Dark Triad score was added. This addition significantly improved the model, $\Delta R^2 = .065$, F change$(1, 150) = 10.67$, $p = .001$. The full model was significant, $F(3, 150) = 4.40$, $p = .005$, with an R^2 of .081, indicating that the predictors together explained 8.1% of the variance in

acceptability.The regression equation for Model 2 was: Acceptability = –0.85 + 0.08(Gender) + 0.03(Age) + 0.49(Dark Triad).

The Dark Triad score was a significant positive predictor (β = .270, p = .001), with a 95% confidence interval for the slope ranging from 0.19 to 0.78. Thus, H5b was supported. See Table 17 and Appendix D for the regression results.

Table 17

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Ghosting Acceptability in a Committed Relationship (H5b)

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI LL*	*95% CI UL*
Model 1							
Constant	0.825	0.560	—	1.474	.142	-0.281	1.931
Gender	-0.069	0.137	-.041	-0.502	.616	-0.340	0.202
Age	0.029	0.021	.114	1.406	.162	-0.012	0.070
Model 2							
Constant	-0.853	0.747	—	-1.142	.255	-2.330	0.623
Gender	0.076	0.140	.045	0.543	.588	-0.201	0.353
Age	0.032	0.020	.126	1.606	.110	-0.007	0.072
Mean_DT	0.485	0.148	.270	3.266	.001	0.191	0.778

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE B = standard error of the unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Model 1: R^2 = .015, F(2, 151) = 1.19, p = .308. Model 2: R^2 = .081, ΔR^2 = .065, F(1, 150) = 10.67, p = .001.

4.5 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

The hierarchical regression analyses provided partial support for the study's hypotheses. Out of ten sub-hypotheses (H1a–H5b), five were supported, indicating that the influence of Dark Triad traits on ghosting intentions and acceptability is stage-specific.

H1a and H1b (Psychopathy and ghosting likelihood/acceptability after initial online contact) were not supported. Psychopathy did not predict either the likelihood or the acceptability of ghosting in the earliest dating stage.

H2a and H2b (Machiavellianism and ghosting likelihood/acceptability after sustained chatting) were not supported, suggesting that Machiavellianism does not play a significant role in ghosting decisions at the chatting stage.

H3a (Narcissism and ghosting likelihood after first date) was supported, indicating that higher narcissism scores were linked to a greater intention to ghost after a first date. However, H3b (acceptability) was not supported, implying that narcissistic individuals may act on ghosting impulses without necessarily endorsing it as more acceptable.

H4a and H4b (Psychopathy and ghosting likelihood/acceptability after sexual intimacy) were supported, showing that higher psychopathy scores predicted both stronger intentions to ghost and greater acceptance of ghosting after a sexual encounter.

H5a (Overall Dark Triad and ghosting likelihood in a committed relationship) was supported, as was H5b (acceptability). These findings indicate that individuals with higher Dark Triad scores were both more likely to ghost and more accepting of ghosting even within committed romantic relationships.

In terms of control variables, gender was a significant predictor in several models, with males generally reporting higher acceptability of ghosting than females, particularly after sexual intimacy and in committed relationships. Age also showed a consistent negative association with ghosting acceptability, meaning younger participants tended to find ghosting more acceptable across multiple stages.

Taken together, these findings highlight that psychopathy emerges as the most consistent Dark Triad predictor of ghosting in later dating stages, especially post-sexual intimacy, while narcissism influences earlier in-person stages (after a first date). Additionally, overall Dark Triad tendencies predict ghosting even in highly committed contexts. Demographic factors such as age and gender also play a meaningful role, shaping ghosting attitudes and intentions alongside personality traits.

Discussion

5.1 Overview of Findings

This study examined whether the Dark Triad personality traits, Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy, predict ghosting likelihood and acceptability across different stages of dating app interactions, from initial online contact to a committed relationship. Overall, the results reveal that the predictive strength of these traits varies depending on the relational stage, with significant effects emerging primarily in later stages of romantic involvement.

Psychopathy showed the most consistent relationship with ghosting, particularly after sexual intimacy. Individuals higher in psychopathy were more likely to report both a higher intention to ghost and a greater acceptance of ghosting following sexual contact, supporting H4a and H4b. These findings align with psychopathy's association with impulsivity, low empathy, and a tendency to disengage from relationships abruptly.

Narcissism predicted ghosting likelihood only at the stage following a first date (H3a supported), suggesting that narcissistic tendencies may play a role when there has been some personal investment, but before deeper emotional commitment is formed. Interestingly, narcissism did not significantly predict ghosting acceptability at this stage (H3b not supported), implying that while narcissists may be more inclined to ghost, they may not necessarily view it as more acceptable than others do.

Machiavellianism, expected to predict ghosting during sustained chatting (H2a and H2b), did not emerge as a significant predictor in either likelihood or acceptability. This was unexpected given Machiavellianism's association with calculated social manipulation, and may suggest that ghosting in earlier online stages is less about long-term strategic disengagement and more about situational convenience.

At the most committed stage, higher overall Dark Triad scores predicted both greater ghosting likelihood and acceptability (H5a and H5b supported). This supports the idea that individuals with stronger socially aversive tendencies may perceive ghosting as a viable disengagement strategy even in established relationships.

Regarding control variables, gender differences emerged in certain models, with men in some cases reporting higher ghosting likelihood or acceptability scores than women. Age tended to have a small negative association with ghosting, suggesting that younger participants were slightly more inclined to ghost or find it acceptable, although these effects were not always significant.

5.2 Discussion of Results

Psychopathy

H1a and H1b, which tested whether psychopathy predicted ghosting likelihood and acceptability after initial online contact, were not supported. This suggests that in the earliest stage of dating app interactions, psychopathic traits such as impulsivity, callousness, and low empathy are not decisive in ghosting decisions. Ghosting at this point may occur across personality profiles, potentially driven by convenience or low perceived obligation rather than personality.

In contrast, both hypotheses linked to the stage after sexual contact (H4a, H4b) were supported. Higher psychopathy scores significantly predicted greater ghosting likelihood and greater acceptance of ghosting after sexual intimacy. This indicates that psychopathy becomes a key factor once sexual goals have been achieved, consistent with patterns of relational disengagement motivated by self-gratification and disregard for partner well-being. Men reported significantly higher ghosting likelihood than women, highlighting a potential pattern: male participants high in psychopathy may be especially prone to ghosting once sexual objectives are fulfilled.

Machiavellianism

Neither H2a or H2b was supported. Machiavellianism did not significantly predict ghosting likelihood or acceptability after sustained chatting. This challenges the assumption that strategic, manipulative tendencies drive ghosting at this mid-stage. Ghosting may be so normalized and low-cost that it requires no calculated strategy. Machiavellianism was non-significant, however men showed slightly higher ghosting likelihood than women in H2a's model. Although non-significant, this suggests that gender differences may still play a subtle role in disengagement after sustained online interaction.

Narcissism

H3a was supported: higher narcissism predicted greater ghosting likelihood after the first date. This highlights a clear point in the dating process where narcissistic tendencies, such as prioritizing self-image and disengaging when validation needs are unmet, become influential. Meeting in person may act as a "screening" moment for narcissistic individuals, who may end the interaction abruptly if the partner does not match their expectations.
H3b was not supported; narcissism did not predict ghosting acceptability after the first date. This disconnect between behavior and explicit endorsement suggests that narcissistic participants may ghost for self-serving reasons but are reluctant to justify such behavior

when asked directly. Interestingly, women scored significantly higher than men in finding ghosting acceptable after the first date, indicating a potential gender-based difference.

Overall Dark Triad

Both H5a and H5b were supported. Higher overall Dark Triad scores predicted greater ghosting likelihood and acceptability in the committed relationship vignette. This is a critical finding because ghosting in an established relationship is socially disapproved and generally perceived as a form of betrayal. When Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy are all elevated, social norms and emotional obligations appear to carry less weight, making ghosting more likely even in high-investment contexts. In these committed relationship models, no significant gender or age effects emerged. This suggests that the influence of high Dark Triad scores on ghosting in serious relationships operates similarly across demographic groups.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

This study advances theory on ghosting by integrating the Dark Triad framework with a stage-based model of dating app interactions. While previous research has often treated ghosting as a singular phenomenon, the current findings support the view that it is situationally contingent and that the influence of socially aversive traits shifts across relational contexts. This aligns with recent calls in the literature for more interaction-specific approaches to relationship dissolution in digital environments (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 9).

First, the results refine theoretical understandings of psychopathy in online dating. Whereas existing studies describe psychopathy as broadly predictive of exploitative and disengaging behaviour (Jonason et al., 2021, p. 5), these findings suggest this trait exerts its strongest influence after high-reward relational milestones like after sexual intimacy. This stage-specific pattern highlights the value of incorporating temporal or stage-based frameworks into personality–behaviour models.

Second, the absence of significant effects for Machiavellianism challenges assumptions in dark personality theory that strategic, long-term manipulation necessarily predicts disengagement in earlier, lower-investment stages. The findings imply that in modern online dating, ghosting in early online phases may be too low-cost to require strategic calculation, reducing the relevance of Machiavellian tendencies. This nuance adds an important boundary condition to existing trait–behaviour predictions (Jonason et al., 2021, p. 6).

Third, the observed role of narcissism after the first date refines theories of self-regulation and relational investment. The effect at this stage supports the notion that narcissistic individuals use early in-person encounters as a self-enhancement filter (Foster & Brunell, 2018, p. 23). Notably, the lack of parallel findings for acceptability indicates a divergence between behavioural likelihood and explicit moral endorsement, a distinction underexplored in ghosting literature (LeFebvre et al., 2019, p. 12).

Finally, the overall Dark Triad scores in committed relationship situations show that when these traits are present together, they may be able to break the rules that relational dissolution theory (Knapp et al., 2015, p. 342) says should be followed. This backs up the idea that socially unpleasant traits may be combined together to make relational investment and mutual obligation less important.

5.4 Practical and Societal Implications

The findings hold several practical implications for both dating app users and platform developers. By identifying stage-specific associations between the Dark Triad traits and ghosting, this study offers actionable insights for mitigating the negative interpersonal consequences of ghosting in online dating environments.

For dating app users, awareness that certain personality traits are linked to ghosting after deeper relational investment (e.g., after sexual intimacy or in committed relationships) can inform more cautious approaches to trust-building. Educational resources or public awareness campaigns could encourage users to assess compatibility not solely on attraction or early rapport, but also on indicators of reliability and empathy.

Second, for dating app platforms, these results suggest the potential value of stage-sensitive interventions. For instance, apps could implement optional “cool-off” or “closure” prompts when interactions reach high-investment stages, encouraging communicative disengagement rather than abrupt withdrawal. While such features should be voluntary to avoid overregulation, they may help reduce the emotional harm associated with late-stage ghosting.

Third, the gender differences observed in certain stages, such as higher ghosting likelihood among men after sexual intimacy and higher ghosting acceptability among women after the first date, highlight opportunities for targeted communication guidelines or in-app safety tips that address specific disengagement patterns.

The finding that Machiavellianism did not predict ghosting in early stages implies that ghosting at low-investment points may be driven less by calculated intent and more by

normative online dating culture. This suggests that platform-level cultural shifts such as promoting etiquette around early-stage disengagement may be more effective than attempting to target individual personality differences at these points.

The results also have implications for relationship education and public awareness campaigns. By addressing the emotional and psychological impact of ghosting, particularly in later stages of relational development, educational initiatives could encourage empathy and promote strategies for direct communication. The observed gender differences in certain stages suggest that such campaigns might benefit from gender-sensitive approaches, acknowledging differing patterns of disengagement.

For mental health professionals, these findings underline the importance of understanding how personality traits and relational context interact in shaping online dating experiences. Therapists and counsellors working with clients experiencing distress from ghosting could tailor coping strategies to the stage of the relationship and the possible motivations underlying the behaviour.

Finally, from a societal perspective, recognising ghosting as a complex and context-dependent behaviour may help shift public discourse away from simplistic moral judgments and towards more nuanced conversations about digital relationship norms. This could contribute to fostering a more respectful and emotionally responsible online dating culture.

5.5 Constraints

This study offers new insights into the stage-specific relationships between Dark Triad features and ghosting in online dating, although numerous limitations must be recognized. The study utilized self-report measures, which are prone to biases like social desirability and recollection errors. Despite assurances of anonymity, individuals may have underreported socially undesirable behaviors like ghosting or overreported socially acceptable replies, thus diminishing the observed effects. In addition, employing vignettes to operationalize the likelihood and acceptability of ghosting provides experimental control and comparability among respondents, however may inadequately reflect the complex nature of real-life interactions. Participants' hypothetical reactions may not consistently correspond with their real behavior in spontaneous dating situations, especially in emotionally charged environments. Furthermore, the sample was acquired through convenience and snowball sampling; although it included a varied array of European dating app users, it does not represent all dating populations. Cultural norms around dating and ghosting can differ significantly, indicating that the generality of these findings beyond the examined

demographic should be approached with caution. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Although correlations between Dark Triad qualities and ghosting behaviors were seen, it cannot be concluded that these traits directly cause ghosting at particular stages. Longitudinal designs provide more robust causal assertions and a more accurate definition of the interplay between personality and relational stages over time.

Ultimately, although age and gender were incorporated as control variables, additionalrelevant factors such as prior relationship experiences, attachment type, or cultural background were not evaluated. Incorporating these variables in future studies may elucidate further mechanisms by which personality traits affect ghosting behavior.

5.6 Recommendations for Subsequent Research

Future research could explore many ways to enhance and broaden the comprehension of the relationship between the Dark Triad and ghosting, based on the existing findings. Longitudinal studies could monitor dating app users over time, allowing researchers to investigate whether personality features forecast ghosting behavior in real relationship progressions rather than in hypothetical situations. Such approaches would facilitate the evaluation of variations in the probability or acceptability of ghosting as relationships evolve and commitment intensifies. Additionally, integrating behavioral data from dating platforms such as unmatched rates, message response patterns, or post-date contact frequency could yield more objective indicators of disengagement and enhance self-reported intentions and attitudes.

Broadening the sample to encompass participants from varied cultural backgrounds and age demographics could clarify how cultural norms and generational perspectives influence both the acceptability and implementation of ghosting. Comparative cross-cultural studies would be important in determining whether stage-specific trait effects are universal or culturally constrained. Furthermore, subsequent research could include supplementary psychological variables, such as attachment styles, empathy, or sociosexuality, to examine if these traits mediate or moderate the relationship between the Dark Triad and ghosting. This would facilitate more sophisticated personality-behavior models that incorporate interpersonal and emotional regulatory mechanisms.

Ultimately, experimental adjustments within vignette designs such as altering emotional engagement, introducing conflict, or modifying ghosting methods could assist in identifying the environmental triggers that evoke certain Dark Triad behaviors.

Consequently, researchers may formulate more accurate predictions regarding the timing and rationale behind ghosting in both casual and committed digital relationships.

Conclusion

This study examined whether the Dark Triad personality traits, Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy, predict ghosting likelihood and acceptability across distinct stages of dating app interactions, from initial online contact to committed relationships. The findings, derived from a vignette-based survey approach, indicate that the predictive impact of these qualities is inconsistent and dependent upon relational context. Psychopathy was identified as the most reliable predictor, especially following sexual closeness, but narcissism notably forecasted the risk of ghosting after a first date. Machiavellianism shown no notable impacts at any phase. The combination of these features into a comprehensive Dark Triad score significantly forecasted ghosting, even inside committed partnerships, highlighting the capacity of several socially unpleasant characteristics to surpass conventional relational boundaries.

These findings enhance theoretical comprehension by emphasizing the stage-specific characteristics of personality-behavior connections in online dating and by clarifying the impact of socially aversive features on the dissolution of online relationships. The findings indicate that interventions that aim to reduce ghosting should be adjusted according to the relationship stage and the underlying personality factors. As online dating increasingly influences contemporary romantic engagements, understanding the interaction between persistent personality characteristics and contextual factors will be essential for building healthier and more transparent digital relationships.

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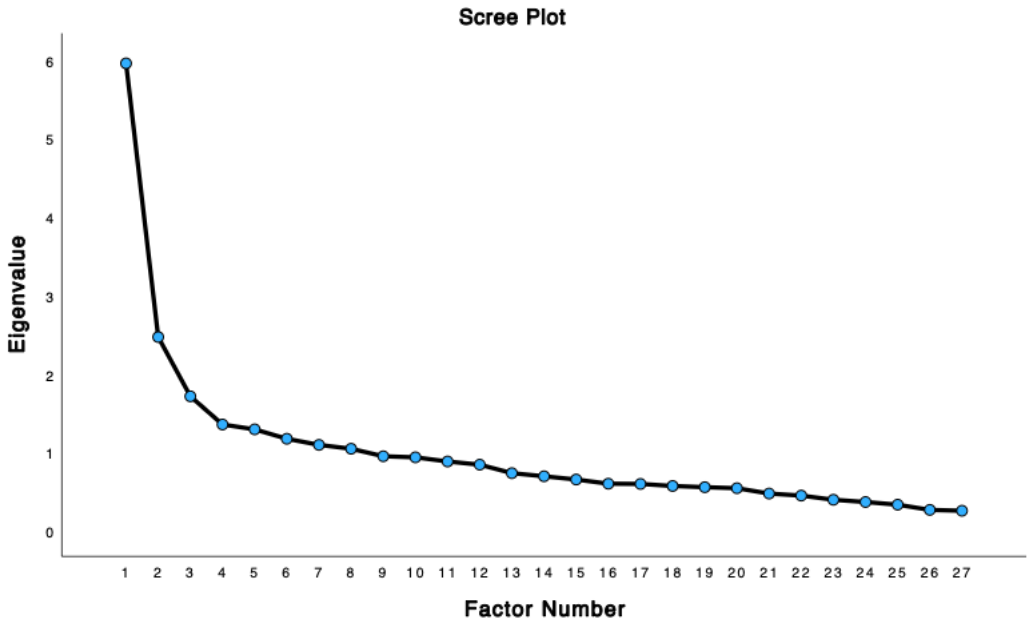
Appendix A: Factor Analysis

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Factor		
	1	2	3
Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.	.669		
Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.	.569		
There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.	.515		
I like to get acquainted with important people.	.470	.328	
I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.	.415		
You should wait for the right time to get back at people.	.358		-.308
It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.	.349		-.338

Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor		
	1	2	3
It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.	.620		
I'll say anything to get what I want.	.619		-.303
Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.	.609	-.318	
I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.	.609		
I like to get acquainted with important people.	.583		
I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so.	.517		
There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.	.510	-.316	
It's true that I can be mean to others.	.500		
People see me as a natural leader.	.482		
I like to get revenge on authorities.	.479		
Payback needs to be quick and nasty.	.461		-.315
People often say I'm out of control.	.455		-.305
I have been compared to famous people.	.455		
You should wait for the right time to get back at people.	.443		
Reversed: I hate being the center of attention.	.419	.323	
Many group activities tend to be dull without me.	.411		
Most people can be manipulated.	.399		
Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.	.395		
People who mess with me always regret it.	.391		


Scree Plot
Eigenvalue
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1
2
3
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5
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27
Factor Number

Appendix B: Reliability

Machiavallianism

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.764	.758	9

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
It's not wise to tell your secrets.	3.58	.927	154
I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.	2.62	1.139	154
Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.	2.94	1.107	154
Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.	3.01	1.091	154
It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.	2.48	1.156	154
You should wait for the right time to get back at people.	2.88	1.188	154
There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.	3.51	1.092	154
Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others.	2.89	1.033	154
Most people can be manipulated.	3.75	.979	154

Narcissism

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.714	.714	9

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
People see me as a natural leader.	3.1558	.99100	154
Reversed: I hate being the center of attention.	2.8636	.99060	154
Many group activities tend to be dull without me.	2.5974	.88944	154
I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so.	2.5260	1.00455	154
I like to get acquainted with important people.	3.1039	1.07356	154
Reversed: I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me.	3.2597	1.13071	154
I have been compared to famous people.	2.6429	1.17534	154
Reversed: I am an average person.	2.8831	1.19885	154
I insist on getting the respect I deserve.	3.5519	.95001	154

Psychopathy

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.711	.723	9

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I like to get revenge on authorities.	2.3182	1.02711	154
Reversed: I avoid dangerous situations.	2.7078	1.01573	154
Payback needs to be quick and nasty.	2.0455	.83503	154
People often say I'm out of control.	2.0779	.94649	154
It's true that I can be mean to others.	3.1623	1.01280	154
People who mess with me always regret it.	2.6623	.96488	154
Reversed: I have never gotten into trouble with the law.	2.5260	1.31456	154
I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know	2.5390	1.31424	154
I'll say anything to get what I want.	2.3052	1.01832	154

Appendix C: Correlations

Correlations

		Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	Mean_Psychopathy
Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	1	.432**	.440**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	.432**	1	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	154	154	154
Mean_Psychopathy	Pearson Correlation	.440**	.498**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	154	154	154
Mean_DT	Pearson Correlation	.797**	.797**	.802**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	-.014	.043	-.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.861	.596	.735
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	-.039	.077	.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.630	.340	.349
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.128	.070	.199*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.114	.387	.013
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.101	.182*	.241**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.213	.024	.003
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.239**	.188*	.246**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.020	.002
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.173*	.141	.230**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.081	.004
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.168*	.191*	.210**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.018	.009
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.043	.132	.183*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.592	.103	.023
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.224**	.179*	.262**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.026	.001
	N	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean_DT	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?
Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	.797**	-.014	-.039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.861	.630
	N	154	154	154
Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	.797**	.043	.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.596	.340
	N	154	154	154
Mean_Psychopathy	Pearson Correlation	.802**	-.027	.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.735	.349
	N	154	154	154
Mean_DT	Pearson Correlation	1	.000	.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.999	.582
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.000	1	.580**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.999		<.001
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.045	.580**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.582	<.001	
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.166*	.249**	.303**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.002	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.216**	.243**	.338**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.002	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.282**	-.013	.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.876	.289
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.227**	-.086	.156
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.287	.054
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.237**	.116	.155
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.150	.054
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.147	.033	.254**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.069	.682	.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.278**	-.131	.043
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.106	.599
	N	154	154	154

Correlations

		How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?
Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	.128	.101	.239**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.114	.213	.003
	N	154	154	154
Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	.070	.182*	.188*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.387	.024	.020
	N	154	154	154
Mean_Psychopathy	Pearson Correlation	.199*	.241**	.246**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.003	.002
	N	154	154	154
Mean_DT	Pearson Correlation	.166*	.216**	.282**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.007	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.249**	.243**	-.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.002	.876
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.303**	.338**	.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.289
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	1	.624**	.429**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.624**	1	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.429**	.462**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.324**	.587**	.700**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.484**	.527**	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.374**	.541**	.571**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.290**	.408**	.606**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154

Correlations

		How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?
Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	.173*	.168*	.043
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.037	.592
	N	154	154	154
Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	.141	.191*	.132
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.081	.018	.103
	N	154	154	154
Mean_Psychopathy	Pearson Correlation	.230**	.210**	.183*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.009	.023
	N	154	154	154
Mean_DT	Pearson Correlation	.227**	.237**	.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.003	.069
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	-.086	.116	.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.287	.150	.682
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.156	.155	.254**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	.054	.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.324**	.484**	.374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.587**	.527**	.541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.700**	.614**	.571**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	1	.548**	.692**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.548**	1	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	154	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.692**	.667**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	154	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.707**	.506**	.600**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154

Correlations

		How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?
Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	.224**	.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.068
	N	154	154
Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	Pearson Correlation	.179*	.216**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	.007
	N	154	154
Mean_Psychopathy	Pearson Correlation	.262**	.248**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.002
	N	154	154
Mean_DT	Pearson Correlation	.278**	.253**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.002
	N	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	-.131	-.169*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.106	.036
	N	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.043	.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.599	.745
	N	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.290**	.153
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.059
	N	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.408**	.396**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.606**	.493**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.707**	.692**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.506**	.352**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.600**	.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	1	.792**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	154	154

Correlations

		Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	Mean_Psychopathy
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.147	.216**	.248**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.068	.007	.002
	N	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean_DT	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.253**	-.169*	.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.036	.745
	N	154	154	154

Correlations

		How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.153	.396**	.493**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.059	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154

Correlations

		How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.692**	.352**	.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	154	154	154

Correlations

		How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	Pearson Correlation	.792**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	154	154

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix D: Regression

H1a

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	3.73	.979	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean_Psychopathy	2.4827	.58262	154

Correlations

		How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	1.000	.174	-.089
	What is your gender?	.174	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	-.089	-.090	1.000
	Mean_Psychopathy	-.027	-.330	.051
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.	.015	.137
	What is your gender?	.015	.	.134
	AgeReal	.137	.134	.
	Mean_Psychopathy	.368	.000	.267
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean_Psychopathy	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean_Psychopathy
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	-.027
	What is your gender?	-.330
	AgeReal	.051
	Mean_Psychopathy	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.368
	What is your gender?	.000
	AgeReal	.267
	Mean_Psychopathy	.
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean_Psychopathy	154

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.727	.630		5.914	<.001
	What is your gender?	.323	.154	.168	2.090	.038
	AgeReal	-.021	.023	-.074	-.918	.360
2	(Constant)	3.549	.762		4.655	<.001
	What is your gender?	.345	.164	.179	2.107	.037
	AgeReal	-.022	.023	-.074	-.924	.357
	Mean_Psychopathy	.060	.143	.036	.418	.676

Coefficients[a]

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Upper Bound	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics VIF
1	(Constant)	2.482	4.972		
	What is your gender?	.018	.628	.992	1.008
	AgeReal	-.067	.025	.992	1.008
2	(Constant)	2.042	5.055		
	What is your gender?	.021	.669	.886	1.129
	AgeReal	-.068	.024	.991	1.009
	Mean_Psychopathy	-.222	.341	.891	1.123

a. Dependent Variable: How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics R Square Change	Change Statistics F Change
1	.189[a]	.036	.023	.967	.036	2.800
2	.192[b]	.037	.018	.970	.001	.175

Model Summary[c]

Model	Change Statistics df1	Change Statistics df2	Change Statistics Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	2	151	.064	
2	1	150	.676	1.707

a. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?

b. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?, Mean_Psychopathy

c. Dependent Variable: How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?

H1b

Correlations

		Mean_Psychopathy
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.076
	What is your gender?	-.330
	AgeReal	.051
	Mean_Psychopathy	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.175
	What is your gender?	.000
	AgeReal	.267
	Mean_Psychopathy	.
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean_Psychopathy	154

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	3.17	.969	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean_Psychopathy	2.4827	.58262	154

Correlations

		How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	1.000	.106	-.058
	What is your gender?	.106	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	-.058	-.090	1.000
	Mean_Psychopathy	.076	-.330	.051
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.	.096	.238
	What is your gender?	.096	.	.134
	AgeReal	.238	.134	.
	Mean_Psychopathy	.175	.000	.267
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean_Psychopathy	154	154	154

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.197	.631		5.066	<.001
	What is your gender?	.193	.155	.101	1.250	.213
	AgeReal	-.014	.023	-.049	-.600	.550
2	(Constant)	2.573	.758		3.393	<.001
	What is your gender?	.272	.163	.143	1.667	.098
	AgeReal	-.015	.023	-.051	-.635	.527
	Mean_Psychopathy	.209	.142	.126	1.473	.143

Coefficients[a]

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Upper Bound	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics VIF
1	(Constant)	1.950	4.444		
	What is your gender?	-.112	.499	.992	1.008
	AgeReal	-.060	.032	.992	1.008
2	(Constant)	1.074	4.071		
	What is your gender?	-.050	.594	.886	1.129
	AgeReal	-.060	.031	.991	1.009
	Mean_Psychopathy	-.071	.489	.891	1.123

a. Dependent Variable: How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics R Square Change	Change Statistics F Change
1	.116[a]	.014	.000	.969	.014	1.036
2	.166[b]	.028	.008	.965	.014	2.169

Model Summary[c]

Model	Change Statistics df1	Change Statistics df2	Change Statistics Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	2	151	.357	
2	1	150	.143	1.903

H2a

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	2.63	1.060	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	3.0736	.63698	154

Correlations

		How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	1.000	-.001	-.012
	What is your gender?	-.001	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	-.012	-.090	1.000
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.128	-.166	-.084
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.	.497	.441
	What is your gender?	.497	.	.134
	AgeReal	.441	.134	.
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.057	.020	.149
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.128
	What is your gender?	-.166
	AgeReal	-.084
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.057
	What is your gender?	.020
	AgeReal	.149
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	154

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	2.728	.695		3.925
	What is your gender?	-.004	.170	-.002	-.022
	AgeReal	-.004	.026	-.012	-.151
2	(Constant)	1.883	.872		2.159
	What is your gender?	.044	.172	.021	.256
	AgeReal	.000	.026	.001	.010
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.218	.137	.131	1.591

Coefficients[a]

Model		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	<.001	1.355	4.101	
	What is your gender?	.982	-.340	.333	.992
	AgeReal	.880	-.054	.047	.992
2	(Constant)	.032	.160	3.606	
	What is your gender?	.798	-.296	.384	.962
	AgeReal	.992	-.050	.051	.982
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.114	-.053	.490	.963

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.012[a]	.000	-.013	1.067	.000	.011
2	.129[b]	.017	-.003	1.062	.017	2.532

Model Summary[c]

Model	Change Statistics			
	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	2	151	.989	
2	1	150	.114	2.086

H2b

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	2.36	.853	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	3.0736	.63698	154

Correlations

		How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	1.000	.003	.026
	What is your gender?	.003	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	.026	-.090	1.000
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.101	-.166	-.084
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.	.484	.375
	What is your gender?	.484	.	.134
	AgeReal	.375	.134	.
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.106	.020	.149
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.101
	What is your gender?	-.166
	AgeReal	-.084
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.106
	What is your gender?	.020
	AgeReal	.149
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	154

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.026[a]	.001	-.013	.858	.001	.053
2	.109[b]	.012	-.008	.856	.011	1.711

Model Summary[c]

Model	Change Statistics			
	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	2	151	.948	
2	1	150	.193	2.280

a. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?

b. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?, Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)

c. Dependent Variable: How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?

Coefficients[a]

Model		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	<.001	1.078	3.288	
	What is your gender?	.945	-.261	.280	.992
	AgeReal	.747	-.034	.047	.992
2	(Constant)	.022	.233	3.013	
	What is your gender?	.768	-.233	.315	.962
	AgeReal	.650	-.031	.050	.982
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.193	-.074	.364	.963

Coefficients[a]

Model		Collinearity Statistics
		VIF
1	(Constant)	
	What is your gender?	1.008
	AgeReal	1.008
2	(Constant)	
	What is your gender?	1.040
	AgeReal	1.018
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	1.039

a. Dependent Variable: How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2.183	.559		3.904
	What is your gender?	.009	.137	.006	.069
	AgeReal	.007	.021	.026	.323
2	(Constant)	1.623	.704		2.306
	What is your gender?	.041	.139	.025	.296
	AgeReal	.009	.021	.037	.454
	Mean score Machiavellianism (SD3)	.145	.111	.108	1.308

H3a

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	1.84	.960	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	2.9538	.57891	154

Correlations

		How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	1.000	.033	-.002
	What is your gender?	.033	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	-.002	-.090	1.000
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.188	-.264	-.001
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.	.343	.491
	What is your gender?	.343	.	.134
	AgeReal	.491	.134	.
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.010	.000	.494
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean score Narcissism (SD3)
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.188
	What is your gender?	-.264
	AgeReal	-.001
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.010
	What is your gender?	.000
	AgeReal	.494
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	154

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.033[a]	.001	-.012	.966	.001	.081
2	.206[b]	.043	.023	.948	.041	6.499

Model Summary[c]

Model	Change Statistics			
	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	2	151	.922	
2	1	150	.012	1.911

a. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?

b. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?, Mean score Narcissism (SD3)

c. Dependent Variable: How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t
1	(Constant)	1.732	.629		2.754
	What is your gender?	.062	.154	.033	.403
	AgeReal	.000	.023	.001	.013
2	(Constant)	.494	.786		.629
	What is your gender?	.168	.157	.089	1.071
	AgeReal	.002	.023	.006	.080
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.350	.137	.211	2.549

Coefficients[a]

Model		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Upper Bound	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance
1	(Constant)	.007	.489	2.975	
	What is your gender?	.688	-.242	.367	.992
	AgeReal	.989	-.045	.046	.992
2	(Constant)	.530	-1.059	2.047	
	What is your gender?	.286	-.142	.478	.922
	AgeReal	.936	-.043	.047	.991
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.012	.079	.622	.930

Coefficients[a]

Model		Collinearity Statistics VIF
1	(Constant)	
	What is your gender?	1.008
	AgeReal	1.008
2	(Constant)	
	What is your gender?	1.084
	AgeReal	1.009
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	1.076

a. Dependent Variable: How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?

H3b

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	1.63	.893	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	2.9538	.57891	154

Correlations

		How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	1.000	-.058	.038
	What is your gender?	-.058	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	.038	-.090	1.000
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.141	-.264	-.001
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.	.236	.322
	What is your gender?	.236	.	.134
	AgeReal	.322	.134	.
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.041	.000	.494
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean score Narcissism (SD3)
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.141
	What is your gender?	-.264
	AgeReal	-.001
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.041
	What is your gender?	.000
	AgeReal	.494
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	154

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.067[a]	.004	-.009	.896	.004	.339
2	.147[b]	.022	.002	.892	.017	2.633

Model Summary[c]

Model	Change Statistics			
	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	2	151	.713	
2	1	150	.107	2.148

a. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?

b. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?, Mean score Narcissism (SD3)

c. Dependent Variable: How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?

Coefficients[a]

Model		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	.008	.424	2.732	
	What is your gender?	.497	-.380	.185	.992
	AgeReal	.690	-.034	.051	.992
2	(Constant)	.259	-.622	2.297	
	What is your gender?	.819	-.326	.258	.922
	AgeReal	.658	-.033	.052	.991
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.107	-.046	.465	.930

Coefficients[a]

Model		Collinearity Statistics
		VIF
1	(Constant)	
	What is your gender?	1.008
	AgeReal	1.008
2	(Constant)	
	What is your gender?	1.084
	AgeReal	1.009
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	1.076

a. Dependent Variable: How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1.578	.584		2.702
	What is your gender?	-.097	.143	-.056	-.681
	AgeReal	.009	.022	.033	.399
2	(Constant)	.838	.739		1.134
	What is your gender?	-.034	.148	-.019	-.230
	AgeReal	.009	.021	.036	.444
	Mean score Narcissism (SD3)	.210	.129	.136	1.623

H4a

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	2.25	1.110	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean_Psychopathy	2.4827	.58262	154

Correlations

		How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	1.000	.105	.016
	What is your gender?	.105	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	.016	-.090	1.000
	Mean_Psychopathy	.210	-.330	.051
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.	.098	.420
	What is your gender?	.098	.	.134
	AgeReal	.420	.134	.
	Mean_Psychopathy	.005	.000	.267
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean_Psychopathy	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean_Psychopathy
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.210
	What is your gender?	-.330
	AgeReal	.051
	Mean_Psychopathy	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.005
	What is your gender?	.000
	AgeReal	.267
	Mean_Psychopathy	.
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean_Psychopathy	154

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	AgeReal, What is your gender?[b]	.	Enter
2	Mean_Psychopathy[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.108[a]	.012	-.001	1.111	.012	.888
2	.280[b]	.078	.060	1.077	.067	10.864

Model Summary[c]

Model	Change Statistics			
	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	2	151	.414	
2	1	150	.001	2.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?

b. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?, Mean_Psychopathy

c. Dependent Variable: How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?

H4b

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	1.93	1.004	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean_Psychopathy	2.4827	.58262	154

Correlations

		How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	1.000	.030	.090
	What is your gender?	.030	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	.090	-.090	1.000
	Mean_Psychopathy	.183	-.330	.051
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.	.355	.134
	What is your gender?	.355	.	.134
	AgeReal	.134	.134	.
	Mean_Psychopathy	.011	.000	.267
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean_Psychopathy	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean_Psychopathy
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.183
	What is your gender?	-.330
	AgeReal	.051
	Mean_Psychopathy	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.011
	What is your gender?	.000
	AgeReal	.267
	Mean_Psychopathy	.
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean_Psychopathy	154

Model Summary[c]

					Change Statistics	
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change
1	.098[a]	.010	-.004	1.006	.010	.729
2	.225[b]	.051	.032	.988	.041	6.505

Model Summary[c]

	Change Statistics			
Model	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	2	151	.484	
2	1	150	.012	2.268

a. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?

b. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?, Mean_Psychopathy

c. Dependent Variable: How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.146	.655		1.750	.082
	What is your gender?	.076	.161	.039	.474	.636
	AgeReal	.028	.024	.093	1.148	.253
2	(Constant)	.039	.776		.050	.960
	What is your gender?	.215	.167	.109	1.291	.199
	AgeReal	.026	.024	.089	1.112	.268
	Mean_Psychopathy	.370	.145	.215	2.550	.012

Coefficients[a]

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.148	2.441		
	What is your gender?	-.241	.393	.992	1.008
	AgeReal	-.020	.075	.992	1.008
2	(Constant)	-1.495	1.573		
	What is your gender?	-.114	.545	.886	1.129
	AgeReal	-.020	.073	.991	1.009
	Mean_Psychopathy	.083	.657	.891	1.123

a. Dependent Variable: How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?

H5a

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	1.57	.969	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean_DT	2.8367	.47861	154

Correlations

		How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	1.000	-.038	.108
	What is your gender?	-.038	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	.108	-.090	1.000
	Mean_DT	.278	-.314	-.017
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.	.320	.091
	What is your gender?	.320	.	.134
	AgeReal	.091	.134	.
	Mean_DT	.000	.000	.415
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean_DT	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean_DT
Pearson Correlation	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	.278
	What is your gender?	-.314
	AgeReal	-.017
	Mean_DT	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	<.001
	What is your gender?	.000
	AgeReal	.415
	Mean_DT	.
N	How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean_DT	154

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	AgeReal, What is your gender?[b]	.	Enter
2	Mean_DT[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.112[a]	.013	-.001	.969	.013	.957
2	.307[b]	.094	.076	.932	.082	13.531

Model Summary[c]

Model	Change Statistics			Durbin-Watson
	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	2	151	.386	
2	1	150	<.001	1.904

a. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?

b. Predictors: (Constant), AgeReal, What is your gender?, Mean_DT

c. Dependent Variable: How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.933	.632		1.478	.142
	What is your gender?	-.054	.155	-.028	-.350	.727
	AgeReal	.030	.023	.106	1.302	.195
2	(Constant)	-1.181	.836		-1.413	.160
	What is your gender?	.129	.157	.067	.820	.414
	AgeReal	.034	.022	.120	1.530	.128
	Mean_DT	.610	.166	.301	3.678	<.001

Coefficients[a]

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.314	2.181		
	What is your gender?	-.360	.252	.992	1.008
	AgeReal	-.016	.076	.992	1.008
2	(Constant)	-2.833	.471		
	What is your gender?	-.181	.438	.892	1.121
	AgeReal	-.010	.078	.990	1.010
	Mean_DT	.282	.938	.899	1.112

a. Dependent Variable: How likely would you be to ghost in this situation?

H5b

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	1.41	.860	154
What is your gender?	1.58	.509	154
AgeReal	23.8831	3.38190	154
Mean_DT	2.8367	.47861	154

Correlations

		How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	What is your gender?	AgeReal
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	1.000	-.051	.118
	What is your gender?	-.051	1.000	-.090
	AgeReal	.118	-.090	1.000
	Mean_DT	.253	-.314	-.017
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.	.265	.073
	What is your gender?	.265	.	.134
	AgeReal	.073	.134	.
	Mean_DT	.001	.000	.415
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154	154	154
	What is your gender?	154	154	154
	AgeReal	154	154	154
	Mean_DT	154	154	154

Correlations

		Mean_DT
Pearson Correlation	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	.253
	What is your gender?	-.314
	AgeReal	-.017
	Mean_DT	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	<.001
	What is your gender?	.000
	AgeReal	.415
	Mean_DT	.
N	How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?	154
	What is your gender?	154
	AgeReal	154
	Mean_DT	154

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	AgeReal, What is your gender?[b]	.	Enter
2	Mean_DT[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary[c]

					Change Statistics	
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change
1	.124[a]	.015	.002	.859	.015	1.187
2	.284[b]	.081	.062	.833	.065	10.668

Model Summary[c]

	Change Statistics			
Model	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	2	151	.308	
2	1	150	.001	2.098

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.825	.560		1.474	.142
	What is your gender?	-.069	.137	-.041	-.502	.616
	AgeReal	.029	.021	.114	1.406	.162
2	(Constant)	-.853	.747		-1.142	.255
	What is your gender?	.076	.140	.045	.543	.588
	AgeReal	.032	.020	.126	1.606	.110
	Mean_DT	.485	.148	.270	3.266	.001

Coefficients[a]

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.281	1.931		
	What is your gender?	-.340	.202	.992	1.008
	AgeReal	-.012	.070	.992	1.008
2	(Constant)	-2.330	.623		
	What is your gender?	-.201	.353	.892	1.121
	AgeReal	-.007	.072	.990	1.010
	Mean_DT	.191	.778	.899	1.112

a. Dependent Variable: How acceptable do you think ghosting is in this situation?