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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND THE TENDENCY TO ENGAGE IN GHOSTING BEHAVIOR IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Ghosting is the act of ending communication without explanation and has become common among young adults. This study aimed to determine the relationship between self-esteem and the tendency to engage in ghosting behavior among university students. This study used a quantitative analytical design with a cross-sectional approach. The population consisted of 32 university students in Jujun Village, Keliling Danau District, Kerinci Regency, in 2025. All 32 respondents were selected using total sampling. Data were analyzed using the Chi-Square test. The results showed that most respondents had moderate self-esteem (21 respondents), while 22 respondents had a moderate tendency toward ghosting behavior. Statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between self-esteem and the tendency to engage in ghosting behavior (p-value = 0.013; p less than 0.05). It can be concluded that self-esteem is significantly associated with ghosting behavior among university students. Students are encouraged to improve their self-esteem, communication skills, and self-awareness to develop healthy interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: *Self-Esteem, Ghosting Behavior, Interpersonal Relationships.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of communication technology, including instant messaging applications and social media platforms, has transformed the ways in which people establish, maintain, and terminate interpersonal relationships. One emerging phenomenon that has attracted research attention is *ghosting*, defined as the unilateral termination of a relationship by discontinuing all forms of communication without prior notice or explanation. *Ghosting* occurs not only in romantic relationships but also in friendships, informal work relationships, and other social networks. Synthesis studies indicate that *ghosting* is characterized by abrupt and unilateral communication termination and may have emotional consequences for the individuals who experience being ghosted (Sukmana et al., 2025).

In addition to technological developments and changes in communication patterns, individual psychological characteristics also play an important role in determining how people respond to conflicts in interpersonal relationships. One widely studied factor is *self-esteem*. According to Rosenberg (1965), *self-esteem* refers to an individual's evaluation of themselves, reflecting the extent to which they perceive themselves as valuable, capable, and worthy of respect from others. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to demonstrate self-

confidence, emotional regulation, and better interpersonal communication skills. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to experience insecurity, fear of rejection, social anxiety, and difficulties in resolving conflicts directly. These conditions may encourage university students to engage in *ghosting* as a mechanism for avoiding emotional discomfort rather than resolving conflicts through open communication. Low self-esteem may also negatively affect the quality of interpersonal relationships because individuals may find it more difficult to establish trust, maintain commitment, and resolve problems maturely.

University students, as a generation that has grown and developed amid rapid digitalization, have a high level of social media usage in establishing and maintaining social relationships. Interactions that were previously dominated by face-to-face communication have increasingly shifted to online communication, making the quality of relationships highly dependent on the continuity of digital communication. When communication is unilaterally terminated without clarification, the individuals left behind may experience psychological distress due to the loss of meaning, certainty, and a sense of security in their social relationships (Sitinjak et al., 2024).

The phenomenon of *ghosting* among university students is particularly relevant. University students are young adults undergoing a transitional phase from adolescence toward greater academic, social, and emotional responsibilities. *Ghosting* reflects an avoidance tendency resulting from difficulties in communicating about conflicts, particularly among individuals with an avoidant attachment style, which is an important aspect of students' mental health (Abyari, 2021). Furthermore, *ghosting* may trigger feelings of sadness, anger, disappointment, and low self-esteem among victims. A qualitative study conducted at Universitas Medan Area found that students who experienced being ghosted reported psychological effects, including anger, sadness, and reduced self-confidence (Danish et al., 2026).

The phenomenon of *ghosting* is relatively common among young adults. Although prevalence rates vary across studies depending on definitions and measurement methods, findings consistently indicate that many young people have experienced *ghosting* as perpetrators, victims, or both. From a psychological perspective, *ghosting* is often understood as a form of *avoidance coping* or an interpersonal avoidance strategy adopted to reduce emotional discomfort, avoid confrontation, or protect oneself from potential rejection and conflict. *Ghosting*, which involves abruptly ending an interpersonal relationship without further communication, has become an increasingly common phenomenon, particularly among university students (Murdyne & Azizah, 2022).

Theoretically, *ghosting* behavior can also be explained through Coopersmith's *Self-Esteem Theory* (1967), which states that *self-esteem* is the result of an individual's self-evaluation based on personal experiences, social acceptance, and appreciation from the surrounding environment. Individuals with low self-esteem generally believe that they are less accepted by others, making them more vulnerable to using avoidance strategies when facing interpersonal conflicts. Among university students, this condition may negatively affect their ability to establish healthy social relationships, reduce assertive communication skills, increase interaction-related anxiety, and heighten the tendency to terminate relationships through *ghosting*. These negative effects are experienced not only by perpetrators but also by victims, who may experience decreased self-esteem, stress,

overthinking, feelings of rejection, and difficulties trusting new relationships. Therefore, self-esteem is considered one of the psychological factors closely associated with the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students (Forrai et al., 2023).

Ghosting behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students has become increasingly apparent alongside the growing use of social media and instant messaging applications as primary communication tools. Students originating from this village, whether pursuing their education outside the region or returning to the village during certain periods, tend to maintain friendships and romantic relationships through intensive online communication. However, in practice, when conflicts, emotional discomfort, differences in expectations, or fear of direct confrontation arise, some students choose to abruptly discontinue communication without providing an explanation. This phenomenon often occurs in close friendships as well as romantic relationships and is perceived as an easier way to avoid conflict and maintain one's self-image within a relatively small village community where people know one another. Such circumstances may disrupt the quality of interpersonal relationships, generate feelings of confusion and disappointment, and reduce the self-confidence of those experiencing *ghosting*. They also reflect challenges in interpersonal communication skills and emotional regulation among university students in the village.

Problems associated with *ghosting* behavior include ending communication without explanation and completely cutting off contact. This phenomenon has reportedly become increasingly widespread among emerging adults, including university students, and has implications for the overall quality of interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, cross-national studies indicate that *ghosting* is not merely a minor social phenomenon. Experiences of being ghosted or engaging in *ghosting* have been associated with increased psychological symptoms, such as anxiety, loneliness, and decreased relationship satisfaction, thereby raising mental health concerns relevant to university populations (Morales et al., 2025).

Among university students, the prevalence, motives, and effects of *ghosting* vary. Several local studies in Indonesia have reported a high frequency of *ghosting* in both friendships and romantic relationships. However, systematic data and validated measurement instruments for the Indonesian context remain limited. This makes it difficult to accurately identify risk factors, such as attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and intensity of platform use, as well as the academic and emotional consequences of *ghosting* among Indonesian university students (Sukmana et al., 2025).

The *Uses and Gratifications Theory*, developed by Abraham Maslow in 1970, explains that individuals actively seek to fulfill their needs, ranging from concrete to abstract aspects. Millennials' need for social media can be examined through the perspective of communication theory, particularly *Uses and Gratifications Theory*. This theory focuses on how human needs influence the ways individuals use and respond to media channels. Rather than examining what media do to individuals, it emphasizes how individuals use media to fulfill their own needs. According to Littlejohn and Foss, *Uses and Gratifications Theory* applies the concepts of values and expectations. The gratification sought from media is determined by an individual's attitudes toward particular media, their perceptions of what those media can provide, and their evaluation of the available content. This theory can be

used as a foundation for explaining how the phenomenon of *ghosting* occurs in virtual relationships. It provides a theoretical basis for examining various phenomena that emerge in virtual interactions and social media (Sitinjak et al., 2024).

Referring to several studies discussing the phenomenon of *ghosting*, Fadli states that regardless of the reasons, *ghosting* is not appropriate behavior because it can cause harmful consequences for its victims (*ghostees*). These consequences include feelings of depression, anger, confusion, and being unwanted. Furthermore, *ghosting* can cause significant emotional pain because it makes individuals feel a sense of loss after being abandoned by someone they trusted or believed cared about them. Victims of *ghosting* may feel rejected and begin questioning their own self-worth. *Ghosting* not only triggers psychological consequences but may also affect overall physical health. Victims may experience reduced self-confidence, feelings of being discarded or unaccepted, and a reluctance to initiate new relationships in the future, whether romantic or otherwise (Thomas, 2023).

The problems associated with *ghosting* in interpersonal relationships among university students in Jujun Village can be identified through several aspects, including the sudden termination of communication without explanation, such as when someone stops replying to messages, avoids phone calls, or disappears from the life of someone with whom they previously had a close relationship. Difficulties in resolving interpersonal conflicts may be observed when students choose to avoid conversations or discontinue communication rather than discuss misunderstandings and seek solutions together. A lack of openness in expressing feelings may occur when students feel uncomfortable communicating disagreement, disappointment, or their desire to end a relationship directly. Furthermore, the tendency to avoid discussions when facing problems may be reflected in withdrawing without providing a clear reason, either in friendships or romantic relationships. These conditions may cause confusion, disappointment, and feelings of being unappreciated among the individuals who are left behind.

Based on these findings, interventions aimed at improving students' self-esteem are necessary, such as counseling and self-development programs. This is consistent with the recommendation of Wood (2020), who stated that improving self-esteem can help individuals cope with emotional challenges more effectively, potentially supporting the development of healthier interpersonal relationships. Thus, improving *self-esteem* is beneficial not only for individuals personally but also for fostering healthier and more harmonious interpersonal relationships. Various studies have shown that low self-esteem is associated with several psychosocial problems among university students, including social anxiety, difficulties in establishing interpersonal relationships, poor conflict-resolution skills, and a tendency to adopt avoidant communication patterns. If these conditions persist over time, students may experience a decline in the quality of their social relationships, increased social isolation, reduced social support, and impaired psychological well-being. Conversely, students with high self-esteem tend to be more capable of expressing their feelings openly, accepting differences of opinion, and resolving conflicts constructively. However, a research gap remains, as the relationship between *self-esteem* and the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students requires further investigation, particularly among students in Jujun Village. Although self-esteem and interpersonal relationships have been widely discussed in previous studies, empirical evidence specifically examining the relationship between these two variables in

the context of *ghosting* behavior among students in Jujun Village remains limited. Furthermore, it has not yet been established whether students with low self-esteem have a greater tendency to engage in *ghosting* or whether this behavior is more strongly associated with other factors, such as communication patterns, relationship experiences, and conflict-management strategies.

A previous study conducted by Freedman and Powell (2024), entitled "*Emotional Experiences of Ghosting*," found that individuals who experienced being ghosted reported a decrease in state self-esteem, increased sadness, and threats to basic psychological needs, such as self-worth and belongingness. These findings indicate that the emotional effects experienced by victims differ from those experienced by individuals who engage in *ghosting*. The implications of this study emphasize that being ghosted is directly associated with a temporary decline in *self-esteem* and may affect psychological well-being.

Meanwhile, a previous study conducted by Forrai et al. (2023), entitled "*Short-Sighted Ghosts: Psychological Antecedents and Consequences of Ghosting Others Within Emerging Adults' Romantic Relationships and Friendships*," found that *self-esteem* was a predictor of *ghosting* behavior toward friends, although this association did not necessarily apply to romantic partners. This means that individuals with certain levels of *self-esteem* may be more likely to engage in *ghosting* within friendships. In addition, ghosting friends was associated with increased depressive symptoms among those who were ghosted, indicating that the emotional consequences may differ depending on the type of relationship. These findings highlight the importance of distinguishing between relationship contexts when examining the association between *self-esteem* and *ghosting* behavior.

The objectives of this study were to determine the level of *self-esteem*, identify the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior, and analyze the relationship between *self-esteem* and the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students in Jujun Village. The novelty of this study lies in its specific examination of the relationship between self-esteem and the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior among university students in Jujun Village, encompassing both friendships and romantic relationships. This study seeks to examine whether an individual's self-evaluation is associated with their tendency to abruptly discontinue communication without providing an explanation to the other person.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative analytical research method with a *cross-sectional study* approach. A cross-sectional study. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between *self-esteem* and the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students. The population consisted of all university students residing in Jujun Village, Keliling Danau District, Kerinci Regency, in 2025, totaling 32 individuals. Given the relatively small population size, all population members were included as research participants, resulting in a total sample of 32 respondents. The sampling technique used was total sampling, which involves selecting all members of the population as research respondents. This technique was chosen to ensure that all population characteristics were optimally represented, thereby enabling the research findings to reflect the actual conditions of the population more accurately.

The inclusion criteria in this study were active university students enrolled at public or private higher education institutions at the time of the study; aged 18–25 years, representing the early adulthood stage; residing in Jujun Village, Keliling Danau District, Kerinci Regency; willing to participate by signing an informed consent form; having been or currently being involved in interpersonal relationships, including friendships, romantic relationships, or other social relationships; and having experienced or engaged in *ghosting* behavior, defined as abruptly terminating communication without providing an explanation to the other party. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included students who did not complete the questionnaire or withdrew from the study during the data collection process.

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of statements developed based on predetermined variable indicators in accordance with the research objectives. The instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire, which provides predetermined response options, allowing respondents to select answers that correspond to their actual conditions or experiences. The use of a closed-ended questionnaire aimed to facilitate respondents in providing answers and assist researchers in processing and analyzing the data. This questionnaire was used to obtain data regarding the relationship between *self-esteem* and the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following verification of the research data, all data obtained from the administration of the questionnaires to university students were considered valid and suitable for analysis, totaling 32 records. The following section presents a description of the research findings.

3.1. Self-Esteem Among University Students

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Self-Esteem Among University Students

Self-Esteem	**Score**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Low	0-20	8	25,0%
Moderate	21-40	21	65,6%
High	41-60	3	9,4%
Total		32	**100,0%**

The results indicate that the overall level of self-esteem among university students was predominantly moderate, accounting for 21 respondents (65.6%), with scores ranging from 21 to 40. Meanwhile, 8 respondents (25.0%) were classified as having low self-esteem, with scores ranging from 0 to 20, while 3 respondents (9.4%) were classified as having high self-esteem, with scores ranging from 41 to 60.

3.2. Tendency to Engage in Ghosting Behavior in Interpersonal Relationships

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Tendency to Engage in Ghosting Behavior in Interpersonal Relationships

Ghosting Tendency	**Score**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Low	0-20	8	25,0%
Moderate	21-40	21	65,6%
High	41-60	3	9,4%

Total	32	**100,0%**

The results indicate that the overall tendency to engage in ghosting behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students was predominantly moderate, accounting for 22 respondents (68.8%), with scores ranging from 21 to 40. Meanwhile, 9 respondents (28.1%) were classified as having a low tendency to engage in ghosting behavior, with scores ranging from 0 to 20, while 1 respondent (3.1%) was classified as having a high tendency, with scores ranging from 41 to 60.

3.3. The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and the Tendency to Engage in Ghosting Behavior

To determine the relationship between self-esteem and the tendency to engage in ghosting behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students, the Chi-Square test was performed. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 3. The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and the Tendency to Engage in Ghosting Behavior in Interpersonal Relationships

		Tendency to Engage in Ghosting Behavior			Total	*Asymp. Sig (2-sisded)*
		Low	**Moderate**	**High**		
Self-Esteem	**Low**	4	4	0	8	0,013
	Moderate	5	16	0	21	
	High	0	2	1	3	
Total		9	22	1	32	

Based on the table examining the relationship between self-esteem and the tendency to engage in ghosting behavior among 32 respondents, it was found that in the group of students with low self-esteem, 4 respondents had a low tendency to engage in ghosting behavior, 4 had a moderate tendency, and none had a high tendency, resulting in a total of 8 respondents. In the group with moderate self-esteem, 5 respondents had a low tendency to engage in ghosting behavior, 16 had a moderate tendency, and none had a high tendency, resulting in a total of 21 respondents. Meanwhile, among students with high self-esteem, none had a low tendency to engage in ghosting behavior, 2 had a moderate tendency, and 1 had a high tendency, resulting in a total of 3 respondents. Overall, the largest proportion of respondents had moderate self-esteem and a moderate tendency to engage in ghosting behavior, accounting for 16 respondents. Meanwhile, the Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) represents the significance value or p-value for testing the relationship between the two variables, with a result of 0.013.

Self-esteem as a factor influencing the choice of relationship termination strategies: findings indicating that fear of confrontation and avoidance tendencies are strongly associated with low *self-esteem* are consistent with literature identifying *self-esteem* as a determinant of interpersonal coping strategies. Individuals with low self-evaluations are more likely to adopt avoidance strategies, such as *ghosting*, to minimize perceived social threats and the risk of rejection. Recent empirical studies and reviews have confirmed that *self-esteem* and social avoidance are important antecedents of *ghosting* behavior (Timulak, 2021). The negative consequences of these conditions include reduced ability among university students to establish healthy interpersonal relationships, diminished assertive

communication skills, increased interaction-related anxiety, and decreased capacity to resolve conflicts maturely (Orth & Robins, 2023).

Ghosting as a self-protection mechanism rather than merely unethical behavior. Qualitative analyses indicate that many individuals who engage in *ghosting* perceive it as a form of emotional self-protection, particularly when a relationship is considered risky, such as when it involves emotional pressure, prolonged conflict, or unpleasant treatment. This is consistent with the *Coping Theory* proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which states that individuals employ various strategies to reduce psychological distress, including avoidance coping strategies. Nevertheless, using *ghosting* as a coping mechanism may have negative consequences, including poor conflict-resolution skills, reduced empathy, the development of unhealthy communication patterns, and an increased risk of permanently terminating interpersonal relationships. Victims of *ghosting* are also at risk of experiencing stress, anxiety, decreased *self-esteem*, overthinking, and difficulties trusting others in future relationships (Purnamasari, 2024).

The phenomenon of *ghosting* is relatively common among young adults. Although prevalence rates vary across studies depending on definitions and measurement methods, findings consistently indicate that many young people have experienced *ghosting* as perpetrators, victims, or both. From a psychological perspective, *ghosting* is often understood as a form of *avoidance coping* or an interpersonal avoidance strategy adopted to reduce emotional discomfort, avoid confrontation, or protect oneself from potential rejection and conflict. *Ghosting*, defined as abruptly terminating an interpersonal relationship without further communication, has become an increasingly common phenomenon, particularly among university students (Murdyne & Azizah, 2022). According to the *Attachment Theory* developed by Bowlby (1988), individuals with insecure attachment styles tend to experience difficulties maintaining interpersonal relationships, making them more likely to adopt avoidance strategies such as *ghosting*. The negative consequences include reduced social relationship quality, loss of mutual trust, increased loneliness, and impaired mental health among both perpetrators and victims (Sukmana et al., 2025).

Ghosting behavior may arise for various reasons and may provide further insight into the characteristics of individuals who engage in this behavior (Popescu, 2019). However, numerous studies and survey findings indicate that some individuals are not only victims of *ghosting* but also perpetrators (Manning, 2019). Several factors may contribute to *ghosting* behavior, one of which is *self-esteem*. *Self-esteem* refers to an individual's perception and beliefs about themselves, which develop through interactions with people in their surrounding environment. These interactions may result in either self-acceptance or self-rejection (Kang et al., 2022). The role of communication skills and emotional regulation as protective factors is also important. Findings indicating that respondents with more stable *self-esteem* tend to engage in open communication highlight the importance of assertiveness and emotional regulation skills in preventing *ghosting* behavior (Forrai et al., 2023). This is consistent with studies linking high *self-esteem* to better emotional regulation abilities and higher-quality interpersonal relationships. Therefore, skill-based interventions, such as *assertiveness training* and *emotion regulation*, are relevant preventive strategies (Daraj et al., 2023).

An individual's *self-esteem* is reflected in how positively or negatively they perceive themselves. Individuals with high *self-esteem* generally maintain a positive self-image,

whereas those with low *self-esteem* tend to have negative and uncertain perceptions of themselves. *Self-esteem* is a subjective evaluation of the self; therefore, it is shaped by each individual's perceptions, which may not always correspond to reality. *Self-esteem* is an important aspect of every individual's life because it influences attitudes and behaviors, including assertive behavior (Gultom & Oktaviani, 2022).

According to Fitri and Dewi (2023), low *self-esteem* may trigger *ghosting* as a coping strategy in interpersonal relationships, particularly in emotionally intense relationships. *Self-esteem* refers to an individual's evaluation of themselves, encompassing aspects of self-confidence and self-worth (Orth, 2021). University students with low *self-esteem* tend to avoid confrontation due to fear of rejection or an inability to cope with conflict (Leary, 2020). Consequently, they may be more likely to use *ghosting* as a mechanism to protect themselves from emotional discomfort (Koessler & Berger, 2022). Conversely, individuals with high *self-esteem* generally possess better communication skills and are therefore less likely to use *ghosting* to terminate relationships (Wright & Clark, 2021).

According to Masitah (2024), *self-esteem* influences how individuals terminate relationships without providing an explanation. *Ghosting* can have psychological consequences, including decreased *self-esteem*, sadness, anger, and reduced self-confidence, highlighting that victims of *ghosting* often experience impaired confidence. Meanwhile, Addawiyah et al. (2023) reported that among university students who become victims of *ghosting*, this phenomenon may cause psychological distress, feelings of inferiority, and emotional conflict. Individuals generally respond to *ghosting* through *emotion-focused coping* strategies to manage its negative psychological effects. Ramdani et al. (2025) further explained that *ghosting* is influenced by psychological factors, such as attachment styles and moral disengagement, which are associated with an individual's *self-esteem*. Low *self-esteem* may make individuals more vulnerable to choosing strategies such as *ghosting* in interpersonal relationships.

A previous study conducted by Murdyne and Azizah (2022), entitled "*The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Interpersonal Competence Among Psychology Students of the 2017–2019 Cohorts at University X, Bandung*," examined the relationship between *self-esteem* and interpersonal competence. The findings indicated that students who perceive themselves as valuable and meaningful are better able to regulate and control their behavior, influence others, and establish interpersonal relationships. Individuals who view themselves positively and believe in their own abilities are also more likely to meet personal expectations and achieve their goals, thereby facilitating the development of relationships with others.

A previous study conducted by Rahmatin et al. (2020), entitled "*Psychological Dynamics of Resilience Among Victims of Ghosting*," found that university students experience *ghosting* both as perpetrators and as victims in their social relationships and communication. Since social relationships and communication are essential for fulfilling basic human needs, their quality needs to be improved. One effort to enhance the quality of social relationships is to avoid *ghosting* behavior. Building healthy social relationships requires openness and mutual communication among the individuals involved.

A previous study conducted by Kaur (2025), entitled "*Relationship Between Rejection Sensitivity, Ghosting, and Self-Esteem in Young Adults with Dating Experiences*," primarily

focused on *self-esteem*, rejection sensitivity, and *ghosting* experiences among young adults. The findings further emphasized the psychological implications of romantic rejection and the uncertainty surrounding relationship breakups, highlighting the need for digitally mediated relationships to be more mindful, communicative, and emotionally supportive.

A previous study conducted by Freedman et al. (2024), entitled "*Emotional Experiences of Ghosting*," found that individuals who experienced *ghosting* reported decreased state *self-esteem*, increased sadness, and threats to basic psychological needs, such as self-worth and belongingness. These emotional effects were evident and differed from those experienced by individuals who engaged in *ghosting*. The implications of this study confirm that being a victim of *ghosting* is directly associated with a temporary decline in *self-esteem* and may affect psychological well-being.

Meanwhile, a previous study conducted by Forrai et al. (2023), entitled "*Short-Sighted Ghosts: Psychological Antecedents and Consequences of Ghosting Others Within Emerging Adults' Romantic Relationships and Friendships*," found that *self-esteem* was a predictor of *ghosting* behavior toward friends, although this association did not necessarily apply to romantic partners. This suggests that individuals with certain levels of *self-esteem* may be more likely to engage in *ghosting* within friendships. Furthermore, ghosting friends was associated with increased depressive symptoms among those who were ghosted, indicating that the emotional consequences may differ depending on the type of relationship. These findings highlight the importance of distinguishing between relationship contexts when examining the relationship between *self-esteem* and *ghosting* behavior.

This study hypothesizes that there is a significant relationship between *self-esteem* and the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior. The level of *self-esteem* among university students is generally assumed to be moderate, reflecting a relatively stable but not yet optimal psychological condition in terms of self-evaluation and self-worth. This moderate level of *self-esteem* is assumed to influence how students establish interpersonal relationships, particularly when dealing with conflict or discomfort in relationships. Students' *self-esteem* can be improved through the development of self-awareness, strengthening self-confidence, providing positive feedback, and implementing assertive communication and emotional management training. Furthermore, the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior in interpersonal relationships is also assumed to be moderate, indicating that students may choose communication avoidance as a coping strategy when facing difficult relational situations. Efforts to reduce the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior can include equipping students with constructive conflict-resolution skills, enhancing empathy, and encouraging open and responsible communication in interpersonal relationships.

4. CONCLUSION

The statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship between *self-esteem* and the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students, with a p-value of 0.013 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that *self-esteem* plays a role in influencing the tendency to engage in *ghosting* behavior in interpersonal relationships among university students.

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