

Strong sense of self? You're more open to casual sex

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From what we pick from the menu to what gadget we buy, how we see ourselves influences many of our daily choices. But could sense of self also sway how quickly we'll jump into bed with someone?

That's what UK and US researchers were looking to find when they looked into the link between how much we let others define us and our fondness for hook-ups.

Why do some people prefer to flit from partner to partner with little commitment while others insist on something more long-term with their one true love?

There's a handful of possible explanations. Culture, religion, gender and personal values all play a role. But new research suggests our self-concepts may be a key part of the story as well.

"Individual's attitudes towards casual sex may be rooted in their self-concept," said Professor David Schmitt at Brunel University London.

"Those who view themselves as being independent of others are more apt to engage in

casual sex," he said in a study published by *The Journal of Sex Research*. People with a more 'interdependent self', who mostly think of themselves in terms of their relationships with friends, families and communities, tend to have less casual sex.

The main reason the study links independent selves with more [casual sex](#) is because independent types really value [personal autonomy](#). They want to emotionally connect, but want these connections with less interference from their friends, families and communities.

Meanwhile, interdependent people, who base their sense of self on their relationships, value their autonomy much less – maybe because they are more comfortable with others influencing their life choices. Or, the study suggests, their emotional closeness to so many others pushes them to shun casual uncommitted sex.

Researchers questioned 603 people from six different cultures. Taking into account different genders, ages, cultures, religions and levels of education, they compared people's self-concepts and personal values with their sexual attitudes and behaviours.

"Interdependence and independence aside, one lesson is clear," said Prof Schmitt. "Whether it's with one person or many, people desire at least some type of interpersonal bond and they will seek it with or without guidance from others."

More information: Independent, Autonomous, and Permissive: Examining the Links Between Self-Concept and Sexual Permissiveness, is published online by *The Journal of Sex Research*, DOI: 10.1080/00224499.2018.1465884

Provided by Brunel University

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