

O'Malley, P. M., & Bachman, J. G. (1983). Self-esteem. Change and stability between ages 13 and 23. *Developmental Psychology, 19*(2), 257-268.

Abstract

Findings from several studies that have assessed self-esteem at various ages between 13 and 23 are summarized and integrated quantitatively. The data, including some new results from the Monitoring the Future project, show clearly that global self-esteem, as measured by Rosenberg-type scales, increases over that age span. Various methodological pitfalls that could lead to inappropriate conclusions are discussed. We conclude that the burden of proof regarding a rise in reported self-esteem during adolescence and early adulthood has shifted to those who would deny the reality of that rise. In spite of the considerable increase in mean levels, there is also considerable stability of self-esteem. Using both single indicator models and multiple indicator models with correlated errors, the stabilities of self-esteem are shown to be fairly high. Annual stabilities are estimated to be between .6 and .9, depending on the model and depending on the definition of stability.