

JOURNAL OF RESEARCH ON ADOLESCENCE, 15(4), 451–477  
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## Body Image and Self-Esteem Among Adolescent Girls: Testing the Influence of Sociocultural Factors

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In Western cultures, girls' self-esteem declines substantially during middle adolescence, with changes in body image proposed as a possible explanation. Body image develops in the context of sociocultural factors, such as unrealistic media images of female beauty. In a study of 136 U.K. girls aged 11–16, experimental exposure to either ultra-thin or average-size magazine models lowered body satisfaction and, consequently, self-esteem. Self-esteem was also lower among older than among younger girls. Structural equation modeling showed that this age trend was partially accounted for by a corresponding downward trend in body satisfaction; this, in turn, was fully accounted for by upward age trends in awareness and internalization of sociocultural attitudes toward appearance, and in social comparison with media models. Results support calls for early educational interventions to help girls to deconstruct advertising and media images.

Self-esteem is defined as a “positive or negative attitude toward . . . the self” (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 30), and can be viewed as a key indicator of psychological well-being, at least among people in Western cultures (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Oishi, Diener, Lucas, & Suh, 1999). In Western cultures, self-esteem typically differs by gender. A recent meta-analysis of self-esteem studies, most conducted in Western industrialized nations, has confirmed that women's self-esteem is moderately, but significantly, lower than men's ( $d = .21$ ); moreover the average

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