Cross-Cultural and Gender-Based Research on Kohlberg’s Model
Evidence supports the view that children and adolescents progress through the stages Kohlberg suggested, even if they may not reach the level of postconventional reasoning (Flavell et al., 1993; Walker, 1989). Moreover, Kohlberg's own studies of people in other countries led him to believe in the universality of his first four stages, a belief that was later supported by a review of forty-four studies conducted in twenty-seven countries (Snarey, 1985). Nevertheless, critics have challenged Kohlberg’s model for both cultural and gender biases.

Critics contend that Kohlberg’s model may be culturally biased because it emphasizes ideals found primarily in Western cultures, such as individual rights and social justice (Shweder, 1994). Cross-cultural evidence based on a study comparing moral reasoning in Americans and Indians led him to believe in the universality of his first four stages, a belief that was later supported by a review of forty-four studies conducted in twenty-seven countries (Snarey, 1985). Nevertheless, critics have challenged Kohlberg’s model for both cultural and gender biases.

Another controversy is whether Kohlberg’s model is biased against women. Interestingly, it was someone who had worked and published with Kohlberg, the...