

# Gender: Androcentrism



## This activity will help you to:

- Explain what androcentrism is
- Identify examples of androcentric bias in psychological research
- Comment on and evaluate androcentric research

## What is Androcentrism?

Androcentrism develops when male views and behaviour are taken as the norm, and are used to explain both male and female behaviour. What tends to happen is that where female behaviour deviates from male this is construed as inferior, abnormal or 'other'.

## Kohlberg's Research on Moral Development

Kohlberg was interested in how the reasoning that people use to make moral judgments changes as they grow older. He assumed that moral thinking was similar between the sexes, so he based his initial research on men. He identified six levels of moral reasons from level 1 (avoiding punishment) to level 6 (abstract principles of justice).

He later conducted studies comparing men and women in their moral development. He found that whilst the majority of men operated at level 4, most women operated at level 3.

## Questions for Discussion...

- What types of gender bias are apparent in Kohlberg's work?
- How might Kohlberg's work be considered androcentric?

## What You Need to Do...

Find out about the work of Carol Gilligan on moral development. You can use any of the available resources to do this. Then prepare answers to the following questions.

- What was Gilligan's criticism of Kohlberg's work?
- How did Gilligan explain gender differences in moral behaviour?

You may also wish to consider the following question (higher level evaluation AO2):

- To what extent is Gilligan just as guilty of gender bias in her research as Kohlberg is in his?