The 8 scenarios below were developed, piloted, and used by us in an experiment in which we assessed women’s perceptions of sexist discrimination when its presence was ambiguous. We were interested in whether conveying information about the main executor in the scenario as prototypically sexist (i.e., male) or not (i.e., female) would influence women’s perceptions. The scenarios first were crafted and piloted for ambiguity with regard to the presence of discrimination. Then, the sex of the executor was varied, such that each scenario featured either a female or male executor. Both sexes are presented together here (in italics) for clarity, but in the study materials, only one sex per scenario should be used.

This statement follows each scenario: “In your mind, to what extent did this situation depict an instance of unfair treatment based on sex?,” followed by a response scale ranging from 1 (not at all—it definitely was not an instance of unfair treatment based on sex) to 6 (very much so—it definitely was an instance of unfair treatment based on sex). A mean score is obtained for both the male-executed scenarios and the female-executed scenarios. Each participant, then, produces a mean perception of discrimination score for both the prototypical (i.e., male-executed) scenarios and the non-prototypical (i.e., female-executed) scenarios.

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1. You enter a staffing (temp) agency to get help finding a summer job. You indicate that you are interested in any position in office work, manual labor, factory work, or data entry. You make it clear that you have experience in all four of those fields. The staffing person, Mary/John, looks over your interests and then she/he offers you the option of either a teacher’s aide in a daycare center or a higher-paying factory job. The gentleman you sat in the waiting room with requests a job with low manual labor and he is given his first request.

2. You and a male peer are hired for the same position at the university library. Neither of you has any prior experience and you are very similarly matched on general job skills, GPA, and people skills. When you compare salaries, you learn that he has been given 25 cents more per hour than you have. When you ask the head librarian, Linda/Mark, for a reason for the difference in salaries, she/he explains that your male peer was willing to do the lifting and high climbing that is needed when sorting and shelving books, and you were not.

3. You overhear your friend Elizabeth/James tell her/his brother she’s/his proud of him for being able to date two girls at one time. You later ask Elizabeth/James for advice about whether to accept a date offered by a guy in your class. She/he responds, “Aren’t you already dating someone else?” You explain that you have casually dated another guy over the past few weeks, but that it is understood that the two of you do not have a commitment. She/he says, “I don’t really know if it’s a good idea.”
4. You accept a new job with a company. You begin to develop a mutually pursued dating relationship with a colleague already at the firm. When your boss, Jennifer/Robert, finds out that you have been dating, she/he informs you both that dating co-workers is against office policy. She/He states that one of you must leave the company, and you are let go. Your male colleague is allowed to keep his job.

5. You enroll in a welding class and soon realize that you’re the only female student in the class. After the third week of class, you approach the teacher, Mrs./Mr. Smith, to clarify an assignment. Before you have asked your question, she/he says, “I am surprised you stuck it out this long with all these guys. How have you liked the class?” A male peer who needed your help on several projects speaks with Mrs./Mr. Smith after you are through, and is asked how he has liked the class.

6. You are in a conference room filled with men and women waiting to be called into an interview. When it is your turn, you are invited into another room and the interview begins. During the interview, the interviewer, Lisa/William, comments on the ring located on your left hand. When you say it is your engagement ring, she/he begins to talk about how busy life can get all of a sudden and that it is really hard balancing a career and a family.

7. You arrive at a university office to start your work-study job. You introduce yourself to the secretary, Karen/David, and she/he greets you warmly. She/He says, “They said they were sending a male student. I have quite a few heavy things that need to be done. Anyway, I’m so glad you are here to help. For example, there are pictures in the back room that still need to be hung in the hallways and all those books need to be moved to the storage room. Why don’t you get started on doing those things?”

8. Your brother and you are attending a church service event where there are numerous projects in progress. Your brother and you decide to help with the restoration of tile in the church kitchen. As you go to join the group already working there, you are stopped by the coordinator, Nancy/Thomas. She/He hands your brother the tools needed to help with the tile, and encourages each of you to work on whatever project interests you the most.

In addition to the 8 substantive scenarios above, the following 3 (distracter) scenarios are presented. These do not convey the executor's sex, are interspersed among the substantive scenarios, and are not scored.

- You and your brother are having lunch at an upscale restaurant. You both order the same salad. When you order, the server asks if you would like the half or full-sized portion. You answer, and then the server turns and leaves your table.

- You and your brother are attending a distant relative's funeral. As you sit down next to him to listen to the eulogy, the person sitting in the row behind you hands you a tissue and says, "Just in case."

- While house-sitting for your brother, you answer the phone to be greeted by a telemarketer. The representative begins to pitch a special offer for a table saw, then pauses to apologize for mistaking what product was on special that week. You then hear a description for the latest deal on a gardening kit.