This design is a 2x2x2 factorial following DeSante (2013) and Hayes et al. (2020). It seeks to address the question: “Do Americans punish women who apply for federal aid relative to men?” In other words, when comparing two otherwise identical applicants for federal aid, are Americans more generous toward male applicants? While a wealth of literature considers how, when, and why Black Americans are punished when they apply for welfare ((Gilens 1999; Smith 1987; Sears et al. 1997), few have considered if Americans treat male and female aid applicants differently (but see Rabinowitz et al. 2009). Instead, nearly all experiments use female names in order to hold sex constant as they evaluate race-based punishment. Using names that are distinctly white according to Hayes and Mitchel’s (2020) name-characteristics dataset, I hold race fixed as white and instead vary names by sex.

The basic design of the experiment is a budgeting task in which the respondent is asked to allocate $1,500 to two applicants for federal assistance, each of whom is said to need $900. Respondents may also choose to give some (or all) of the funds to “offset the federal deficit.” Given the budget constraint—both applicants’ full need cannot be met—I will use the amount awarded to each—Applicant 1, Applicant 2, and the Government—as an estimate of an applicant’s deservingness. These allocations will become my main variables of interest. Everything about the applicants will be the same except for a randomly assigned name (Misty, Sandra, Sammie, or James) and worker quality assessment (Excellent/Poor).

This design allows me to examine respondents’ generosity to women as compared to men, high quality women (men) as compared to low quality women (men), high (low) quality women as compared to high (low) quality men, low rated women (men) as compared to high rated women (men), and high (low) rated women as compared to high (low) rated men. Thus, I can examine not only to which groups respondents are most giving, but comment on the underlying causes of generosity (and punishment) based on sex, stated quality, or perceived quality *and* the interactions between these factors.

These names come from Hayes and Mitchell’s (2020) name-characteristics dataset and are matched on important characteristics. Specifically, James and Sandra are rated highly in professionalism, competence, and work ethic, while Sammie and Misty are rated lower in all three categories. The figure below shows the full breakdown of name characteristics.

Chart

Description automatically generated

*[Instructions for programmers]*

*[Show all on one screen]*

Researchers have been hired to consult with the Florida ACCESS, the state’s welfare agency. Below you will find two applicants for government assistance. The application information has been redacted to hide information that may identify individual applicants.

Each applicant has a state-assessed level of need of $900 per month. Your task is to allocate $1,500 between the two applicants. You can allocate any amount between $0 and $900 to each applicant. Any remaining funds will be used to offset the state’s budget deficit. Please enter three numbers below:

*[Items in bold are randomized. Applicant 1 could be either Sammie-Excellent, Sammie-Poor, Misty-Excellent, Mistry-Poor. Applicant 2 could be either James-Excellent, James-Poor, Sandra-Excellent, Sandra-Poor).*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Applicant 1: (**Sammie/Misty**) | Applicant 2: (**James/Sandra**) |
| * Head of household * Two dependents: one son and one daughter * Worker quality assessment: **Excellent/Poor** | * Head of household * Two dependents: one son and one daughter * Worker quality assessment: **Excellent/Poor** |

Amount allocated to Applicant 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Amount allocated to Applicant 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Amount allocated to reduce budget deficit: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*[Number responses may range from 0-1,500. The total of all three allocations must sum to $1,500]*