

White Fragility in Nursing: An Evolutionary Concept Analysis

Phyllis Pastwa, MSN, RN
Jill Peltzer, PhD, APRN-CNS

The University of Kansas School of Nursing, Kansas City, KS



Background

- Limited diversity of nursing workforce
 - 72% of nurses identify as white [1]
 - 19% of faculty identify as belonging to a minoritized group [2]
 - 40% of BSN students identify as a minoritized population [2]
- Attrition of historically minoritized students remains high [4,5]
- Minoritized students face unique challenges
- Bias, discrimination, microaggressions, and overt racism [6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14]

Purpose

To examine white fragility in nursing education and identify how systemic racism may contribute to exclusivity and attrition among minoritized students

Methods

Rodgers Evolutionary Concept Analysis

- White fragility is a new, evolving concept
 - Rodgers acknowledges concepts are contextual and evolving
- Sources for Concept Analysis
- No nursing-specific articles obtained
 - 13 peer-reviewed articles from arts & humanities, education, and health professions

Concept & Surrogate Terms

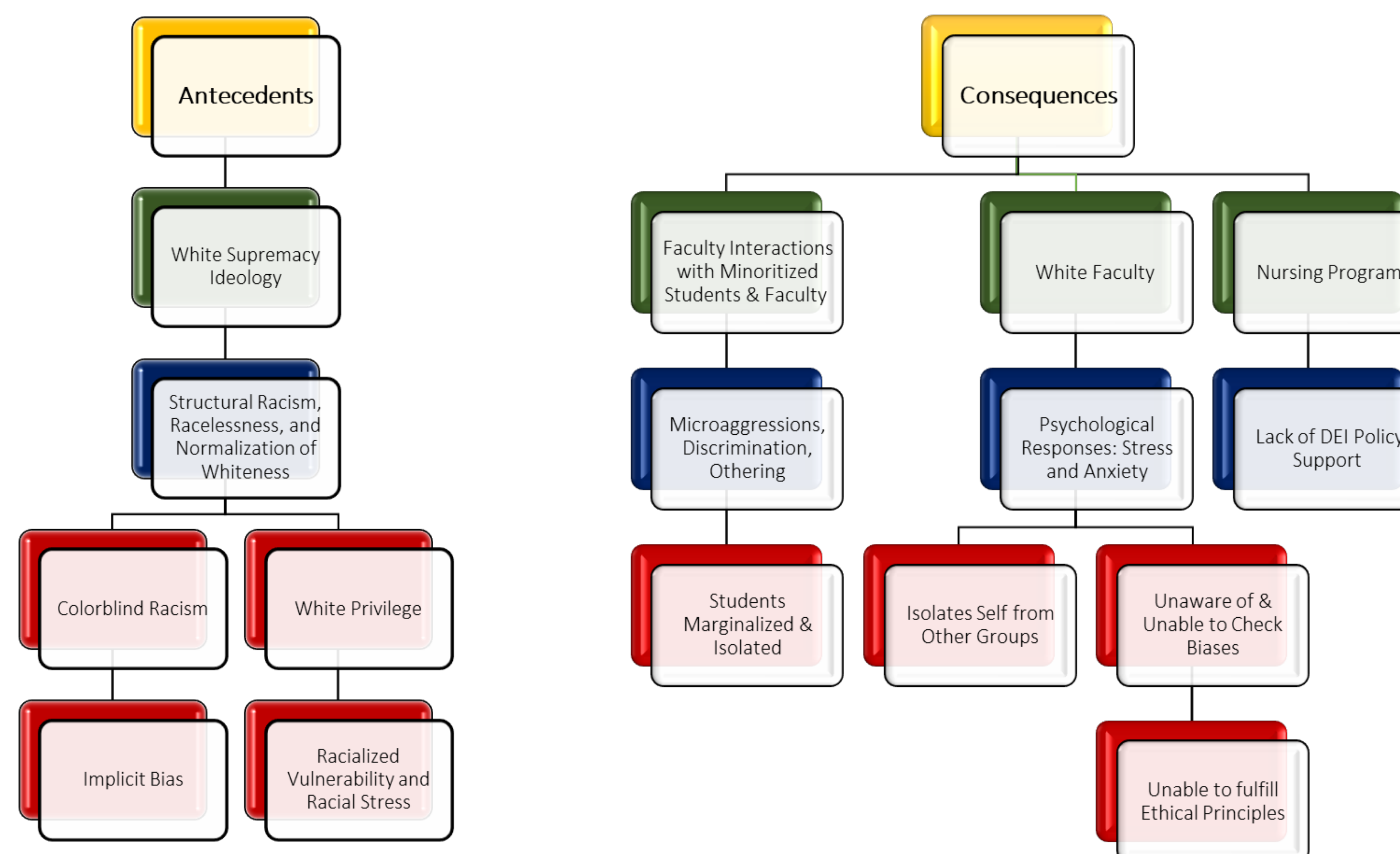
White fragility is complex concept that combines Whiteness and Fragility and is the response of white individuals when faced with uncomfortable racial topics [15,16]

Surrogate terms: Racial fragility & white emotionality

Results

Essential Attributes	Definition	Source
Withdrawal	Disengaging from the conversation, avoiding all racial discussions, and silence when faced with racial conversations.	Applebaum, 2021; DiAngelo, 2011; DiAngelo, 2018; Ford et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2019
Defensiveness	Negative actions for defensiveness include ignoring facts, aggression, confrontation, marked anti-social behavior. Positive actions for defensiveness include strong in-group pride, which is difficult to identify. Example: Statements from nurses: "I am a nurse," and the unvoiced ending of the statement is "Therefore, I cannot be racist."	Ford et al.,2022; Hamrick & Byma, 2017
Control	Control the conversation by moving to futuristic actions: "What can we, as white people, do?" Establish civility parameters with Whites holding the power to determine what is civil discourse. Intensify negative emotions of shame and remorse, placing people of color in position of consoler.	Applebaum, 2021; DiAngelo, 2018; Ford et al.,2022; Hamrick & Byma, 2017; Liu et al., 2019
Innocence	Denying patterns and histories of oppression. Refusing to acknowledge facts. Embracing individualism "I am a different White"	Applebaum, 2021; DiAngelo, 2018; Hamrick & Byma, 2017; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017

Antecedents and Consequences



Discussion

White fragility may impact retention of historically minoritized students:

- White majority nursing educators perpetuate the transfer of white knowledge and norms in education
- Unintentional messaging that historically minoritized individuals do not belong may occur due to unexamined biases

Anti-racist pedagogy necessary in nursing education to increase retention of historically minoritized students

- Intentional to bring in other perspectives

Intentional hiring of historically minoritized faculty to provide racially concordant mentors

Conclusions

The nursing workforce fails to match US population's diversity

Increased attrition of minoritized students impacts diversity of future workforce

Examining & addressing white fragility in nursing education important to foster inclusive culture and promote retention

References



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