

**Centennial Honors College Thomas E. Helm Undergraduate
Research Day 2025**

ABSTRACT

Major: Psychology

Podium

Faculty Mentor(s): Kristine Kelly

Comparing White Fragility Across Three Measures

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Presented by Ariana Sanchez

This study examined the effectiveness of three measures of White Fragility (WF) in assessing defensive reactions White individuals may exhibit when their racial privilege is challenged. WF, as conceptualized by DiAngelo (2018), includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses such as denial, defensiveness, and withdrawal during discussions on race. Despite the development of multiple WF assessment scales, no research has directly compared their efficacy. To address this gap, 23 self-identified White college students participated in an online survey in which they were randomly assigned to read one of two workplace promotion scenarios—one involving race-based inequity and the other involving non-race-based favoritism. Participants then completed three WF scales (Hill et al., 2021; Langrehr et al., 2021; Richmond & Kelly, 2021). Results showed that the Richmond & Kelly WF scale was the most sensitive to race-based inequity, with participants scoring significantly higher on this measure after reading about race-based promotion compared to the control condition ($p = .015$). The Langrehr scale showed no significant differences, while an unexpected trend in the Hill scale indicated lower scores in the race-based inequity condition ($p = .057$). These findings suggest that the Richmond & Kelly scale aligns most closely with the theoretical construct of WF, making it a more reliable tool for assessing White Fragility in discussions about race.