
ARRESTED EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: UNIVERSITIES AND THE INFANTILIZATION OF STUDENTS INSTEAD OF ANDRAGOGICAL COMPETENCY - A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract

Following up on Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt's impactful work: *The Coddling of the American Mind*, the objective of this study is to review the infantilization of university students and analyze the potential issues of andragogical incompetency. Through PRISMA guidelines for a systematic review, five distinct themes emerged reflecting infantilization through education, teaching, policy, and society all having an impact on learners in higher education. Findings show that infantilization happens through socio-economic impacts of media and commercialization, narcissistic infantilization in teaching and learning, and an andragogical deficit in place of students eventually leading to Arrested Educational Development (AED) attributing fear and anxiety to the education process, hindering student competency towards negative effects for their social and economic future. Further sociological and psychological implications are recommended, but the AED provides a cohesive framework to recognize infantilization in university students.

Keywords: infantilization; andragogy; universities; learning; narcissism

Introduction

In *The Coddling of the American Mind*, Lukianoff and Haidt (2015) outline the troubling realization facing college and university campuses in the modern era. They observe the excessive safety of students on campuses with the stifling of critical speech to capitulate to the 'feelings' of the modern-day political actors and activists. Furthermore, they observe the hypo-stimulating world of social media, helicopter parenting, and increasing political polarization. Some of the troubling realizations that came from their work were that hypo-stimulation mixed with safety ironically created more social anxiety and a burden for future young professionals. In response, Byron (2017) counters that the safe space on campus is a normalized outcome to deal with trauma through a well-being praxis

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and paradigm of comfort to provide students while on campus dealing with challenging speech. She concludes that safe spaces allowed students to expand their academic horizons in the framework of acknowledging vulnerability through the appropriateness of feelings.

Rationale

Before it was a hit show on the Fox network, the term arrested development relates to a neurodevelopment disorder commonly associated with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) relating to hyperactivity, impulsiveness, and inattention that hinders the developmental function commonly within children (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). One can conclude that the infantilization of college students may be a manifestation of adult ADHD; however, the phenomenon of adult ADHD in high volume on college and university campuses invites us to look deeper at the social matrices rather than the neurodevelopmental. This will help in creating a definition for Arrested Educational Development (AED) as the potential impulsiveness and hyperactivity of university classrooms, teaching, and administrative levers that hinder developmental function for society and economic prospects for students.

Infantilization is a term to literally ‘form infancy’ of someone or something psychologically through prolonged action. Ware and Johnson (2000) describe infantilization as “to sensitize students...the childlike treatment of older adults” (p. 271) conveying a sense of transgression of competency. Krauss Whitbourne and Cassidy (1994) found through an infantilization experiment, that students responded negatively to the controls of the study. Inside a university psychology class, teaching assistants would hand out crayons and coloring books to students asking them to hold up what they have drawn, show and tell with the rest of the class, and even ask students if they need to take a break and go to the bathroom. Most students indicated that this was a negative and dehumanizing practice leaving an experience that “discourages independence” (p. 168). The over-sensitization is reflected not only in school settings but within workplaces as account executive Paul Hebert (2019, May 6) outlined in an editorial that the modern workforce lacks the coping skills and codependency blurring the lines of work and fun at the hindrance of productivity. Not only is the concept of infantilization having an effect in the classroom, but it is also percolating out into the social and economic fabric of our modern world which can cause detrimental impacts on a socio-economic system.

Andragogy - or adult learning - relates to the teaching framework used for adults, commonly in a university setting. Growing out of the demand for adults seeking education after World War I, andragogy incorporates pragmatic concepts connecting schooling to competency outside of the walls of academia, predominantly in the workplace (Knowles, 1980). Andragogical design looks to connect pedagogical concepts used in the elementary and secondary school systems and tailors them to adult streams of learning such as experiential education (Kolb, 1984) and problem-based instruction (Gasser, 2011). Competency comes from how the student can be successful in achieving learning

outcomes as desired requisites for knowledge attainment. Observing the literature will look for how teachers were able to achieve insight through university programs with the potential of infantilized intervention.

Objective

The two dichotomies are that infantilization produces more anxiety and challenges for future professionals, holding on to preconceived biases, to avoid harsh challenges to ideas. Since this is taking place at a university - an institution designed to teach students the secrets of the universe and prepare them for life - one might wonder if the infantilization is creating a sense of ignorance causing an Arrested Educational Development (AED) which may produce challenges to andragogical competency (adult learning ability) towards future social and economic prospects. The key question to observe is how might infantilization of university students produce AED that impacts students' andragogical competency towards a social fit and economic outlook? The purpose of this study is to review the research behind the concept of infantilization and AED to observe how it may hinder adult learning competency relating to modern social and economic determinants. The hope is to develop a framework for how AED may be prevalent and how it can be detrimental to overall comprehension.

Methods

This paper will apply a systematic literature review (SLR) using the methods of Briner and Denyer (2012) of advancing knowledge through meta-analysis and creating further insight by systematically answering a question to a problem. The objective is to create a general framework from the literature to conclude with a determinable certainty. PRISMA guidelines were used to assess the validity and relevance to the objectives of the study (Figure 1). The selection of the articles used Boolean Search Parameters of online databases including ERIC, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect. The initial search used the phrase 'infantilization AND adult learning' and rendered 120 articles, book chapters, and other entries. Active filters were used to narrow the search toward higher education, and students showing 39 articles. Of the 39 articles screened, further relevancy filters were added focusing on the publication date between 2010-2021. After a review of the abstracts relating to justification, 17 articles were selected relating relevance, currency, and purpose of the study.

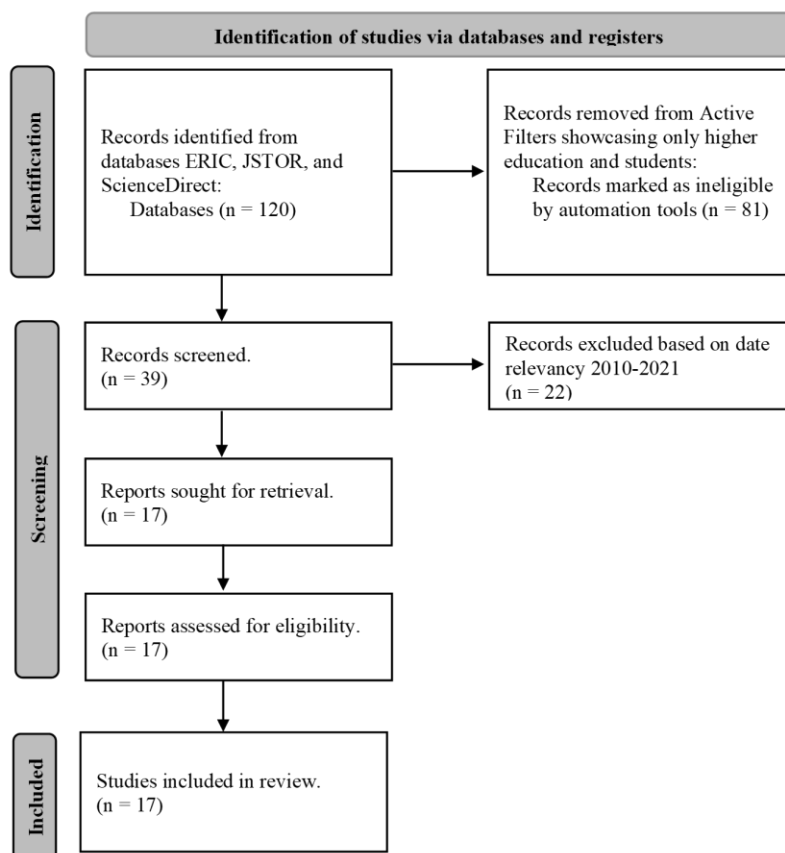


Figure 1. PRISMA inclusion and exclusion criteria

Article selection

There is a diverse gathering of research articles crossing six different countries spanning a decade of research. The selection incorporates a multidisciplinary assortment of scholarships such as literature, education, philosophy, political science, organizational leadership, sociology, media, psychology, and medical sciences. The multidisciplinary fields allow a deeper understanding of how adult learning related to infantilization can affect students in the classroom, along with teachers and administrative policy inside higher education. Below, is the list of articles that will be used in this meta-analysis (Table 1).

Table 1. List of articles for systematic literature review

Author	Year	Location
Baker	2019	Baltimore, USA
Biesta	2010	Champaign, USA
Bradley	2015	Tokyo, JPN
Christian	2018	Salt Lake City, USA
Czarniawska & Kunda	2010	Gothenburg, SWE
Ferraz & Morgan	2019	Toronto, CAN
Grumet	2010	Chapel Hill, USA

Table 1. List of articles for systematic literature review - *continued*

Author	Year	Location
Harris	2010	Cleveland, USA
Hayward	2012	Kent, UK
Hayward	2012	Kent, UK
Ilyes	2020	New York, USA
Li & Winchester	2014	Towson, USA
Phelan	2011	Dublin, IRE
Rhodes	2017	Shippensburg, USA
Schneider et al.	2014	Chicago, USA
Williams	2018	Exeter, UK
Williamson	2010	Hove, UK

One way to observe the data is through a concept of interdisciplinarity or inherently connected knowledge. The studies provide epistemic access to many different fields such as literature, politics, education, medicine, and leadership amongst others, and allow a wide range of knowledge to be shared. Potential biases with the study showcase a lack of concrete quantitative data, leaving qualitative data up for interpretation relating to the results. A reporting bias assessment on the literature reflects that the qualitative data presented is up for interpretation for researchers which leads to questioning certainty of the papers provided to provide a robust, quantitative understanding of infantilization in higher education.

Results

The results from the review of the literature rendered five distinct themes: infantilization is dehumanizing, exclusionary, and divisive; a sign of andragogical deficiency; educators and scholastic organizations perpetuate infantilization; the infantilization of media and marketing; and the framework for Arrested Educational Development (AED). As stated, the first four themes will outline the literature building toward the fifth theme of an AED framework that has an impact on the competency and scholarship of university students. Furthermore, the results will provide some additional detail on the aspects of infantilization that lead to further implications.

Infantilization is dehumanizing, exclusionary, and divisive

Reviewing the literature, it shows divergent yet collective responses on infantilization about its characteristics on learners. Most of the research considers that infantilization of one individual or a group - to another individual or group renders negatives such as dehumanization, exclusionary practices, and general divisiveness. Baker (2019) draws on the history of African Americans and how slaves would infantilize other slaves as a form of dehumanization. Thus, it becomes more pernicious when some observe that infantilization can be used as a pedagogical measure to reduce inequality or form self-expression (Biesta, 2010; Williamson, 2010), as it may create a sense of diminishment or dehumanization, especially in certain persons who have experienced this before in their lives. In

addition, the act of infantilization can contribute to other forms of historical dehumanization such as ableism or the patronization of elderly patients reflecting a loss of dignity and respect (Christian, 2018; Phelan, 2011).

As students eventually graduate, they shift into the workforce where exclusionary outcomes through infantilization happen. Czarniawska and Kunda (2010) outline the paradoxical vision of a workplace that rewards compliance with corporate objectives. They would observe adult-like approval for ideas related to the mission and vision statement of the company; however, they would treat individuals with new and complex ideas away from the objectives as need-to-be-educated infants re-reciting the company policies and procedures. In addition, educational contexts show exclusion through ideas when 'positive' reflected as mature, whereas differentiated ideas perpetuate a sense of infantilization as a sort of removal from the discourse. Exclusionary aspects - along with dehumanization - lead to a divisive understanding of how people interact within academia and within the professional workspace. If we refer back to (Krauss Whitbourne & Cassidy, 1994) we see that students strongly disliked the infantilized instruction that took place, and the research demonstrated that infantilization created a power/dependence dynamic that leads some to infantilize others for power attainment (Rhodes, 2017). This draws a similarity to how infantilization can inflame anxieties in learners along with creating a non-functioning society, removal from general discourse, and enhanced divisiveness (Czarniawska & Kunda, 2010; Hayward, 2013).

The challenges with the concepts of dehumanization, exclusion, and divisiveness are that these characteristics are negative in modern society. The lengths liberalized and modern societies have come reflect these characteristics as bygone relics of previous eras of social degradation such as the Medieval dark ages. One of these characteristics relates to the autonomy of the human, which infantilization allows for no autonomy given the psychological subservience. However, the research shows that the enhancement of autonomy can be beneficial to one's capability to overcome general infantilization through classically liberalized concepts, fostering independent competency, and personal accountability and agency (Baker, 2019; Ilyes, 2020; Rhodes, 2017) to help students - along with others in society - overcome the negative loop of dehumanization, exclusion, and divisiveness.

Andragogical deficit

A significant trend within the literature commented on the andragogical learning deficit stemming from infantilization. Three subthemes were found in the literature relating to stifled instruction, a lack of freedom, and anxiety in the learning process. What we can decipher from these subthemes is that the different psychological and sociological factors from infantilization contribute to the challenges in andragogy creating a deficit. Stifled learning happens when the teaching is not dynamic in terms of connected, experiential, and embracing of critical thinking. In turn, the stifling can come from a lack of action in learning leading to stagnant knowledge with no room for growth (Li & Winchester,

2014), or a conception of magical realism that leads to restlessness (Williams, 2018). The embrace of experiential, connected, and critical thinking can help andragogical deficits, especially with medical professionals and elderly care (Phelan, 2011), and a focus on andragogy towards real-world outcomes (Hayward, 2013).

Lack of freedom is an issue relating to the sociological factors for university students gaining competency in education. As Baker (2019) outlines autonomy and independence can overcome infantilization towards freedom in enhancing learning competency. The research shows that freedom reflects students gaining independence, autonomy, and grounded concepts in real-world experiences that can help students grow (Ilyes, 2020; Li & Winchester, 2014). Furthermore, when students with intellectual disabilities are provided freedom and autonomy, they can avoid vulnerabilities and stigmatization through enhanced scholarship (Christian, 2018; Ilyes, 2020). We can also see that training in the medical field - such as care for dementia patients - should be based on freedom and autonomy in schooling by medical students who merge life empowerment with care (Harris, 2010). What we can surmise is that the infantilization of students subdues freedom and autonomy that challenges competency into adult life similar to the exclusionary method of infantilization in the workplace (Czarniawska & Kunda, 2010).

Anxiety - along with other forms of mental illness - has been precipitously on the rise in the past decade. Twenge (2020) suggests that mental illnesses including anxiety have been on the rise since 2012 among adolescents in the United States commonly attributed to social media use, but implications suggest the change in cultural norms of youth and young adults. Even in the literature related to learning competency, Hayward (2012; 2013) suggests that a socio-cultural error of diminished reality and a playful consumer base emerge with the anxieties of youth and young adults leading to infantilization embrace and an inability to function in a competent society. In addition, students declared negative feedback of over-supervision, fear, risk-aversion, boundary violation, and unrealized potential devoid of the realities of society (Bradley, 2015; Schneider et al., 2014; Williams, 2018). Also, Williams (2018) outlines the infantilized concepts of flowery teaching and over-supervision that breed a narcissistic demand for gratification through “grotesquely distorted yogic teachings, exaggerating asceticism in the service of reaching a higher consciousness” (p. 383).

We can see the manifestation of andragogical deficit through stifled learning of stagnant epistemological growth, the diminishment of freedom and autonomy creating dependence, and the enhancement of anxiety through pedagogical and socio-cultural impacts that affect youth and young adults alike. This is a major theme in comprehending how the infantilization of teaching and education not only influences the student but on the adult that enters the workforce as contributing members of our economic society.

Educators and learning organizations perpetuate infantilization

Where might we find the cause of the infantilization of young adult students inside universities? One might attempt to look at other stakeholders in the university system - notably the educators and the administrators. Areas to observe are policy, processes, and outcomes that stem from educators and administrators within universities. Christian (2018) outlines that foreign policy in the political science field adopts rhetoric around learning disabilities suggesting an infantilization through policy stigmatization found with international relations. This in turn stimulates a response in economic and education policy as a resistance method to stodgy norms of the university enhancing characteristics of childhood as a form of activism against the norms (Williamson, 2010). We can look further at Hayward (2012; 2013) and the commercialization of infantilization to connect the tendency for educators - through these policy levers - to enter the field of teaching outlining commercialization and the infantilization of adults in modern culture (Williamson, 2010) mirroring a form of “systemic adult infantilization” (Bradley, 2015, p. 1034).

This segues into the processes or practices of educators within higher education and their infantilization influence on students. What the literature shows is that supervision from professors to students mirrors a form of audit culture in training with over-supervision and boundary violations contributing to the infantilization of students (Bradley, 2015; Grumet, 2010; Schneider et al., 2014). University student feedback from the literature was highly informative reflecting, but not exclusive, the enhanced auditing and lack of boundaries and the development of instruction that is “silly...arrogant, [and] narcissistic” (Schneider et al., 2014, p. 1221) with instruction leading to increased infantilization. This also connects to a view from an educator - as outlined in Ferraz and Morgan (2019) - that if international students cannot learn as outlined in a specific society, they should be catered to meet the student needs as in the example of English as a second language in Canada. This of course leads to outcomes that are harmful to students’ andragogical competency given they are not free to adjust their learning to develop new skills causing risk aversion (Bradley, 2015), and education that is not grounded in familiarity with real-world experiences leading to infantilization and poor-quality professionals (Grumet, 2010) as referenced in the negative feedback from students.

What we can surmise from this level of policy, practice, and outcome is that there is a psychological phenomenon at play referring to victimization and a theory of low expectations. We can look to Thomas Sowell (2013; 2019) on the theory of victimization in his study of the African American community in the United States. He suggests a pre-requisite of failure and the ideal perpetual problematization of the environment commonly espoused by affluent and educated liberals - with no empirical or epistemological precedent - creates a cycle of victimization that hurts the African American community. This correlates with the phenomenon of the *Pygmalion* or *Rosenthal Effect* which suggests if teachers demand high performance it correlates with high performance from students;

inversely, the demand for low performance correlates with a low performance from students suggesting an expectancy theory of prophetic outcomes based on inputs (Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968).

What we can observe from a policy and practice level is that educators and administrators as leaders in learning organizations impel this method of infantilization through a narcissistic form of expectancy suggesting low expectations and not living up to their preconceived standards. Furthermore, educators indulge in this infantilization which eventually hurts university students as they move away from academia into the socio-cultural world.

Infantilized marketing and media

If we recall the work of Rancière in Biesta (2010), he suggests that the infantilization of persons - through a method of cultural Marxism - may help reduce inequality to emancipate individuals. What we can reflect from this point is that infantilization may create a level playing field for learners and educators; however, this is an equal distribution towards a level of general subpar social and economic outcomes - like a caustic outline of Marxism 'equality in poverty'. The infantilization in the form of social and economic determinants trace back to the society of the 1970s with an over narcissistic demand for gratification and a willingness to regress to youth (Williams, 2018). This majestic and histrionic perception of life - especially in the era of new love and counterculture - would set the precedent of infantilization in areas of society including marketing and media.

Hayward (2012) outlines the method of pantomime justice of life stage dissolution in crime media led to the sociological change towards victim culture which "has intensified the infantilized adult's need for comfort, shelter, and safety, something that, as we have seen, is already a major trope within contemporary marketing (the so-called 'protective shield of childhood')" (p. 222). Hayward (2013) demonstrates how life stage dissolution in contemporary media and marketing actively erodes the distinction between adulthood and childhood leading to the superficiality of real-world outcomes. It also shows how we see the world of media and consumerism through marketing. If we take the assertion of teaching practices for international students through "infantilizing content and passive citizenship practices" (Ferraz & Morgan, 2019, pp. 206-207), and connect passive citizenship practices with media and marketing, we come to a central thesis from Hayward (2012; 2013) that infantilization creates a socio-cultural error in thinking through a playful consumer-based ideal blurring adulthood and childhood creating life stage dissolution. Furthermore, this concept of diminished reality allows marketing and infantilization in consumerism to maintain a sense of perpetual immaturity which is accepted.

When we look at university teaching, the method of preparation based on the demand of society crystallizes the connection between modern media and marketing for products that empower society and economics to play in this negative space of infantilization. This connection to organizational infantilization brings together the common theme of generational attitudes from youth and young adults in the 1960s and 1970s. What is suggested is a correlation with the same

cohort in the 2010s with community acceptance of perceived validation with a general rise in narcissism from the 1980s to 2010 allowing room for a u-quadratic distribution before 1980 (Twenge et al., 2008; 2012). We can also look at the work of Howe and Strauss (1993; 2000) which outline the narcissism of the boomer generation correlating to the millennial generation through a hypo-individualized attitude towards society, parentage, and a burden of dominant generations through u-quadratic rates in birth mixed with similar traits of histrionic attitudes and self-indulgence. What we can surmise is that a form of infantilization trends with the winds of generational engagement with media and economics allowing a subsequent boomerang effect of modern indulgence seen in past generations.

Framework for Arrested Educational Development (AED)

When attempting to create a framework to outline AED, one must look at the multiple sides of a topic to see how it may be structured within a system. The process of AED happens via a negative feedback loop in which a stimulus-response triggers a sensor leading to control and effect bringing the process back to stasis starting the stimulus-response again. The negative feedback loop in this case displays a circular flow model in which AED is the stimulus that triggers the sensor and is influenced by the effector. Given the findings from the systematic literature review, we can develop this AED framework using the four compounds: AED, socio-economic infantilization, narcissistic infantilization, and infantilization creating andragogical deficit (Figure 2).

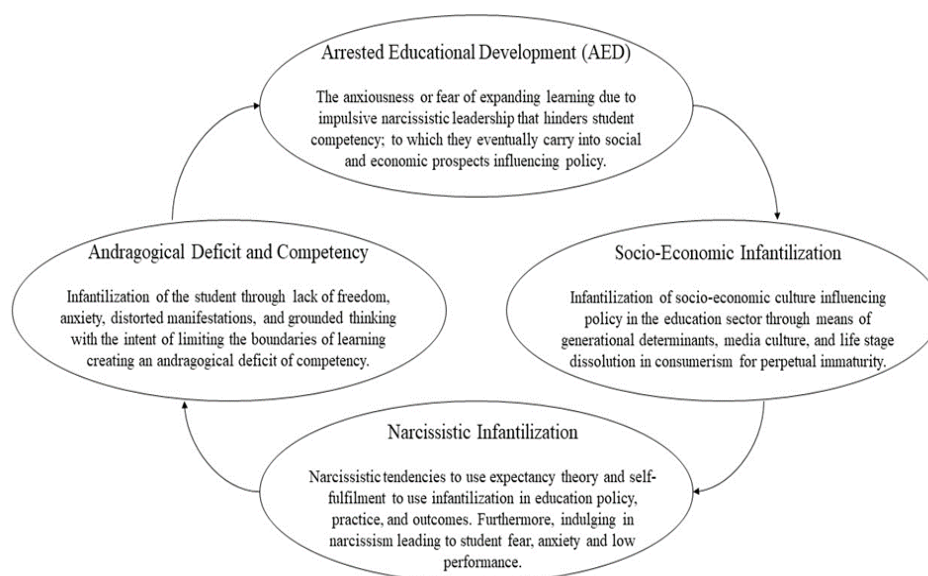


Figure 2. Arrested Educational Development Framework

The AED is both an influencer and influenced by its model demonstrating that AED is both a cause and effect by many modes recommended in the literature. It hurts the socio-economic infantilization through life stage

dissolution (Hayward 2012; 2013) with infantilization creating passive citizenship (Ferraz & Morgan, 2019) setting the dissolution of society and the economy creating perpetual immaturity. This then leads to a narcissistic outcome that mirrors AED hyper-intensity and impulsiveness (see American Psychiatric Association, 2013) creating fear and anxiety through methods in educational policy (Christian, 2018; Williamson, 2010) which flows to the infantilization of students (Bradley, 2015; Grumet, 2010; Schneider et al., 2014). Lastly, the andragogical deficit happens when the fear and anxiety from educators flows to the students with a lack of freedom and distorted manifestations that limits epistemological boundaries. This then creates the AED of anxiousness or fear of expanding learning due to impulsive narcissistic leadership that hinders student competency, which they eventually carry into future social and economic prospects that have an influence on policy.

Discussion

Many implications can be drawn from the research into infantilization and its effects on university students. Most of the implications are related to further questions as to why this is happening beyond the framework presented, along with potential current and future questions that may stem from this knowledge. The exigency on the topic of infantilization of university students is needed given the direction of universities as outlined in Lukianoff and Haidt (2015) along with the news reports that have been released relating to the psychological development of students in the modern university with the developed and crafted naivete to meet political outcomes (Shulevitz, 2015, March 26; Steinbaum, 2021, April 13). Inferences are drawn connecting life stage dissolution (Hayward, 2013) on the generational, epistemological, and societal factors of individuals creating a precedent of diminished reality, creating a negative feedback loop of infantilization begetting infantilization.

One area that the research briefly touched on was the impact of infantilization compared across different generations of students, not only in academic settings but social settings. A deeper discussion around the generational impacts of infantilization is needed especially considering the diversity of generations currently in the workplace at this moment in time. Although research on this topic is ever-changing, a sense of learning and production are key themes for team dynamics and cross-generational differences in motivation (Burton et al., 2019). Further inquiry between the Twenge et al. (2008; 2012) articles and the Howe and Strauss (1993; 2000) articles are important to understanding the nexus of narcissism and its impact on how we learn about society. Future research should continue to be done in the area of cross-generational education training and teaching using an interdisciplinary approach connecting topics related to generational knowledge attainment, notably, potential similarities between baby boomers and millennials, the two biggest generational cohorts.

Epistemologically, we can look at some of the knowledge attainment methods used when relating to the infantilization of students in universities. Most university epistemologies lean toward a post-structuralist concept of teaching and learning related to postmodern pedagogy reflecting the collective way of knowing through the deconstruction of socio-educational power structures (Kilgore, 2004). When we look at postmodernism in education, we trace it back to Freire (1970) and his connecting of education through the Marxist lens to power, oppression, and social justice. There were sections of the systematic literature review that were written with a postmodern lens such as Biesta (2010) who suggest the cultural Marxist or postmodern framework will be beneficial to emancipating individuals; also, a critical awareness of international students (Ferraz & Morgan, 2019).

However, if we look deeper into the epistemology of postmodernism, we can find some of the issues that attribute to the current problem of infantilization of higher education students. We can look at the classical tenets of postmodernism such as the unbroken acceptance of subjective reality as noted in Foucault (1961) theorizing that hidden subjectivity is the nature of man and that objectivity is a construct connecting the subjectivity of psychiatric madness. We can also look at the never-ending power struggle of oppressor and oppressed as outlined in Marcuse (1965) to which oppression is a never-ending construct and the status quo of society perpetuates the oppression. One might be able to look at these dynamics and connect them to the infantilization of university students given the rise of far-left activist teaching in the twenty-first century (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015).

The epistemological basis in oppression dynamics and lack of subjectivity connect to the dissolution, narcissistic, and activist tendencies in academia that place blame on unseen structures and blur the lines of fantasy and reality towards a heightened post-structural sense. As a remedy for infantilization - according to the literature - are the experiential and authentic education experiences that expand boundaries. However, in most of the institutions of postmodern pedagogy, epistemology is suffering from a lack of authenticity failing to address empirical and pragmatic concepts using post-realist and hypo-stimulating methods not conducive to positive outcomes. Moving forward, addressing this challenge in adult education is beneficial to helping break the loop of AED and build reliable competencies in adult learning, especially in universities.

Appreciating change in society about infantilization in university allows us to take a deeper look into more connected factors that influence it. Much like the challenges with postmodern pedagogy, society is not constructed in a vacuum of oppressors and oppressed systems gave their dynamism. To say all society is infantilized would be irresponsible; however, characteristics of infantilization can be seen in the research provided to make an effective observation. Furthermore, examples of sociological infantilization could be extrapolated in many areas such as the request for more safe spaces in universities (*see* Byron,

2017); to the World Economic Forum (Parker, 2016, November 11) - an organization that is connected to over 100 multinational companies including Apple, Microsoft, and Walmart - suggesting the infantilized future of no ownership and no responsibility for individuals through all products becoming services such as the clothes we buy and the food we eat becoming a mainstay. Further study on the trends happening in society about infantilization will be needed to address these concerns not only in schools but in our global society.

Potential challenges with the future of infantilization focus on the legal implications of infantilized outcomes in the university that was not predominant in the article search - as in - the university administration and the legal liability shield. Fairfax (2005) describes the liability shield as an outcome of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act to shield directors and senior management of corporations from harm or loss - either financial or civil - for issues that befall the organization. Thus, an interesting juxtaposition is present between infantilized students in college and where blame is found. Legal liability shields reflect a level of responsibility, but not complete responsibility, outside of the purview of the individual. For example, if a student at a university feels that they felt traumatized by a speaker on campus, the administration is protected by offering a safe space as a liability to any potential litigation from the said student. This is an interesting outline to pursue, especially for a law review, to look deeper into the aspects of legal liability shields and the impact on modern universities.

Related psychological discussion with the research expresses the need for further study on areas such as mental illness. It should be known that any method of arrested development of hyperactivity or other schizoid personality disorders should be observed further. The DSM-V only applies limited information on how to describe and analyze an illness; thus, further observation through clinical studies, quantitative data, and exploratory studies will be beneficial and complementary to this work. It may be beneficial to use this study as a basis for field research in observing AED inside classrooms or programs at universities. Furthermore, future research relating to higher education and AED will hope to bring more expanded perspectives towards empiricism through nomological networks of study.

What this systematic literature review attempted to achieve was to observe and analyze this phenomenon of infantilization in higher education and create a framework for understanding it on a practical and pragmatic level. The concept of AED can be used in future research based on all aspects of knowledge as a generalized theory for andragogical competency. Furthermore, the field of infantilization relating to students within institutes of higher learning will benefit from significant quantitative study to draw correlational and causal inferences.

Conclusions

In sum, the concept of AED through infantilization in higher education is found in the literature. The question observed was: how might infantilization

of university students produce AED that impacts students' andragogical competency towards a social fit and economic outlook? Through a review of the research, infantilization is causal in the teaching, scholarship, administration, social, and commercial determinants of students in higher education via socio-economic infantilization, narcissistic infantilization, and a deficit in andragogical competency leading to the Arrested Educational Development (AED). Through anxiety, fear, and narcissistic impulsivity paired with life stage dissolution, divisiveness, and low expectations relating to the *Pygmalion Effect*, hinders an individual's competency to learn about the real-world in preparation for the social and economic complexities of the future.

Practical implications

Moving forward, it is important that university educators and administrators critically assess their educational goals and learning outcomes for students ensuring that freedom, autonomy, and a lack of overzealous auditing are policies to consider. It is also advised that educators reflect on their pedagogical and epistemological frameworks to understand infantilization and its detrimental effects on learning competency for adult students. Working together with deans and other institutional leaders can help alleviate the challenges of infantilization in the university classroom.

Limitations and future research directions

Key limitations to the study revolve around the questions of infantilization in a predominantly socio-political or socio-economic climate. Although education provides a view, the divergent concepts of society therein would require a broader study relating to societal impacts. In response to the limitations, we can look at potential benefits that can be used for future research. Furthermore, provide attention to the implications of mental illness and its relation to the infantilization such as hyperactivity and other schizoid disorders. The use of interdisciplinarity - the connected knowledge streams to answer complex questions - may be beneficial to future studies on AED. Multi-faceted studies through different university programs on one campus or through many different universities in a specific geographic area can provide rich and sufficient data for observing AED in the future.

Ethics statement

Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest

The author declare no conflict of interest.

Author contributions

Not applicable.

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