

Love and Money: Societal Attitudes Toward Income Disparities in Age-Gap Relationships

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Abstract : Couples involved in age-gap relationships generally evoke negative stereotypes, opinions, and social disapproval. This research seeks to examine whether financial disparities in age-discrepant relationships cause negative attitudes in study participants. It was hypothesized that an age-gap couple (29 year difference) would receive a greater degree of societal disapproval when the couple also had a large salary gap compared to a similarly aged couple (1 year difference) with a salary gap. Additionally, there would be no significant difference between age-gap couples without a salary-gap compared to a similarly aged couple without a salary gap. To test the hypothesis, participants were given one of four scenarios regarding a couple in a romantic relationship. Then they were asked to respond to nine Likert scale questions. Results indicated that participants perceived age-gap relationships with a salary disparity to be less equitable in regard to a power imbalance between the couple and the financial and general gain that one partner will receive. A significant interaction was also detected for evoking feelings of disgust in participants and how morally correct it is for the couple to continue their relationship.

Keywords : age gap relationships, love, financial disparities, societal stigmas, relationship dynamics

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