

A THEMATIC ANALYSIS STUDY ABOUT REMARRIAGE OF ELDERLY MEN IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: Although the phenomenon of remarriage at the later phase of life is well-researched in Western countries, little is known in Asia, including Vietnam. Vietnamese divorced/widowed senior citizens who wished to remarry/re-partner at their old age usually faced criticism and misinterpretation of their actions due to obsolete social beliefs and bias. To explore experiences and perspectives of Vietnamese male senior citizens throughout their process of remarriage, this qualitative research recruited and interviewed six male participants who remarried at the age of 56 to 70. They came from six different provinces and central cities of Vietnam. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and via audio and video calls. Thematic analysis was used to extract emerging themes and subthemes. There were five themes identified, which include motivations for remarriage, expectations for remarriage, obstacles of remarriage, support for remarriage, and marriage registration of Vietnamese elderly men.

Keywords: Remarriage; Vietnamese elderly; remarried elderly men

Introduction

At a later phase of their life, widowed/divorced elderly men in Vietnam may think about their own happiness and wish to remarry/re-partner. Remarriage is a life-transition event that is expected to bring valuable support from a new spouse (De Jong Gierveld, 2002; Moorman et al., 2006; Cancian & Oliner, 2000, as cited in Carr, 2004), but it may also create conflicts with the newlyweds' family members (De Jong Gierveld & Peeters, 2003; Cohn, 2005; Nguyen, 2012; Ngoc Anh & Quang Anh, 2012) at the same time challenge their values system (Nguyen et al., 2012). Due to a lack of public understanding about their actual needs, thoughts, and experience relating to remarriage later in their life, Vietnamese widowed/divorced elderly have not

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received the necessary support and respect from their families and communities for this legitimate right. This study aims at getting more insights as well as raising public awareness about this phenomenon.

Vietnamese elderly's life

At this phase of their life, it is the elderly's children's responsibility to take care of their parents, not only in providing material and financial support but also in preventing them from developing negative feelings due to people around them not listening to their words or not fulfilling their wishes (Ngo, 2013; Nguyen, 2012; Nguyen, 2012). Over 63% of Vietnamese elderly lived with at least a child, and the main income of 32% of them was remittance from their children (Giang, 2011). At the country level, the Vietnamese state considers the aging population a precious resource of the country in terms of their living experience, talents, and wisdom (Ngo, 2013). Hence, the government has taken actions to ensure the quality of life given to them through the issuance of protective policies, laws, and regulations. In their turn, the Vietnamese elderly tend to keep an active work-life balance by contributing to their families and society in various ways. In 2008, 61.91% of the elderly whose ages ranged from 60 to 69 still joined the labor market. The percentages of working elderly who were in the age group of 70 - 79 and above 80 were 34.50% and 7.84%, respectively (UNFPA, 2011). The elderly who did not work to earn a living contributed to their families by taking care of their family members, including their spouse, parents, great or grandchildren, and/or doing housework.

Remarriage in Vietnamese elderly

Remarriage is a legitimate right of the Vietnamese elderly, and it is protected by law (Law of the elderly, 2009). However, the attitude of families and society toward this phenomenon is inconsistent. On the one hand, there is a traditional Vietnamese belief that "the care from children for their aged father is not as good as the care from his wife." On the other hand, there is a much stronger belief that partnership among the elderly is not so necessary (Nguyen et al., 2012) because they already have exceeded the age of reproduction, finish parenting tasks, reduced or have no sexual desires, and consequentially, have their children and peers to fulfill their need of social interactions. If these elderly individuals express their wish to remarry, it is likely to be interpreted that they want sex (Ngoc Anh & QuangAnh, 2012). Then, they will be considered indecent and become a source of shame for themselves and their family (Ngoc Anh & QuangAnh, 2012 & DoanTrang, 2012). In many cases, the wish of aged parents to remarry has reportedly been cruelly opposed by their children and relatives (Thanh Hien, 2014; Ngoc Anh & Quang Anh, 2012; Doan Trang, 2012; & Nguyen, 2012).

Literature Review

Characteristics of a Remarried Family Formed in Old Age

Remarried family, formed in old age, is quite unique with three distinct characteristics. Firstly, biological and stepchildren of the family are already adults. Thus, they do not need care from their parents. Secondly, stepchildren and stepparents do not experience the period of staying in the same house together because adult children usually move out to live their independent lives. Thirdly, the possibility that stepparents will need support and care from their biological and step relatives is high (Ganong & Coleman, 2006). Most old parents in Vietnam and other Asian countries usually live with at least one single or married adult child (Huang, 2012; Nguyen et al., 2012). Registering their re-partnering at a later time is usually done by the elderly who sought security and familiarity (De Jong Gierveld, 2002) and recognition and protection from the law. Their religion and some of its associated rights and obligations also matter in their decision whether to remarry or not (Cherlin, 2004; Nock, 1995 as cited by Vespa, 2012).

Motivations

One of the most common motivations for remarriage over nations and genders is companionship (Watson, Bell, & Stelle, 2010; Bildtgaard & Oberg, 2015; Mehta, 2002), i.e., the elderly usually want to have a partner to spend their time with in order to avoid loneliness (De Jong Gierveld, 2002; Bildtgaard & Oberg, 2015). The companionship of a partner is irreplaceable by that of children or friends (Tabott, 1998; Bulcroft & O'Connor, 1986). Besides, two common motivations are to have a caregiver and financial security. The former is more popular in single male elderly, and the latter is more desired by single female elderly (Bulcroft, Bulcroft, Hatch, & Burgatta, 1989; Huang, 2012; Ganong & Coleman, 2012). In Vietnam, both remarried elderly and experts consider companionship and emotional support as the motivations for remarriage in old age (Hồng Phương, 2012).

Expectations

Studies about the expectations of the elderly for remarriage as well as re-partnering are rare, although expectations are an important part of romantic relationships (Miller & Tedder, 2011; Romano, 2001, p.6). In two studies about this topic, three expectations were found, and these include spending most of their available time with their spouses and do things together, to be with each other until one partner dies (Bildtgaard & Oberg, 2015), and a sense of equality in their new marriage (Clarke, 2005).

Obstacles

Among many sources of obstacles for remarriage in later life, this present study focused on the obstacles that stem from the disapproval of the adult children as well as with that of the society at large toward the remarriage process of the elderly. In relation to the disapproval of adult children to the remarriage intention of their elderly parents, five reasons were identified—first, concerns about their inheritance, which could be possible affected by the remarriage (De Jong Gierveld & Peeters, 2003; Cohn, 2005; Nguyen, 2012, Ngoc Anh & Quang Anh, 2012); second, possible decrease in financial and housework support that they used to receive from their old parents before the remarriage (Pew Research Center, 2015; Huang, 2015; Le et al., 2011; Knodel & Nguyen, 2015); third, being seen as failures in providing appropriate care for the elderly (Huang, 2012; Mehta, 2002); fourth, avoiding custody and financial burden for another elderly in their households (Huang, 2012; Nguyen, V. C., 2012; Yen Ha, 2015); lastly, jealousy due to the belief that the new partner of their remarried parent replaced the presence of the other biological parents (De Jong Gierveld & Peeters, 2003) or would share the love of their remarried parent to them (Cohn, 2005). With regard to the obstacles from society as a whole, societal attitudes and judgment of Asian cultures toward the phenomenon of remarriage in later life are generally negative. The wish to remarry by the Asian elderly is easily interpreted to be motivated by their sexual interests. Therefore, they are usually teased and laughed at by family and neighbors (Huang, 2012; Mehta, 2002), and this may lead to fear and shame and suppress the elderly's wish to remarry (Huang, 2012).

Support

More than the issue on the obstacles, there are also cases in which the intention by the elderly to remarry received support from their adult children, friends, neighbors, and community. In Asian cultures, the remarried elderly reported that they received understanding of their wish to remarry from their children (“Using Nguoi Lao Dong,” 2005; Doan Trang, 2012). In fact, some were even suggested to remarry and have been assisted in finding the right dating candidates (Indriana, 2013). In terms of religion, the Islamic belief of marrying widowed women is a factor of support for its believers (Mehta, 2002). In Western cultures, re-partnering elderly could rely on their family and friends for emotional support and recommendations. At the community level, their wish to remarry is also facilitated by available matching services, even the ones online (McWilliams & Barrett, 2014).

Objectives

In recent years, the Vietnamese public has started to notice the remarriage of the elderly since some local newspapers reported few cases. Some general

developmental facts about the physical and psychological needs of elderly from experts were presented in those articles to raise public awareness and advocate this important legal human right (“Using Nguoi Lao Dong,” 2005; Nguyen, 2012; Yen Ha, 2015). However, much more knowledge about the remarriage of the Vietnamese elderly remains unexplored. For example, almost nothing is known in relation to what remarried elderly consider, expect, or are concerned about when they decide to remarry. In other words, there are many issues waiting to be probed. Therefore, this present study aims to get more insights and raise public awareness about the expectations, motivations, obstacles, support, and reasons for marriage among remarried elderly men in Vietnam.

Methods

Participants

In Vietnam, remarriage in later life is a sensitive topic covering very personal (and painful) experiences and thoughts. Therefore, potential participants did not want to share their stories with a stranger. In order to recruit six participants, the researcher had to reach out to her social network, including family members, friends, and acquaintances, for help. The researcher presented to her contacts the research topic, purposes of the study, matters on confidentiality, and requirements to be taken from the participants. Her contacts then convinced potential participants who were their relatives or good friends to join the study. When the potential candidates agreed to join the research, their phone numbers were given to the researcher.

The selection criteria included divorced/widowed Vietnamese elderly men remarried or re-partnered at age 56 above, registered their new marriage or conducted a formal wedding ceremony, and articulated their thoughts and experience in relation to their remarriage. Age criterion was adjusted from 60 above at the design phase to 56 above because of the difficulty of recruiting enough participants for the study.

Each participant was given a pseudo name to protect their confidentiality. Among the six participants, three were widowed (An, Khoa, Khang), and three were divorced (Nam, Chau, Huy) before their remarriage. An was in Binh Duong, a Southern province, living alone and remarried at age 70. His wife was 54 at remarrying time. Nam was in Hai Duong, a Northern province, living with his old mother, remarried at age 61, and his wife was 35 at remarrying time. In My Tho, a Southern city, Chau was living alone, remarried at age 61, and his wife was 48 at remarrying time. Khoa was in Ha Noi, the capital of Vietnam, living alone, remarried at age 65, and his wife was 50 at remarrying time. Khang was in Hai Phong, a Northern city, living with his two

teenage children, remarried at age 56 but did not share his wife's age at their remarrying time. Huy was in Ho Chi Minh city, the financial center of Vietnam, living alone, re-partnered at age 68, and his wife's age was around 60. Five participants An, Nam, Chau, Khoa, Khang, registered their remarriages. Huy did not register his re-partnership but hold a formal wedding ceremony with some hundred guests.

Procedure

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the participants. The total duration of each participant's interview ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. Most of the participants were interviewed once. Only one participant was interviewed twice because some important information could not be collected in the first one.

As the researcher worked in Thailand while all participants lived in Vietnam, there was only one face-to-face interview conducted at the house of a friend of the first participant. In this interview, the researcher could observe the body language of the participant besides collecting verbal content. The rest included one video call and four phone-call interviews at participants' convenient times. Video/phone interviewing did not negatively impact the quality of data collection and analysis processes because participants were comfortable sharing their insights despite the distance and via calls. Additionally, the researcher was able to read the participants' feelings by changing their voice tones while they were talking. The positive point of adopting video/phone interviews was that the researcher could approach the diverse backgrounds and stories of the participants.

At the beginning of their interviews, all candidates understood the purposes of the conversation and were willing to share their thoughts and experiences. Participants voluntarily joined the study and did not get pay for their time. To manage the researcher's bias, the researcher usually summarized and clarified participants' points during their interviews. Member checking could not be done as planned due to participants' unwillingness and the time limitation of the researcher.

Analyses

After transcribing the conversations, thematic analysis was used to extract codes, themes, and subthemes. This process followed the six-phase guide of Braun and Clarke (2006). To interpret the data, the researcher used psychological and cultural knowledge as lenses to understand the thoughts, opinions, perceptions, behaviors, actions, and experiences of the 6 participants, and they were then given meanings.

Findings

Motivations for Remarriage

This present study discovered nine motivations for remarriage in later life; many have never been found in current literature. They included loneliness, companionship—someone to share life with/rely on, health risks of living alone, mutual care, love—affection, the desire of couple lifestyle, to have someone to worship their ancestors longer, unpredictable life and future, and lower chances to remarry at an older age. About loneliness, four participants reported facing it. Khang felt severe loneliness although he lived with his two teenage children before remarriage, *“Eating rice was like chewing straw. I ate for survival only; I did not feel that I was a human being...I would rather die than live lonely. There is no sadness stronger than sadness due to loneliness.”* In terms of care, unlike the popular model of exchanging service and financial security found in the literature, participants of this present study sought for mutual care as Khoa shared, *“to live together, facilitate and lean on each other when we are sick at an old age.”* With regards to love and affection, Khang described them as compulsory and natural needs, *“I think lack of food or clothes can be tolerated, but lack of affection and care between husband and wife is unbearable.”* “To have someone to worship my ancestors longer” was the second motivation for remarriage of Khoa. It was a new and culturally unique motivation, *“My friends suggested this to me. In our Vietnamese tradition, it is important to have someone to worship your ancestors longer.”*

Expectations for Remarriage

Two main expectations found in this present study include a successful remarriage, and the life mate will understand life. A successful marriage could be defined by good interaction between husband and wife (Chau, Khoa). Like Khoa said, *“As we live together, we should be cultured; we must have good manners in dealing with the other.”* It also meant the highest level of commitment of both partners (Khoa) *“when you decide to marry that person, you cannot leave him/her. Because once you accept each other, you have to share joys and suffer sadness together.”* Or it was successful when the couple could live well with each other until the end of life (An, Nam, Khang, Huy) as An expected *“... together until the end of our life in peace, harmony, and warmth.”* To be understood by their wives was also an expectation of Nam and Khang for a successful marriage, *“I wish that... she lived near... my hometown...I mean the distance between our houses was only about four kilometers, so more or less she would understand my life more.”* (Nam) Moreover, two participants, An and Khang, expected the harmony of the whole combined family, *“In order to live together, two families have to thoroughly understand each other”* and *“be a harmonious and united family.”* About the expectation that the lifemate will understand life, it was Nam’s

expectation to prevent another failure of couple-ship, *“As she also had a failed marriage, I hope that she would already have the right judgment about life.”*

Obstacles of Remarriage Process

Participants of this present study faced disapproval for their choices of new wives, disapproval for their action of remarriage, difficulty in approaching potential candidates, and some minor obstacles. In terms of disapproval for their choices of new wives, An and Nam reported vigorous disagreement and disapproval from their children, siblings, relatives, friends, and even warning from strangers about their wives-to-be. For example, An’s children commented about their step-mother-to-be, *“Too young. She is just a few years older than our oldest sibling. It’s awkward. You should find someone around 60.”* As to the disapproval for the action of remarriage, there were negative judgments/advice and misunderstandings, including “eager for strange/new lust” (An), “enjoy your freedom” (An, Khang), and misunderstanding from neighbors (Khang). This disapproval also comprised prejudice about remarriage at old age (Khang and Huy), *“In rural areas, their culture and ways of thinking are different from those in urban areas. Inherited from our older generations in feudal time, people supposed that taking another step is like this, like that...a bad deed.”* (Khang), and social expectations toward widowed persons as Khang shared, *“It is our custom that when one’s husband or wife dies, that person has to stay single to mourn and to be faithful to their deceased partner.”*

With regard to the difficulty in approaching a potential candidate, it was Nam’s experience because his new wife was way too younger than him, *“My age...was about the age of her father. It was not easy to approach her.”* It was Chau’s and Huy’s experiences about minor obstacles when Chau got disapproval from his mother-in-law for his remarriage. Huy was disagreed by some fellows about his wish to remarry. However, these were minor obstacles because his brother-in-law helped Chau solve his problem quickly, and Huy did not mind the disagreement.

Support for Remarriage Process

Not only facing obstacles, but participants of this present study also received meaningful support from their adult children, family members, friends, neighbors, organizations, and the geography—history—culture factors. Regarding the support from their adult children, four participants Nam, Chau, Khang, and Huy, reported that their children suggested they remarry or agreed and sympathized with their wish to remarry. *“It was fortunate that A (his son’s name) and his sister all agreed. It was my very good luck.”* (Khang). About support from family members, four participants received support from their

step-children (An) and future in-law family members (Nam, Chau, Khoa), members of original families and clans (Nam, Khoa). The support ranged from helping find and approach candidates to organizing their wedding ceremonies. About support from friends, five participants An, Nam, Chau, Khoa, and Huy, reported that their friends helped them choose/find the right mates, gave emotional support while facing opposition, encouraged them to remarry, and helped them find information and approach the candidates. About support from neighbors, two participants Chau and Khoa reported receiving support in the form of encouraging them to remarry, wanting to help them find the right mates, and assisting them in the wedding ceremony. In terms of support from organizations, Khang and Huy were supported by the organizations to which they belonged to encourage them to remarry and approve their remarriage. Regarding geography—history—culture factors, two participants Chau and Huy, mentioned this advantage to their remarriage, including progressive thoughts/attitudes and supportive beliefs from a different culture.

Marriage Registration

Five participants reported seven reasons for marriage registration, and one participant shared his reasons for not registering his remarriage. The seven reasons for marriage registration comprised of high sense of complying with marriage law, protection by law, the desire to have an official tie, a way to express respect and appreciation toward the wife, “I am a decent person,” to set clear boundaries for family relationships after marriage,” to live with high standard—to be models for the younger generation. Chau and Khang reported that they must comply with marriage law properly because one participant was a government officer and a Communist party member. *“I must register for my marriage. I am working in the government sector. I must comply with the law properly.”* (Chau). An expected to be protected by law, *“I chose to register with the purpose of having the law... defend both partners.”* An and Khang shared their desire to have an official tie, *“There would be nothing to tie each other. Therefore, I had no other choice than registration. Secondly, we must register to be really husband and wife.”* (An). An, Nam and Chau considered registering their remarriage as a way to express respect and appreciation toward their wives. For example, Chau said, *“to give the woman a proper honor and position.”* All five participants reported similar opinions that they registered their marriage to demonstrate their characteristics of being decent people. *I think registration is more legal. So, wherever I go, I can walk properly with my head up. (...) I am a decent person; why do I have to be involved in vague issues?”* (Khang) Khang was also the participant expecting that registering his remarriage would help set clear boundaries between step-adult children and step-parents, *“...Many of my friends and neighbors just solved a part of their matters, i.e., moving to live together without registration;*

then, children from both sides came and fought for this or that. They even insulted their parents.” An and Khang reported that they chose to register for their remarriage to conform to standards and be models for the younger generation.

Huy was the participant who did not register for his remarriage. His reason was that he did not trust the law and wanted to prevent conflicts between children of two sides about properties if one partner would die later. *“We will hold a decent wedding ceremony. Why, however, won’t we register for our marriage? Because Vietnamese law is very complicated. You have your house; I also have my house... When we register for our marriage, when we die...or one of us dies...our children will fight among themselves (...) So, if we do that, our marriage will lose its meaning.”*

Discussion

This present study successfully revealed valuable insights about motivations, expectations, obstacles, support, and reasons for marriage registration of remarried Vietnamese elderly men.

Motivations for Remarriage

In the literature review, elderly men’s common motivations to remarry were loneliness (De Jong Gierveld, 2002; Bildtgaard & Oberg, 2015; Mehta, 2002), companionship (Bildtgaard & Oberg, 2015; Mehta, 2002), and exchange of financial security for a caregiver (Bulcroft, Bulcroft, Hatch, & Burgatta, 1989; Huang, 2012; Ganong & Coleman, 2012; Indriana, 2013). Findings from this present research also revealed two similar motivations, i.e., loneliness and companionship. However, the exchange of financial security and caregiver was not a motivation for remarriage among the participants. They sought a real marriage with its true meaning in which two people could trust each other, stay and support each other when one or both of them have to face difficulties, sickness, or unhappiness in their life. Besides, six participants had expressed many more different motivations, reflected their awareness about their living situations, a serious commitment to their remarriage, their need for love and affection at this age, and their high sense of responsibility.

Expectations of Their Remarriage

The participants of this present study shared the same expectations with the participants of other researches in the current literature, i.e., their current wives would be the last, they would “be with each other until the end of their life,” and one partner would die in the arms of the other (Bildtgaard & Oberg, 2015). In addition, the participants expected more—they hoped for something good, wanted to treat and be treated well, and live their life in “peace, harmony, and

warmth.” These escalating expectations showed that the participants were confident to hope for happiness and had high standards for their marriage life. With their rich life experience and high self-awareness, their expectations for remarriage were high but very practical and reasonable. They were not too romantic and somehow impractical like those of younger couples. From the expectations of their remarriage, the question as to why the model of exchange service (Huang, 2012) did not apply in my participants’ stories is mainly because they sought true marriage, utmost commitment, and intimacy between a man and woman as well as connection between two families.

Obstacles of Remarriage Process

Like participants in other researches, the two main sources of obstacles of the participants’ remarriage process were their children/family members’ children (Davidson, 2002; Huang, 2012) and society/community (Huang, 2012; Mehta, 2002). However, the reasons and content of disapproval were very different from those participants in other researches. The only reason for disapproval from their adult children and family members was that their new wives were not good or inappropriate matches to them. Regardless of the correctness of their adult children’s or family members’ judgments about their new wives, the participants shared that they understood that the disapproval was derived from their sincere care for them and not from their selfishness. This difference in reason could be attributed to the participants’ independence, especially in their financial capacities; understanding, practical and assertive attitudes to deal with inheritance issues before remarriage; openness and understanding of their adult children and family members; and their adult children’s filialness. As to the obstacles from the society/community, the participants had to face negative judgments/advice as well as misunderstanding, prejudices, and social expectations that were against remarrying, not to mention the disagreement from their friends and neighbors about their wish/action of remarriage. They all overcame them and persisted with their decision because they knew who they were, how their situation was, what they needed, what was important to them, and what was not. They had the ability to balance between caring about social pressure and letting it go. From a developmental perspective, they successfully built their identity, which protected them from social pressures. They made a difference in their life compared to those who wished to remarry but gave up due to social pressure.

Support for Remarriage

The participants’ support for their remarriage process surprised the researcher as there is now a trend in Vietnamese society that is open to elderly remarriage. The reality is not as gray as what has been mentioned in local articles and research in Vietnam in the past (Nguyen et al., 2012). In fact, the participants

got support from different important sources ranging from their children, friends, neighbors to their organization and geography—history—culture factors. The most surprising supporting factor was the children's agreement to the participants' wish—their fathers—to remarry and the reported absence of conflicts relating to inheritance. This revealed that their children were more understanding and open. The participants were practical and proactive to work on the matter to prevent it from becoming a large obstacle to their remarriage.

Marriage Registration

In current literatures, marriage registration provided married couples law and religious protection (Cherlin, 2004; Nock, 1995 as cited by Vespa, 2012) and security and familiarity (De Jong Gierveld, 2002). Findings from the in-depth interviews with the participants agreed with the literatures and added different reasons for their choices. "I am a decent person" showed their high self-awareness and strong identity, which protected them from shame, fear of falling into the trap of losing face as with their counterparts in Asia had (Huang, 2012; Mehta, 2002; Nguyen et al., 2012). They knew who they were, what were the right things to do in their situations, and refused easier but vague alternatives, which might involve them in illegal or immoral problems. In addition, remarrying at this age did not interfere with their role of being models for younger generations as the researcher's expectation before conducting this research. Quite the opposite, registering their remarriage was the way that the participants modeled for the younger generations.

Implications

This present study provided a better understanding of Vietnamese senior citizens' motivations, expectations, obstacles, support, and reasons for their remarriage. In this case, family members may embrace the phenomenon better and give more helpful support to their elderly. Also, Vietnamese senior citizens who wish to remarry may know their legitimate rights and learn from the shared stories given and analyzed in this present study. Mental health professionals in Vietnam may also refer to these findings when providing services for senior citizens and their family members who struggle when engaging/involving in their/their family members' process of remarriage at a later life. They may also use participants' stories, opinions, and experiences to serve as real case examples in their psychoeducation in groups or communities. Vietnamese society may realize and acknowledge that adult children's love, care, and provisions are enough for senior citizens. They do not need sex, and companionship is practically not true. Therefore, this should be changed. Policymakers may build more programs to increase public awareness and acceptance of remarriage/re-partnering in later life to reduce

criticism toward remarrying/re-partnering senior citizens. This will lead to a less struggling remarriage/re-partnering process for them.

Limitations

Homogeneous sample was the most salient limitation of this present study. Although wishing to draw a most holistic picture of the phenomenon of remarriage among senior citizens in Vietnam, this research was not able to invite female participants to join. All participants had experience living in major central cities for decades or lived in urban areas of smaller provinces where the lifestyle and mindset of people were more modern and progressive. In this research, no participant came from a lower social-economic class, lived in rural areas, and was less educated; so, the stories of remarried elderly in those contexts were not heard. Additionally, this study did not cover stories of cohabiting and living apart together, which are also more popular in Vietnam.

Future Directions

Future researchers are suggested to research the experience of female senior citizens, uncover their stories and give more insight into their remarriage process. They may expand the scope of research by including cohabitating and living apart together participants and conducting research that includes participants from rural areas, lower social-economic classes, as they are believed to face a larger shortage of resources and support. Therefore, they may need more public awareness and support for their re-partnering process and conjugal life.

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