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## The Impact of the Culture of Self-Efficacy among Divorced Women in Saudi Arabia

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### Abstract:

This paper explores the culture of self-efficacy among divorced women in Saudi Arabia, a country where cultural norms and societal expectations place a strong emphasis on the institution of marriage and the traditional role of women within the family. The study adopted qualitative phenomenology. A face-to-face interview was used to collect data from 10 women using criterion-based purposive sampling and subsequently snowball sampling. The data were analyzed using interpretive phenomenology and presented thematically. This study found that cultural expectations affect divorced women's dignity and respect in society, which can impact their self-efficacy. These beliefs can limit divorced women's ability to travel alone, perform certain actions or behaviors, and even dress according to their preferences. The study recommends encouraging education and raising awareness about the challenges of stereotypes in Saudi Arabian society. Thus, there are no qualitative studies aimed at exploring the impact of the culture of self-efficacy among divorced women, especially in the context of Saudi Arabia. Hence, the study can be important in the practical aspect as it will aid policymakers and the body of knowledge in understanding the experiences of divorcee women in communities. Therefore, the novelty of this study contributes to the practice of solving problems of a culture of self-efficacy affecting divorced women in Saudi Arabia, one of the largest Arab countries.

**Keywords:** self-efficacy, divorce, culture, awareness, marriage, women.

## 沙特阿拉伯离婚妇女自我效能文化的影响

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## 摘要:

本文探讨了沙特阿拉伯离婚妇女的自我效能文化，该国的文化规范和社会期望非常重视婚姻制度和妇女在家庭中的传统角色。该研究采用了定性现象学。通过面对面访谈，使用基于标准的目的抽样和随后的滚雪球抽样，收集了10名女性的数据。使用解释现象学对数据进行分析并按主题呈现。这项研究发现，文化期望会影响离婚女性的尊严和社会尊重，从而影响她们的自我效能。这些信念可能会限制离婚女性独自旅行、进行某些行动或行为，甚至根据自己的喜好拥有的能力。该研究建议鼓励教育并提高人们对沙特阿拉伯社会陈规定型观念挑战的认识。因此，没有旨在探索离婚女性自我效能文化影响的定性研究，特别是在沙特阿拉伯的背景下。因此，这项研究在实践方面很重要，因为它将帮助政策制定者和知识体系了解社区离婚妇女的经历。因此，这项研究的新颖性有助于解决影响沙特阿拉伯（最大的阿拉伯国家之一）离婚妇女的自我效能文化问题的实践。

**关键词:** 自我效能、离婚、文化、意识、婚姻、女性。

## 1. Introduction

Divorce is a significant life event that can have profound implications for individuals, particularly women, in Saudi Arabian society. Saudi Arabia is a country where cultural norms and societal expectations place a strong emphasis on the institution of marriage and the traditional role of women within the family. Therefore, divorced women in Saudi Arabia often face unique challenges and cultural barriers as they navigate the aftermath of divorce and strive to rebuild their lives.

One crucial psychological construct that plays a crucial role in the well-being and adaptation of divorced women is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to effectively cope with and navigate challenging situations, achieve desired goals, and exert control over their lives (Raseed et al., 2021). Saleh and Luppacini (2017) further observed that it also encompasses a sense of confidence, resilience, and empowerment.

Understanding the culture of self-efficacy among divorced women globally and in Saudi Arabia in particular is essential for several reasons as identified by scholars such as Kołodziej-Zaleska & Przybyła-Basista (2016) and Al-Rashdi & Abdelwahed (2022). First, it sheds light on how divorced women perceive their own capabilities and how these perceptions influence their psychological well-being, post-divorce adjustment, and overall life satisfaction. Second, exploring the cultural factors that shape self-efficacy beliefs among divorced women can provide insights into the broader socio-cultural dynamics and norms that impact women's experiences in Saudi Arabian society. Thirdly, in Saudi Arabia, Islamic law (Sharia) serves as the basis for family law. Divorce is allowed, and it can be initiated by both men and women. However, the process and requirements differ between genders, with men having relatively more rights and easier access to divorce compared with women. Fourth, Saudi Arabia follows a guardianship system where adult women are legally required to have a male guardian, typically a father, husband, or male relative, who is responsible for making important decisions on their behalf. This system can impact divorced women's autonomy and decision-

making abilities.

Furthermore, Maccoby et al. (2014) observed that divorce can have significant implications for women's rights in terms of custody of children, financial support, and access to resources. Custody rights tend to favor fathers, and women may face challenges in obtaining financial support and property rights after divorce.

There is still a gap in studies on the impact of culture on self-efficacy affecting women in Saudi Arabia. Thus, this research aims to delve into the culture of self-efficacy among divorced women in Saudi Arabia, especially in the Al Ahsa region. It will examine the cultural factors that influence self-efficacy beliefs, the potential consequences of self-efficacy on the well-being and empowerment of divorced women, and the strategies and interventions that can be employed to enhance self-efficacy among this population. By gaining a deeper understanding of the culture of self-efficacy among divorced women in Saudi Arabia, we can identify ways to promote their resilience, empower them, and support their successful adaptation to post-divorce life.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Divorce among Women in Saudi Arabia

Divorce rates in Saudi Arabia are shockingly high. Divorce was a social taboo for most modern history. With independence and women's rights today, divorce is no longer stigmatized. Rasheed et al. (2021) observed that the number of marriage contracts in Saudi Arabia reached 150,117 in 2020, up 8.9% from 2019, citing the Saudi Ministry of Justice. On the other hand, divorce rates increased by 12.7% from 2019 to 57,595 in 2020. This indicates that there are 127 divorce cases every day, or nearly five instances per hour, in the Kingdom, a high number for a 33-million-person country.

Selim & Al-Luhayan (2020) argued that the majority of divorces are initiated by men. This is because under Saudi Arabia's previous male guardianship system, men had more legal authority than women and could divorce their wives more easily (Selim & Al-Luhayan, 2020). Yet with the new laws that are granting Saudi women

more rights, divorce in Saudi Arabia is now equally easy for women (Saleh & Luppardini, 2017; Alsudairy, 2017).

Social and cultural factors may contribute to the high divorce rate in Saudi Arabia, which Saudi women take more into consideration (Rasheed et al., 2021). In the view of Anser (2013), it is difficult to compare divorce rates in Saudi Arabia with those in other Gulf countries because of the lack of regularly published statistics in these countries. However, social structures in the Gulf countries resemble each other, and therefore, cultural and social factors will play similar roles in divorce throughout the region (Anser, 2013).

Scholars have attributed the rise in divorce to several factors. Ratner & El-Badwi (2011) attributed the rise in divorce to traditional expectations around gender roles and family structures, which can put pressure on marriages, while Al-Dawood et al. (2017) argued that many couples in Saudi Arabia enter into arranged marriages without knowing each other well, which can result in limited communication and compatibility issues that can eventually lead to divorce. Financial pressure has also been identified as another major source of divorce. The cost of living in Saudi Arabia has increased in recent years, and many couples struggle with financial pressures and debt (Gilbert & Brik, 2022). Financial stress is a major contributing factor to marital conflict and divorce (Rasheed, 2021).

## 2.2. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to perform a task successfully. It has been found to be an important predictor of behavior and achievement in a variety of contexts (Trautner & Schwinger (2020). Self-efficacy beliefs can be influenced by a range of factors, including personal experiences, social support, and cultural values (Guan & So, 2016).

In the context of women's empowerment, self-efficacy has been identified as a key factor in promoting gender equality and women's participation in social, economic, and political spheres. Hartman and Barber (2020) supported this view by observing that women with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to pursue education, seek employment, and engage in leadership roles.

Studies have shown that women's self-efficacy can be influenced by cultural factors, including gender roles and stereotypes (Mueller & Conway Dato-on, 2013). However, previous research by Al-Qahtani (2021) has shown that interventions aimed at promoting self-efficacy among women can be effective in promoting gender equality and empowering women. In the context of divorced women in Saudi Arabia, the cultural expectations and stigma associated with divorce can have a negative impact on their self-esteem. However, interventions aimed at promoting self-efficacy and providing support can help divorced women overcome these challenges and pursue their goals.

## 2.3. Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory

Albert Bandura, a renowned psychologist, developed the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in the 1970s. Bandura's work was influenced by his observations of human behavior and his dissatisfaction with the prevailing behaviorist and psychoanalytic theories of the time, which he believed did not adequately account for the role of cognition and social factors in learning and behavior (Bandura, 2011). Allan (2017) observed that Bandura's SCT is built upon the principles of traditional behaviorism and cognitive psychology while incorporating the concept of social learning. Bandura (2011) argued that individuals learn not only through direct experiences but also through observing others and the consequences of their actions. He emphasized the importance of cognitive processes, such as attention, memory, and motivation, in mediating the relationship between the environment and behaviour.

Albert Bandura conducted extensive research to support his theory, particularly in the areas of observational learning, self-efficacy, and the influence of social factors on behaviour. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory is a key component of his broader SCT. An individual's belief in their capacity to perform a particular activity or achieve a certain goal in a specific circumstance is referred to as self-efficacy (Resnick, 2017). It is belief in one's own competence and effectiveness to achieve desired outcomes.

According to Bandura, self-esteem beliefs play a crucial role in human motivation, behaviour, and achievement. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to approach challenges with confidence, persistence, and belief that they can overcome obstacles and succeed. On the other hand, individuals with low self-efficacy may feel anxious, have a fear of failure, and are more likely to avoid or give up on challenging tasks. Bandura argued that the most influential source of self-efficacy beliefs comes from mastery experiences, which involve successfully performing tasks and achieving desired outcomes (Phan & Locke, 2015). This means that previous successes enhance self-efficacy, while failures or setbacks can undermine it. Furthermore, verbal encouragement, feedback, and support from others can impact self-efficacy. Positive and constructive feedback can strengthen self-efficacy beliefs, while negative or discouraging feedback can lower them.

Also, Clarke (2022) observed that physical and emotional states, such as stress, anxiety, or relaxation, can influence self-efficacy beliefs. For example, feeling anxious or stressed may lower self-efficacy, while being relaxed and confident can enhance it. Importantly, therefore, how individuals interpret and appraise past experiences and outcomes can shape their self-efficacy beliefs. Positive interpretations can bolster self-efficacy, while negative interpretations can diminish it.

The nexus between Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory and the impact of the culture of self-efficacy among

divorced women in Saudi Arabia lies in understanding how cultural factors shape and influence women's self-efficacy beliefs and their experiences after divorce. The culture of Saudi Arabia, with its traditional gender roles, societal expectations, and beliefs about marriage and divorce, can have a significant impact on women's self-efficacy. Cultural norms may dictate that divorced women are stigmatized or face societal judgment, which can undermine their self-efficacy (Grabowski, 2001). Understanding these cultural norms can shed light on the unique challenges divorced women face and the potential barriers they encounter in developing and maintaining self-esteem.

Also, Bandura's theory highlights the importance of observing and modeling the behavior of others, as noted by Allan (2017). In the context of divorced women in Saudi Arabia, the availability of positive role models who have successfully navigated postdivorce life and demonstrated self-efficacy can be instrumental in shaping women's own beliefs. Eger et al. (2018) observed that cultural factors such as the presence of empowered divorced women who challenge societal norms can serve as powerful role models for others and inspire a culture of self-efficacy. Bandura's theory also recognizes the role of social support in influencing self-efficacy. The cultural context in Saudi Arabia, including family, friends, and broader social networks, can provide or restrict social support for divorced women. The availability of supportive networks and empowering communities that challenge traditional gender roles can enhance women's self-efficacy beliefs and facilitate their postdivorce adjustment.

Finally, culture plays a significant role in shaping empowerment and resilience. The cultural context in Saudi Arabia, including religious beliefs and practices, can either support or hinder divorced women's sense of empowerment and resilience. Understanding how cultural factors influence women's perceptions of their capabilities and their ability to bounce back from adversity can provide insights into the culture of self-efficacy and its impact on women's well-being. By examining the interplay between self-efficacy theory and the cultural context of self-efficacy among divorced women in Saudi Arabia, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play. This understanding can inform interventions, support programs, and policy initiatives that aim to enhance women's self-efficacy, empower them, and promote positive outcomes in their postdivorce lives within the cultural context of Saudi Arabia.

### 3. Methodology

Broadly, this study adopts a qualitative approach in the organization, collection, the analysis, and interpretation of interview data collected for this study. In particular, the phenomenology method was adopted because the study gives prominence to the lived experiences of divorced women and how they feel

about the culture of self-efficacy. Scholars like Outoshi (2018) and Qutoshi (2018) believe that phenomenology is a philosophy of experience. As a philosophy and method of inquiry, phenomenology goes beyond a simple approach to knowing and instead engages the mind in interpretation and meaning-making in order to comprehend the conscious experience of human existence (Qutoshi, 2018). The study was conducted in the Saudi Arabian Al-Ahsa Region.

Criterion-based purposive sampling was used to select participants in this study. In the views of Moser & Korstjens (2018), it is a sampling strategy used by qualitative researchers to find individuals who can provide comprehensive, in-depth information on the phenomena under study. Kalu (2019) conceived criterion-based purposive sampling as a non-random sampling strategy that chooses a particular sample based on a predetermined set of criteria or objectives. The criteria used are four: the informant must be a female who is 18 years of age or older, and females younger than 18 years are not allowed to participate. The informant must be a Saudi Arabian citizen residing in the country, while Saudi Arabian divorced women residing in other countries are not included. The informants must have been divorced for at least four years or more, and informants with less than three years of divorce are excluded. The informant must willing to participate in the study.

A total of 10 people were interviewed for this study, relying on saturation to determine sample size and snowballing to identify participants. Saunders et al. (2018) described saturation as when you see the same topics emerging regularly throughout interviews (or observations). Table 1 shows the lists of the participants among the informants.

Table 1. Informants' categories and codes

S/N	Category	Number	Identification codes
1	Divorced women	10	DW 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9, & 10

The category of informants, the number of informants who participated in the research, and their identification codes are shown in Table 1 above. This means that the informants are tagged with codes DW1, DW2, DW3, DW4, DW5, DW6 until DW10, the essence was to hide their identity and to fulfill the research ethics. However, Key Informant Interview (KII) was used to collect data from the participants. KII involves qualitative in-depth conversations with individuals chosen for their first-hand expertise on a particular subject (Smith & Smith, 2018). The supervisory committees gave the researcher a letter containing essential information about the study before the interview began, which was shown to each informant. The chosen informants were then contacted by the researcher regularly by phone and some of them also received invitations via WhatsApp and SMS. Those who made the effort to respond were thanked,

but it is important to note that some identified informants declined the invitation. People who accepted the invitation, on the other hand, were contacted to set up an interview time and date. The interview sessions typically lasted 30 to 60 minutes. The interview was conducted in Arabic. A professional translator translated Arabic into English while simultaneously transcribing all 10 interviews. Therefore, the data obtained are limited to the specified informants of this study who reside in the Al-Ahsa region of Saudi Arabia.

Data were analyzed using interpretive phenomenology techniques that consist of three stages; reading, reflecting and writing. Interpretive phenomenology recognizes that the researcher cannot totally remove their own perspective and background from the data analysis and that meaning is jointly constructed by the researcher and the participants (Burns et al., 2022). The data collected are presented thematically with triangulation from secondary sources. However, the researcher contacted a second (the supervisory committee) and third party (professionals) to cross-check the data in order to ascertain its legitimacy, dependability, and trustworthiness. All ethical concerns were addressed such confidentiality, voluntary involvement, the right to end the interview at will, and signing the document of consent. The main steps of the research process are summarized in figure 1 below.

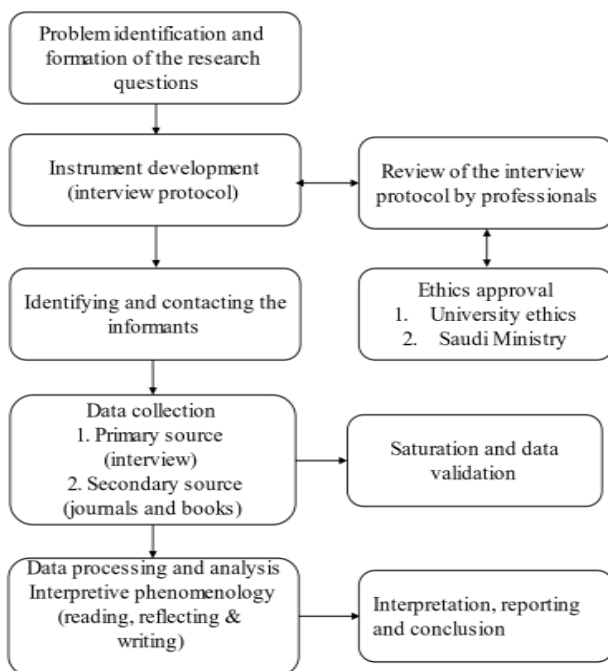


Figure 1. Flowchart of the research methodology

## 4. Findings

The research findings and discussions are presented in this section. The information is analyzed, interpreted, discussed, and presented based on the themes that emerged from the informant's interview transcripts. These themes are namely; cultural expectations, social support, religion, and spirituality and postdivorce resilience and adjustment.

### 4.1. Cultural Expectation

The messages people internalize about what is and is unacceptable are referred to as cultural expectations, and they are based on the moral codes and cultural norms that are established by people's social systems (Wilson, 2023). Therefore, this theme represents the cultural values, norms, and expectations in Saudi Arabian communities that influence divorced women's self-efficacy. It carries with it three sub-themes, which are: beliefs people hold about marriage, divorced women capabilities, and gender roles.

A participant revealed that as members of her community she is expected to follow certain cultural norms that apply to all divorcees, she noted the following.

*"As a divorced woman I struggle daily wherever I go since I do not have husband to take care of my needs, so I am my man but there are certain jobs I cannot do, there are certain limitations to how far I can travel an many things. The society does not patronize women engaging in certain actions and behaviors. Even our dressing, we are expected to do it in a way our culture demands so that people will not talk bad about us since we are divorced. And women with husbands are treated with more dignity, so if I am a divorcee my dignity is less"* (DW 2).

As the above informant stated, there are certain things that she cannot do as a divorced woman, like traveling to other places alone, and this has affected her. Another participant who had been divorced for five years observed that there are certain rights that only a man can exercise but women cannot undermine women's views.

*"Sometimes I feel bad when I see in our culture today, a man can decide to just divorce a woman without any reason but a woman cannot divorce a man until she provides evidence as to why she wants a divorce, even at that, it is only the man or a judge can terminate a marriage. So, men use this advantage to get back at women for minor disagreement and then the woman is stranded she has to start taking care of herself"* (DW 6).

The above participant shares her concern about how men handle marriage and divorce in the country. To her, divorce handling is solemnly in the hands of the male; he can do and undo as he wishes. Similarly, a participant observed that she feels as a woman she can achieve anything she wants to achieve but certain factors will not allow her to achieve them because she is divorced.

*"If I want to travel like any man, it will not be as easy for me as it will be for a man because I need the guide of a man companion. This is not about if I can travel alone or but it is about what society places on women or if you want you can call it culture"* (DW 1).

From the foregoing, it can be understood that the informants highlight the cultural values and norms in

Saudi Arabian communities that influence divorced women's self-efficacy. The sub-themes identified under this area include beliefs about marriage, divorced women's capabilities, and gender roles. The excerpt shows how these beliefs can limit divorced women's ability to travel alone, perform certain actions or behaviors, and even dress according to their preference. These cultural expectations also affect divorced women's dignity and respect in society, which can impact their self-efficacy. This finding agrees with Wilson (2023), who reveals that the messages people internalize about what is and is unacceptable are referred to as cultural expectations, and they are based on the moral codes and cultural norms that are established by social systems. These messages, which are deeply ingrained in people's subconscious, influence their judgment and the way they respond to various circumstances. We can only learn to navigate these messages and make wiser, more fulfilling decisions about our lives by becoming aware of them. Moreover, Rashhed, Amr & Fahad (2020) showed that 77% of women in their study experienced emotional divorce at moderate to severe levels, thereby affecting their self-efficacy in the community.

#### 4.2. Social Support

Social support refers to the psychological and material resources provided by a social network to help individuals cope with stress. Such social support may come in different forms and might involve: helping a divorced person with various daily tasks when they are ill because of stress or offering financial assistance when they are in need (Cherry, 2023). This theme explains how community and social support systems affect divorced women's sense of efficacy. It investigates how women's perceptions of their capacity to overcome obstacles and navigate life after divorce are influenced by their relationships with family, friends, and larger social networks. A participant observed how she felt when she had to go back to her father's house to live after divorce:

*"When I was divorced, I had no option but to go back to my parents' house because it feels like I no longer belong there but thanks to Allah, I was received well by my father and mother and other siblings. They really understood my situation and were so welcoming. If my family did not accept me back with open arms, it would have been devastating for me sure. I count on their support throughout my journey of divorce till today as I speak with you"* (DW 8).

The above participant affirmed that her father, mother, and siblings provide her with social support, which helps her cope with the consequences of divorce. Another participant did not find it easy in contrast to the earlier participant:

*"Two years before I was divorced, my mother died so when I got divorced, I was not sure if I should go back to my father's house. My main concern was how his new*

*wife would treat me if I go back. But I had no option so when I went back, she didn't like seeing me and my father was not always at home, our relationship was bad, sometimes I have to cook what I will eat myself"* (DW 5).

In some instances, returning to the parent's house can become a problem for the divorced woman because of several factors, such as the absence of the mother in the father's house due to death. This view was corroborated by another participant who similarly had challenges when she had to go back to her parent is after bitter divorce:

*"My father is a very tough person to handle, he also believes that a woman should stay in her husband house no matter the challenge and when I was divorced and returned home, he was very angry and didn't want to even talk to me or listen to me. It became uncomfortable that I could not cope and I had to go back to my uncle house which I am grateful to for supporting me and allowing me to stay in his house. I was well received by his family and neighbors"* (DW 4).

The foregoing analysis reveals the role of social support, which looks at how family, friends, and larger social networks impact divorced women's self-efficacy. The excerpt shows that social support can be a significant factor in helping divorced women overcome the challenges of divorce. Supportive families can provide a safe and welcoming environment for divorced women, while unsupportive families can create additional stress and strain. The excerpt also highlights the importance of social networks in helping divorced women navigate life after divorce. This finding agrees with study of Qamar & Faizan, (2021) which revealed that one of the factors that help women to adjust their lives in post-divorce era is matrilineal support. Kolodziej-Zaleska & Przybyla-Basista (2016) concluded that one of the most important factors in achieving psychological well-being after divorce is perceived social support for women because it is connected to reducing the negative effects of the sense of loss brought on by a marriage dissolution. However, a lack of social support can lead divorced women to have psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Social support is therefore defined as a person's interactions with their surroundings with the intention of preventing or reducing the negative effects of a stressful event.

#### 4.3. Religiosity and Spirituality

This theme provides information on how divorced women's self-efficacy is impacted by their religious practices and beliefs. It looks at how spirituality and religious doctrine can either help or hinder women's sense of resilience and empowerment following divorce. As put forward by Paul and Treschuk (2020) that connections to God, the natural world, other people, and the environment can all be made through spirituality. The quality and purpose of life are related

to spirituality. Religion, on the other hand, is traditionalism connected to a specific group of people or faith. Religion is based on customs, rules and culture. Religion is a term used to describe a unique set or institutionalized system of attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Religion is the practice of serving or honoring God or other deities.

*“If you look at some of the scholars in Islam, they portray a divorced woman as someone who needs to be supported and helped especially to get remarried, but it is not going to be the same case when a woman who never married is, and in most cases religion gives a divorcee the change to decide who she wants to marry unlike when she never married. So that is good as Islam now gives the woman more power in deciding who to marry” (DW 3).*

The participant explained the role and importance of religious leaders in providing guidance that can help cope with postdivorce trauma. However, when a woman is divorced, it is not in all cases that religion empowers her to do anything she wants to have her life back, a participant observed that in the eyes of religion women who are divorced are no longer looking for blessing from her husband, she observed that;

*“When I got divorced, my father told me that my heaven is under my husband feet but since I am divorced now I should know what to do to please God so that I will be forgiven and get another husband to marry. To my father, I must have sinned against God to lose my husband, so my paradise is supposed to be with me under my mother’s feet who is no longer alive. That confused me. When I try to work, my dad didn’t like it he said women are supposed to stay at home and care for the family” (DW 10).*

This view portrays that some parents in Saudi Arabia consider divorce as a sin, and if it occurs, the victim needs to seek forgiveness from God. A participant further revealed what her uncle told her when she got divorced:

*“My uncle said to me that according to Islam, if a married woman prays to God she gets 40 or 50 times the reward that a divorced woman will get, this makes me feel like religion is making me feel less spiritually” (DW 7).*

The above analysis exposes religion and spirituality, which looks at how divorced women's self-efficacy is impacted by their religious beliefs and practices. The excerpt shows that religious doctrine can either help or hinder divorced women's sense of resilience and empowerment following divorce. For instance, some Islamic scholars portray a divorced woman as someone who needs support and help, while others may hold negative views of divorced women. However, past studies on the impact of religion on divorce focused more on religious involvement on divorce. Previous studies reported that religious people are more likely to have stronger moral convictions about marriage. Previous studies that support the findings of this current

research emphasize the significance of religious practice and belief in reinventing or remaking one's self in the context of one's religious identity. Simonic (2017) stated that religiously divorced people primarily use constructive religious coping mechanisms during the divorce process. Lower levels of depression and anxiety are associated with these forms, as are posttraumatic growth and personal development. For believers, their relationship with God is a significant personal one, and they view God as a significant individual who possesses the authority of a living being. Participants who developed a personal relationship with God felt safe and supported as they dealt with the stress of divorce. One of religion's main purposes for a person is to make them feel safe, and it can be a big help in overcoming daily existential challenges. Many clients and families experience divorce consult religious and spiritual counselors for advice and guidance. Many counselors are faced with the task of helping clients with divorce within a religious context by providing and providing solutions to their problems. In the daily lives of older adults, it was discovered that religion, spirituality, and/or belief played a variety of roles, including providing stability, solace, and hope during difficult times and fostering a sense of community and belonging (Malone & Dadwell, 2018).

#### **4.4. Postdivorce Resilience and Adjustment**

Resilience is defined as the capacity of an individual, a family, a community, a nation, or a region to withstand, cope with, adapt to, and quickly recover from stresses and shocks such as violence, conflict, drought, and other natural disasters without compromising long-term development (European Union Factsheets, 2015). The relationship between self-efficacy and resilience in divorced women is examined in this study. It looks at how women's self-efficacy beliefs can affect their capacity to adjust to the difficulties of post-divorce living, bounce back from adversity, and forge new identities and senses of wellbeing.

*“Since I got divorced 6 years ago, I have tried to stay focused on my dreams, I have focused on my career and my children. I can tell you it is hard to be a single mother to 3 children but I coped well I think” (DW 10).*

When probed on how the participant coped in the early days of the divorce, she noted the following.

*“Well, it has not been easy especially how the society looks at divorced women as not being capable of keeping a marriage as many times people see divorce as a failure of the wife, I was so depressed after the divorce, and many things disturb me like how to train 3 children, but I composed myself with the help of friends and family, and today I am better” (DW 4).*

The statement above signifies that depression can be a implication of the post-divorce era. Another participant observed that coping after divorce has been challenging for her as a woman who is still young;

*“I got divorced when I was about 27-28, and I was sad because we shared a lot with my husband, but then what can I do... At that time I have a friend who was also divorced and I asked her how she coped and things that worry me, she helped me a lot especially when am down, I call her we talk and she advised me, encouraged me to get back to work so that I can meet my needs since it appears am a burden to my family. And don't forget I have only 1 child so I must strive to earn so I can take care of the child” (DW 1).*

From the above analysis, it is shown that postdivorce resilience and adjustment looks at how divorced women adapt to life after divorce. The excerpt highlights the importance of resilience in helping divorced women overcome the challenges of divorce. It also shows how divorced women can adjust to life after divorce by building new relationships, developing new skills, and pursuing new goals. The result further supports previous studies that demonstrated the relationship and importance of postdivorce programs in rehabilitating divorcees. For instance, Cox, Brosi, Spencer & Masri (2021) reported that from baseline to a 12-month follow-up, divorcing parents who took part in the Co-Parenting for Resilience program reported significant increases in hope and child adjustment as well as decreases in perceived stress and conflictive co-parenting. Additionally, when CPR participants were compared to a control group of divorced parents who had never taken part in a divorce education program, nearly identical gains were discovered. These findings provide preliminary evidence that CPR is effective in assisting divorcing parents transition toward a healthy post-divorce adjustment and that this adjustment is advantageous for their children. The study findings are in line with the study of Edelman (2023) that anyone going through a challenging life transition needs the ability to take care of themselves, but this is especially crucial after divorce. Individuals who take care of themselves and develop resilience can navigate the difficulties of divorce and move forward with assurance and purpose. Therefore, the ability of parents and children to adopt strong, constructive, and mutually supportive relationships that play a role in insulating families from the effects of related adversity is a key factor in postdivorce resilience.

Overall, the findings discussed in the excerpt highlight the complex interplay between cultural expectations, social support, religion and spirituality, and post-divorce resilience and adjustment in shaping divorced women's self-efficacy. By understanding these key thematic areas, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective interventions to support divorced women and help them overcome the challenges of divorce.

## 5. Conclusion

Therefore, from the foregoing analysis and discussion, the result of the study revealed that cultural

expectations affect divorced women's dignity and respect in society, which can impact their self-efficacy. These beliefs can limit divorced women's ability to travel alone, perform certain actions or behaviors, and even dress according to their preferences. Based on these findings, it is concluded that divorce can have a significant impact on the lives of women in Saudi Arabian society, where cultural norms and expectations surrounding marriage and women's roles are deeply ingrained. Self-efficacy, which encompasses confidence, resilience, and empowerment, is a crucial psychological construct that plays a vital role in the well-being and adaptation of divorced women. By exploring the cultural factors that shape self-efficacy beliefs among divorced women in Saudi Arabia, we can gain insights into the broader socio-cultural dynamics and norms that impact women's experiences in the country.

Prior studies have concentrated primarily on survey research (quantitative) to provide information on the implication of divorce on women, and this has restricted the suggestions to useful ideas such as developing policies. To determine the effect of cultural self-efficacy on divorce women in a community from the perspectives and experiences of divorce women, the current study used a qualitative approach based on the phenomenology method. As a result, it is anticipated that the results of this study will advance the field of sociology and serve as a model for further research, especially qualitative research that examines the effects of divorce on divorcees. The findings can be a reference point for future research and useful to parties looking for information about the study findings. To improve social welfare and family support, promote education, and increase awareness, this research can offer the government and policymakers additional information. This information can aid in decision making and formulation of policies. This research can therefore help to improve the current policies on marriage and divorce and lower the divorce rate in a country by promoting and enhancing social welfare, women's education, and awareness.

Based on the impact of the culture of self-efficacy on divorce women in Saudi Arabia, the following recommendations could be made:

1. It is essential to promote the resilience and empowerment of divorced women in Saudi Arabia by identifying strategies and interventions to enhance their self-efficacy and support their successful adaptation to post-divorce life. Ultimately, supporting the well-being of divorced women in Saudi Arabia is crucial for creating a more equitable and inclusive society that values the rights and autonomy of all individuals.

2. Encourage women education and raise public awareness about the challenges of stereotypes in Saudi Arabian society. This could be achieved through public campaigns through social and other mediums platforms, workshops, and training programs for parents, teachers,

and other caregivers.

3. Increase access to counseling and mental health services for divorce women. This would provide divorced women with a safe space to express their emotions and work through their feelings, and it would give them the support and resources they need to navigate the challenges of divorce.

4. It was further recommended that the government and policymakers put in place measures that support workplaces that are friendly to divorce, such as flexible schedules and paid leave for emergencies related to divorce. This would ease the women's stress during the divorce process and help them balance their obligations to their families and careers

5. Encourage divorced women to rely on their family and community networks. This could be accomplished through community centres, religious institutions, and other community-based initiatives that offer divorced women mentorship, emotional support, and social connections.

By putting these suggestions into practice, it will be possible to lessen the harmful effects of Saudi Arabia's culture of self-efficacy on divorced women and aid them in building strong identities, coping mechanisms, and interpersonal connections.

### 5.1. Limitations and Further Study

The study tries to present data based on people's views, opinions, and perceptions regarding the effects of a self-efficacy culture on divorcee women in Saudi Arabia. Because the study was conducted only in one region of the nation (the Al-Ahsa region), the findings may not accurately represent the experiences or outcomes of divorced women nationwide. Moreover, the data obtained is limited to the divorced women in the Al-Ahsa region and is therefore only applicable to the region. Further studies can be conducted in other regions of the country for generalization and comparative purposes. Additionally, the study mainly focuses on how divorced women are affected by cultural self-efficacy. Future studies, however, may increase the sample size by including additional participants since the study uses the qualitative phenomenology method and a sample size of 10.

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### Authors' Contributions

The corresponding author contributes to the research process by gathering in person data and providing analysis and discussion. The second author contributed

the concepts, carefully reviewed the work, and aided in extending the study's discussion.

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