



SAVIOR OR NEW BURDEN? A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF WOMEN'S DOMESTIC LABOR IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

KURTARICI MI, YENİ YÜK MÜ? YAPAY ZEKÂ ÇAĞINDA KADINLARIN EV İÇİ EMEĞİNİN DÖNÜŞÜMÜ ÜZERİNE FENOMENOLOJİK BİR İNCELEME

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords

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This article uses a phenomenological approach to examine the multi-layered effects of artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled home technologies on the everyday life experiences of women in Şanlıurfa, a city in Turkey known for its traditional and patriarchal structure. Drawing on feminist technology studies, domestication of technology and invisible labor theories, this study is based on in-depth interviews with 25 women. The findings reveal the complex and contradictory dynamics that AI creates in the domestic sphere: On the one hand, technology alleviates women's physical labor burden and opens up new time spaces for them, while on the other hand, it brings new mental burdens such as "managerial labor" and "digital caregiving". It has also been observed that technology is used as an "excuse" for men to withdraw from housework responsibilities, but it also opens the door to a "selective" male participation based on technological curiosity. Women's "domestication" of these devices by personifying them and forming emotional bonds with them shows that technology is not only a functional tool but also a social actor. By analyzing a global technological phenomenon in a local context through an intersectionality lens, the study reveals that technology both reproduces and negotiates gender roles and makes an original contribution to the literature.

ÖZ

Bu makale, yapay zekâ (YZ) destekli ev teknolojilerinin, Türkiye'nin geleneksel ve ataerkil yapısıyla bilinen Şanlıurfa ilindeki kadınların gündelik yaşam deneyimleri üzerindeki çok katmanlı etkilerini fenomenolojik bir yaklaşımla incelemektedir. Feminist teknoloji çalışmaları, teknolojinin evcilleştirilmesi ve görünmez emek kuramlarından beslenen bu çalışma, 25 kadınla yapılan derinlemesine görüşmelere dayanmaktadır. Bulgular, YZ'nin ev içi alanda yarattığı karmaşık ve çelişkili dinamikleri ortaya koymaktadır: Teknoloji, bir yandan kadınların fiziksel emek yükünü hafifletip onlara yeni zaman alanları açarken, diğer yandan "yönetimsel emek" ve "dijital bakıcılık" gibi yeni zihinsel yükler getirmektedir. Ayrıca, teknolojinin erkeklerin ev işi sorumluluğundan çekilmesi için bir "bahane" olarak kullanıldığı, ancak aynı zamanda teknolojik meraka dayalı "seçici" bir erkek katılımına da kapı araladığı gözlemlenmiştir. Kadınların, bu cihazları kişileştirerek ve onlarla duygusal bağlar kurarak "evcilleştirmesi", teknolojinin sadece işlevsel bir araç değil, aynı zamanda sosyal bir aktör olduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışma, küresel bir teknolojik olguyu, kesişimsel (intersectionality) bir mercekten yerel bir bağlamda analiz ederek, teknolojinin toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini hem yeniden ürettiğini hem de müzakereye açtığını ortaya koymakta ve literatüre özgün bir katkı sunmaktadır.

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Introduction

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation technologies is one of the most fundamental dynamics shaping the social transformation of the twenty-first century. Although this transformation is usually discussed in the context of industrial production and public services, its effects are increasingly permeating the most intimate and private sphere of everyday life, the “household” (Kelan, 2025; Strengers & Kennedy, 2020). From robot vacuums to smart kitchen appliances, the proliferation of smart home technologies (SHT) has the potential to profoundly reshape the nature of housework, care practices and family relationships (Aagaard, 2023; Hargreaves et al., 2018; Martens et al., 2025; Nicholls & Strengers, 2019).

Popular and technocratic discourse on the effects of technology in the domestic sphere often presents a simplistic and utopian narrative that “liberates” women from the monotonous and exhausting drudgery of housework (Strengers & Kennedy, 2020). However, this techno-optimistic perspective tends to ignore how technology intersects with complex social dynamics such as gender, class and culture. Indeed, as Ruth Schwartz Cowan (1985) argues in “More Work for Mom” that instead of reducing labor burdens, household appliances can paradoxically increase them by raising standards of cleanliness and reshaping expectations of home care (Beltran-Figueroa, 2024; Bittman et al., 2004). This critical perspective underpins feminist technology studies. According to this approach, technology is never a “neutral” force free from social and political values; rather, it is “inscribed” in existing power structures such as gender hierarchies in all processes from its design to its use (Savcı, 1999; Wajcman, 2000; Wajcman & Young, 2023). Therefore, the presence of technology in the home should be considered as a complex social and political process rather than a simple increase in efficiency.

At this point, there is an important gap in the literature: There is a conspicuous lack of in-depth, qualitative and intersectional studies on how AI technologies are reshaping women’s life experiences, perceptions of labor and domestic power relations, especially in a context like Turkey where modernity and tradition, global technological trends and local patriarchal norms are intertwined. Existing studies often focus on Western societies and risk treating the effects of technology as a homogenous experience. To precisely situate its contribution, this study provides below a brief synthesis of international and Turkish research on domestic AI.

Recent international HCI and feminist technology studies show that domestic AI systems are not neutral appliances but socio-technical actors that reconfigure routines and invite ongoing human intervention, care, and troubleshooting (Schneiders et al., 2021; Strengers & Kennedy, 2020; Wajcman, 2000). Classic work on household technologies cautions that automation can paradoxically intensify standards and redistribute rather than eliminate labor (Cowan, 1985; Bittman et al., 2004). In the Turkish context, emerging studies document everyday encounters with robotic vacuums and culturally specific expectations around adoption and use, yet in-depth phenomenological accounts from non-metropolitan settings remain scarce (Yapici, Tuğlular & Basoglu, 2022). Against this backdrop, the present study contributes an intersectional, hermeneutic phenomenology from Şanlıurfa, analyzing women’s lived experiences of AI in the home and complementing Western-centric accounts with culturally embedded qualitative evidence (Hargreaves et al., 2018; Nicholls & Strengers, 2019).

The main aim of this study is to fill this gap and analyze the multi-layered effects of AI on women’s everyday life practices, perceptions of labor and gender roles in Şanlıurfa through a phenomenological approach. The significance of the research rests on three main points. First, by examining a global phenomenon such as automation in a unique and local context such as Şanlıurfa, known for its strong patriarchal structure and traditional family norms, it reveals how technology is culturally understood and experienced in different ways. In this respect, Şanlıurfa serves as a “social laboratory” and a “critical case” where the tension and negotiation between global technology and local tradition can be observed most clearly (Üner, 2015). Second, it illuminates the subjective and emotional dimensions of this process by addressing the effects of technology beyond statistical generalizations, through women’s “lived experiences”, that is, with a phenomenological depth. Third, instead of homogenizing women’s lived experiences, it analyzes them at the intersection of factors such as gender, class, education and age, and reveals how the benefits and burdens of technology differ through an intersectional lens. In this context, the study seeks to answer the following key research questions:

1. How do AI-enabled home technologies transform women’s domestic labor (physical, mental, emotional) processes and perceptions of time?
2. How do these technologies affect the existing gendered division of labor and power relations within the family; do they reinforce or negotiate these roles?

3. How do women integrate (domesticate) AI technologies into their everyday lives, value systems and emotional worlds, and what resistance or concerns emerge in this process?

In line with these questions, the article consists of theoretical framework, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion sections. The theoretical framework section will present the theories of feminist technology studies, invisible labor and domestication of technology on which the research is based. The methodology section will detail the phenomenological design of the research, site selection, participant characteristics and the data analysis process. The findings section will present the three main themes from the interviews in the participants' own words. The discussion section will analyze these findings in relation to the theoretical framework and the wider literature. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the main findings of the research, address its limitations and draw implications for future research and policy recommendations.

Theoretical Framework: Rethinking Technology, Labor and Gender

This paper uses a multi-layered framework consisting of four key interrelated theoretical approaches to analyze the effects of AI in the domestic sphere. This framework allows us to understand how technology is socially shaped, the invisible dimensions of domestic labor, how technology is integrated into everyday life, and how these experiences vary for women in different social positions.

Feminist Technology Studies and Gendered Innovation

The main theoretical underpinning of this research is Feminist Technology Studies, which fundamentally rejects the assumption that technology is a neutral tool free from social and political values. As pioneers in the field such as Judy Wajcman (2000) have noted, technology neither develops outside of society nor influences it from the outside; rather, it is a product of social relations, cultural values and power hierarchies, and has the potential to reproduce these structures (Wajcman & Young, 2023). According to this perspective, technological artifacts internalize the assumptions, prejudices and worldviews of their creators (usually male-dominated groups) in their design and development processes. Thus, technology itself is “gendered” (Kelan, 2025; Savcı, 1999).

This process of “gendered innovation” is also evident in AI technologies. For example, the fact that digital voice assistants (Siri, Alexa, etc.) are designed with female voices by default and are often coded with submissive, helpful and service-oriented personalities is a concrete example of how existing gender stereotypes are transferred to technology. Ovacık (2025) conceptualizes this as a “digital authority” that reproduces traditional patriarchal power dynamics in the digital space by creating an interaction where users constantly give orders to female voice assistants and these assistants obey. This framework provides a critical ground for analyzing the theme of “Gendered Automation” that emerged in the findings of this research. Men’s withdrawal from housework responsibilities by saying “there is a robot vacuum cleaner anyway” shows how technology can function not only as a tool but also as an ideological apparatus that legitimizes and reinforces the existing patriarchal division of labor.

Intersectionality Lens: The Intersection of Gender, Class and Education

Taking feminist critique one step further, intersectionality theory argues that women’s experiences are not homogeneous; gender intersects with other social identities such as class, race, ethnicity, age and education to create different experiences and forms of inequality (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2019). This approach offers a powerful analytical tool for understanding how women in different social positions experience technology in different ways, rather than treating the category of ‘woman’ as a singular whole. For example, the benefits or burdens of a technology are not the same for all women (Alozie & Akpan-Obong, 2016; Henwood & Wyatt, 2019).

Intersectionality in the context of technology and domestic labor shows that a woman’s level of education, income and social environment profoundly affect her access to technology, her ability to use it (digital literacy) and her relationship with it. While a highly educated and middle-class woman may use technology as a means of autonomy, for a less educated and economically insecure woman, the same technology may become a new source of stress and inadequacy (Strengers, & Kennedy, 2020). Therefore, when analyzing the impacts of

technology, it is not enough to focus only on gender. In traditional and patriarchal contexts such as Şanlıurfa, women's education levels and economic dependence play a critical role in understanding their position vis-à-vis technology and their strategies of "patriarchal bargaining" (Kandiyoti, 1988). This theoretical lens will be used to reveal the nuances between the different participants' experiences of AI and the intersectional factors that shape these experiences.

Transformation of Labor: From Invisible Labor to "Digital Caregiving"

The third theoretical underpinning of the study to understand the nature of domestic labor is "invisible labor" and "mental burden", two key concepts of feminist sociology. Ann Oakley's (1974) seminal work, *The Sociology of Housework*, demonstrated that housework is not only about visible physical actions such as sweeping and cooking (Oakley, 1974; Oliver, 2023). Oakley (1974) showed that housework also involves "invisible" labor that requires intensive cognitive and emotional effort such as planning, organizing, supervising, managing the emotional needs of family members and is often unrecognized and undervalued (Petts & Carlson, 2023). This labor places a disproportionate burden on women and can negatively affect their mental and emotional well-being. As a matter of fact, a study conducted in Turkey quantitatively revealed that the mental burden, which includes the thinking and planning/organizing dimensions of housework, is undertaken more frequently and heavily by women (Çakıroğlu Çevik & Con Wright, 2023).

In the age of AI and automation, these classical concepts take on a new dimension. The literature suggests that technology is reducing physical labor and replacing it with a new type of labor called "digital caregiving" or "digital housekeeping" (Kennedy et al., 2015; Strengers & Nicholls, 2017). This new type of labor includes technical and cognitive tasks such as installing smart devices, tracking software updates, resolving network connectivity issues, programming and managing devices (Oliver, 2023; Vindegg & Julsrud, 2025). This study will analyze the experiences of "administrative labor" (device installation, map management, troubleshooting) described by the participants in the findings through the concept of "digital caregiving". The fact that this new type of labor also remains predominantly the responsibility of women suggests that technology is not simply "destroying" labor, but rather transforming it into a less visible, more cognitive and potentially more stressful form. This transformation is critical to understanding how gender inequality is reproduced differently through technology.

The Domestication of Technology: Meaning, Emotion and New Family Members

The final theoretical lens is the "domestication of technology" theory (Haddon, 2007; Silverstone & Haddon, 1996), which argues that users do not passively receive and use technology, but rather actively negotiate and integrate it into their everyday lives, value systems and emotional worlds. This theory considers the introduction of technology into the household as a four-stage process: (1) appropriation- technology is taken into the home, (2) objectification- technology finds a place in the physical and symbolic order of the home, (3) incorporation- technology becomes part of everyday routines, and (4) conversion- technology is projected onto the outside world and becomes part of social identity (Martens et al., 2025; Haddon, 2011).

One of the most important contributions of this theory is that it reveals that the domestication of technology is not only a process of functional adaptation, but also has a deep emotional and symbolic dimension. By personifying a cold and alien machine, ascribing meanings to it and forming emotional bonds with it, users "domesticate" it and make it part of the social fabric within the household. In this process, technology is transformed from a passive object into an active "social actor" that carries emotional and symbolic meanings (Berker et al., 2005). In the literature, there are examples of users giving names to smart assistants or robot vacuums, talking to them and treating them like family members (Forlizzi, 2007; Turkle, 2011). This act of personification is a form of 'emotional labor' to make technology compatible with family life. Thus, the presence of technology in the home has the potential to reshape not only how things are done, but also the network of emotional and social relations in the home. This theoretical grounding provides a critical framework for making sense of the social and emotional role of technology in the household.

Methodology

Research Design: Phenomenological Approach

This study was designed based on an interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenological approach from qualitative research designs to deeply explore the place and meaning of artificial intelligence (AI)-supported technologies in the daily lives of housewives in Şanlıurfa (van Manen, 2014; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Phenomenology focuses on understanding the essence and structure of individuals' "lived experiences" related to a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This approach aims to reveal how technology resonates with participants' lives, what meanings it carries, and how it transforms their daily practices, based on their own worlds of meaning, rather than measuring the effects of technology using predetermined categories or statistical generalizations. Interpretive phenomenology involves not only describing the experience but also the researcher's interpretation of this experience within a theoretical and contextual framework (van Manen, 1997). Therefore, it offers the most appropriate methodological framework for understanding the subtle and often invisible effects of a complex and multi-layered phenomenon such as AI on women's intimate spheres of life.

Research Site and Context: Why Şanlıurfa?

The choice of Şanlıurfa as the site of this research is a theoretically based decision rather than a geographical preference. Şanlıurfa is a unique "critical case" for examining the processes through which a global technological innovation intersects, negotiates and reshapes powerful local dynamics. This uniqueness of Şanlıurfa can be revealed with both current socio-demographic data and its historical depth. Üner's (2015) study on the Sheriyye Registers shows the centuries-old roots of the patriarchal family structure in the region and the central role of women in the domestic sphere. This historical background provides a solid ground for understanding contemporary gender roles and the relationship with technology.

Looking at current data, Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) statistics reveal why Şanlıurfa's socio-demographic profile is meaningful for this study. While the employment rate of women in Turkey is 30.4% (TÜİK, 2023b), in the TRC2 region, including Şanlıurfa, this rate is well below the national average. According to 2022 data, only 25.1% of the compulsorily insured under 4a in Şanlıurfa are women. Similarly, women's literacy rate is below the national average and illiteracy rates are particularly high among older age groups (TÜİK, 2021). This data, coupled with the strong traditional and patriarchal family structure in the region, which is often emphasized in the literature (Bastian et al., 2019: p. 9; Üner, 2015: p. 25), makes Şanlıurfa an ideal "social laboratory" to observe how a modern technology such as AI is embedded in this deeply rooted social fabric, how it affects existing gender roles, and what kind of new practices and meanings it produces.

Participants and Data Collection

The participant group of the study consists of 25 women residing in the center of Şanlıurfa, who use or do not use at least one AI-supported home appliance (e.g. robot vacuum cleaner, smart kitchen appliance). Purposive sampling method, which aims to reach individuals who can provide rich and in-depth information in accordance with the purpose of the study, was used to select the participants. In this process, it was aimed to ensure maximum diversity in factors such as age, education level, occupation, socio-economic level and marital status. The initial participants having been reached, snowball sampling technique was also utilized to reach other potential participants under their guidance (Patton, 2002).

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews between April and May 2025. The interviews were conducted in the participants' own homes where they felt most comfortable, and lasted an average of 30 to 45 minutes. The interview questions were designed to operationalize the study's theoretical framework, including concepts such as feminist technology studies, invisible labor, and the domestication of technology (See Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Form). With the consent of the participants, all interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The final sample size of 25 participants was determined by reaching data saturation. Data saturation was approached not merely as a stopping point for new data collection, but as an analytical process. As Saldaña (2013) emphasizes, saturation occurs at the point where new data no longer offer new analytical insights or

develop the properties of existing themes. In this study, after approximately the 18th interview, it was observed that recurring patterns, such as “technology used as an excuse to evade responsibility,” “the emergence of new managerial labor,” and “emotional bonds formed with devices”, became prominent, and the frequency of new themes emerging significantly decreased. The final seven interviews were used to confirm the depth and diversity of these main themes and to verify how they manifested across different demographic characteristics (e.g., age, education, income). At this point, it was determined that new data would not make a significant contribution to the analytical framework, and the sample size was finalized.

The demographic characteristics and technology use profiles of the participants are summarized in Table 1. This table shows the diversity of the sample and allows for an intersectional analysis in interpreting the findings. For example, the fact that participants with higher levels of education (P5, P7, P14) tend to use more complex AI tools such as ChatGPT provides important clues about the relationship between education and technology adaptation.

Table 1. Participants Demographic Characteristics and Technology Use Profile

Participant ID	Age	Education	Profession	Marital Status	Average Monthly Income (TL)	AI Technology Used
P1	33	Bachelor's Degree	Teacher	Married	Middle	Internet Based AI (Question and Answer)
P2	50	Primary School	Housewife	Married	200.000	Does not use
P3	45	Primary School	Housewife	Married	50.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, Airfryer
P4	57	Literate	Housewife	Married	15.000	Home Appliances (Robot, Mixer etc.)
P5	40	Bachelor's Degree	Psychological Counselor	Married	100.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, Capcut, ChatGPT
P6	40	Primary School	Housewife/Volunteer	Married	70-80.000	Unspecified AI Devices
P7	43	Bachelor's Degree	Accountant	Married	Average	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, ChatGPT
P8	37	Bachelor's Degree	Teacher	Married	Average	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, Smart Home Appliances
P9	38	High School	Housewife	Married	30-40.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, Camera, ChatGPT
P10	30	High School Dropout	Housewife	Single	50-60.000	Home Appliances (Vacuum Cleaner, Dishwasher)

P11	33	Bachelor's Degree	Housewife	Married	Average	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, Air Conditioner
P12	30	Bachelor's Degree	Procurement Officer	Married	Average	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, ChatGPT
P13	33	High School	Housewife	Married	50.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, ChatGPT
P14	26	Bachelor's Degree	Teacher	Single	55.000	ChatGPT
P15	33	Bachelor's Degree	Housewife	Married	Middle	Internet Based AI (Question and Answer)
P16	30	Bachelor's Degree	Procurement Officer	Married	Average	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, ChatGPT
P17	37	Middle School	Housewife	Married	40.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner
P18	29	Bachelor's Degree	Student	Married	60.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, Food Robot, ChatGPT
P19	22	Bachelor's Degree	Student	Married	200.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, ChatGPT
P20	37	High School	Tradesmen	Married	20.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, Washer/Dryer.
P21	34	Associate Degree	Housewife	Married	25.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner
P22	28	Bachelor's Degree	Interior Architect	Married	50.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner
P23	37	University	Housewife	Married	60.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, Refrigerator, ChatGPT
P24	41	Middle School	Housewife	Married	100.000	Robot Vacuum Cleaner, Smart Phone (Siri)
P25	35	Bachelor's Degree	Lawyer	Married	70.000	Robot Vacuum

Data Analysis

The transcribed interview texts were analyzed by thematic analysis using qualitative data analysis software (NVivo). The analysis process flexibly followed the steps described by Braun and Clarke (2006): (I) Familiarizing with the Data: Each interview transcript was read repeatedly along with the audio recording to grasp the entirety of the participant's narrative. (II) Creating Initial Codes: While reading the texts, descriptive and conceptual comments were made in the margins. For example, a participant's statement, "I bought you a robot vacuum, so count it as me having vacuumed the house" (P7), was marked with a descriptive note like "delegation of responsibility" and a conceptual note like "substitution of labor with financial investment." (III) Searching for Emergent Themes: Connections between these initial notes were established to form more abstract "emergent themes." For instance, the code above was developed into an emergent theme such as "technology as a tool for patriarchal bargaining." (IV) Developing Superordinate Themes: Emergent themes from each case were brought together to form broader "superordinate themes" that encompassed the entire dataset. For example, emergent themes like "technology as a patriarchal bargaining tool" and "selective male participation based on technological curiosity" were combined under the superordinate theme of "Gendered Automation." (V) Writing the Report: The results of the analysis were presented in a narrative whole structured around this thematic framework and supported by rich quotations and interpretative analyses. In this study, thematic analysis is not employed as a method that dilutes the deep interpretative goal of phenomenology, but rather as a systematic tool to identify shared patterns and meaning structures within the participants' lived experiences, thereby providing a structured foundation for the search for the phenomenological "essence".

Trustworthiness, Validity, and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the academic rigor and robustness of the findings, this study adopted the "trustworthiness" approach, which corresponds to the concepts of validity and reliability in the quantitative paradigm. Accordingly, a series of strategies were followed to meet the four fundamental criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which are widely accepted in the field:

Credibility: This criterion concerns whether the research findings accurately represent the reality experienced by the participants. To enhance credibility, strategies such as prolonged engagement (spending two months in the field), member checking (sharing themes with some participants post-analysis), and triangulation (selecting participants with diverse demographic characteristics) were used.

Transferability: To provide a basis for the reader to assess the extent to which the findings can be applied to similar contexts, the research site, participants, and processes were described in detail using the technique of thick description.

Dependability: To ensure that the research process is logical, traceable, and repeatable, a comprehensive audit trail including interview transcripts, field notes, and analysis processes was created.

Confirmability: The aim was to ensure that the findings originated directly from the data rather than from the researcher's subjectivity. For this purpose, the audit trail and the practice of reflexivity, in which the researcher questioned their own assumptions throughout the process, were utilized.

Ethical principles were strictly adhered to at all stages of the research. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Harran University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with the decision number 2025/106, dated April 16, 2025. Before the interviews, each participant was given detailed information about the purpose of the research, the process, how the data would be used, and the principles of confidentiality, and their written informed consent was obtained. To protect the identities of the participants, code names such as P1, P2, P3 were used in the report. Audio recordings and transcripts are stored securely and are only accessible to the research team.

Findings: Multilayered Impacts of the New Actor in the Home

In-depth interviews were conducted with 25 women residing in Şanlıurfa. The interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview form covering main topics such as “the impact of AI on household chores,” “gender roles,” and “intra-family dynamics.” The interviews were analysed thematically using a holistic and inductive approach. This analysis revealed three main themes reflecting the multi-layered and contradictory effects of AI-supported technologies in the domestic sphere. These themes consist of patterns of meaning that recur throughout the entire data set and reflect the essence of the phenomenon under investigation, rather than responses to specific questions. The analysis of these themes demonstrates that technology has evolved into a significant factor that influences the social, emotional, and labour structure of the home, transcending its role as a mere instrument. In this section, the three themes are presented through the participants' own experiences and interpretations, linked to the relevant literature, and supported by the statements of numerous participants. Within the confines of the article, the most representative and rich quotations are included.

The New Domestic Actor: Transformation of Labor, Time and Emotional Ties

This theme examines how AI-enabled technologies, particularly robot vacuums, are transforming the nature of domestic labor, the perception of time and the emotional bond with technology. The findings show that the decline in physical labor has given rise to a new type of “managerial labor”, that “earned time” comes with new expectations, and that the relationship with technology has not remained purely utilitarian but has acquired a deep emotional dimension.

Managerial Labor Replacing Physical Labor

In the narratives of the participants, the most prominent effect of AI-supported devices is that they relieve women’s physical burden by automating tasks that require intense physical effort such as sweeping and mopping. This is described as “*a great blessing*” by P4 and “*the greatest favor ever done to a woman*” by P23. However, this physical relief does not mean that labor, which feminist sociology conceptualizes as “invisible labor” and “mental burden” (Oakley, 1974; Çakıroğlu Çevik & Con Wright, 2023), disappears. On the contrary, labor is changing form and physical labor is being replaced by a new type of labor called “digital housekeeping” or “digital housekeeping” in the literature (Kennedy et al., 2015; Strengers & Nicholls, 2017).

Participants’ experiences reveal concrete components of this new type of labor: initial setup of devices, mapping the house, solving common problems such as “map deletion”, managing Wi-Fi outages, and even watching hours of videos on YouTube to learn all the features of the device. These tasks move women from the role of direct “doer” of housework to that of “manager” and “problem solver” of the technological infrastructure in the home. This represents a shift in labor from muscle power to cognitive flexibility, digital literacy and problem-solving skills. The fact that this new type of “managerial labor” remains almost entirely the responsibility of women shows that technology does not destroy labor, but rather reproduces gender roles by transforming it into a less visible and cognitive form (Vindegg & Julsrud, 2025).

The Paradox of “Earned Time”

One of the greatest promises of technology is the “time gained”, which tangibly opens up new spaces in women’s lives. Participants indicated that they use this time in quite diverse and meaningful ways. These activities include steps towards personal development (attending Qur’an courses, sewing and embroidery courses, reading educational books), strengthening social relationships (visiting friends and neighbors), spending more and better quality time with children, and, for working women, more easily achieving work-life balance. This finding confirms the potential of technology to create autonomous time that women can devote to themselves and their families.

However, the use of this time involves a paradox that demonstrates the persistence of the notion of “mental burden”. The interviews reveal that even “free time” comes with an expectation of performance and pressure

to be productive. For example, a participant coded P7 summarized this situation by saying, *“I am not free again, but...”*, indicating that he was busy with another household chore while the robot vacuum cleaner was working. Similarly, another participant coded P18 expressed concern that this new free time could be wasted by spending it on *“empty things”*. These statements indicate an implicit social and moral pressure that even “free time” should be used productively. This is in line with Bittman et al.’s (2004) findings that “labor-saving” devices do not always save time overall, as this gain can be neutralized by rising standards or the addition of new tasks. While technology frees women from physical work, it can also place a new mental burden on them to use this “saved” time “correctly” and “efficiently” (Petts & Carlson, 2023).

Domestication of Technology and Emotional Labor

One of the most striking and theoretically rich findings of the analysis is that the participants’ relationship with AI-enabled devices does not remain on a purely utilitarian plane, but acquires a deep emotional and symbolic dimension. The tendency to name the devices is the most concrete indicator of this situation. A participant coded P11 stated that he named his robot vacuum cleaner “Mr. Hayri” and that he named it specifically “because he helps me more than my wife”, which is both an act of personification and a subtle criticism of the division of labor within the family. Another participant coded P17 stated that she considers the technological devices at home as family members and establishes a caring relationship with them by saying “they are all like my daughters”.

These acts of personification show that technology has transformed from a passive tool to an active social actor in the home. This can be explained by the “domestication of technology” theory developed by Silverstone and Haddon (1996). By attaching meanings to these inanimate objects, talking to them and forming emotional bonds with them, women integrate them into their own family and emotional worlds, that is, they “domesticate” them (Haddon, 2011). In this process, technology reshapes not only the physical layout of the home, but also the network of emotional and social relationships within it. This deep attachment and dependence reaches its peak when participant P19 expresses how he would feel if his robot vacuum cleaner broke down with the words “my arm and wing would break”. This shows that technology is no longer a luxury, but has become an indispensable limb for the continuity of daily life.

Gendered Automation: Reproduction and Negotiation of Domestic Power Dynamics

This theme focuses on the contradictory and paradoxical effects of AI-enabled technologies on gender roles and the domestic division of labor. The analysis reveals that AI has the potential both to reinforce these roles and, to a limited extent under certain conditions, to break them down and open them up for negotiation.

“Gendered” Technology as an Excuse to Escape Responsibility

The most dominant and recurrent finding from the interviews is the use of AI-enabled household appliances as an “excuse” for men to be further distanced from housework. The participants’ statements clearly show that technology has become a tool of “delegation of responsibility” rather than a tool of “labor saving” (Wajcman & Young, 2023). For example, participant K7 reported that her husband said to her. “I bought you a robot vacuum cleaner, count the times I vacuumed my house”. This statement reveals that the man sees his financial investment in technology as a ticket to exemption from housework responsibilities. Similarly, participant P10 states that her brother uses the excuse of “he says the machine washes the dishes anyway” to avoid helping with the dishes while another participant coded P20 states that her husband avoids responsibility by saying “you have a robot vacuum cleaner anyway, let him run it”.

These statements suggest that technology functions as a screen that legitimizes and reinforces the existing inequality in the domestic division of labor rather than reducing it. This is in line with one of the main arguments of feminist technology studies that technology is socially shaped and can reproduce existing patriarchal norms (Savcı, 1999). By delegating the responsibility for housework directly to the machine, men completely isolate themselves from this responsibility and reinforce women’s role as “managers” in the home (managers of both work and technology).

“Selective” Male Participation through Technological Curiosity

Against this dominant trend, there are also cases, albeit less frequently, where technology encourages men’s participation in housework. However, this participation is usually a “selective” one, limited to interest and curiosity in the technological gadget, rather than a holistic and egalitarian sharing of housework responsibility. As stated by participant P10, “If you put a normal vacuum cleaner in his hand, he would not get up and sweep, but he can set that thing and watch it sweep or something”. This statement shows that men’s participation is oriented towards the “toy” or “hobby” nature of technology, not the work itself.

Another participant coded P21 supports this by saying that her husband “likes to use artificial intelligence products so much that he does not leave it to me, he wants to take care of it himself”. This participation is not only limited to spouses, but also reflects on new generations. Participant P3 stated that her son likes to use the airfryer and cooks for her. These observations suggest that technology does not “desexualize” housework, but rather “re-genders” some tasks. When the use of technology is framed as a “masculine” hobby, a technical interest or a performance, it is possible for men to “selectively” participate in areas traditionally seen as “women’s work” (Aagaard & Madsen, 2022; Rode & Poole, 2018). The table below summarizes this paradoxical impact of AI on men’s participation in housework with concrete quotes.

Table 2. Paradoxical Effects of Artificial Intelligence on Men’s Participation in Housework

Participant ID	Expression that Reduces Participation / Legitimizes Evasion from Responsibility	Expression that Increases / Enables Participation
P7	“I bought you a robot vacuum cleaner, count the times I vacuumed my house. That’s what it has come to.”	-
P10	“My brother says that the machine washes the clothes.”	“Men are unfortunately more curious about technology nowadays... If you put a normal broom in his hand, he won’t get up and sweep, but he can set that thing and watch it sweep or something.”
P18	“I think men’s participation has decreased because my wife used to sweep the house herself and now she has a robot vacuum cleaner.”	-
P13	“They weren’t doing it anyway, so they won’t do it again. I think they are relieved that there is no such expectation.”	-
P20	“When something happens, my wife says, ‘Why don’t you just turn on the robot vacuum cleaner?’”	-
P21	-	“Since he likes to use artificial intelligence products very much, he does not leave it to me, he wants to take care of it himself.”
P3	-	“My son is not like that. My son cooks... He uses an airfryer... he usually uses it.”

The Social Cost of Automation: Resistance, Inequality and Changing Norms

This section explores the practical conveniences that AI technologies bring, as well as the concerns they raise in the minds of participants, the mechanisms of resistance to the technology, and the potential social costs of automation. The findings suggest that the benefits of technology are not universal, a “moral panic” against automation is developing, and basic domestic norms such as cleanliness are being transformed.

Moral Panic: Fear of becoming “lazy” and “dull”

A frequent theme in the interviews is the deep concern that AI’s making life easier will come at a cost. This concern manifests itself as a fear of both physical and mental “atrophy” or “laziness”. Participants express these concerns with statements such as “It makes young people lazier” (P6), “People will not use their own intelligence much” (P18), and even “physically... maybe it shows that health problems will increase in the future” (P8). A participant coded P23 emphasizes that this effect is not only individual, but also covers the whole family with the words “it makes us lazy, it makes our children lazy.”

Beyond a simple criticism of laziness, this situation reflects a deeper “moral panic” towards automation. In a social structure where labor and effort are seen as a moral virtue, and physical work is considered valuable, technology’s elimination or transformation of this labor is perceived not only as a convenience but also as a moral erosion, a loss of the skills that make humans human, and a potential corruption. This suggests that technology calls into question not only practices, but also fundamental moral values and understandings of what it means to be human.

Digital Divide: Cost and Difficulty of Use

That the benefits offered by AI technologies are not universally accessible is evident in participants’ experiences, underlining the concept of “intersectionality” (Anthias, 2012; Christian & Namaganda, 2018). Participants point to two main barriers to accessing these technologies: cost and difficulty of use. The high prices of the devices constitute a significant barrier, especially for low- and middle-income families. Participant P11’s simple but poignant statement that her mother also wanted a robot vacuum cleaner but could not afford one, “my mother cannot afford it”, epitomizes this economic gap. Given that the cost of purchasing goods or services over the internet in Turkey is 49.5% (TÜİK, 2023b), which suggests that access to high-cost technological products may be even more limited. Here, gender directly intersects with economic class. Without access to technology, women do not have a new tool for “patriarchal bargaining” and remain trapped in traditional forms of labor. This suggests that technology not only reproduces existing inequalities but also creates a new hierarchy and a line of division between women (those who have technology and those who do not) (Kandiyoti, 1988).

In addition to the economic barrier, technological literacy is also a significant barrier. The installation, programming and management of devices pose a serious challenge for those who are unfamiliar with technology or, like respondent P17, are illiterate. This necessitates support from younger family members or spouses who are often more tech-savvy, creating new dependency relationships. While a woman is freed from the burden of housework, she may become dependent on someone else (usually her son or husband) to use the technology. These findings suggest that instead of reducing existing socio-economic inequalities, technology can reproduce and deepen them in a “digital” dimension.

Changing Norms of Cleanliness and the Notion of “Good Enough”

AI is transforming not only how housework is done, but also what “cleanliness” means and the standards of “good housewifery”. The traditional, perfectionist and all-encompassing understanding of “thorough cleaning” is being replaced by a more pragmatic and “good enough” approach. A participant coded P19 expresses this change with the words: “After artificial intelligence entered our lives, we say that it is enough to be clean in appearance, not so much in extreme cleanliness”. This suggests that, contrary to findings in some Western literature (Strengers et al., 2019) that technology raises standards of cleanliness and thus creates more work, in this context it has lowered standards to a more “realistic” level. This finding is in line with Bittman et al.’s (2004)

argument that household appliances do not always provide the expected time savings because expectations and standards can also change.

Another participant coded P18 pointed to the disappearance of traditional rituals and said “There used to be holiday cleaning... You don’t do it anymore, the robot takes care of it. I don’t think there will be much of that old traditional cleaning culture left.” This shows that socially constructed standards such as “good housewifery” and “clean house”, which impose a great pressure on women, are renegotiated through technology. Although the robot’s cleaning may not reach the meticulousness and thoroughness of a human’s hand, it is accepted as “good enough” for the continuation of daily life, entailing the potential to alleviate some of the pressure of perfectionism on women.

Discussion: A Perspective on Global Debates from Şanlıurfa

In this section, the findings derived from the lived experiences of housewives in Şanlıurfa will be interpreted in dialogue with a broader academic literature, informed by feminist technology studies, the sociology of labour, and intersectionality theories. The objective of the analysis is to elucidate the multifaceted nature of technological integration within the domestic sphere, challenging the simplistic binaries of “good” or “bad” outcomes. Instead, it explores the intricate, contradictory, and malleable process within prevailing gender regimes and power dynamics.

Gendered Automation: How Patriarchy Instrumentalizes Technology

One of the most dominant findings of the research is that AI-enabled household appliances are used by men as an “excuse” to escape from housework responsibilities. Participants’ statements such as “I bought you a robot vacuum cleaner, count me sweeping my house” (P7) are strong evidence that technology is not a neutral tool, but rather gains meaning and is instrumentalized within the existing social and cultural context. This is directly in line with Judy Wajcman’s (2007) central thesis that the design and use of technology cannot be considered independently from gender relations and that technology can reflect and reinforce existing power hierarchies (Wajcman, 2007; Wajcman & Young, 2023). In the patriarchal context of Şanlıurfa, instead of being a tool for equality, technology becomes a new argument for monopolizing women’s domestic responsibilities in the name of “alleviating” them, while the traditional breadwinner role of men being reinforced. Technology becomes a new and modern tool of patriarchal bargaining.

However, the findings also reveal men’s “selective engagement” based on technological curiosity. One man’s playing with the settings of the robot vacuum cleaner while not using the “normal vacuum” (P10) suggests that interaction with technology, and not housework itself, is framed as a “masculine” hobby or a field of technical mastery. As noted in the literature, men are often more interested in the technical aspects of technology and take on the role of “guru” or “knight” of the technological infrastructure in the home (Rode & Poole, 2018; Strengers et al., 2019). This suggests that technology “re-genders” specific technological tasks rather than “de-gendering” housework altogether. While programming the robot vacuum cleaner is seen as a “masculine” technical skill, more “dirty” and mundane maintenance tasks such as freeing the robot from a stuck place, emptying its reservoir or cleaning its jammed brush remain the responsibility of women. Thus, instead of equalizing the division of labor, technology reproduces existing sexist distinctions in new and more subtle ways.

The New Form of Labor’s Invisibility: The Burden of “Digital Caregiving”

This research clearly shows that AI has not destroyed domestic labor, but rather transformed it. The new types of “managerial labor” such as device setup, map management, troubleshooting that emerge with the reduction of participants’ physical burdens are a contemporary reflection of Ann Oakley’s (1974) classic concept of “invisible labor” (Oakley, 1974; Oliver, 2023). The types of mental labor Oakley describes, such as planning, organizing and supervising, can be reconceptualized as “digital caregiving” or “digital housekeeping” in the age of technology (Kennedy et al, 2015; Strengers & Nicholls, 2017). This new type of labor, while less physically strenuous, creates a “mental load” that requires constant attention, problem-solving skills and digital literacy (Vindegg & Julsrud, 2025).

The most important feature of this new form of labor is that it can be even more “invisible” than traditional invisible labor. Due to the prevailing discourse that technology “makes things easier” and “saves time”, the existence and difficulty of this new digital care labor may be less noticeable to both women themselves and other family members. This can create the illusion that women have “free time” when, in fact they are under a constant cognitive load in the background. Participant P7’s statement “I’m not free again, but...” while the robot is working perfectly summarizes this paradox. herefore, while technology eliminates one form of labor (physical), it substitutes another form (cognitive/managerial), and this new type of labor is again placed on women’s shoulders in accordance with gender stereotypes.

The “Mr. Hayri” Phenomenon: Domestication, Emotional Labor and Substitute Relationships

The participants’ deep emotional bond with AI-enabled devices, naming them and seeing them as family members strongly suggest the validity of the “domestication of technology” theory (Haddon, 2007; Silverstone & Haddon, 1996) in this context. This process shows that women do not passively accept technology but actively integrate it into their social, cultural and emotional worlds. This integration is a process of “emotional labor” expended by women; a cold and alien machine is “domesticated” and made part of the social fabric of the home by being attributed to a meaning, being personified and being related to.

However, the findings of this study add a deeper and more critical dimension to the domestication process. The fact that the participant coded P11 named the robot vacuum cleaner “Mr. Hayri” “because it helps more than my wife” shows that this action carries meanings beyond a simple personification. This is not only a process of adaptation, but also a strategy of compensating for and coping with a deficiency in the family (the unhelpful spouse). The woman “substitutes” the technology for her husband who does not help her or does not help her enough, and delegates his duties to the technology. While, on the one hand, this “substitution relationship” offers a practical solution to the woman, on the other hand, it carries the risk of bypassing the problem of division of labor in the family through technology instead of solving it. “Mr. Hayri” is both a helper and a symbolic expression of the absence of a real partnership. This adds an important nuance to domestication theory by showing how technology can be positioned not only as an “actor” but also as an object of “substitution” in the network of domestic relations.

Intersecting Inequalities: The Local Face of the Digital Divide in Şanlıurfa

This study reveals through the lens of intersectionality that the effects of AI technologies are not a homogeneous experience, but rather differentiate according to the social position of individuals (Anthias, 2012; Christian & Namaganda, 2018). The findings show how the “digital divide”, a global problem, is embodied in a local context such as Şanlıurfa and how it can deepen existing socio-economic inequalities (Henwood & Wyatt, 2019).

Cost, one of the biggest barriers to access to technology, is a reflection of class inequality in this area. P11’s statement that “my mother cannot afford it” shows that the conveniences brought by AI are only valid for those with a certain economic power while the poorer segments are excluded from this technological revolution. This proves that instead of reducing existing class distinctions, technology reproduces them in a new “digital” dimension. Similarly, education level and digital literacy also create an important distinction. The difficulty experienced by the illiterate P17 in using the device suggests that the use of technology requires a certain cultural capital (education, technical knowledge) and that those who do not have this capital, especially older and less educated women, may miss out on the benefits of technology or become dependent on others (usually younger and male family members) to be able to use it (Backåberg et al., 2025; Luo, 2023). Thus, when analyzing the impact of AI on housewives, it is imperative to consider their intersecting identities (gender, class, education, age) rather than enlisting all women within a monolithic category such as “housewives” in order to understand the complex web of inequalities created by technology.

Conclusion: Technology, Tradition and the Future

This study uses a phenomenological approach to examine the complex, contradictory and multi-layered effects of AI-enabled home technologies on the everyday life experiences of housewives in Şanlıurfa, a traditional and

patriarchal city in Turkey. The analysis, conducted through a framework consisting of feminist technology studies, invisible labor, the domestication of technology, and intersectionality theories, has revealed that technology is neither an absolute “savior” nor an absolute “evil” in the domestic sphere, but rather a dynamic actor that both reproduces and opens to negotiation the existing social fabric. When the findings are interpreted through these theoretical lenses, it is concluded that technology is a complex social process that reshapes gender roles, labor perceptions, and intra-familial power Dynamics rather than a simple tool.

The key findings of the research reveal a series of paradoxes created by AI, each resonating with the study's theoretical framework. First, while technology offers a “great boon” by relieving women of strenuous physical labor, it introduces a new burden of “managerial labor” and “digital babysitting.” This finding empirically demonstrates the transformation of “invisible labor”, showing that automation does not eliminate domestic work but rather converts it into a more cognitive, yet still gendered form of “digital housekeeping”. Second, technology reinforces the existing gendered division of labor by being used as an “excuse” for men, yet it also opens the door to a “selective” male participation. This paradox confirms the core tenets of “feminist technology studies”, illustrating how a “gendered” technology can simultaneously entrench patriarchal norms while creating limited spaces for their negotiation. Third, as women “domesticate” these technologies by giving them names like “Mr. Hayri”, this act functions not only as an adaptation strategy but also as a “substitution” relationship. This “domestication of technology” process highlights that devices become social actors, and in this context, serve to manage emotional and relational deficits within the household. Finally, the benefits of technology are not universal as barriers like cost and digital literacy reproduce existing inequalities. This directly reflects the principle of “intersectionality”, proving that the experience of technology is shaped not by gender alone, but also by the intersecting dynamics of class and education.

This study makes an original contribution to the literature by examining a global technological phenomenon in a non-Western, traditional context with an intersectional and phenomenological depth. By revealing the effects of AI through the meaning worlds and narratives of the women who experience it, it has provided us with a more nuanced understanding of the place of technology in social life.

Limitations and Future Research

As with any research, this study has some limitations. The study is limited to Şanlıurfa provincial center and the findings cannot be generalized to other regions or rural areas of Turkey with different socio-cultural structures. Furthermore, due to its cross-sectional design, it does not provide the opportunity to observe the long-term effects of technology and change over time.

Several avenues for future research can be suggested. Comparative studies in different socio-cultural contexts (e.g. a more secular and metropolitan city versus a rural area) could reveal how technology is culturally domesticated in different ways. Studies that examine the effects of technology not only on housewives, but also on children, the elderly and other family members can provide a holistic picture of family dynamics. Longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of the presence of AI technologies in the home (e.g. children’s gender perceptions, lasting changes in family power balances) would deepen our understanding in this area.

Recommendations

The findings of this study have important implications for both technology designers and policy makers in Türkiye.

1. For Technology Designers:

- Design that Encourages Collective Use: Devices should be designed to encourage the participation of all family members rather than just targeting an individual user. For example, shared control interfaces, the ability to create different user profiles, and features that facilitate task delegation can prevent the burden of managing the technology from being concentrated on one person (Bano et al., 2025).
- Reducing the Burden of “Digital Caregiving”: Installation, update and troubleshooting processes should be simplified and made as user-friendly as possible. Instead of creating a new workload for the user, technology should provide a seamless experience that actually makes life easier.

- Participatory and Inclusive Design: Actively involving women from different socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds in design processes will ensure that the products developed are more relevant to real life needs and contexts. This is one of the most effective ways to prevent technology from reinforcing existing inequalities.

2. For Policymakers in Turkey:

- Digital Literacy Programs: In response to the problems of difficulty of use and the digital divide revealed in the findings, digital literacy programs that are sensitive to local needs and accessible, especially for women, the elderly and low-educated individuals should be expanded (Ovacık, 2025).

- Increasing Accessibility: In order to spread the benefits of technology to wider segments of society, policies such as tax reductions or support mechanisms to reduce economic barriers to accessing these devices should be considered.

- Gender Equitable Technology Policies: A gender perspective should be taken into account when developing technology and innovation policies. Projects and initiatives that promote an egalitarian transformation should be supported taking into account the potential for technology to increase the invisible labor burden on women or reinforce traditional roles (Ovacık, 2025; Turquet et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the future of AI in the home will depend less on the technology itself than on how we design it, how we use it and what social policies we surround it with. Transforming technology from a tool that reproduces existing inequalities to a partner that promotes a more equitable division of labor and prosperity requires a conscious and collective effort.

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We hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

Researchers' Contribution Rate

The study was conducted and reported by only one researcher.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Yirmi birinci yüzyılda yapay zekâ ve otomasyon teknolojilerinin yaşamın neredeyse her alanını dönüştürme gücü, ev içi gündelik hayatı ve toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkilerini de yeni baştan şekillendirmektedir. Özellikle kadınların geleneksel emeği, akıllı ev teknolojileriyle birlikte çok boyutlu bir dönüşüm yaşamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'nin geleneksel ve ataerkil yapısıyla öne çıkan Şanlıurfa ilinde, yapay zekâ destekli ev teknolojilerinin kadınların yaşam deneyimleri üzerindeki etkileri derinlemesine ve fenomenolojik bir yaklaşımla incelenmiştir. Feminist teknoloji çalışmaları, görünmez emek ve teknolojinin evcilleştirilmesi teorileriyle desteklenen bu araştırma, kadınların gündelik hayatlarında teknolojinin toplumsal cinsiyet rolleriyle nasıl kesiştiğini ve mevcut eşitsizlikleri nasıl yeniden ürettiğini veya dönüştürdüğünü analiz etmektedir.

Araştırmanın temel motivasyonu, Batı-dışı ve geleneksel bağlamlarda teknolojinin toplumsal sonuçlarının çoğu zaman homojen ve iyimser yaklaşımlarla ele alınması, bu süreçte ise yerel kültürel, ekonomik ve toplumsal dinamiklerin yeterince dikkate alınmamasıdır. Şanlıurfa gibi hem güçlü ataerkil aile yapısının hem de düşük kadın istihdamı ve okuryazarlığının hâkim olduğu bir sosyal ortamda, küresel bir teknolojik trendin nasıl anlamlandırıldığı ve gündelik pratiklere nasıl yansıdığı önemli bir araştırma boşluğuna işaret etmektedir. Çalışmada, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden yorumlayıcı fenomenoloji tercih edilmiş; Şanlıurfa'da ikamet eden, çeşitli sosyo-ekonomik arka planlara sahip, toplamda 25 kadınla derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Katılımcıların bir kısmı aktif olarak yapay zekâ destekli ev teknolojileri kullanırken, bir kısmı ise bu teknolojilere erişimi olmayanlardan oluşmaktadır. Bu çeşitlilik hem teknolojinin erişilebilirliğinin hem de etkilerinin toplumsal kesitler arasında farklılaşmasını inceleme imkânı sunmuştur.

Elde edilen bulgular, yapay zekâ teknolojilerinin ev içi emeği dönüştürürken, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini de yeniden üreten karmaşık ve çelişkili dinamikleri ortaya koymaktadır. Öncelikle, robot süpürgeler ve akıllı mutfak aletleri gibi cihazların kadınların fiziksel emek yükünü hafiflettiği ve onlara göreceli olarak yeni zaman alanları yarattığı gözlemlenmiştir. Katılımcıların birçoğu, bu zamanı sosyal ilişkilerini güçlendirmek, kişisel gelişim faaliyetlerine katılmak ya da çocuklarına daha fazla vakit ayırmak gibi biçimlerde değerlendirdiklerini belirtmiştir. Ancak, “kazanılan zaman” kavramının kendi içinde bir paradoks taşıdığı, bu yeni boşluğun bile verimli ve üretken biçimde değerlendirilmesine yönelik toplumsal bir baskı ve zihinsel yükü beraberinde getirdiği anlaşılmaktadır. Teknolojinin fiziksel işleri kolaylaştırmasının ardında, cihazların kurulumu, yönetimi ve bakımı gibi yeni “yönetimsel emek” ve “dijital bakıcılık” görevlerinin, sıklıkla görünmez şekilde yine kadınların omuzlarına bindiği görülmektedir. Böylece, fiziksel emek form değiştirmekte; evin “yöneticisi” ve sorun çözücüsü rolü kadının yeni bilişsel emeği olarak öne çıkmaktadır.

İkinci temel bulgu, teknolojinin ev içi toplumsal cinsiyet iş bölümünü her zaman eşitlemediği, aksine çoğu zaman erkeklerin ev işi sorumluluğundan çekilmesi için bir “bahane” ve meşrulaştırıcı araç olarak kullanıldığdır. Erkekler, finansal olarak teknolojik aleti eve kazandırmakla kendi sorumluluklarının sona erdiğini düşünmekte, evin bakım ve yönetimi ise yine kadına kalmaktadır. Yine de bazı erkeklerin teknolojiye duyduğu ilgi sayesinde “seçici” bir katılım gösterdiği; örneğin robot süpürgeyi ayarlanması veya arızasının giderilmesi gibi “teknik” görevlerde yer aldığı da kaydedilmiştir. Bu durum, teknolojinin iş bölümünü cinsiyetsizleştirmekten çok, mevcut cinsiyetçi ayrımları yeni ve ince biçimlerde yeniden ürettiğini göstermektedir. Evdeki teknoloji, kimi zaman aile içindeki “yardımcı partner” açığını da sembolik olarak doldurmakta; katılımcıların cihazlara isim vermesi, onları bir aile üyesi gibi görmesi, teknolojinin yalnızca işlevsel değil, aynı zamanda duygusal bir aktör haline geldiğini göstermektedir.

Araştırmada ortaya çıkan bir diğer önemli bulgu ise, teknolojinin tüm kadınlar için eşit fayda sunmadığıdır. Katılımcı ifadeleri, yapay zekâ destekli cihazların yüksek maliyeti ve teknolojik okuryazarlık gereksinimi nedeniyle, daha az gelirli, yaşlı ya da düşük eğitilmiş kadınların bu avantajlardan yararlanmakta zorlandığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu durum, geleneksel sınıfsal ve eğitime dayalı eşitsizliklerin, dijital uçurum olarak yeniden üretildiğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca, teknolojinin yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte ev içi temizlik standartlarında ve “iyi ev kadınlığı” normlarında da bir değişim yaşanmakta; geleneksel, titiz ve zahmetli temizlik ritüellerinin yerini, “yeterince iyi” anlayışı ve pragmatizm almaktadır. Ancak bu dönüşüm, herkes tarafından olumlu karşılanmamakta; bazı katılımcılar, teknolojinin insanı “tembelleştirdiğine” veya fiziksel ve zihinsel kabiliyetlerin körelmesine neden olacağına dair endişelerini dile getirmiştir. Bu kaygılar, teknolojinin yalnızca pratik yaşamı değil, aynı zamanda ahlaki değerleri ve aile içi ilişkileri de sorgulamaya açtığını göstermektedir.

Araştırmanın özgün katkısı, küresel bir teknolojik olgunun, yerel bir bağlamda ve kesişimsel bir bakış açısıyla çok boyutlu olarak analiz edilmesinde yatmaktadır. Çalışma, teknolojinin kadınların hayatındaki etkilerini, toplumsal cinsiyet, sınıf, eğitim ve yaş gibi farklı sosyal kimliklerin kesişiminde inceleyerek; teknolojinin fırsat ve yüklerinin eşit dağılmadığını, bazen mevcut eşitsizlikleri derinleştirdiğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca, “teknolojinin evcilleştirilmesi” ve “duygusal emek” kavramlarının, kadınların teknolojiyi gündelik yaşama uyarlama ve ona anlam yükleme biçimlerinde nasıl tezahür ettiğini de gözler önüne sermektedir.

Sonuç olarak, yapay zekâ çağında kadınların gündelik yaşam deneyimleri, teknolojinin toplumsal cinsiyet rolleriyle etkileşimi üzerinden okunmalı; teknolojik ilerlemenin, kendi başına toplumsal eşitliği garanti etmeyeceği, mevcut güç ilişkileriyle iç içe ilerleyeceği göz ardı edilmemelidir. Politikalar ve teknolojik tasarımlar, dijital okuryazarlığı ve erişilebilirliği artırıcı, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini gözetten bütüncül yaklaşımlar geliştirmeli; böylece teknolojinin toplumsal faydası adil biçimde yaygınlaştırılmalıdır. Bu makale hem akademik literatüre hem de teknoloji tasarımcıları ve politika yapıcılar için pratik önerilere katkı sağlamayı hedeflemektedir.

Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Form

Section 1: Demographic Information and General Life Experience

What are your age, education level, occupation, marital status, and average monthly household income?

Could you briefly introduce yourself? (e.g., your family, your daily routine)

What are your general thoughts on housework and caregiving tasks? How do these tasks make you feel?

Section 2: AI Awareness and Usage Practices

4. What do you know about artificial intelligence (AI)? Do you use any AI-supported devices or applications? (e.g., robot vacuum, smart home assistant)

5. If so, how often and for what purposes do you use these devices?

6. How have AI-supported devices changed the way you do your housework? (e.g., cleaning, cooking, childcare)

7. Do you think AI has reduced the time you spend on housework? Why?

Section 3: Impact of AI on Professional Life and Gender Roles

8. Do you think AI offers you new opportunities to join the workforce? (e.g., more free time, learning new skills)

9. If you are employed, how do you think AI helps you balance your work and home life?

10. How do you think AI affects the division of household labor between men and women? (e.g., has men's participation in housework increased?)

11. Do you think AI reduces or increases gender inequalities? Why?

Section 4: Social Life, Cost, and Challenges

12. How does the use of AI affect your social life? (e.g., relationships with friends, community activities)

13. How does the cost of AI-supported devices affect your use of them? (e.g., does their high cost make them difficult to access?)

14. What challenges do you face when using AI-supported devices? (e.g., technical problems, difficulty of use)

15. What kind of support do you need to overcome these challenges?

Section 5: Family Dynamics and Future Perspective

16. How does AI affect the sharing of responsibilities within the family? (e.g., are your spouse or children participating more in housework?)

17. How do you think AI has changed your roles and relationships within the family?

18. How do you think AI might change the lives of housewives in the future? (e.g., more automation, new responsibilities)

19. Do you think AI is changing the traditional understanding of housework? Why?

Section 6: Closing

20. Is there anything else we haven't asked about that you would like to share?