

From Homemaker to Influencer: Tradwife Aesthetics, Digital Femininity, and the Commodification of Domestic Labor in Turkish Food Reels

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Abstract: Instagram Reels transform cooking from ordinary domestic labor into visible, affective, and potentially monetizable media performance. This study examines how four prominent Turkish female content creators construct digital femininity and convert culinary work into symbolic and commercial value. Rather than assigning creators a fixed tradwife identity, the article treats tradwife aesthetics as a visual-discursive repertoire that idealizes domestic space, associates feminine competence with care and attractiveness, and presents labor-intensive homemaking as pleasurable lifestyle content. A purposive comparative multimodal case study analyzed four user-supplied Instagram Reels by Melisa Özkan, Havva Hacifazlıoğlu, Ezgi Köse/Peppycook, and Merve Avan Topak. Video sequences, profile screenshots, visible captions, and interface cues were coded for domestic labor, femininity, care, authenticity, aestheticization, self-branding, and commercial visibility. The cases produced four contrasting formations: aspirational-sensual culinary femininity, playful everyday authenticity, maternal entrepreneurship, and spouse-oriented aesthetic care. Across cases, editing compressed effort into fluent competence, while kitchens operated simultaneously as homes, studios, and branded interfaces. The findings suggest that Turkish food Reels hybridize gendered domestic service with public authorship, bodily display, humor, motherhood, and entrepreneurship, turning domestic competence into platform value without necessarily restoring a fixed traditional feminine identity.

Keywords: digital femininity; domestic labor; food influencers; Instagram Reels; multimodal analysis; tradwife aesthetics

1. Introduction

The home kitchen has become a conspicuous site of digital cultural production. On Instagram, cooking is no longer presented only as a practical sequence of ingredients and techniques. It is staged through camera angles, editing rhythms, voice-over, domestic décor, bodily performance, captions, hashtags, and interactions designed for platform circulation. The result is a hybrid form in which unpaid household work becomes content, content becomes a source of visibility, and visibility can become an economic value. This transformation makes food influencing a productive site for examining the relationship among gender performance, platform design, self-branding, and the commercialization of everyday life.

The recent visibility of the tradwife has intensified scholarly interest in the digital return of domestic femininity. Tradwife discourse commonly emphasizes homemaking, marriage, motherhood, modesty, care, and gender complementarity; in some contexts, it also intersects with conservative, anti-feminist, nationalist, or racial politics [1-6]. Yet, some women who create aesthetically appealing domestic content do not identify as tradwives, and it



would be analytically careless to assign a political identity to creators who do not claim it. This study therefore distinguishes tradwife identity from tradwife aesthetics. The latter refers to a portable visual and affective repertoire: idealized domestic space, highly competent homemaking, family-centered care, pleasurable labor, femininity expressed through service, and the conversion of these motifs into attractive lifestyle media.

This distinction is particularly important in Türkiye, where food media draw on overlapping histories of family, hospitality, motherhood, religious-cultural language, culinary heritage, and entrepreneurial social media use. Turkish food influencers may reproduce traditional feminine codes while also exercising authorship, expertise, public visibility, and economic agency. Their videos can therefore contain a structural tension: work conventionally coded as private and unpaid is made public and potentially profitable, but its value continues to be attached to ideals of feminine care, self-discipline, generosity, and effortless competence.

Existing research has examined tradwife influencers, domesticity on TikTok, postfeminist self-branding, and influencer authenticity [2-12]. The supplied comparative study by Yavuz and Erdal Aytekin demonstrates that tradwife representations are culturally adapted and that domestic femininity can become a commercial digital identity [13]. The present article extends this discussion in three ways. It shifts the empirical focus from self-declared or readily identifiable tradwife personalities to Turkish food influencers; it analyzes recipe videos as multimodal information objects rather than treating profiles as undifferentiated wholes; and it introduces a transparent coding matrix that links visual, verbal, affective, and platform-specific cues.

Accordingly, the study asks: RQ1: How is gendered domestic labor visually and verbally organized in four Turkish food Reels? RQ2: Which forms of femininity, care, authenticity, embodiment, and expertise are performed across the four cases? RQ3: How does the platformed presentation of cooking convert domestic competence into symbolic and potentially commercial value? The purpose is not statistical generalization. It is to develop an analytically transferable account of how the kitchen operates at once as a domestic setting, production studio, identity resource, and interface with an audience.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Gender Performativity and Domestic Competence

Butler conceptualizes gender not as an inner essence but as an effect of repeated, socially intelligible acts [14]. This perspective is useful for recipe media because femininity is produced not only by explicit statements but also through repeated gestures, tones, spatial arrangements, clothing, serving practices, forms of address, and relations to family members. Cooking competence becomes gendered when it is narrated as care, devotion, natural ability, maternal knowledge, or an expected feature of a well-managed home.

Domestic labor includes physical, cognitive, organizational, and emotional work. Its apparent ordinariness can obscure the planning, time, repetition, and maintenance required to sustain households [15-17]. In short-form video, this complexity is selectively represented. Preparation may be accelerated through cuts; unsuccessful attempts and cleaning may disappear; sensory satisfaction and the finished dish may receive disproportionate attention. The medium can thus make labor visible while simultaneously aestheticizing and de-materializing its costs.

B. Postfeminist Media Culture, Authenticity, and Self-Branding

Postfeminist media culture often frames femininity through choice, self-surveillance, makeover, entrepreneurial subjectivity, and individualized empowerment [18-20]. The influencer embodies these tendencies by transforming the self into a continuously maintained media property. Even when commercial partnerships, metrics, algorithmic visibility, and audience expectations shape content production, personal preference and authenticity remain central claims.

Influencer authenticity is not the absence of mediation. It is a communicative achievement produced through consistency, intimacy, ordinariness, disclosure, responsiveness, and a recognizable personal voice [8-10]. In recipe

videos, authenticity may be signaled by colloquial address, family references, familiar ingredients, an apparently lived-in domestic setting, or a claim that a recipe is repeatedly prepared at home. Such cues can coexist with careful staging. The productive question is therefore not whether a video is authentic or artificial but how authenticity is assembled and what kinds of authority it supports.

C. Platformization and the Commodification of Domestic Life

Platforms organize visibility through technical affordances, datafication, recommendation systems, standardized formats, and monetization opportunities [21-23]. Reels encourage vertical framing, rapid narration, visual hooks, repeatable editing conventions, audio layering, captions, and engagement prompts. These features do not determine meaning, but they reward content that is immediately legible and emotionally or sensorially engaging.

Bourdieu's concepts of cultural and symbolic capital help explain how culinary knowledge, taste, domestic order, and embodied competence can generate distinction [24]. When translated into platform metrics and brand recognition, such capital may also become economic. The influencer kitchen is therefore double-coded: it signifies intimacy and private life while functioning as a productive infrastructure. The creator's domestic performance can attract attention, establish credibility, cultivate community, and create conditions for sponsorship, affiliate marketing, product promotion, or cross-platform expansion.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Research Design and Sampling

The research used qualitative, comparative, multimodal case-study design. Purposive sampling was appropriate because the objective was to compare information-rich examples rather than estimate the prevalence of a feature across all Turkish food influencers [25,26]. Four verified, female-led Turkish Instagram accounts were selected: Melisa Özkan (@meliozkann), Havva Hacıfazlıoğlu (@havvahf), Ezgi Köse/Peppycooky (@peppycooky), and Merve Avan Topak (@avanmerve). The profile screenshots recorded approximately 896,000, 1 million, 1.6 million, and 600,000 followers respectively on 17 August 2026. These counts contextualize the creators as highly visible platform actors but are not used as stable performance measures.

One user-supplied, complete recipe video was analyzed from each account. Inclusion criteria were: (a) the content centered on preparing a specific dish; (b) the principal setting was a domestic or domestic-styled kitchen; (c) the video contained enough procedural, verbal, visual, or caption information for multimodal coding; and (d) the creator/account was identifiable. The final corpus consisted of four videos, four profile screenshots, captions visible in the screen recordings, and interface cues. The videos ranged from approximately 12 seconds to 160 seconds, providing deliberate variation in editing density and narrative elaboration. Because Instagram content and metrics are mutable, the supplied recordings and screenshots constitute the study's dated audit corpus.

TABLE I
VIDEO CORPUS AND SELECTION RATIONALE

Case	Account / corpus item	Recipe focus	Analytic rationale
C1	Melisa Özkan, @meliozkann; 56.7-second supplied Reel	Steak, asparagus, and pan sauce	Aspirational kitchen, controlled plating, fashionable bodily presentation, and a high-production transformation of cooking into a lifestyle spectacle.
C2	Havva Hacıfazlıoğlu, @havvahf; 127.0-second supplied Reel	“Göbek arası hamburger” using lettuce as the bun	Extended direct address, humor, visible improvisation, and an accessible creator persona that resists polished domestic perfection.
C3	Ezgi Köse/Peppycooky,	Rapid chickpea-based sandwich/burger	Compressed healthy-food instruction, baby participation, maternal identity, and explicit display of the creator’s Peppythings products.

	@peppycooky; 12.3-second supplied Reel		
C4	Merve Avan Topak, @avanmerve; 159.7-second supplied Reel	Mushroom-filled pastry with sauce	Labor-intensive preparation staged in a luxury kitchen, floral feminine styling, careful service, and a concluding scene of the husband eating the dish.

Note: Durations were measured from the user-supplied screen recordings. Recipe labels describe the visible preparation and caption information; displayed engagement metrics may change after the access date.

B. Unit of Analysis and Coding Framework

The primary unit of analysis was the individual Reel. Each Reel was examined as a multimodal ensemble containing moving image, composition, editing, voice or music, on-screen text, caption, profile context, and platform prompts. The analysis did not infer creators' private beliefs or political affiliation. It coded observable representational choices and interpreted their patterned relationships.

A deductive-inductive coding strategy was used. Initial categories were derived from gender performativity, postfeminist media culture, influencer authenticity, platformization, scholarship on tradwife aesthetics, and multimodal visual analysis [27,28]. These sensitizing concepts were refined during repeated viewing and comparative memo writing. Each feature was coded as absent (0), present but secondary (1), or strongly foregrounded (2). Ordinal scores served as a disciplined comparison device rather than statistical measurement. Interpretive memos documented how each score was justified and how modes interacted.

TABLE II
MULTIMODAL CODING MATRIX

Dimension	Operational indicators
Domestic labor visibility	Recipe steps, preparation time, manual skill, repetition, cleaning or hidden work, transformation from raw ingredients to finished dish.
Aestheticization	Lighting, décor, plating, visual order, sensory close-ups, editing smoothness, transformation of work into pleasurable spectacle.
Care and relationality	References to spouse, children, guests, health, hospitality, feeding others, affectionate audience address.
Femininity performance	Maternal identity, softness, modesty, beauty, competence, service, bodily presentation, feminized voice or language.
Authenticity cues	Colloquial speech, ordinary ingredients, lived experience, imperfection, tradition, naturalness, direct testimony.
Expertise and instruction	Measurements, sequence, tips, demonstrations, certainty, claims of reliability or repeated household use.
Self-branding / platform logic	Recognizable persona, engagement invitation, branded style, cross-platform cues, promotional visibility, repeatable format.
Tradwife-aesthetic intensity	Overall convergence of idealized domesticity, pleasurable labor, family-centered femininity, and aspirational homemaking; not a claim of tradwife identity.

C. Analytic Procedure and Trustworthiness

Analysis proceeded in four stages. First, descriptive logs recorded the recipe, setting, participants, verbal address, visible actions, caption language, and profile self-description. Second, videos were segmented into opening hook, preparation, transformation, and presentation/closure. Third, the coding matrix was applied to each segment and

summarized at video level. Fourth, constant comparison was used to identify shared patterns and meaningful contrasts across the four cases.

Trustworthiness was strengthened through an explicit codebook, preservation of the supplied recordings and profile screenshots, negative-case attention, and separation between description and interpretation [25]. Claims were limited to the observable corpus. The analysis treats absent evidence cautiously: for example, a video without a disclosed sponsorship cannot demonstrate the absence of wider commercial activity. A second human coder was not available for this pilot dataset; accordingly, no intercoder-reliability coefficient is claimed. The matrix and audit trail are provided so that later research can replicate, contest, or extend the coding.

D. Ethics

Only publicly accessible professional content was analyzed. No private messages, follower identities, or non-public analytics were collected. User comments were excluded to avoid reproducing identifiable audience speech. Account names are retained because the creators function as public-facing content producers and the analysis requires an auditable corpus. Nevertheless, the study avoids diagnosing motives or assigning political identities. Researchers applying this design should follow their institution's ethics procedures and Instagram's applicable terms at the time of data collection.

4. RESULTS

A. From Work Sequence to Frictionless Spectacle

Across the four cases, cooking was organized as purposeful transformation, but the degree of compression differed radically. C3 condensed cracking eggs, blending chickpeas, involving a baby, baking a bun, assembling the sandwich, and displaying a branded bag into approximately 12 seconds. C1 compressed steak searing, sauce preparation, asparagus cooking, cutting, geometric plating, and tasting into less than one minute. In both cases, editing produced exceptional fluency: shopping, cleaning, waiting, failed attempts, and coordination disappeared.

C2 and C4 retained more process. Havva Hacıfazlıoğlu's approximately two-minute performance repeatedly returned to her face and speech while she handled lettuce, meat, mushrooms, onions, cheese, and assembly. The duration allowed humor, commentary, and minor irregularities to remain visible. Merve Avan Topak's nearly 160-second video displayed chopping, sautéing, sauce preparation, yufka handling, filling, rolling, baking, serving, and eating. Yet even this extended representation culminated in an orderly golden product and did not show cleaning or fatigue.

The cases therefore form a continuum rather than a binary. C3 offers maximal platform compression; C1 combines compression with luxury food aesthetics; C2 uses duration to create conversational authenticity; and C4 makes labor visible but converts it into disciplined devotion and aesthetic mastery. Visibility did not automatically de-romanticize domestic work. Effort was narratively revalued as speed, competence, humor, craft, or care.

B. Embodied Femininity and the Aesthetic Organization of the Kitchen

C1 and C4 are most clearly integrated bodily styling with the architecture of the kitchen. Melisa Özkan appeared in a fitted black dress in a bright white kitchen, alternating between medium shots of her body and close-ups of steak, butter, asparagus, sauce, and symmetrical plating. The creator's appearance, marble surfaces, white flowers, tableware, and restaurant-style composition formed a unified aspirational image. Culinary competence and glamorous femininity became mutually reinforcing signs of taste.

Merve Avan Topak wore a fitted floral dress while working in a large, carefully illuminated kitchen with glass-fronted cabinetry and expansive preparation surfaces. The dress visually echoed conventional feminine softness, while the extended manual sequence demonstrated stamina and technical control. The final transition from preparation to the husband eating the pastry established the dish as successful care, but the creator remained the director, performer, and publisher of that care.

C2 provided a counter-aesthetic. Havva's dark clothing and neck scarf created a recognizable style, yet the central appeal depended less on bodily glamour or pristine staging than on speech, facial expression, humor, and direct demonstration. C3 combined a casual black top, colorful accessories, bright nails, rapid movements, and product colors. Here femininity was youthful, entrepreneurial, and mobile rather than organized around domestic elegance. Consequently, the corpus shows that platformed domestic femininity is not one look: it ranges from sensual luxury and floral respectability to playful ordinariness and branded creative labor.

C. Four Versions of Digital Femininity

The corpus produced four distinct models. C1 performs aspirational-sensual culinary femininity: a visibly styled body, luxury kitchen, premium ingredients, restrained motion, and precision plating make domestic cooking resemble restaurant and fashion content. C2 performs playful everyday authenticity: humor, extended direct speech, an unconventional lettuce-bun recipe, and visible improvisation construct proximity without demanding perfection. C3 performs maternal-entrepreneurial femininity: a baby briefly participates in food production, while rapid editing and Peppythings products display merging motherhood, healthy convenience, and business ownership. C4 performs spouse-oriented aesthetic care: elaborate labor and conventional feminine styling culminate in the husband consuming and validating the finished dish.

None of these models are reduced to passive housewifery. Each creator controls framing, narration, publication, audience relations, and the circulation of her own image. Nevertheless, culturally gendered motifs remain central: beauty, feeding, motherhood, couple care, domestic order, emotional warmth, and apparently confident competence. Digital femininity is thus ambivalent: it turns gendered expectations into public expertise and platform capital while continuing to draw value from those expectations.

D. The Kitchen as Home, Studio, and Branded Interface

All four cases demonstrate that the platformed kitchen has multiple functions. As home, it supplies intimacy and cultural legitimacy. As a studio, it provides lighting, surfaces, appliances, props, sound, and repeatable production routines. As branded interface, it mediates a continuing relationship between creator, audience, platform, agencies, owned businesses, and potential commercial partners. The kitchen is therefore not simply background; it is part of the information architecture of the creator's identity.

C3 makes commercialization most explicit. Ezgi Köse's profile identifies her as founder of Peppythings and Peppyspace, and the video closes with a deliberate display of Peppythings bags and a smaller container. The transition from recipe to product is narratively seamless: healthy maternal competence legitimizes the branded object. The other cases illustrate indirect commercialization. C1 converts luxury taste, bodily visibility, and culinary styling into a highly differentiable persona. C2 converts humor and proximity into audience attachment. C4 converts domestic effort, fashion, couple intimacy, and architectural aspiration into lifestyle visibility. Commercial value therefore begins before sponsorship disclosure; it arises when domestic performance consistently generates attention, recognition, and trust.

TABLE III
COMPARATIVE INTERPRETIVE PROFILE

Case	Dominant femininity	Primary authenticity cue	Domestic labor framing	Platform-value pathway
C1	Aspirational-sensual	Visible self-styling and controlled luxury setting	Compressed skill and restaurant-style finish	Lifestyle differentiation, beauty, and premium taste

C2	Playful everyday	Direct speech, humor, improvisation, unconventional recipe	Process retained as conversational entertainment	Relatability, personality, and community attachment
C3	Maternal-entrepreneurial	Baby participation, speed, casual self-presentation	Convenient healthy production compressed into seconds	Explicit own-brand integration and founder identity
C4	Spouse-oriented aesthetic care	Extended preparation and concluding husband-consumption scene	Labor made visible as disciplined, pleasurable devotion	Couple intimacy, luxury domesticity, and lifestyle aspiration

Interpretive profiles summarize dominant emphases; they are not mutually exclusive creator identities.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings support the argument that tradwife aesthetics travel beyond self-declared tradwife communities. In Turkish food Reels, idealized domesticity can appear as an aesthetic and economic repertoire without explicit anti-feminist rhetoric. This matters theoretically because it relocates analysis from identity labels to representational mechanisms. The relevant question becomes how domesticity is made desirable, who is authorized by it, what work is hidden, and how platform systems convert the performance into attention.

The study's first contribution is to clarify the double movement of visibility. Food Reels make domestic labor publicly observable and attach authorship to women who may previously have been treated as ordinary homemakers. This visibility can create expertise and entrepreneurial possibilities. Yet platform compression removes much of the temporal, repetitive, and infrastructural burden. Visibility therefore coexists with aesthetic concealment. Domestic work is recognized as a skill but not necessarily as socially distributed labor.

Second, the findings extend research on influencer authenticity. Authenticity in the four cases was relational and culturally situated. Maternal language, hospitality, naturalness, family references, familiar recipes, and handmade effort functioned as credibility resources. These cues were compatible with professionalized content because authenticity is a genre convention rather than the opposite of production. This observation helps explain why highly polished and modestly produced accounts can both appear authentic: they mobilize different but recognizable evidence of proximity and care.

The contrast between Havva Hacifazlıoğlu and Melisa Özkan is especially revealing. Havva's authenticity is supported by duration, speech, humor, and visible immediacy, whereas Özkan's authority is produced through control, styling, premium ingredients, and visual restraint. Peppycooky adds a third configuration in which maternity and founder identity coexist within a highly compressed branded sequence. Merve Avan Topak's video adds a fourth: couple-oriented care becomes credible through the sustained visibility of preparation and the husband's embodied consumption of the result. Authenticity is therefore plural and strategically adapted to different creator brands.

Third, the study identifies the kitchen as a platform infrastructure. Scholarship on platformization emphasizes the data and governance layers of digital services [21-23]. The present cases show how platform logic has materialized in domestic space. Countertops become stages, cooking actions become modular shots, recipes become searchable and saveable assets, and family-coded intimacy becomes an audience relation. The home is not merely represented on the platform; it is reorganized for platform production.

The results also complicate a simple oppression-versus-empowerment binary. The creators exercise agency by teaching, producing, editing, publishing, accumulating audiences, and potentially earning income. At the same time, the market value of their content depends partly on recognizable gendered ideals: care, patience, attractiveness, hospitality, and apparently effortless household competence. Postfeminist entrepreneurialism does not dissolve traditional gender codes; it can reactivate them as individualized choices and branded competencies [18-20].

Compared with the U.S.-Türkiye tradwife comparison by Yavuz and Erdal Aytekin [13], the present corpus contains less explicit ideological messaging and greater emphasis on food instruction, self-presentation, humor, entrepreneurship, and couple intimacy. Nevertheless, both studies identify commodification as a key process. The difference is that the current study locates commodification not only in a declared identity or lifestyle narrative but also in the technical and affective organization of recipe content. This is the study's main information-systems relevance: the same domestic act is re-specified as a modular, datafied, audience-facing media object through platform affordances.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. Its exploratory corpus comprises only four purposively selected videos, one from each account, and therefore cannot represent either the creators' broader content histories or the heterogeneous field of Turkish food influencing. Because the inclusion criteria privileged recipe-centered performances in domestic or domestic-styled kitchens, the analysis may underrepresent other dimensions of the accounts, including travel, parenting, advertising, humor, conflict, and non-domestic content. The videos were also published at different times, during which platform conventions, audience expectations, account's visibility, and production resources may have changed. Accordingly, the comparison identifies representational patterns rather than offering prevalence estimates or a synchronous account of Turkish food influencing. Future research could employ a pre-registered sampling period, analyze all eligible Reels or a systematic random sample, and archive engagement metrics at standardized observation points.

The analysis was limited to publicly accessible content and did not include audience comments, backend metrics, follower demographics, revenue, commercial contracts, production costs, or algorithmic recommendation data. Commercialization is therefore interpreted as a platform possibility and branding logic rather than demonstrated income, while the study cannot determine how audiences accept, negotiate, parody, or reject the femininities represented. Moreover, the theory-informed coding was conducted without an independent second coder; although the transparent framework supports auditability, it cannot eliminate researcher positionality. Future studies should combine longitudinal and cross-platform analysis with creator interviews, audience research, platform data, and multiple-coder procedures. Finally, tradwife aesthetics is used here as an analytical concept rather than an identity attributed to the four creators. To avoid conceptual overextension, subsequent research should distinguish recipe instruction, lifestyle domesticity, explicit tradwife discourse, commercial advertising, and counter-traditional performances across Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Pinterest.

7. CONCLUSION

This study asked what four Turkish food Reels can reveal about the contemporary circulation of tradwife aesthetics. Across the cases, cooking moved from private household activity to public, searchable, affective, and potentially monetizable media production. Domestic competence became visible through editing, direct address, bodily presentation, maternal participation, couple intimacy, and product display. Yet this visibility did not produce one uniform femininity. The corpus generated four platform-specific formations: Melisa Özkan's aspirational-sensual culinary femininity, Havva Hacıfazlıoğlu's playful everyday authenticity, Peppycooky's maternal entrepreneurship, and Merve Avan Topak's spouse-oriented aesthetic care. The kitchen connected these formations by functioning simultaneously as a workplace, performance set, instructional environment, intimate domestic space, and branded interface.

Read as a situated snapshot rather than a prevalence claim, the findings suggest that tradwife culture in 2026 is becoming less dependent on explicit self-identification, ideological declaration, or visually literal nostalgia. None of the four creators needs to call herself a tradwife for selected elements of the repertoire to remain culturally legible: an orderly home, pleasurable service, feminine attractiveness, family-centered care, and apparently fluent domestic competence. The tradwife aesthetic can therefore travel as a modular visual and affective grammar. It may be detached from overt political discourse and recombined with wellness, humor, luxury consumption, motherhood, convenience, or entrepreneurship. For research in 2026, the relevant analytical question is consequently not only 'Who is a tradwife?'

but also 'Which components of tradwife domesticity circulate, through which platform conventions, and with what economic and gendered effects?'

The four cases also indicate a temporal shift in the meaning of nostalgia. Earlier tradwife imagery commonly reconstructs an identifiable past through vintage clothing, retro utensils, slow preparation, and from-scratch production [30]. In the present corpus, the promise of domestic order survives without requiring this historical *mise-en-scène*. Modern marble surfaces, glass-fronted cabinetry, premium ingredients, rapid editing, healthy substitutions, and creator-owned products update the fantasy for contemporary platform culture. What emerges is platform-native or frictionless nostalgia: not a detailed return to a previous era, but an affective promise that domestic life can still be coherent, beautiful, caring, and controlled. In 2026, nostalgia may therefore reside less in visible objects from the past than in the emotional certainty offered by the finished dish, the organized kitchen, and the competent feminine subject.

The findings further show that speed and commercialization do not displace domestic femininity; they reorganize it. Short-form video compresses shopping, cleaning, waiting, repetition, failure, and fatigue into a fluent sequence of transformation. This temporal compression allows labor to be simultaneously displayed and concealed: viewers witness skill and process, but rarely the full infrastructural cost of sustaining them. At the same time, the creator does not simply serve a family. She teaches an audience, directs the camera, edits a narrative, manages visibility, and may integrate her own products or wider lifestyle brand. Çetin and Karakaş Aydınbakar's observation that motherhood can become entrepreneurship and domestic serenity a monetizable resource is therefore especially pertinent to the last years' landscape [29]. Domesticity is no longer positioned only against paid or public work; it can itself become public facing, datafied, and commercially productive work.

This development complicates both celebratory and critical readings. Platform visibility can recognize women's culinary knowledge, attach authorship to feminized labor, build communities, and create entrepreneurial opportunities. However, marketable visibility may also depend on intensifying familiar expectations: women should care willingly, remain attractive, produce intimacy, manage the home competently, and make difficult work appear pleasurable. Even though the humorous and deliberately imperfect performance of C2 does not stand outside platform value; relatability itself becomes a differentiating brand resource. Likewise, the luxury settings of C1 and C4 do more than signify taste. They translate domestic competence into classed aspiration, potentially obscuring the material resources, space, time, and assistance required to reproduce the scene. The 2026 tradwife formation is thus neither a simple return to patriarchal domesticity nor an uncomplicated story of empowerment. It is a negotiated economy in which agency and constraint, visibility and concealment, intimacy and commerce become mutually constitutive.

The principal theoretical contribution of the study is therefore to conceptualize tradwife aesthetics as a platformed repertoire rather than a bounded creator identity. This approach avoids assigning political beliefs to creators based on attractive cooking content while still permitting critical analysis of recurring gender codes. It also connects feminist media research with information-systems scholarship: platform affordances do not merely distribute domestic representations but help produce their form. Vertical video, algorithmic circulation, savable recipes, modular shots, engagement prompts, and branded profiles convert care into reusable information and the kitchen into communication infrastructure. The persistence of tradwife aesthetics in 2026 lies precisely in this adaptability. The repertoire remains recognizable because it preserves the promise of feminized care, yet it remains commercially viable because it can be accelerated, modernized, personalized, and detached from explicit ideology.

Accordingly, the study concludes that the most consequential question for future research is not whether digital domesticity is traditional or modern, but how tradition is selectively redesigned for platform markets. Larger longitudinal and cross-platform datasets should test whether the four formations identified here recur across creator scales and audience groups, and whether platform-native nostalgia becomes more prominent than overt vintage symbolism. Audience and creator research should also examine who experiences these performances as inspiration, pressure, entertainment, expertise, or ideological messaging. Within the limits of this four-video corpus, the evidence suggests that tradwife aesthetics in 2026 persist not by faithfully restoring the past, but by becoming faster, more flexible, more entrepreneurial, and more deeply embedded in the everyday infrastructures of influencer culture.

The central contradiction is therefore not resolved. Platform visibility can recognize women's knowledge, create authorship, and enable entrepreneurship; it can also preserve expectations that domestic labor should appear natural, loving, beautiful, and effortless. Understanding digital femininity requires holding these processes together rather than choosing between empowerment and subordination.

8. DECLARATIONS

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Author Contribution: Fatma Senem Güngör: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, analysis, writing - original draft, and writing - review and editing.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement: The corpus consists of four dated screen recordings and four profile screenshots supplied to the researcher. Descriptive metadata and durations are reported in Table 1. Because platform content is mutable and creator-owned, the source videos are not redistributed with this article; qualified researchers may request the coding sheet from the author where ethically and legally permissible.

Ethics Statement: The study analyzed public-facing professional social-media content and did not collect private data or reproduce audience comments. Institutional requirements should be confirmed before submission.

Use of Generative AI: Author to confirm and complete in accordance with the journal policy and the actual research/writing process before submission.

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