



Women and Technology
A case study of Famagusta, TRNC

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Abstract

It has been observed that men have always had more access to technology. Currently, increased educational opportunities for the women proved that women can be very successful not only in the use but also in the design of technology. The present study explores the attitude of a variety of forms of feminism to technology and presents the findings of a descriptive study carried out in Famagusta, TRNC about the domestic instruments owned, used, used with all the functions, and repaired by women.

Feminism and Technology

The gender roles of men and women closely related to the society in which they live and the roles that particular society denotes to them. These roles are attributed to the children in the family when they were born and continue by the education institution and the media becomes a part of their social identity. In other words, the girls play with dolls whereas the boys play with cars. In the school, girls are given domestic science and cooking courses, on the other hand, boys are given courses on technical drawing or carpentry (Renzetti, C. & Curran, D. 1993 p. 33). All these indicate the difference between the social gender roles and technology. In a nutshell, the women are considered to be the consumers of domestic technology; on the other hand, men are known as the producers of technology.

The relation between the technology and women are explained differently by different feminist waves. According to the liberal feminists, men and women are equal in respect to



their abilities and capacities. Yet, women's capacity is limited by the society's value system. According to this wave, men and women are told by the society the roles they should undertake. Women's field is limited to the domestic life, and this constitutes an obstacle to women's entry to the public sphere. Liberal feminists suggest that women should be encouraged to be educated in the fields of science, engineering and computing (Kourany, J. A., Sterba, J. P. & Tong, R. 1993).

According to Marxist-socialist feminism, women's separation from technology starts with industrial revolution and is dependent the changes brought by the industrial revolution and the times when capitalism started to develop. Social feminists hold that patriarchy contributes to women's oppression, whereas Marxists believe that clan oppression is the main source of the problem. Liberal feminists draw attention to the role of women in the work force yet Marxist socialist feminist adds equality in work conditions (Kourany, J. A., Sterba, J. P. & Tong, R. 1993).

According to Radical feminism, which has not been very influential in practice, the distinction between men and women is the most fundamental area of hegemony. Women struggle against the hegemony of men.

Whether women's monopoly over the power to give birth is *the* paradigm for power relations is controversial both inside and outside the radical feminist community. So too is the notion that bearing and rearing children are necessarily oppressive. ...What is oppressive is not female biology per se, but rather the fact that men have controlled women as bearers and rearers of children" (Kourany, J. A., Sterba, J. P. & Tong, R. 1993 p. 19).

Data Collection Techniques

For the present study, disproportional stratified sampling technique has been used to select 99 women from the whole of the 6000 women who are older than 18 years old to represent women population in the Famagusta. Data have been collected through a questionnaire consisting of 57 questions (see Appendix 1). Questionnaires were piloted on another group of disproportional stratified sampled on 35 women. The questionnaire consists of 2 sections: the first section is about the women's demographic situation and the second section explores the women's level of use for the home and office equipments like what type of the technological



equipments they own at home or work and the extend to which they make use of these and they attend to their maintenance.

Analysis and Findings

Distribution of the Participants According to the Districts

18% of the women participants live in Maraş, 17% live in Tuzla, 16% live in Çanakkale, 12% live in Dumlupınar, 11% live in Karakol , 11% live in Baykal, 8% live in Sakarya, 6 % live in Suriçi.

Age

16% of the participants were 18–24 years old, 15% was between 25–31 years, 23% was between 32–38, 16% was between 39-45, 15% was between 46–52 years and 14 % of the women were 53 years old and above.

Education Level

Education level of the participants is found to be: 23% primary school, 21% secondary school, 44% high school, 10% University graduate and 1% of the participants hold PhD degree.

Marital Status

Martial status of the participants is: 71% are married, 19% are single, 8% are widowed, 1 % is divorced.

Number of Children

80% of the participants have children. 4% of the married participants do not have a child. 14% have a child, 34% have two children, 17% have 3 children, 7% have 4 children, and 3% have more than 4 children.

Occupation

2% of the participants work as teachers, 5% are civil servants, 20% are business owners, 46% are housewives, 8% are shop-assistants, 5% are hairdressers and 13 % are busy with other occupations.



Income

17% of the participants mention that their monthly income is less than 500 Million TL, 47%'s monthly income is between 500 Million TL - 999 Million TL, 23%'s monthly income is between 1 Billion TL - 1.5 Billion TL, 9%'s monthly income is between 1.501 Billion TL - 2 Billion TL, 3%'s monthly income is between 2001 - 2.5 Billion TL, 1%'s monthly income is more than 2.5 Billion TL.

Technological Instruments Used at Home

This section covers the reaction of the participants to the possession, use, functional use and repair and maintenance of the most common domestic instruments. The distinction is made between the basic use an instrument and using it functionally with all its properties.

Television

100% of the participants mention that they own a *TV* at home. 49% of the participants can use the TV functionally, 52% of the participants can use the TV in a basic way, but if any mechanical or technical problems occur 20% of the participants get help from their husband, 79% mention that they call the technical service to maintain or fix it. Only 2% of the participants can do maintenance or repair the TV by themselves.

Video

45% of the participants told us that they owned a *video* at home. 18% of the participants can use Video functionally, 26% of the participant can use Video in a simple way, but if any mechanical or technical problems occur, 11% of the participants get help from their husbands, 33% mention that they call the technical service to maintain or fix it. Only 2% of the participants can do maintenance or repair of the Video by themselves.

Radio

88% of the participants said that they had a *radio* at home. 52% of the participants mention that they use the radio with all its functions. 34% of the participants can use radio with its basic functions, but if any mechanical or technical problems occur, 20% of the participants get help from their husbands, 33% mention that they call the technical service to maintain or fix it. Only 7% of the participants mention that they can repair the radio by themselves.



CD Player

33% of the participants mention that they own a *CD player* at home. 16% of the participants can use the CD player functionally, 17% of the participants can use the CD player in a simple way, but if any mechanical or technical problems occurred 7% of the participants ask for help from their husbands, 25% mention that they call the technical service to maintain or fix it. Only 1% of the participants can see to its maintenance.

VCD Player

30% of the participants point out that they own a *VCD player* at home. 53% of the participants mention that they are able to use the VCD Player functionally, 70% of the participants can only use the VCD Player with its simple functions, but if any mechanical or technical problems occur, 27% of the participants ask for help from their husbands, 70% of the respondents mention that they would call the technical service to maintain or fix it. Only 3% of the participants can do the maintenance of the VCD Player by themselves.

DVD Player

30% of the participants drew our attention to the fact that they had a *DVD player* at home. 17% of the participants are able to use the DVD Player functionally, 13% of the participants can use it in the simplest way, 21% mention that they call the technical service to maintain or fix it. 8% of the participants get help from their husbands to fix it if any problems occur. 1% of the participants can do the maintenance on their own.

Vacuum Cleaner

42% of the participants said that they owned a *vacuum cleaner* at home. 63% of the participants are in a position that to use the vacuum cleaner with all its function. 28% of the participants can use the vacuum cleaner in the simplest way, if any mechanical or technical problems occurs, 14% of the participants would get help from their husbands, and 68% mention that they would call the technical service to fix it. Only 8% of the participants can do its maintenance on their own.

Carpet Washing Machine



31% of the participants mention that they own a *carpet washing machine* at home. 25% of the participants can use it functionally, 6% of the participants can simply use it. Provided that there are any mechanical or technical problems, 5% of the participants get help from their husbands, 22% mention that they call the technical service to fix it. Only 4% of the participants can do its maintenance.

Washing Machine

98% of the participants mention that they own a *washing machine* at home. 73% of the participants can functionally use it whereas 27% of the participants can just use it. 3% of the participants get help from their husbands if any problems occur. 94% mention that they call the technical service to maintain or fix it. Only 1% of the participants can do its maintenance.

Drier

87% of the participants mention that they own a *drier* at home. 12% of the participants can use it functionally, 1% of the participants can just use it with its simplest functions, 12% of the participants mention that they call the technical service if any mechanical or technical problems occur.

Dishwasher

32% of the participants mentioned that they own a *dishwasher* at home. 19% of the participants can use the dishwasher functionally, 13% of the participants can simply use it, 32% mention that they call the technical service if any mechanical or technical problems occur.

Refrigerator

88% of the participants mentioned that they own a *refrigerator* at home. 64% of the participants can use refrigerator functionally, 24% of the participants can simply use it and 6% of the participants get help from their husbands to fix if any problems occur. 79% mention that they would call the technical service if any mechanical or technical problems occurred. Only 1% of the participants can do its maintenance.

Iron



99% of the participants mentioned that they own an *iron* at home. 72% of the participants can use it functionally, 27% of the participant can use the *Iron* in the simplest way, if any mechanical or technical problems occur, 27% of the participants get help from their husbands, 65% mention that they call the technical service to maintain or fix it. 6% of the participants can do its maintenance.

Oven

99% of the participants mentioned that they owned an *oven* at home. 71% of the participant can use the *Oven* functionally, 28% of the participants can use it in the simplest way 16% of the participant gets help from their husbands if any mechanical or technical problems occur, 78% mention that they would call the technical service to maintain or fix it. 5% of the participant can do its maintenance.

Micro-wave Oven

27% of the participants mentioned that they owned a *micro-wave oven* at home. Only 14% of the participants can use the micro-wave oven functionally. 52% mention that they can use the micro-wave oven with its basic functions. If any mechanical or technical problems occur, 1% of the participants get help from their husbands, 25% mention that they call the technical service to maintain or fix it. 5% of the participants can do its maintenance.

Mobile Phone

87% of the participants mention that they own a *mobile phone*. 40% of the participants can use it functionally, 46% of the participant can use the mobile phone. If any mechanical or technical problems occur, 5% of the participants would get help from their husbands. 76% mention that they call the technical service to maintain or fix it. 6% of the participants can do its maintenance.

Computer

26% of the participants mention that they own a *computer* at home. 8% of the participant can use the *Computer* functionally. 18% of the participants can use the computer for simple functions. If any mechanical or technical problems occur, 2% of the participants would get



help from their husbands, 22% mention that they would call the technical service to fix it. Only 1% of the participants can add or remove any hardware of the computer by themselves.

CD Recorder

4% of the participants mention that they own a *CD recorder*. 3% of the participants can use it functionally, 1% of the participants can simply use it. If any mechanical or technical problems occur, 1% of the participants would get help from their husbands. 3% mention that they would call the technical service to maintain or fix it.

Car

64% of the participants mention that they own a *car*. 32% of the participants can use her car with all its functions. 29% of the participants mention that they can simply drive the car. In the case of mechanical problems, 10% of the participants point out that they would get help from their husbands, 44% mention that they would call the technical service to fix it. 7% of the participants mention that they are able to look after their car.

Drill

29% of the participants mentioned that they owned a drill at home. Only 3% of the participant could use the drill by herself. 78% did not attempt to answer this question.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study justifies the role of women as the consumers of technology. They can use many domestic technological devices with their simplest function. A limited number of women can use technological devices functionally. Even smaller number of women can look after the devices either to maintain or fix. Mostly husbands' or repairers' (other men's) help is sought for fixing the instruments. Definitely, more research and awareness raising activities are needed to empower women to take upon more responsible roles in relation to technology.

References

Kourany, J. A., Sterba, J. P. & Tong, R.(1993). *Feminist Philosophies*, Harvester Wheatsheaf: New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore.



Renzetti, C. Curran, D. (1993) Sex-Role Socialization, in Kourany, J. A., Sterba, J. P. & Tong, R. Feminist Philosophies, Haverster Wheatsheaf: New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Anket

1. Yaşadığınız Mahalle:

- | | | |
|--------------|----------|-------------|
| a)Karakol | b)Baykal | c)Çanakkale |
| d)Dumlupınar | e)Tuzla | f)Sakarya |
| g)Suriçi | h)Maraş | |

2. Yaşınız:

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| a)18- 24 | b)25 – 31 | c)32 – 38 |
| d)39 – 45 | e)46 – 52 | f)53 ve yukarı |

3. Eğitim durumunuz:

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------------------|--------|
| a)Okur/yazar | b)İlkokul | c)Ortaokul | d)Lise |
| e)Üniversite | f)Master | g)Doktora ve sonrası | |

4. Medeni Durumunuz:

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|-------|------------|
| a) Evli | b)Bekar | c)Dul | d)Boşanmış |
|---------|---------|-------|------------|

5. (Evli iseniz) Çocuk sayınız:

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|----------------|
| a) 0 | b) 2 | c) 3 | d) 4 | e) Diğer |
|------|------|------|------|----------------|

6. Çocuklarınızın yaşı:

- a) 0 -5 b) 6 -11 c) 12 - 17 d) 18 - 23 e) 24 üzeri

7. İşiniz:

- a)Öğretmen b)Devlet memuru c)İş sahibi
d)Ev hanımı e)Diğer

8. Aylık Geliriniz:

- a) 500 Milyon TL' dan az.
b) 500 Milyon TL. – 999 Milyon TL
c) 1 Milyon TL. – 1500 Milyon TL.
d) 1501 Milyon TL. – 2000 Milyon TL.
e) 2001 Milyon TL. – 2500 Milyon TL.
f)2501 Milyon TL. – 3500 Milyon TL.
g) 3500 Milyon TL. Üzeri

		Bu teknolojik aletlere sahip misiniz?	Temel düzeyde kullanıyorum	Tüm fonksiyonları ile kullanıyorum.	Tamir ve bakımını yapabiliyim.	Tamir ve bakımını eşim yapıyor.	Tamir ve bakımını için servise veriyoruz.
9.	Cd recorder						
10.	Araba						
11.	Matkap						
12.	TV						
13.	Video						
14.	Radyo						
15.	Cd player						
16.	Vcd player						
17.	Dvd player						
18.	Elektrik süpürgesi						
19.	Halı yıkama makinesi						
20.	Çamaşır makinesi						
21.	Çamaşır kurutma makinesi						
22.	Bulaşık makinesi						
23.	Buzluk						
24.	Ütü						



25.	Fırn						
26.	Mikro dalga fırın						
27.	Cep Telefonu						
28.	Bilgisayar						
29.	Cd recorder						
30.	Araba						