

section plays a role in framing the study’s academic relevance and guiding the reader through its core themes and direction.

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

“I chose this lifestyle because I believe in serving my husband and creating a peaceful home, it’s my purpose and passion.” This quote is taken from the YouTube video “Trad Wife Answers TOUGH Questions | Estee Williams”, released in 2021. The video features Estee Williams explaining her views and experiences as a Trad Wife, embracing traditional femininity and domestic roles. As of 2025, the video has received 639,000 views, over 30,000 likes, and around 3,500 comments. It also includes hashtags like #TradWife and #feminineenergy, which appears in thousands of similar videos across the platform.

“Trad Wife,” which stands for “traditional wife,” typically describes a woman who adopts conventional gender roles within her relationship (Garfinkle, 2024). Kelsey-Sugg (2021) added that the Trad Wife subculture consists of heterosexual women globally who promote traditional values from the past. They value being stay-at-home parents and housewives while their husbands work outside the home, resulting in a clear division of labor, with a strong emphasis on family devotion. Furthermore, Monica Hesse, a columnist for The Washington Post, argues that a Trad Wife is not merely a woman who remains at home; rather, she romanticizes this role in a nostalgic manner, reflecting on both the functional aspects of life in the 1950s and the values that families upheld during that era.

The purpose of this study is to understand how this trend has emerged, despite the fact that, according to Kelsey-Sugg (2021), the ideas of the Trad Wife community are not new. In 1970s Australia, Women Who Want to be Women (now the Endeavour Forum) lobbied against the feminist movement and in support of women's right to be full-time homemakers. However, it gained renewed attention following a 2020 BBC interview with prominent British Trad Wife Alena Pettitt, who characterized her lifestyle as “submitting to and spoiling my husband like it’s 1959” (BBC Stories, 2020). In the six-minute interview, Pettitt explained that she chose the Trad Wife lifestyle because she did not want her husband, who works all day, to come home to an empty house if she pursued a career. “It was all kind of let’s fight the boys and go out and be independent and break glass ceilings. But I just felt like I was born to be a mother and a wife,” she stated in her interview as the founder of The Darling Academy.

This controversial trend has also spread to America, where Gen Z influencer Estee Williams has emerged as a notable figure within the movement. Based in Virginia, Williams was originally a college student with a more conventional life path. Williams chose to leave her academic ambitions behind to embrace a traditional homemaker role, focusing on domestic responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and presenting herself in a way that she believes pleases her husband. In her 2021 YouTube video interview “Trad Wife Answers TOUGH Questions | Estee Williams” with Michael Knowles, Williams explained her perspective: “I wouldn’t expect my husband to come home after a long day’s work and have to cook for me, because my role is being at home, job is essentially housework.” This statement reflects her commitment to traditional gender roles. Over time, Williams has gained significant attention, amassing over 151,000 followers on TikTok and 119,000 on Instagram, where she continues to share content that resonates with those interested in traditional femininity. Although Williams asserts that her lifestyle choice stems from a desire for family stability and personal conviction,

critics argue that her content romanticizes restrictive gender norms, overlooking the complexities of modern partnerships.

The revival of the Trad Wife trend poses a significant challenge in modern society, as it prompts important discussions about women's roles and choices today. Sykes and Hopner (2023) note that the Trad Wife movement aims to empower women to embrace traditional femininity while distancing itself from mainstream feminism, which is often linked to the concept of equality. Jo Piazza, in her podcast "Under the Influence" (2024), suggests that this movement is frequently perceived as endorsing outdated views on women's rights and is labeled as anti-feminist. Many see the "Trad Wife" label as often carrying negative connotations towards working women and feminist principles.

Conversely, supporters contend that this trend can revive essential aspects of human experience and reinforce traditional roles, positioning women as homemakers and men as providers (Saptono, 2024). Numerous women find solace in the structured roles offered by traditional marriage, which can enhance their emotional well-being and satisfaction in relationships. This trend has gained traction on social media, particularly YouTube, where many women share glimpses of their daily lives as traditional wives, highlighting domestic tasks like cooking, cleaning, and childcare, reflecting family values and conventional gender roles (Azizah, 2023).

One of the key components of this research is the concept of traditional feminization. Traditional feminization refers to the process by which traditional gender roles and identities, particularly those associated with women, are reinforced or maintained within society. In America, traditional feminization can be observed through various historical phases that reflect shifts in gender roles. For instance, Kerber and Mathews (1982) assert that the roles of American women in the 19th century were part of a cultural framework that viewed femininity through the ideology of the "Cult of True Womanhood," where white women in America were often educated to be good wives and mothers. Domestic education programs taught skills such as cooking, sewing, and maintaining cleanliness, aiming to prepare women for their traditional roles as homemakers and caregivers for their children. This created a norm that defined women's roles as primarily within the home, supporting their husbands and families.

The theory correlates with the Netnography theory. According to Kozinets (2010), Netnography is an ethnographic approach to studying online communities and cultures, focusing on observing digital interactions and analyzing the shared cultural meanings within online spaces. This approach, according to Kozinets, adapts traditional ethnographic methods to the digital realm, emphasizing the importance of understanding social behavior and cultural phenomena in virtual environments. The goal of netnography is to gain insights into how online communities construct their values, norms, and identities through digital communication, making it an effective tool for studying emerging social trends and movements in the digital age.

The connection between netnography and traditional feminization is rooted in the way both theories explore the construction and negotiation of feminism roles in society. Netnography is a fitting theoretical approach for studying the Trad Wife trend and its impact on feminist perceptions because it examines online communities where gender norms and roles are negotiated and reinforced. Since the Trad Wife movement predominantly thrives in digital spaces, netnography enables researchers to analyze how individuals engage with traditional gender roles in online discussions, particularly those that focus on women's roles as homemakers and caretakers (Kozinets, 2010). This is

especially relevant to traditional feminism, which critiques the socialization of women into restrictive rules that limit their opportunities and autonomy in public life (Sumantri, 2017). By utilizing netnography, researchers can investigate how the Trad Wife movement both challenges and supports feminist concerns, providing insight into how digital platforms contribute to reshaping or reinforcing gender roles in modern society. Ultimately, netnography allows for an in-depth exploration of how online interactions influence and reflect feminist perceptions of women's role.

This research specifically investigates the Trad Wife phenomenon within the context of American society, centering on Estee Williams and her YouTube video interview with Michael Knowles named “Trad Wife Answers TOUGH Questions | Estee Williams”. In this video, Williams openly discusses her reasons for adopting a traditional role as a homemaker. She asserts, "I would rather stay home and take care of my husband and children than be in the workforce," emphasizing her strong belief in the value of domestic work. By focusing on Williams' personal account, the study seeks to understand the motivations and justifications behind her choice to embrace a traditional feminine role, reflecting the broader Trad Wife ideology that has gained attention in both digital and social spaces.

Additionally, the concept of a Trad Wife, as discussed by Monica Hesse in The Washington Post, involves more than just being a homemaker; it entails a romanticized vision of life that harkens back to the 1950s, a time when traditional family roles were deeply embedded in American society. Williams, through her videos and content, promotes this vision, presenting domesticity as an ideal choice that provides her with personal fulfillment and stability. By examining Williams' depiction of her life, this study aims to investigate how Trad Wife like her construct their identities around nostalgic family values and how this can influence the perception of femininity in contemporary society. Williams' contents not only portray her personal lifestyle but also contributes to a growing trend where women find empowerment in traditional, homemaker roles.

The research observations from social media like YouTube have become pivotal in spreading the Trad Wife ideology, offering women like Estee Williams a space to share their experiences and beliefs with a wider audience. In her 2021 interview with Michael Knowles on his YouTube channel, titled “Trad Wife Answers TOUGH Questions | Estee Williams”, Williams articulates her choice to embrace traditional gender roles and responds to frequently asked questions about her lifestyle. This particular interview is significant as it provides a structured platform for her to present her views to a diverse audience, while simultaneously inviting public reactions through the comment section. The video enables both supporters and skeptics of the Trad Wife movement to engage in discourse, revealing how digital platforms foster not only community but also critical dialogue. As one commenter on the video states, "I truly admire Estee's choice, it's a lifestyle that brings peace to my life. We need more women to realize that it's okay to choose a traditional role." Such comments illustrate the polarized responses the Trad Wife movement receives, some view it as a peaceful and fulfilling lifestyle, while others criticize it as a reinforcement of outdated gender norms.

The novelty of this research lies in its recognition that the emergence of the Trad Wife identity, as portrayed by Estee Williams in her YouTube video interview “Trad Wife Answers TOUGH Questions | Estee Williams”, is shaped by personal, cultural, and ideological motivations. Rather than making assumptions about broader societal trends, this study focuses on the specific narratives Estee presents about why she chose

to become a Trad Wife. In the video, Williams discusses her decision in terms of religious conviction, a desire for peace and stability, and disillusionment with modern feminist expectations. These explanations reflect how the Trad Wife phenomenon is not merely a nostalgic return to the past but a conscious ideological stance rooted in values of tradition, femininity, and individual choice. Her narrative provides insight into the sociocultural factors that make this lifestyle appealing to some women in the digital age.

This research also highlights the significance of audience responses found in the YouTube comment section, which serve as a reflection of how digital users engage with and interpret Williams' narrative. These comments, while not representative of the broader public, reveal a specific discursive community, one in which traditional values are affirmed and reinforced. Many users express admiration for Williams' choice to embrace domestic roles, suggesting that her message resonates with those who feel disillusioned by contemporary gender norms. At the same time, critical voices appear, questioning the implications of promoting traditional gender roles in a modern context. These interactions illustrate how online platforms like YouTube serve not only as sites of self-presentation but also as arenas for ideological debate and identity negotiation. The discussion surrounding Williams' video demonstrates how digital spaces can both affirm and challenge cultural narratives about womanhood.

METHODOLOGY

Furthermore, the research employs a qualitative research approach, designed to provide a deep understanding of the phenomena experienced by the study's subjects. According to Moleong (2017:6), qualitative research aims to comprehensively understand subjects' behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions. This approach allows the researcher to explore the meanings and contexts behind the subjects' everyday experiences. This aligns with the objective of qualitative research, which is to describe in detail and depth the natural setting of a specific context, shedding light on what actually occurs in the field.

In line with Basrowi & Suwandi (2008:2) definition of qualitative research, where researchers can identify with and understand the subjects' everyday experiences, this study aims to explain various perspectives on traditional feminization and how it influences societal views on women's roles. According to Yusanto (2019), qualitative research offers a variety of approaches, allowing researchers to select the one that best fits their research object. The analysis will provide deeper insights into the social dynamics underlying this movement and its implications for the progress of gender equality in modern society.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section elaborates on the analytical findings through theoretical reflection, focusing on how the Trad Wife, particularly as presented by Estee Williams in her 2021 YouTube interview, intersects with and challenges contemporary feminist frameworks. Using traditional feminization theory as its primary lens, supported by netnographic insights and audience response analysis, this discussion examines the contradictions, performances, and ideological negotiations embedded in the digital construction of femininity. By bridging theory with lived (and digital) expressions of identity, this section critically unpacks how the Trad Wife lifestyle becomes both a site of resistance and complicity, revealing a cultural paradox where tradition is repackaged as modern

agency. The following subsections will explore these tensions, beginning with the paradoxical relationship between traditional feminization and feminist liberation.

1. Traditional Feminization as a paradox to feminism

Traditional feminization, as defined by Ghorfati et al. (2015), refers to the process through which societal and cultural structures mold women into roles centered on domesticity, submission, and emotional labor. This concept has become a pivotal frame in examining the Trad Wife phenomenon. Estee Williams’s embrace of homemaking, as seen in her 2021 interview with Michael Knowles, exemplifies a modern re-enactment of these traditional roles, yet paradoxically framed as liberation. She states, “I wouldn’t expect my husband to come home after a long day’s work and have to cook for me...” (00:02:17–00:02:30), suggesting that domestic work is a gift of love, not a burden of gender.

This act of choosing domesticity is at the heart of the paradox. Feminist discourses, especially second-wave feminism, have historically critiqued such roles as mechanisms of patriarchal control (Rich, 1976; hooks, 2000). However, postfeminist theorists like Genz and Brabon (2009) argue that agency today is increasingly defined by the freedom to choose, even if that choice aligns with conservative gender expectations. Williams asserts, “you don’t need the BS degree... if what you’re going for is the Mrs. degree” (00:03:32–00:03:41), challenging the liberal feminist valuation of education and career as universal female goals. This reframing implies that fulfillment can be rooted in the domestic, not despite feminism, but because feminism allows for choice.

Audience responses intensify this paradox. The most-liked comment by @LauraRamirez-zd3il_ “Feminism is about having a choice. This is her choice. End of sentence.” (2,145 likes) illustrates a postfeminist logic that values individualism over collective critique. The comment asserts that feminism, once a movement to deconstruct structural limitations, has now become a justification for traditionalism, provided it is chosen. This sentiment resonates with Hakim’s (2000) preference theory, which argues that women make diverse life choices, including domestic ones, when given full agency. Yet, critics like Fraser (1997) warn that glorifying “choice” often masks structural inequalities.

What complicates the paradox further is how Williams positions submission as strength. Her statement, “you have to learn to depend on your husband and buy a house within his income” (00:09:22–00:09:35), reinterprets financial dependency as trust and partnership. In this framing, economic submission becomes an act of wisdom, not weakness. But hooks (2000) remind us that patriarchy is most effective when internalized. While Williams’s narrative claims clarity and peace, it may also reinforce ideals that make women more vulnerable to economic precarity, as critics in the comment section warn.

One such voice of concern is embedded in the criticism from users who reject this framing altogether. @malifinch3461 sarcastically comments, “If a trans person pretended to be this kind of woman, they would be celebrated,” (5,800 likes), revealing how conservative interpretations of femininity clash with broader intersectional feminist values. The comment veers away from supporting traditionalism as choice and instead exposes ideological discomfort around authenticity, identity, and legitimacy. The paradox becomes thicker: while Williams finds clarity in conventional roles, others see it as erasure or betrayal of feminist progress.

Interestingly, Estee Williams's appeal relies not just on values, but also on aesthetics. Her soft-spoken tone, polished appearance, and curated domesticity are not relics of the past, they are digitized performances of femininity. As Sauer (2017) notes, the Trad Wife is "a digital remix of vintage gender roles." Williams's digital persona rebrands caregiving and submission into lifestyle goals, less about duty, more about elegance. Yet, this aestheticization of tradition can obscure the power structures that initially shaped them. As Bartky (1990) argues, internalized gender norms can present as desire, even when they restrict autonomy.

This duality is not lost on some viewers. @HelloItsK8 writes, "The fact that being a homemaker is 'crazy enough' to be an interview is insane" (1,800 likes), revealing the cultural inversion at play. What was once the default role for women has become radical in its visibility. In this sense, traditional feminization becomes both an act of resistance and conformity, resistance to modern chaos and feminist expectations, conformity to age-old hierarchies of family structure. The paradox is not just ideological but temporal: tradition is new again.

The psychological appeal of this paradox is deeply emotional. As Trihastutie (2024) suggests, audience interpretations are "rooted in memory and emotional values," indicating that responses to Williams are often autobiographical. For many viewers, her lifestyle affirms a buried longing for simplicity, stability, or admiration. Domesticity, once seen as a prison, is now marketed as peace. But Budgeon (2015) warns that this "neoliberal femininity" often individualizes structural burdens. The emotional resonance of the Trad Wife discourse may soothe the symptoms of modern life, but it also displaces critique from systems to self.

Yet, in this paradox lies its power. The Trad Wife ideology seduces through beauty, coherence, and emotional safety. It doesn't ask women to resist systems, but to beautify them. It offers not revolution, but romanticism. As Estee Williams embodies, it is possible to be empowered and dependent, submissive and self-assured, visible and invisible, all at once. This complexity challenges binary readings of feminism versus traditionalism and urges scholars to consider new frameworks for understanding femininity in the digital age.

Thus, traditional feminization presents a paradox to feminist liberation: what was once critiqued as patriarchal oppression is now reframed as personal empowerment, challenging feminism not by rejecting its principles, but by invoking them to justify a return to traditional roles. In this paradox, agency is not found in escape from domesticity, but in the embrace of it, as a conscious, emotional, and ideological choice.

2. Traditional Feminization in the lens of Netnography

In the digital era, feminine identity is no longer formed solely through lived, everyday experiences, but is also performed, reconstructed, and reimaged through social media. In the context of the YouTube video "Trad Wife Answers TOUGH Questions | Estee Williams." traditional feminization, defined as the association of women with domestic roles, ethics of care, and relational devotion, no longer resides within the private sphere. Instead, it emerges in the public digital space as an aesthetic lifestyle, an ethical vision, and a moral narrative. Through the netnographic lens, it becomes evident that this representation is not merely a record of daily life but a socially constructed performance, strategically curated to appeal to an audience in search of meaning, emotional stability, and clarity of role amidst the chaotic pace of modernity.

Estee Williams narrates her daily routines through a statement that appears simple yet is laden with meaning: “Well I mean a lot of the time I’m cooking, I’m cleaning, and I do like to know what me and my husband are eating” (00:06:47–00:06:55). From a netnographic perspective, this utterance does not merely describe household chores; it reframes domestic labor as an active expression of love, control, and attentiveness. As Adrienne Rich (1976) argues, the household is not merely a site of physical labor, but a space where women construct their identities as moral and emotional anchors of the family. Williams’s digital narrative revitalizes this tradition, framing housework as a mindful and meaningful presence.

Her follow-up statement, “and that’s why I cook all of our meals from scratch... instead of going to get fast food after work” (00:06:56–00:07:00), emphasizes the notion of temporal sacrifice embedded in domestic rituals. Within digital logic, cooking is not simply about sustenance, but also a symbolic resistance to the accelerated, convenience-driven rhythms of capitalist life. In choosing to slow down, Williams presents herself as a woman devoted to order, self-discipline, and emotional structure. As Gill (2007) notes, in postfeminist culture, a woman’s value is increasingly measured not by financial gain, but by the emotional depth and effort she invests in her relationships.

Further reinforcing this notion, Williams states: “Living in this fast-paced life it’s a slow way of living, and we don’t have children yet... but for now I’m just taking care of myself, our home, and my husband” (00:07:01–00:07:13). Here, the meaning of wifehood is not defined biologically, but existentially. To be a traditional wife is framed as a conscious way of life, offering spiritual calm and intentionality amidst modern chaos. The video enhances this message visually through warm lighting, soft music, and a serene tone of voice, all elements curated to evoke intimacy and emotional peace. As Kozinets (2010) argues, digital identity is never neutral; it is shaped by cultural scripts that individuals seek to sustain or disseminate.

Williams further reflects, “Honestly I think going back to our roots and kind of like doing what our grandmothers... did is really giving women this fulfilment and filling their hearts with joy to take care of their family” (00:03:44–00:03:56). In this articulation, the past is not depicted as a prison of outdated norms but as an emotional legacy that provides direction and contentment. As Trihastutie (2024) explains, audience response to digital content is not solely influenced by explicit messages, but also by the activation of personal memory and emotional values accumulated from real-life experience. In this way, the Trad Wife persona becomes a conduit for recalling a past imagined as stable, structured, and deeply meaningful.

Williams’s declaration, “If you want to move into that more traditional way of living you have to learn to depend on your husband and buy a house within means of his income and not two incomes” (00:09:22–00:09:35)—reveals that financial dependence is not merely an economic strategy but is positioned as a spiritual component of feminine identity. Within the netnographic frame, the woman is presented as an emotional stabilizer, while the man assumes the role of provider. Though this configuration appears complementary, Fraser (1997) warns that such arrangements can obscure underlying power imbalances, presenting them as harmony. In digital culture, this dependence is not portrayed as a limitation but as a pathway to peace and mutual order.

Through both narrative and aesthetic, Williams presents herself not merely as a content creator, but as a steward of values that merge the longing for stability with gender role clarity. A comment such as that of user @wr926, “I love staying home and

focusing on my family” illustrates that many viewers find warmth and identity in representations of women who “know their place” within a framework of emotional and gendered consistency.

Netnography allows for an in-depth understanding of how traditional feminization circulates through algorithms, visual style, and affective resonance. By liking, commenting, and sharing, audiences do not simply agree with the content, they participate in the reaffirmation of the values embedded within it. Gill and Orgad (2018) observe that within postfeminist culture, submission is often reimagined as an authentic form of self-expression. Submission to domestic roles is not framed as coercion but as emotional recovery and identity reinforcement.

In conclusion, netnographic inquiry reveals that traditional feminization is no longer silently inherited or regarded as outdated. Instead, it is digitally curated, emotionally monetized, and repackaged as a lifestyle worthy of celebration. Williams’s content functions as a kind of digital liturgy, an emotional ritual that sanctifies tradition and renders it consumable. In its renewed form, the ideal woman is no longer passive but can be scrolled, watched, and collectively felt in the vibrant world of digital media.

3. Audience Response in the lens of Netnography

While the previous discussion centered on the self-presentation and performativity of the Trad Wife identity, this section shifts focus to the audience, the co-authors of meaning in the digital space. In netnographic inquiry, audiences are not passive consumers but active interpreters, contributors, and emotional agents who shape the discursive terrain of any online narrative. On YouTube, where the “Trad Wife Answers TOUGH Questions| Estee Williams” video resides, the comment section does not merely mirror public opinion; it becomes a dialogical field where ideology is rehearsed, contested, and reaffirmed.

According to Kozinets (2010), netnography emphasizes the cultural value of digital interaction as a form of social behavior. The Trad Wife discourse, as echoed through comments on Estee Williams’s video, reveals how ideological alignment is mediated through personal storytelling and emotional investment. A notable example comes from @LauraRamirez-zd3il, whose comment, “Feminism is about having a choice. This is her choice. End of sentence.” (2,145 likes), exemplifies postfeminist logic that reframes traditional roles as empowered acts, so long as they are perceived as freely chosen (Gill, 2007). In this view, affirmation is not just support, but a reiteration of the primacy of agency in a neoliberal feminist paradigm.

In another widely supported comment, @wr926 shared: “This is a very important topic... I love staying home and focusing on my family.” (1,872 likes). This expression does more than validate Estee’s message, it reflects how digital audiences emotionally project themselves into narratives that mirror their own desires or lived realities. As Trihastutie (2024) suggests, audience responses are shaped by accumulated emotional memories and real-life experience, creating collective interpretations that affirm personal identity and community belonging.

The phenomenon of digital resonance extends further in long-view reflections such as @ajfoxw’s comment: “I’ve been a Trad Wife for 60 years... Now retired, I get calls from my children and grandchildren every day and my husband still treat me like his treasure.” (1,100 likes). This statement is more than anecdotal, it becomes archival, placing domestic tradition within a lineage of emotional continuity. It positions homemaking not as stagnation, but as generative labor whose value unfolds across generations.

However, the community is not monolithic. Viewers like @moms9457 offer a tone of cautious realism: “Get your education. When her husband died... she was able to head to work and even put her girls through college.” (1,120 likes). While not antagonistic, this comment complicates the narrative by emphasizing the necessity of preparedness. It invokes the fragility of dependency and offers education as a form of practical empowerment, echoing Fraser’s (1997) critique of romanticized domesticity and the undervaluation of paid labor.

Even more pointed resistance appears in statements such as @malifinch3461’s: “If a trans person pretended to be this kind of woman, they would be celebrated, and possibly get a magazine cover.” (5,800 likes). Here, the Trad Wife discourse becomes a vessel for grievances surrounding identity politics and perceived cultural hypocrisy. As Inglehart and Norris (2016) observe, cultural backlash against shifting gender norms often materializes in reactive rhetoric, expressed through a longing for moral clarity and ideological restoration.

Such comments reveal the function of audience response as both affirmation and opposition, constructing a digital frontier where values are negotiated and emotional truths are aired. Gill and Orgad (2018) note that femininity in digital culture is no longer portrayed as a stable identity, but as one constantly shaped by participatory feedback loops. In this dynamic space, the Trad Wife is not merely a figure to be watched, but a catalyst for self-disclosure and cultural engagement.

Significantly, these responses demonstrate how identity is performed through commentary. Audiences do not just respond to Estee; they respond to themselves and to one another. Their words function as micro-performances of gendered positioning, where alignment or dissonance with the Trad Wife ideal is carefully articulated in front of both visible and imagined publics. This is not merely dialogue; it is identity work.

Viewed through the lens of netnography, the comment section surrounding Estee Williams’s video reveals the expanded terrain of femininity in the digital age. Here, traditional roles are not simply revived, they are debated, re-contextualized, and co-produced in real time. The Trad Wife identity is strengthened not only by content creators but by the audience who echo, resist, and rewrite its meaning through every like, comment, and digital gesture.

Rather than serving as a static display of opinion, audience response operates as a living discourse, a space where nostalgia, critique, and longing collide to form an evolving narrative of what it means to be a woman today. This dynamic exchange transforms digital spectators into cultural agents, whose participation both mirrors and molds the ideological landscape they inhabit.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore two central research questions: (1) What are the notions of the Trad Wife lifestyle represented in the YouTube video “Trad Wife Answers TOUGH Questions | Estee Williams”? and (2) How does the audience respond to this representation? Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method and a netnographic approach, this research analyzed both the content of the video and the most-liked comments to uncover the ideological construction of the Trad Wife identity and the public’s reception of it.

The analysis reveals that the Trad Wife lifestyle, as articulated by Estee Williams, is grounded in three interconnected notions: traditional female roles, traditional female identity, and the voluntary embrace of patriarchal authority. Williams’s portrayal of

herself as a homemaker is not framed as subservience, but rather as a conscious and fulfilling life choice. She positions domestic duties, such as cooking, cleaning, and budgeting, not as imposed labor, but as sacred acts of care and emotional labor. Her lifestyle is justified through personal narratives of childhood influence, emotional clarity, and a desire to return to simpler, slower living. Importantly, her acceptance of male financial provision is also portrayed as a moral and relational commitment. These ideas reinforce the framework of traditional feminization, wherein womanhood is constructed through domestic devotion, self-restraint, and relational harmony. In this context, submission is reframed as agency, and dependence is romanticized as peace.

Audience responses to the video, as represented by comments with over 1,000 likes, reflect a significant discursive split. On one side, many viewers express admiration and personal resonance with Estee's lifestyle, often indicating that her choices mirror their own aspirations or lived experiences. These supportive responses interpret the Trad Wife identity as a legitimate form of empowerment and a welcome alternative to the pressures of modern feminist expectations. Conversely, another segment of the audience critiques Williams's message, arguing that it glorifies gender inequality, romanticizes economic dependence, and disregards the historical struggle for women's autonomy. Some responses are deeply personal, revealing past traumas associated with patriarchal control, while others engage in ideological critique, positioning her content as antithetical to gender progress.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that the Trad Wife identity, as presented by Estee Williams, represents more than a nostalgic return to past gender norms; it is a digitally mediated, affectively charged, and ideologically complex reconfiguration of femininity. It functions as both a performance of tradition and a critique of modernity, blurring the lines between submission and empowerment. YouTube, in this case, operates not merely as a platform for personal expression, but as a dynamic public sphere where cultural meanings of gender, tradition, and agency are actively contested. The polarized audience responses indicate that the Trad Wife discourse is not universally embraced nor entirely dismissed, but rather negotiated in relation to viewers' own values, experiences, and sociocultural contexts. Ultimately, this study affirms that digital platforms are vital spaces for examining how identities are constructed, challenged, and reimaged in the contemporary era, particularly in relation to evolving conceptions of womanhood.

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