

# *Gender Order, Technical Learning, and Subjectivity Construction in Home Repair Practices of Solo-Living Women*

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**Abstract:** As solo living has become increasingly common among women, home repair—a domain traditionally dominated by men—has turned into an unavoidable daily task for women living alone. Drawing on qualitative interviews and thematic analysis, this study explores the motivations, skill-acquisition pathways, and subjective reconstruction of solo-living women who perform independent home repair. Findings show that women engage in self-repair driven by household malfunctions, financial concerns, safety anxieties, and a desire for self-reliance. Their repair skills are acquired mainly through digital platform tutorials and iterative hands-on practice. Home repair practices challenge the stereotype that “women lack technical aptitude,” strengthen their sense of control over daily life, reshape gender perceptions and female subjectivity, and constitute a micro-level restructuring of gender order within private domestic spaces.

## **1. Research Background and Problem Statement**

In recent years, driven by urbanization, delayed marriage and childbearing among young people, and the rise of individualistic lifestyles, solo living has become an increasingly prevalent lifestyle for young women. Living alone means that routine domestic responsibilities once shared among family members now fall entirely on one individual. Burnt-out light bulbs, clogged drains, leaking air conditioners, furniture assembly, loose door locks, faulty power strips, and malfunctioning kitchen appliances—seemingly trivial disruptions quickly become urgent dilemmas in a solo-living context. In short, solo living expands not only personal space but also individual responsibility for maintaining the smooth functioning of daily life [1].

Within the traditional gendered division of domestic labor, a taken-for-granted order prevails: women are assigned cleaning, caregiving, organizing, and routine maintenance, while men are expected to intervene when fixtures, appliances, locks, or pipes break, clog, or loosen. Repair thus involves not only technical operation but also gendered division of labor. Those presumed capable of repair gain greater spatial control; those presumed incapable are more often positioned as waiting for others to help [2].

Yet this traditional order has begun to unravel in the lived experiences of solo-living women. No longer able to rely consistently on fathers, partners, male relatives, or housemates, women must

directly confront tasks once deemed “not women’s work.” Practically speaking, solo-living women deserve focused attention not merely as consumers in the repair market but as a group situated in structural tension: on the one hand, the necessities of daily life push them to improve their ability to handle household breakdowns; on the other, they routinely face safety concerns about unfamiliar male repair workers entering their homes, opaque pricing in the repair industry, and inadequate basic life-skills education. This study therefore does not treat “solo-living women repairing things themselves” as merely a practical skill. Instead, it places the practice within a broader sociological framework: Why do women living alone turn to self-repair? How do they learn repair skills? Do these practices reshape their understandings of technology, gender roles, and personal capability? Furthermore, do these seemingly mundane daily acts contribute to a quiet restructuring of gender order within private domestic spaces?

## 2. Literature Review and Analytical Perspective

In classic gender and technology studies, technology has long been framed as a heavily masculine domain. In occupational segregation, educational expectations, and household routines, mechanical work, wiring, structural fixes, repair, and assembly are widely labeled “masculine,” while women are expected to perform care, cleaning, cooking, and emotional labor. The association between technology and masculinity is thus not merely one of ability but of culture and symbolism.

Within the sociology of science and technology (STS), technology was long viewed as an instrumental driver of social change. Modernist narratives portray technology as a symbol of rationality, efficiency, and progress, depicting technological development as neutral and transcending social divisions. Since the late 20th century, however, scholars have challenged the myth of technological neutrality, arguing that technology is never a pure tool external to social structure but a social practice shaped and enacted within specific historical conditions, institutional arrangements, and power structures.

Technological practices are embedded in gendered power structures historically. Criticizing technological determinism and essentialist views of gender, Wajcman proposes that gender and technology are mutually constitutive: technology both shapes gender relations and is shaped by them.

The term TechnoFeminism first appeared in Wajcman’s work, referring to feminist inquiry into gender issues in technological fields using sociological methods of science and technology. TechnoFeminism addresses oversights in technological constructivism by centering gender. In a narrow sense, TechnoFeminism is a branch of constructivism, as Wajcman originally emphasized. Broadly, however, it encompasses all feminist perspectives focused on technology and gender.

TechnoFeminism systematically critiques the myth of technological neutrality. Feminist reflections on the scarcity of women inventors have moved beyond accounts of discrimination to question the gendered construction of technology itself. Culturally, technology has been coded as compatible with masculinity and incompatible with femininity.

In their study of household technology, Cockburn and Ormrod (1993) argue that social culture categorizes mechanical repair and electrical work as “masculine technologies” and cooking and cleaning as “feminine technologies.” [3] This distinction reflects not inherent difficulty but social valuation and reproduction. Domestic research by Song Yan (2010) and Xia Xiaoyan (2007) similarly notes that education and socialization reinforce the link between masculinity and technical competence. In this context, technology both produces and is produced by gender relations; masculinity and femininity acquire meaning through engagement with machines[4].

A growing body of research confirms that technology has long been tied to masculinity. Bray argues that technology is not merely a material tool but a form of social organization, whose design,

use, and division of labor are deeply embedded in gender structures. Liu Ni observes that the cultural image of technology is often linked to strength, control, and rationality-traits coded as masculine-thereby excluding women from “authentic” technical practice [5].

He Jinna argues that new technologies are often hailed as neutral or progressive in public discourse, yet their design and deployment remain deeply embedded in gendered power structures. The discourse of technological neutrality itself becomes an ideological device that obscures gender inequality. The technical domain in this study shares this legacy: industrial and domestic repair have long been male-dominated fields, assumed to require professional knowledge, skill, and physical strength. Understanding women’s entry into repair and electrical work therefore requires grounding in the framework of gendered technological order [6].

Although technological development bears the imprint of gendered power, the relationship between technology and gender is not unilaterally oppressive. Wajcman insists that gender and technology stand in a dynamic, mutually constitutive relationship, not one of simple determination. Technological systems emerge within gendered divisions, cultures, and power structures, while gender identities are continuously made and remade through technological practice [7].

Domestic reviews of TechnoFeminism reinforce this perspective. Hao Chunming notes that TechnoFeminism moves beyond the narrative that women are “excluded from technology” to emphasize that women are both users of technology and producers of technological meaning.

Within the mutual-constitution framework, whether technology empowers becomes a critical question. Cao Jin shows that new communication technologies do not guarantee gender equality; they are double-edged, creating new expressive spaces while reinforcing existing hierarchies. Technology can thus empower or disempower [8].

Fang Lingling argues that technological empowerment depends on institutional and structural conditions. Tools alone do not shift power dynamics; their impact turns on how they are embedded in existing gendered divisions and valuation systems. Empowerment is not an inherent feature of technology but a practical outcome within structural constraints [9].

With the rise of the platform economy and digital labor, TechnoFeminist research has expanded from industrial technology to platform technologies and algorithmic governance. Sun Ping’s research on female programmers shows that women in technical fields engage in constant identity negotiation, emphasizing professionalism and downplaying gender visibility to gain acceptance. Such gender-boundary negotiation reveals that technical organizations are not gender-neutral but infused with masculine norms. In platform labor, Sun Ping’s study of female food-delivery riders finds that gender performances respond both to gender norms and platform rules. Chen Long shows that although algorithms appear gender-neutral, they can produce hidden gender disparities in task allocation and risk exposure. This “algorithmic gender politics” extends TechnoFeminist analysis into contemporary platform structures. Li Na’s research on female-oriented community platforms finds complex interactions between platform visibility regimes and masculine practices. Women often adjust self-expression under technological gaze to align with dominant platform culture, indicating that gendered power operates not only in occupational structures but also in symbolic production and cultural representation [10].

In sum, TechnoFeminist research has evolved from critiquing technology as oppressive to analyzing the mutual constitution of technology, gender, and power. Technology serves as both productive tool and cultural field: it creates opportunities while reproducing inequalities under new rules.

Existing scholarship on women and technology focuses heavily on women’s entry into STEM, engineering, manufacturing, and formal technical labor, with limited attention to home repair—a practice at the intersection of technology and everyday life. Meanwhile, research on domestic labor extensively examines care, cleaning, emotional work, and marital division of tasks but rarely

addresses repair as a form of hands-on, problem-solving household labor. This study therefore centers the home repair practices of solo-living women as an empirical site connecting gender order, technological practice, and subject formation. It argues that self-repair among solo-living women represents not merely skill acquisition but a form of micro technopolitics within private spaces: a practical response to market instability and solo-living risks, and an empirical challenge to the belief that women lack technical ability [11].

### 3. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach, drawing on semi-structured interviews with women regarding their solo-living experiences and home repair practices. Most interviewees had solo or quasi-solo living experience, including long-term solo renters, single dormitory residents, women studying abroad alone, and shared-apartment residents with high daily independence. They reported handling tasks including furniture assembly, drain unclogging, air-conditioner cleaning and drainage, bulb and ceiling-light replacement, lock repair, faucet and pipe maintenance, power-strip and appliance troubleshooting, basic gas-stove adjustment, fan and hairdryer disassembly and repair, and network equipment checks, providing a rich portrait of everyday repair among solo-living women [12].

Interviews explored six dimensions: (1) solo-living background and living conditions; (2) specific repair or assembly experiences; (3) channels and processes of skill learning; (4) reasons for choosing self-repair; (5) difficulties, risks, and boundaries in repair; (6) impacts of repair on gender attitudes, confidence, and perceived control over life. Given the narrative and experiential focus, the study prioritizes interviewees' interpretive frameworks over statistical representativeness.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes across cases: solo-living pressure and repair motivation, platform-mediated learning and trial-and-error logic, risk assessment and competence boundaries, and post-repair subjective experiences. These themes are integrated to reveal the empirical structure underpinning women's repair practices, rather than treating them as idiosyncratic personal habits [13].

To protect research ethics, all participants are anonymized, with no identifying sensitive information used. The study focuses not on whether individual women are "good at repair" but on how solo-living women engage with repair problems and redefine their relationship to technology and self.

### 4. Why Solo-Living Women Embark on Independent Home Repair

For most participants, entering repair was not driven by interest but by sudden life disruptions. Leaking air conditioners, clogged toilets, broken fans, dead bulbs, and collapsed furniture may wait for "someone who can fix things" in conventional households, but in solo living, they become immediate personal responsibilities. Repair is thus not an abstract technical issue but a condition of sustaining daily life [14].

As Xiaoyun put it plainly: "When you live alone, you just run into all kinds of problems." This captures the starting point: not technical enthusiasm, but unignorable household breakdown. One dormitory resident explained that a leaking air conditioner disrupted her sleep: "Once I fixed it, I could sleep properly. I was busy all day, so bad sleep really affected me." For her, repair was not about mechanical curiosity but restoring a functional living environment [15].

Many breakdowns are time-sensitive: a gas stove failing mid-cooking, a dirty washing machine and air conditioner on move-in day, a clogged drain halting kitchen use. Xiaotang recalled unclogging her kitchen drain for the first time: "I lived alone and was young, and I didn't feel safe having repairmen over." She followed Xiaohongshu tutorials, disconnected the pipe, applied cleaner,

and cleared the blockage step by step. The logic was not “I want to learn drain repair” but “this must be fixed now for life to continue.”

Solo-living women’s repair is therefore typically task-oriented and improvisational. They do not learn preemptively; they search, imitate, and experiment when problems arise, building skills through practice. Solo living removes the option to defer problems to others, making repair truly their own responsibility for the first time.

While breakdowns push women into repair, high and opaque costs in the repair market strengthen the rationale for self-repair. Nearly all interviewees described expensive, untransparent charges that left them feeling exploited.

Kiki stated directly: “I do it myself mainly to save money. I judge how likely I am to succeed. If it’s manageable, I fix it.” For fans, small appliances, and assembly jobs, she preferred trying herself over hiring a worker. Xiaoyun similarly noted that living alone made her more self-reliant: “When problems come up, friends can’t always help right away. Fixing things myself gives me a sense of accomplishment and reduces dependence on others.”

Stories of being overcharged reinforced distrust. Jinhua hired someone to fix a toilet; the initial low price ballooned to over 600 yuan through hidden add-ons. Xiaotang’s friend was charged 50 yuan for a worker to discover the device was simply unplugged. Xiaoyun once failed to unclog a toilet using online guides, creating a mess and requiring a professional—an experience that left her embarrassed and aware of market risks. Such episodes reveal that repair services are often marked by information asymmetry and opportunistic pricing.

Independence thus reflects not only cost-saving but defensive rationality: attempting self-repair where feasible avoids unnecessary expense and reduces exposure to an unregulated service market. In short, the more opaque the repair market, the stronger women’s incentive to master basic fixes.

Beyond financial concerns, a distinctively gendered driver is safety anxiety about unfamiliar male repair workers entering the home. This fear often stems not from personal trauma but structural risk: for young women living alone, the home is both sanctuary and vulnerable space. Allowing strange men with tools inside amplifies physical disparity, enclosed space, and information imbalance.

Xiaotang’s account is emblematic: “I was terrified of repairmen seeing I lived alone... I worried they’d mark my door, like you read about online. My routine was so fixed. I was really scared.” Her fear went beyond cost or inconvenience to a pervasive sense of vulnerability to surveillance and intrusion. Kiki avoided home visits where possible: “Most repairmen are men... I’m small. Their size makes me feel the power difference.” She preferred bringing small items to shops rather than admitting strangers to her home.

Because such safety concerns are widespread, self-repair functions as a spatial defense strategy. Handling basic problems independently reduces contact with male workers, preserving domestic control and security. Self-repair thus reflects not frugality but a calculated balancing of risk, cost, and autonomy.

Although many women begin repair out of necessity, experience often turns “having to” into “choosing to.” Self-repair evolves from passive response to active preference: “I’ll try first” and “I want to handle this myself.”

This shift appears clearly in the narratives. Doudou described repair as rewarding: “Solving problems feels like leveling up in a game. Fixed things become experience points.” Success builds transferable confidence. A participant studying in South Korea reported moving from inability to assemble furniture to active enjoyment: “Now I volunteer to do it. I think it’s fun.” Repair transforms from unwanted chore to desirable capability.

Xiaotang framed the shift in explicitly critical terms: “I want to prove my parents wrong. Changing bulbs, unclogging drains, fixing furniture—these aren’t just men’s jobs. I can do them too.

I'd rather build my own ability to solve problems than depend on others." Self-repair thus becomes an ethical and subjective choice: rejecting passive waiting in favor of active agency.

On the surface, women choose self-repair due to breakdowns, cost, and safety. At a deeper level, it expresses an emerging ethic of self-reliance forged under the pressures of solo living. Women do not start confident in their technical abilities; they grow willing to "try first" by repeatedly solving problems.

## 5. How They Learn to Repair

For nearly all participants, repair skills came not from school or formal training but from informal digital channels: Xiaohongshu, Douyin, Bilibili, comment-section tips, product manuals, and merchant videos. Platforms do not provide systematic technical education; they translate scattered folk knowledge into searchable, mimetic, step-by-step guidance.

Xiaoran explained: "I mostly looked things up online. At first tutorials seemed complicated, but I figured it out. I mainly used Douyin, Xiaohongshu, Bilibili-lots of repair guides and creators." Platforms serve as the main gateway to technical practice for ordinary solo-living women. Xiaoyi learned fan repair by searching Xiaohongshu: "I found videos for my Midea fan model, watched how people took it apart, and copied them." A student in South Korea joked: "If it's on Xiaohongshu, I can fix it."

Platform knowledge is contextual, problem-focused, and low-threshold. Women do not study appliance-theory; they search "how to fix a leaking air conditioner," "how to replace a doorknob," "how to fix a loose bulb," "how to repair a Korean toilet tank." They want not abstract principles but actionable steps matched to their exact problem. Doudou skipped paper manuals for merchant videos: "I can't always follow manuals, but with videos I copy each step." Visual, sequential, guided learning proves more accessible than formal text.

Platform learning also supports peer interaction. Xiaoyun asked questions in comment sections if she struggled with videos, reading explanations from other users and discussing problems together. Platforms thus distribute knowledge and form a loose mutual-support network. Women realize they are not alone in struggling; many face similar issues, and skills can be learned incrementally.

Platforms act as a bridge for women entering technical fields. Tasks once deemed "not for me" become approachable and doable. Yet watching tutorials does not equal mastery. Interview data consistently show that repair is a hands-on, trial-and-error process, not merely intellectual understanding. Women learn by doing, revising their grasp of problems through practice.

Xiaotang's fan-repair experience illustrates this: "I was a total beginner. I watched videos over and over but couldn't put it together. I tried many times before I got it right." Doudou made repeated mistakes assembling a wardrobe: "I messed up several times... screws weren't tight enough, so it wobbled and fell. I had to rebuild it." Kiki spent hours repairing a collapsed wardrobe, buying screws mid-project and accepting a functional but imperfect result. Xiaopai installed a ceiling light backwards initially, then disassembled and reinstalled it correctly.

These accounts confirm that repair depends on embodied competence, not theoretical knowledge. Tutorials provide a starting point; skill emerges through repetition. As Xiaoyun noted: "Videos don't always show every small step clearly. You might not get it the first or second time, but after trying a few times you figure it out."

Repair knowledge is practical and physical, not memorizable like academic content. Wang Xiaohao observed a gap between watching and doing: "Videos feel different from real hands-on work. Sometimes I feel clumsy, like others can do it but I can't. It's frustrating." Within this gap, women convert external guidance into personal capability.

Successful repair also depends on tools, physical capacity, and spatial conditions. Many

difficulties stem not from ignorance but from missing tools, cramped spaces, short stature, limited strength, or fear of electric shock, falls, or damage. Momoko abroad noted: “Sometimes you know exactly what to do—remove the screw, clean inside—but you don’t have the right tools.” Xiaoyu bought a dedicated toolset. Xiaotang borrowed a neighbor’s electric screwdriver to secure a wardrobe. Competence thus requires not just skill but material access.

Body and space shape practice. Xiaotang stood on a heavy desk to reach a bulb, fearing heights and breaking a bulb in the process. Others cited “not being able to reach” as the main barrier to ceiling-light installation. Even light tasks like air-filter cleaning can feel daunting because they involve climbing. Repair is never disembodied; it is physically situated labor.

Safety concerns structure the process. Even experienced DIYers fear electric shock, equipment damage, or injury. Xiaoyun hesitated before disassembling a hairdryer: “What if I get shocked? Or cause a fire?” Wang Xiao stressed that safety must come first: “When you learn basic repair, you also have to learn safety rules—like always turning off the power first.” Women do not act recklessly; they assess risks realistically, viewing basic tasks as manageable with proper precautions.

Notably, participants did not romanticize self-sufficiency as “being able to do everything.” Instead, they developed clear competence boundaries: simple, disassemblable, cleanable, low-risk tasks are manageable; complex wiring, circuit boards, high-voltage systems, specialized tools, and hazardous work require professionals. Kiki explained: “I can fix fans, loose screws on small rice cookers. For air conditioners and TVs, I call someone.” Xiaopai distinguished basic assembly from risky installations: “Water heaters and Wi-Fi setup are harder. Wiring is dangerous and best left to experts.” Xiaoyun learned her limits through a failed toilet unclog: “Some things you just shouldn’t try on your own.”

This boundary-awareness reveals mature practical rationality: pursuing autonomy while respecting risk. Self-repair does not reject professionalism but reclaims basic tasks, leaving complex, high-risk work to specialists. Women adopt a pragmatic technical identity: not overestimating ability, but clarifying what they can safely and effectively do.

## 6. How Independent Repair Transforms Women

Repair experience profoundly reshapes women’s understanding of their own technical capacity. Many began believing the cultural script that “women aren’t good at this” and “men are better at fixing things.” Repeated hands-on success undermines these assumptions.

Kiki captured the shift: “Society makes you think repair is men’s work, that they’re better. I used to believe I couldn’t do it. But after doing these things, I realized I totally can. It boosted my confidence—it’s really not a big deal.” Xiaotang put it more sharply: “If men can do it well, why say women’s hands-on skills have to be worse?” Doudou rejected the opposition between girls and repair as “just a stereotype”: “If I can do it myself, I don’t bother others. I know I can.”

These judgments arise from lived experience, not abstract ideology. Women do not embrace gender-neutral technology after reading theory; they believe it because they have assembled furniture, unclogged drains, fixed fans, and replaced bulbs. Such firsthand insight produces durable, grounded change.

Participants did not necessarily label themselves “technical people,” but they redefined what “technology” means. Tasks once seen as requiring masculine expertise became recognizable as learnable, practicable basic life skills. Technology is demystified, removed from its masculine aura, and normalized as everyday capability.

Beyond technical self-perception, repair strengthens perceived control over solo living. Many reported feeling anxious and overwhelmed by problems before gaining skills; afterward, disruptions felt manageable. Life felt steadier and less precarious.

Kiki noted a decisive shift: “I’d never done this before. Each success gives me a strong sense of achievement. It made me truly confident about living alone. Before graduating, I wasn’t sure I could live alone or should go home. I worried about small problems. But after solving them myself, I know I have the ability.” Xiaoyun agreed: “I used to panic when things broke. Now I stay calm and know how to fix them. My confidence, security, and independence are much stronger.” Hutian described a profound sense of resilience: “It feels like even if the sky fell, I could handle it.”

Repair thus means more than fixing objects: it provides repeated proof of competence without reliance on family or partners. Breakdowns no longer threaten collapse; they become solvable challenges. This confidence generalizes to other life domains. Momoko observed: “I’m way braver than before. I used to be nervous and scared when things broke. Now I realize it’s not that big a deal.” Repair builds not just manual skill but psychological capacity to manage uncertainty.

Change extends beyond confidence to revisions of gendered role expectations. When repair encounters family pressure to marry, stereotypes, and norms of male dependence, women frame DIY competence as liberation from dependency.

Xiaotang’s family conveyed the message that women need not handle repairs: “They wanted me to marry, like I couldn’t live without depending on men.” She resisted through action: “I’d rather build my own problem-solving ability than rely on others.” She concluded: “Once I could repair appliances, I felt I’d broken free from traditional female roles. Girls can do things people think only men can do well.”

This insight underscores the gender-political weight of repair: it is not just about saving money or convenience, but about concretely experiencing freedom from male dependency. When women no longer assign repair, installation, and troubleshooting to men by default, their vision of relationships, domestic division of labor, and self-worth shifts.

Other participants echoed this. Kiki viewed DIY success as confirmation that “women are not inferior to men.” Xiaoyun developed greater appreciation for objects, avoiding the throwaway mindset. Repair reshapes not just gender attitudes but orientations toward consumption, care, responsibility, and domestic order. Women become not just users and maintainers of life, but diagnosticians, repairers, and governors of the household system.

Repair thus fosters both subjective empowerment and a revised social imaginary: women are not merely passive recipients of care and service; they can command technical skill. Society, in turn, should provide more supportive environments and infrastructure for this capability to flourish.

## 7. Conclusion and Discussion

Focused on the home repair practices of solo-living women, this study examines why women adopt self-repair, how they learn and perform repair skills, and how these practices reshape their understandings of technology, gender, and self. Analysis of interview data yields three core conclusions.

First, solo-living women’s turn to self-repair reflects a confluence of motives: household breakdowns, financial concerns, safety anxieties, and aspirations for self-reliance. Entry into repair is driven not by technical interest but by the necessity of solo living, where problems cannot be deferred. Opaque pricing, inconsistent service quality, and widespread wariness of male home visitors further encourage the “try first” approach. Self-repair thus expresses not simple economic rationality but a contextual balancing of cost, risk, and autonomy within gendered living conditions.

Second, women enter repair not through formal training but via platform-supported informal learning and iterative trial and error. Xiaohongshu, Douyin, Bilibili, user comments, manuals, and service videos form a new ecosystem of everyday technical knowledge. Women move from understanding to execution by searching for targeted solutions, watching demonstrations, imitating

steps, and learning from mistakes. Repair competence is not conferred but gradually cultivated through practice.

Third, repair restores functionality to objects while strengthening women's sense of control over solo living and revising their understanding of women and technology. Many began fearful and insecure; after repeated success, they see problems as manageable. Experience directly challenges stereotypes that repair is masculine and women lack technical aptitude. As Xiaotang put it: If men can do it well, there is no inherent reason women cannot. Technology is not naturally masculine; it has been culturally coded that way.

Theoretically, this study frames solo-living women's self-repair as a form of micro technopolitics in everyday life. It unfolds not in public or professional fields, nor through overt protest, but in small, repetitive acts: tightening screws, changing bulbs, cleaning air conditioners, unclogging drains, assembling shelves. In these mundane practices, women renegotiate their distance from technology and their position in private life. They become not just consumers and caretakers, but diagnosticians, fixers, and controllers of domestic systems.

Beyond individual transformation, the study highlights structural issues requiring social attention:(1) Inadequate basic life-skills education in families and schools leaves young people to learn through trial and error after leaving home.(2) Unstandardized pricing, weak regulation, and poor safety safeguards in the repair market erode trust among solo-living women.(3) Female repair workers and gender-safe repair services remain scarce.

This study has limitations. First, participants were willing to discuss repair experiences and likely more reflective and favorable toward DIY, introducing sample bias. Second, the focus is on basic household repair, not complex electronics, heavy equipment, or professional engineering; thus, observed "degendering of technology" applies mainly to everyday skills, not all technical domains. Third, the study does not disaggregate effects of region, class, education, or vocational training; future research can compare repair practices across urban settings, housing types, ages, and resource levels.

In conclusion, self-repair among solo-living women is not a marginal or incidental phenomenon. It reveals how contemporary women reconfigure daily competence, navigate unreliable service systems, reduce technological estrangement through practice, and reject the logic that a fulfilling life requires male support. Stories of fixing lights, unclogging toilets, and reassembling fans collectively express a deeper truth: when women repair their lives, they also redefine themselves.

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