

THE EFFECT OF MODERNISM MOVEMENT ON ICONIC FURNITURE DESIGN

Kardelen ÖZKAN
İstanbul Ticaret University, Türkiye
kardelen.ozkan@istanbulticaret.edu.tr
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9201-9918>

Belis ÖZTÜRK
Maltepe University, Türkiye
belisozturk@maltepe.edu.tr
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2475-3782>

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ABSTRACT

Modernism is a term used to describe an openness to the new and adapting traditional forms to modern sensibilities in design. It emerged as a dominant movement in the field of design since the early 20th century. This movement prioritizes form, function, and production, while adopting a simple, clear, and understandable aesthetic and advocating for the use of natural materials. Modernism aims to reduce production costs through technological advancements and make design more accessible. Furniture design is also influenced by this movement. Furniture is an element used to create a certain order and meet certain needs within interior spaces. Furniture design is shaped according to the user's preferences and the intended use of the interior space. Factors such as material and construction methods, sizing, harmony and balance, cost, social traditions and habits, fashion, art movements, and designer identity all influence furniture design. Modernism is still considered a significant movement in the design field, and furniture design is also influenced by it. Furniture design is shaped according to the user's preferences and the intended use of the interior space and is influenced by many factors. This research aims to explain the modernism movement, the concept of furniture, and the impact of the modernism movement on furniture design. The examined furniture has been chosen among the seating units in order to be clear and compare the way the supporters express their examples.

Keywords: *Modern, Modernism, Iconic Furniture, Furniture, Modernity.*

MODERNİZM AKIMININ İKONİK MOBİLYA TASARIMI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

ÖZ

Modernizm, yeniye açık olma ve geleneksel olanı yeniye uyarlamak anlamında kullanılan bir terim olup, tasarımda 20. yüzyılın başlarından itibaren de hâkim olan bir akımdır. Bu akım, formu, fonksiyonu ve üretimi ön plana çıkarırken, sade, net ve anlaşılır bir estetiği benimsemekte ve doğal malzemelerin kullanımını önermektedir. Ayrıca, modernizm, teknolojinin gelişmesiyle birlikte üretim maliyetlerinin azaltılmasını amaçlamakta ve tasarımın daha ulaşılabilir hale gelmesini sağlamaktadır. Mobilya tasarımı da bu akımın etkisi altındadır. Mobilya, iç mekânlar için belirli bir düzen sağlamak ve birtakım ihtiyaçları karşılamak amacıyla kullanılan öğelerdir. Mobilya tasarımı, kullanıcının tercihleri ve iç mekânın kullanım amacına uygun olarak şekillenir. Malzeme ve yapım yöntemi, ölçülendirme, uyum

ve ağırlık, maliyet, toplumsal gelenek ve alışkanlıklar, moda ve sanat akımları, tasarımcı kimliği gibi faktörler de mobilya tasarımını etkileyen başlıca faktörlerdir. Modernizm tasarım alanında hala etkili olan bir akım olarak kabul edilir ve mobilya tasarımı da bu akımın etkisi altındadır. Mobilya tasarımı, kullanıcının tercihleri ve iç mekânın kullanım amacına uygun olarak şekillenir ve birçok faktörden etkilenir. Bu çalışmada modernizm akımı, mobilya kavramı ve modernizm akımının mobilya tasarımı üzerindeki etkilerini açıklamak hedeflenmektedir. İncelenen mobilyalar, tasarımcıların kendilerini ifade etme şekillerinin açık olması ve karşılaştırılması adına oturma elemanları arasından seçilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Modern, Modernizm, İkonik Mobilya, Mobilya, Modernite.*

INTRODUCTION

The world has always been in a state of development and change from the past to the present day. These changes have sometimes emerged as trends resulting from popular culture, while at other times, they have been influenced by the development of technology, leading to changes in the lifestyles of the period (Koç, Ertaş, & Konakoğlu, 2017). These trends have sometimes resulted in short-lived effects, while at other times, they have had an impact for many years. As a result, every society has been influenced in different ways and has produced different products. However, despite the different ways in which they have been influenced, the resulting products can tell us about the changes and trends of the time in one way or another.

As a result of this description, the words "trend" and "modern" have emerged, and these words have had an impact on many areas of our lives, including sociology, psychology, politics, economics, culture, social, etc (Koç, Ertaş, & Konakoğlu, 2017). The modernism movement, which is one of the artistic and architectural movements, has accompanied these social developments and trends (Uyanık Avşar, 2009).

According to Kuban (2016): "The meaning of a structure is the product of the era in which it exists. Therefore, there is no reason why architecture should not be recreated at every stage according to brand new principles."

As a method, leading sources about modernism and modern furniture were researched. After the source research, the analyses conducted were historical, design, and impact analyses. In the historical and design analyses, the historical development of modern furniture was examined after the historical process of the emergence of modernism. This examination covers topics such as the pioneers of modernism, art and architectural movements, and the design features and materials of modern furniture.

Firstly, source research was conducted. Leading sources about modernism and modern furniture were researched. These sources include the writings of historians, art critics, and other experts, the works of artists and designers, articles, and other sources.

After the source research, specific analyses were conducted. These analyses are historical analysis, design analysis, and impact analysis. In the historical and design analyses, the historical process and emergence of modernism were examined, followed by the historical development of modern furniture. This examination covers topics such as the pioneers of modernism, the design features and materials of modern furniture, and art and architectural movements. In the impact analysis, the influence of modernism on iconic furniture design was examined. This analysis also covers the contribution of modernism to the comfort, functionality, and aesthetic values of modern furniture.

THE ROLE OF THE MODERNISM MOVEMENT IN DESIGN

The word "modern" comes from the Latin word "modernus", and when looking at the root of the word, "modus" in Latin means measure, and "modo" means right now. (Koç, Ertaş, & Konakoğlu, 2017). The dictionary definition of modernism can be explained as a thought, a style, a movement, or anything that is specific to modern times and a closeness to modernity (Diyarbakıroğlu, 2022).

There are many different ideas about when the modernism movement began in architecture, which lasted for about 100 years (Özyalvaç, 2013). Although many people consider the beginning of modernism to be the industrial revolution, modern architecture includes all developments after the Middle Ages in the broadest sense. However, the widespread use of the concept of modernism occurred as a result of industrialization movements, which led to many changes and differentiation in society and the emergence of the "Industrial Revolution" (Diyarbakıroğlu, 2022).

Although modernism is a dominant movement in design from the beginning of the 20th century, it emphasizes form and function in design. It adopts a simple, clear, and understandable aesthetic and recommends the use of natural materials. In addition, modernism aims to reduce production costs with the development of technology. This makes design more accessible. So, it is still seen as an effective and pioneering movement in design.

In conclusion, when talking about the concept of modernism, which defined a period in many ways in world history, it brings to mind the search for new spaces and living conditions after industrialization and the Industrial Revolution (Öçal, 2008). The modern era is one of the trends that influenced changes in the lifestyles of the era due to the development of technology. This situation is also reflected in furniture design, and iconic furniture designs emerged during the periods when modernism was influential.

Modernism and Furniture

If we need to define the concept of furniture, it can be described as an element placed in certain areas within interior spaces to provide a certain order and meet certain needs (Uyanık Avşar, 2009). Therefore, furniture is directly related to the interior of structures. Ching (2007) defined furniture as an element that enables the transition between interior spaces and makes spaces functional in his work.

The process of designing and producing furniture is dependent on many factors. Furniture is formed and used based on these interactions. In the section related to clarifying these interactions, the form related to the design is re-created. The main reason for this is that the design is based on the preferences and choices of the users. Similarly, in ready-made furniture presented in the market, these processes occur, and the design is shaped (Şahinkaya, 2009). Therefore, it can be said that the most important factors that create the idea and usage process of a furniture design are customer preferences and the interior spaces in which they will be used. For this reason, every design has its own unique idea-usage process. The main factors that affect furniture design are material and construction method, sizing, compatibility and weight, cost, social traditions and habits, fashion and art movements, designer identity, special purposes, transformation, and storage (Şahinkaya, 2009).

Modernism is one of the fashion and art movements that has had a significant impact on the furniture design process. After industrialization, which is considered as the cause of the emergence of modernism, details were emphasized in design. The biggest issue that artists, designers, and everyone involved in design discussed during this period was "decoration". Many people put forward different ideas about the necessity of decoration, the intensity of decoration in design, and the requirements before decoration. This situation has not only affected architectural or interior design but also many art branches, from sculpture to painting (Koç, Ertaş, & Konakoğlu, 2017).

It is said that the main relationship of modernism with furniture is during the Bauhaus period. Bauhaus was a famous art school founded in Germany in 1919. As a pioneer of modern art and design with an innovative educational program, Bauhaus has been very influential, especially in the field of modern furniture design. Graduates of the Bauhaus school have carried out significant work in the field of furniture design and realized many famous furniture designs. For example, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a Bauhaus graduate, designed the famous "Barcelona Chair." Marcel Breuer, another Bauhaus graduate,

designed the famous "Wassily Chair." These and similar designs demonstrate the influence of the Bauhaus school on furniture design. In this way, Bauhaus has come to the present day as a movement that embraces the basic principles of modernism (Akhuy, 1995).

Iconic Furniture Design and Designers

Iconic furniture design refers to furniture products that have become recognized and popular over time due to the uniqueness and quality of their design. Iconic furniture design typically stands out for its aesthetic and functional features and has become a classic over time.

Features of Iconic Design

1. Iconic furniture design products have important features due to their uniqueness, quality, and recognition over time. The features of iconic furniture design are as follows:

2. Uniqueness: Iconic furniture design products stand out due to the uniqueness of their designs. These products typically have different and unique designs from others.

3. Quality: Iconic furniture design products are typically made using high-quality materials and are long-lasting. Therefore, these products maintain their value over time and may even increase in value.

4. Aesthetic features: Iconic furniture design products typically have beautiful design elements and are distinguished by their aesthetic features.

5. Functional features: Iconic furniture design products typically have functional features and are easy to use.

6. Recognition: Iconic furniture design products gain recognition over time and become popular. Therefore, these products are often known by the name of their designer.

Modern furniture is furniture designed in accordance with the design movement that emerged in the early 20th century. The features of modern furniture are as follows:

1. Simple design: Modern furniture has simple and minimalist designs. These designs are stripped of unnecessary details and focus on functional features.

2. Natural materials: Modern furniture is typically made using natural materials such as wood, leather, and cotton.

3. Functional features: Modern furniture is designed for practical use and emphasizes functional features.

Its main principles include:

- Minimalist design
- Smooth surfaces
- Clean, straight lines
- Warm neutral colors accentuated with vivid tones
- Materials that include both wood and metal

Iconic Moderns Designers and Furniture

Iconic furniture design can be described as a unique, pioneering, and influential design recognized by many people. These designs have been used by numerous individuals in their homes, offices, and other spaces over time and continue to remain popular. Designers such as Alvar Aalto, Charles and Ray Eames, Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, and Marcel Breuer are among those known for their

iconic furniture designs. These designers are referred to as pioneers of modernism and their designs still have an impact today. (Koç, Ertaş, & Konakoğlu, 2017)

Alvar Aalto

Alvar Aalto is the person who turned the furniture design approach, which started with classicism, into a modern approach. Aalto is an important chair designer who has a unique style that uses curved lines. Aalto designed a chair to alleviate breathing problems for people with tuberculosis, and this chair became popular when viewed from its back angle and materials. Aalto's most original design criterion can be shown as using lightweight birch material with bent plywood (Ayalp, 2011).

Paimio Luonge Chair

Paimio Lounge Chair is a modern design designed by Alvar Aalto (Figure 1). It was designed in 1931 for the Paimio Sanatorium in Finland. This chair was designed to be comfortable while lying in the hospital and has an ergonomic design. Aalto used natural materials, and Paimio Lounge Chair is considered one of the pioneers of modern design (Ayalp, 2011).



Figure 1. Paimio Lunge Chair
Source: (Boyla, 2012)

Mies Van der Rohe

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) was a German architect and designer who made important works in the field of modernist furniture design. Mies van der Rohe is a graduate of the Bauhaus school and is one of the pioneers of the modernist design approach. Rohe, who values originality, quality, and lean design principles, also adopted the linear principle in his designs by emphasizing the use of steel profiles in space with openness and transparency concepts. At the same time, he gave importance to the principle of lightness in furniture designs and carried the influence of the Bauhaus school to the present day. (Tigerman, 1986)

Barselona Chair

Barcelona chair is a type of furniture designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (Figure 2). Barcelona chair was exhibited at the Barcelona International Fair in 1929 and attracted great attention. Barcelona chair reflects the characteristics of the modernism movement and is one of the important examples of this movement. (Dereli, Koç Altuntaş, & Ertaş Beşir, 2021)

The Barcelona chair has a simple and plain design and aims to be functional. It attracts attention especially with its use of leather and sharp lines. The Barcelona chair also has aesthetic value and is still a popular type of furniture. Barcelona chair production is still being carried out today, and these products can be found on the market. (Dereli, Koç Altuntaş, & Ertaş Beşir, 2021)



Figure 2. Barcelona Chair

Source: https://www.dwr.com/living-lounge-chairs/barcelona-chair/1318.html?lang=en_CA

Charles ve Ray Eames

Charles and Ray Eames are an American architect and designer couple who have made important works in the field of modernist furniture design. Charles Eames (1907-1978) and Ray Eames (1912-1988) are among the important designers of the 20th century and have been pioneers of modernist furniture design. Charles and Ray Eames particularly emphasized the use of plastic and fiberglass materials and gave importance to functional design elements. Their important works include the "Eames Chair" and "Lounge Chair". These designs have attracted attention with their lean and stylish design and are still popularly used today. (Underwood, 2005)

Eames Chair

The Eames Chair attracts attention with its lean and stylish design (Figure 3). The chair is produced using fiberglass and plastic materials and high-quality materials have been used. The Eames Chair also has functional features and is easy to use. The Eames Chair is a modernist furniture design icon and is still a popular product today. The design of the chair is functional, aesthetic, and stands out with its unique materials and form. (Weems, 2012)



Figure 3. Eames Chair

Source: <https://www.luizz.com.tr/tr/ana-sayfa/9-45-eames-lounge-chair-pelesenk.html>

Hannes Mayer

Hannes Meyer (1889-1954) is known as a Swiss architect, urban planner and educator. He is best known for his role in the Bauhaus movement and serving as the second director of the Bauhaus school in Germany. (Schnaidt, 2010) He is remembered for the folding chair he designed in 1926. (Figure 4)



Figure 4. Folding Chair

Source: <https://www.design-is-fine.org/post/75939211033/hannes-meyer-co-op-folding-chair-directors>

Marcel Breuer

Marcel Breuer (1902-1981) was a German designer who made significant contributions to modernist furniture design. Breuer was a graduate of the Bauhaus school and was one of the pioneers of the modernist design approach. One of Breuer's most famous furniture designs is the "Wassily Chair." (Ertay Beşir & Dereci, 2021)

Wassily Chair

The Wassily Chair is a furniture product designed by German designer Marcel Breuer (Figure 5). The chair was introduced to the market in 1925 and is still popular today. The Wassily Chair draws attention with its sleek and simple design. The chair is made using sliding tubes and rubber bands, and high-quality materials were used in its production. The Wassily Chair also has functional features and is easy to use. (Ertay Beşir & Dereci, 2021)



Figure 5. Wassily Chair

Source: <https://www.oggusto.com/dekorasyon/tasarim-tarihinin-ilkleri>

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

In this article, the emergence, features and effects of modernism and modern furniture are emphasized. In order to analyze the way different designers, express themselves, the examined furniture was chosen over the seating elements. Examined over 5 designers and 5 iconic furniture.

The following methods were used while writing this article:

Source Research: Leading sources about modernism and modern furniture were researched. These resources may include the writings of historians, art critics and other experts, museum collections, works by artists and designers, articles and other materials.

Historical Analysis: Modernism and the historical development of modern furniture are examined. In this review, subjects such as the pioneers of modernism, art and architecture movements, design features and materials of modern furniture are discussed.

Design Analysis: The design features of modern furniture were examined. This analysis covers topics such as minimalist design, functionality and aesthetic values.

Impact Analysis: The influence of modernism on iconic furniture is examined. This analysis covers topics such as the comfort, functionality and aesthetic values of modern furniture and the impact of modernism on contemporary furniture.

Discussion and Conclusion: By handling the data obtained by these methods, the importance of modernism and modern furniture is emphasized. As a result, it is emphasized that modernism has an important place in the fields of art, design and culture, that modern furniture is an important part of this trend and the effect of modernism on contemporary furniture.

These methods provided a detailed examination of the emergence and effects of modernism and modern furniture, in line with the purpose of the modernism and furniture article.

RESULT

Modernism is an aesthetic and intellectual movement that emerged in the early 20th century and manifested itself in many different fields. This movement emphasized the use of regular, geometric shapes with building materials such as concrete, steel, and glass, departing from natural materials. Modernism also emerged in response to social and economic changes and redefined design principles to reflect a new way of life.

The modernists who revolutionized furniture design based on pragmatism, transparency, and functionalism preferred simple, clean-lined, and functional designs. These designs aimed to reduce unnecessary details and prioritize ease of use since they were designed to meet people's needs. This effect was also seen in the choice of materials, and accordingly, modernist furniture designers preferred innovative materials such as metal, glass, and plastic. These materials were lighter and more economical than those in old furniture, which were heavy and costly.

The Bauhaus school, one of the pioneers of this movement, taught and implemented these principles. Thus, the first foundations of modern furniture design in literature were laid with the Bauhaus movement. The strongest evidence of this situation is that many of the furniture designed by the Bauhaus school still maintain their influence. Modern furniture that has been ongoing since the Bauhaus school is based on the principle of "form follows function" in architecture, and according to this principle, it is emphasized that the design should be compatible with its function and should only focus on functionality without considering aesthetic values.

This movement also aims for buildings to be compatible with the environment and in harmony with nature. Its influence on contemporary furniture design, particularly since the 1950s, is shown by the adoption of functional design principles. These principles highlight practical and less detailed designs that consider the aesthetics and usability of furniture together.

Iconic furniture designs have embraced the principles of modernism and have been made by designers who practice these principles. The term "iconic furniture design" refers to furniture designs that have had a significant impact over time and are still popular. Iconic designs emerged particularly from the mid-20th century. During this period, furniture designers attempted to combine functionality and aesthetics. In parallel with this effort, iconic furniture designs reflect modernist or postmodernist design concepts. Examples of modernist designs include the Eames Lounge Chair, Wassily Chair. The features of these designs can be briefly explained as follows:

- The Eames Lounge Chair is a seating element designed by Charles and Ray Eames. This seating element has received high praise for its comfort and aesthetics.

• The Wassily Chair is a seating element designed by Marcel Breuer. This seating element has a steel frame and is covered with durable fabric.

These designs are still popular today and are often described as classic furniture. The creators of these designs are considered designers who have had a significant influence in the field of furniture design and their designs are still produced.

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