

Poster Design in Digital Culture and Bento Grid-Based Visual Organization

Dijital Kültürde Afiş Tasarımı ve Bento Izgara Temelli Görsel Organizasyon

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Geliş: 17.07.2029 | Kabul: 27.09.2026

Öz: Dijital kültürdeki hızlı dönüşüm, görsel iletişim araçlarını ve tasarım pratiklerini yeniden biçimlendirmektedir. Bu çalışma, geleneksel afiş tasarımının bento ızgara temelli modüler görsel organizasyon aracılığıyla geçirdiği dönüşümü incelemektedir. “Bento ızgara” kavramının hakemli akademik literatürde henüz yerleşik bir tanıma sahip olmaması nedeniyle çalışma, kavramın afiş tasarımı bağlamındaki kullanımına yönelik özgün bir çerçeve önermektedir. Nitel ve betimsel nitelikteki araştırmada; ızgara sistemleri, modüler tasarım, arayüz tasarımı, görsel hiyerarşi ve dijital kültür literatürü eleştirel biçimde sentezlenmiş, çağdaş dijital afiş örnekleri betimsel görsel analizle değerlendirilmiştir. Bulgular; içerik yoğunluğunun modüllerle yönetilmesi, okuma akışının mekânsal hiyerarşiyle yönlendirilmesi, çoklu platform uyumluluğunun kolaylaştırılması ve afişin arayüz benzeri bir deneyim mimarisine dönüştürülmesi olmak üzere dört işlevsel boyut ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışmada ayrıca bilişsel yük ve duygusal yoğunluk gerektiren afiş türlerine ilişkin sınırlılıklar tartışılmaktadır. Bento ızgara, geçici bir görsel eğilimden çok çağdaş afiş tasarımını açıklayan sürdürülebilir bir organizasyon modeli olarak konumlandırılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: grafik tasarım, afiş tasarımı, bento ızgara, dijital kültür, modüler tasarım

Abstract: The transformation of digital culture is reshaping visual communication tools and design practices. This study examines the transformation of traditional poster design through bento grid-based modular visual organization. Because “bento grid” has not yet acquired a settled definition in peer-reviewed literature, the study proposes an original conceptual framework for its use in poster design. The qualitative and descriptive research combines a critical synthesis of literature on grid systems, modular design, interface design, visual hierarchy, and digital culture with a descriptive visual analysis of contemporary digital poster examples. Findings identify four functional dimensions: managing content density through modular units, directing reading flow through spatial hierarchy, facilitating multi-platform adaptation, and transforming the poster into an interface-like experience architecture. The study also discusses risks related to cognitive load and emotionally intensive poster types. Bento grid is therefore positioned not merely as a visual trend, but as a sustainable organizational model for poster design.

Keywords: graphic design, poster design, bento grid, digital culture, modular design

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Citation: Ekiz Kaya, M. (2026). Poster design in digital culture and bento grid-based visual organization. *Kesit Akademi Dergisi*, 12 (48), 180-201.

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Introduction

The poster has long served as one of the most effective public media in the history of modern visual communication, performing functions of information dissemination, persuasion, announcement, and cultural representation over many decades. With the advancement of printing technologies following the Industrial Revolution, the poster became one of the visible communication surfaces of urban life, widely employed for advertising, political propaganda, cultural events, and public campaigns (Meggs & Purvis, 2016). From the perspective of graphic design history, the poster stands out as an integrated design domain in which typography, visual narration, composition, and rhetorical strategies are deployed in concert.

Throughout the twentieth century, poster design evolved not merely as a tool for conveying messages but as a cultural sign reflecting the aesthetic sensibility and technological possibilities of each era. In particular, movements such as the Bauhaus, Constructivism, and the Swiss International Typographic Style reinforced principles of order, simplicity, and rational composition in poster design. The Swiss school's systematic use of the grid aimed to organize information clearly and consistently across the poster surface, an approach that subsequently became one of the foundational references of contemporary graphic design (Müller-Brockmann, 1996).

The development of digital technologies has substantially altered the production, distribution, and consumption of poster design. Traditionally positioned on physical surfaces, posters now circulate through social media platforms, websites, mobile applications, digital screens, and interactive public surfaces. This transformation has moved the poster beyond its status as a printed communication object, rendering it a scalable and re-adaptable visual system operating across multiple platforms (Lupton, 2017). As a result, poster design is now governed not only by aesthetic decisions but also by new parameters such as screen compatibility, information density, rapid scannability, and the management of user attention.

The influence of digital culture on design practices is addressed within the framework of new media theory. Concepts such as modularity, variability, and database logic explain how designed objects have shifted away from fixed,

singular structures toward re-arrangeable systems (Manovich, 2001). Rather than eliminating earlier media forms, digital media transforms them through a process of “remediation” (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). The poster, in this process, is not merely transposed from print to screen; it is formally redefined according to the logic of new media.

The social dimension of this transformation is equally significant. According to network society theory, individuals no longer dwell on a single surface for extended periods; instead, they move rapidly between contents, consuming information through scanning (Castells, 2010). The contemporary designer, therefore, is not only producing aesthetic compositions but also engineering legible and effective systems that compete within the attention economy.

Against this backdrop, the Bento Grid approach, which has gained considerable traction in user interface design in recent years, merits close attention. Bento Grid is a layout model in which modules of varying sizes and functions are organized in a balanced manner on a shared surface. Taking its name from the compartmented structure of Japanese bento boxes, this approach enables the presentation of content as independent yet interrelated units. Unlike classical grid systems, which primarily ensure alignment and order, the bento grid allows content blocks to operate as independent units of meaning at different scales. In this respect, it may be understood as a hybrid model that combines the structural discipline of modernist grid thinking with the card-based flexible architecture of digital interface culture—not merely an aesthetic trend, but a visual response to the fragmented information flows of the digital age.

Originally visible in web interfaces, product landing pages, and dashboard designs, the logic of the Bento Grid has become increasingly apparent in contemporary poster design. Modular information blocks, card-based layouts, and multi-focal compositions are particularly prominent in digital event posters, technology launch visuals, cultural announcements, and social media campaigns.

The Bento Grid approach can generate multiple focal points rather than a single dominant visual focus, which distinguishes it from traditional poster composition. This necessitates a rethinking of the concept of visual hierarchy. According to Lupton and Phillips (2015), visual hierarchy is the fundamental design mechanism that determines the sequence in which a viewer perceives

information. In digital posters, however, this hierarchy shifts from a linear to a networked and modular structure. Bento Grid, therefore, can be understood not merely as a new formal trend but as a contemporary organizational model responsive to viewer reading behavior.

Yet the Bento Grid approach remains insufficiently examined within the academic literature on poster design. Existing scholarship tends to concentrate on grid systems, typographic hierarchy, user experience, or responsive web design (Marcotte, 2011; Norman, 2013). Studies that directly address the role of Bento Grid in contemporary poster design are limited. Moreover, the term “bento grid” does not yet carry a settled definition in academic literature; this study is the first to address the concept systematically in the context of poster design, offering a conceptual definition and framework. Rather than constituting a limitation, this constitutes the study’s original theoretical contribution. Filling this conceptual gap is important for understanding the current relationship between graphic design and digital culture.

The primary aim of this study is to examine how bento grid-based visual organization transforms poster design within the context of digital culture. The study seeks to address the following questions:

- How does the Bento Grid approach restructure the distribution of information in poster design?
- How does this approach affect visual hierarchy and reading flow?
- Does the Bento Grid logic transform the traditional single-surface structure of the poster into an interface-like communication model?
- What are the strengths and limitations of this approach from a design perspective?

To this end, the research has been conducted within a qualitative and conceptual framework, bringing together literature on grid systems, modular design, visual hierarchy, and digital media. The original contribution of the study lies in treating the Bento Grid approach not merely as a current trend belonging to interface design, but as a theoretical model applicable to the analysis of contemporary poster design—thereby proposing a new reading of the structural transformation of poster design in the digital age.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Digital Culture and the Transformation of Visual Communication

Digital culture refers to the large-scale social transformation through which numerical technologies reshape everyday life, forms of communication, the circulation of knowledge, and the processes of aesthetic production. With the emergence of new media environments, visual communication has undergone change not only in terms of content production but also in the ways content enters circulation, is consumed, and is reproduced. According to Manovich (2001), the key characteristics of digital environments include modularity, variability, automation, and database logic—properties that create the conditions for design objects to move away from fixed and singular structures and become re-arrangeable systems.

Bolter and Grusin (2000) argue that digital media does not eliminate earlier media forms but rather restructures them through transformation. In this process, which they term “remediation,” poster design has not simply been transposed from the printed surface to the screen; it has also been formally redefined according to the logic of new media. The single-surface compositional logic dominant in the traditional poster can, in digital environments, evolve into multi-layered, animated, and interactive structures.

Castells (2010), in his theory of the network society, notes that contemporary communication operates through digital networks and that content circulates across multiple platforms. In this context, visual communication products have moved beyond being objects tied to a single medium, becoming systems adaptable to different screens and user contexts. Designers now produce not merely a single poster surface but versions of the same content capable of functioning at different scales, across different platforms, and within different attention spans (Tondreau, 2009).

Lupton (2017) emphasizes that digital design environments offer new non-linear possibilities in terms of narrative and information organization. This contributes to the emergence of new forms in poster design—forms characterized by multiple entry points, rapid scannability, and modular information flows rather than single-focus messaging. Digital culture, therefore, transforms poster design not only technically but also intellectually and structurally.

2.2. Grid Systems: Historical and Theoretical Background

The grid system is recognized in the history of graphic design as one of the fundamental organizational tools for achieving order, alignment, consistency, and legibility. The grid approach, which enables the systematic placement of informational elements by dividing the page surface through invisible structural lines, has occupied a central role particularly in modern design thinking.

According to Elam (2004), the origins of grid systems extend to early manuscripts and classical page proportions. However, the systematic adoption of the grid in its contemporary sense occurred through modernist design movements in the twentieth century. Within the Swiss International Typographic Style in particular, the grid was embraced as a tool for objective organization and rational communication.

Müller-Brockmann (1996) defines the grid system not as a constraint on the designer's subjective decisions but as a functional instrument that enables the clear and consistent communication of content—associating it more with communicative clarity than with aesthetics. In poster design, the systematic construction of relationships among title, subtext, image, and spacing is one of the principal outcomes of this approach. Samara (2017), meanwhile, argues that grid systems should not be viewed merely as a rigid set of rules but as instruments capable of creative transformation. The grid thus becomes a flexible design tool that simultaneously establishes order and can be deliberately disrupted—providing the theoretical basis for the asymmetrical and experimental layouts seen in contemporary poster design.

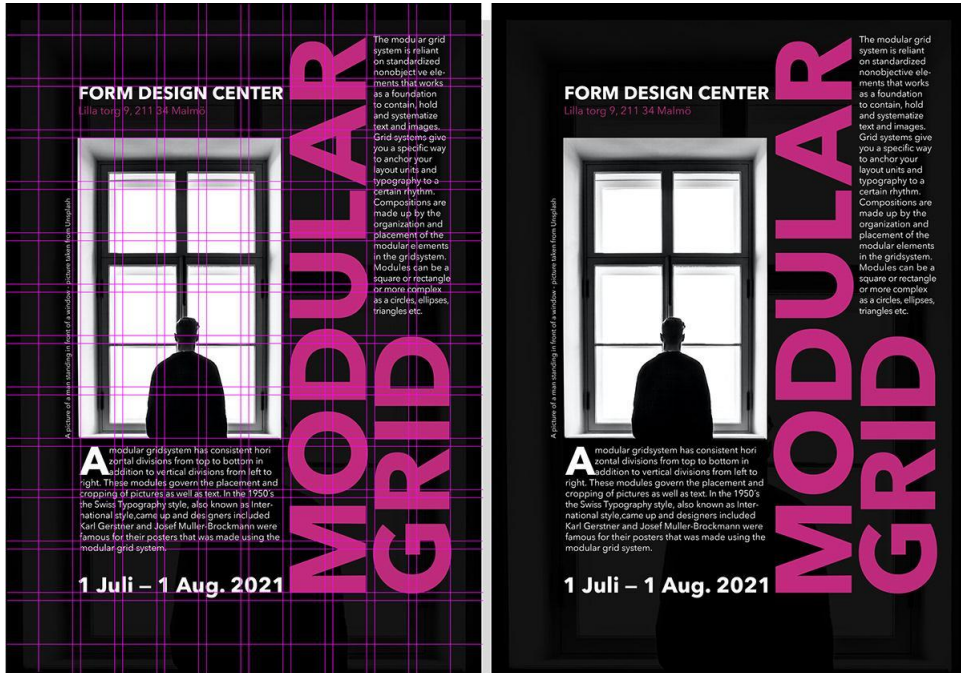


Fig. 1. Use of grid systems in the Swiss International Typographic Style on the poster surface.¹

With the advent of digital environments, grid systems entered a new phase. Marcotte's (2011) responsive design approach demonstrated that the grid must be conceived not as bound to a fixed print surface but as a fluid structure adaptable to different screen sizes. This development paved the way for modular and scalable design approaches such as the Bento Grid.

2.3. Modular Design Theory

Modularity is founded on the principle of structuring complex systems through independent yet interrelated components. In the design field, the modular approach refers to treating content as re-arrangeable elements rather than singular, immutable wholes. This thinking has gained particular importance in digital media environments with respect to flexibility, scalability, and content management.

One of the foundational theoretical underpinnings of modular thinking in design disciplines is the pattern language approach. Alexander (1977) argues that

¹ URL-1

complex environments can be resolved through recurring independent patterns, and that these patterns can be recombined in different configurations. According to this view, the whole is constituted not through a single closed structure but through the interrelation of mutually supporting smaller units—a principle that resonates with the way independent modules in the Bento Grid construct a coherent whole on a shared surface.

The flexibility that modular systems provide in the design production process has become more visible in the fields of publication design and digital content. The possibility of recombining different content pieces makes it possible to update layouts readily in response to new needs (Grimm, 2004). In digital environments this flexibility has increased further, with content blocks becoming adaptable to different screen ratios, devices, and platforms.

From a user experience perspective, modular structures also offer cognitive advantages. Well-structured modules facilitate the construction of mental models by the user and contribute to the more comprehensible perception of complex content (Norman, 2013). Modular design is therefore considered not merely as a technical method providing production efficiency but as an effective communication strategy that is also perceptually and cognitively functional. The Bento Grid approach can likewise be situated within this theoretical framework as a contemporary manifestation of modular thinking in visual communication.

2.4. Visual Hierarchy and Reading Patterns

Visual hierarchy is the process of organizing elements on a design surface according to their relative importance and directing viewer attention in a particular sequence. Scale, contrast, color, typographic weight, position, and the use of negative space are among the primary instruments that constitute this hierarchy. The structure not only achieves aesthetic balance but also determines the order in which the message is perceived (Lupton & Phillips, 2015). Accordingly, which piece of information on a poster is noticed first and which is noticed subsequently is directly related to design decisions.

Research on user attention on digital screens has revealed that individuals most commonly evaluate content through F- and Z-shaped scanning patterns (Nielsen & Pernice, 2010). This finding suggests that, in digital poster design, viewers scan the surface rapidly rather than focusing on a single point for an

extended period. Visual attention management in contemporary poster design has therefore become a more dynamic and multidirectional concern than in printed posters.

According to the information design approach, visual elements should be regarded not as decorative components but as functional communication instruments (Mijksenaar, 1997). A successful design is expected to convey information to the user in an intuitive and comprehensible manner. In the Bento Grid system, the arrangement of modules in different sizes and positions directly translates the hierarchy of information importance into a spatial language, aligning powerfully with this approach. In this respect, the Bento Grid may be regarded not merely as a compositional method that divides a surface but as a contemporary model of visual organization that directs the flow of attention.

2.5. Bento Grid in Contemporary Design Practices

The visibility of the Bento Grid approach in digital design practices has steadily increased. Card-based modular presentation of information units is particularly evident on the product promotion surfaces of technology companies, on the home pages of software platforms, and in the launch visuals of digital product brands. Garrett's (2011) user experience layers model reveals that structural decisions are directly related to the organization of information on the visual surface, offering an appropriate theoretical ground for understanding the transition of Bento Grid from interface to visual communication. This development indicates that Bento Grid is not merely a layout logic specific to interface design but has become an organizational model transplanted into the broader field of contemporary visual communication.

The significance of Bento Grid in contemporary design practice stems from its capacity to present different types of content on a shared surface in a comparable, scannable, and hierarchical manner. Product specifications, dates, locations, calls to action, visual imagery, and supplementary explanations can all be arranged as independent yet interrelated modules. Krug's (2014) principle of intuitiveness in digital design emphasizes that users must be able to grasp instantly what they will see and where to focus upon encountering content; the transparent spatial hierarchy of Bento Grid meets this principle at the visual level. Bento Grid may therefore be assessed as a suitable approach for managing

information density, reinforcing visual hierarchy, and constructing visual systems adaptable to multiple platforms in contemporary poster design.

3. Method

This study is a theoretical-descriptive investigation situated within the qualitative research tradition. The fundamental aim of the research is to address the concept of “bento grid” systematically in the context of poster design for the first time and to explain, at the conceptual level, how this approach transforms contemporary poster design within the digital cultural environment. Accordingly, the study prioritizes the development of an original conceptual framework grounded in contextual interpretation of design objects and concepts rather than quantitative measurement or experimental testing. The qualitative research orientation provides an appropriate epistemological foundation for studies that bring together fields such as visual communication, design theory, and digital culture, as it allows phenomena to be understood within their own contexts and particular conditions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research rests on two principal components. The first is a critical synthesis of the relevant academic literature. Within this scope, foundational and current studies in the areas of grid systems, modular design, visual hierarchy, user interface design, and digital culture were examined, and the theoretical reference points that would constitute the conceptual basis of the bento grid approach were identified. Literature on the history of graphic design (Meggs & Purvis, 2016; Müller-Brockmann, 1996), grid systems (Elam, 2004; Samara, 2017), new media theory (Manovich, 2001; Bolter & Grusin, 2000), modular design (Alexander, 1977; Grimm, 2004), visual hierarchy (Lupton & Phillips, 2015; Mijksenaar, 1997), and user experience (Norman, 2013; Garrett, 2011; Krug, 2014) was evaluated together within this framework. This synthesis served the primary function of constructing the original conceptual framework that reveals the theoretical connection between bento grid and poster design.

The second component is a descriptive visual analysis of contemporary digital poster examples selected to support and render concrete the conceptual framework. The aim here is not to establish a sample for statistical generalization but to support the conceptual arguments through representative and explanatory visuals that reveal the manifestations of bento grid logic on the poster surface.

Within this frame, examples from diverse communicative contexts—including social media posters, digital event announcements, technology product promotion visuals, and institutional launch designs—were included in the analysis.

During the descriptive visual analysis, examples were examined along the following dimensions: modular information distribution, visual hierarchy, typographic organization, use of negative space, reading direction, and platform adaptability. These dimensions were derived from the literature review and are directly related to the study's conceptual framework. Descriptive analysis enables the organization and interpretation of data within pre-established conceptual themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). This approach made it possible to evaluate the poster examples not only in terms of their formal appearance but also with respect to their information organization and functional roles within the digital cultural context.

In order to strengthen the validity of the study, all interpretations were grounded jointly in observations derived from visual analysis and theoretical concepts from the relevant literature. This use of multiple sources ensured that the conceptual framework was constructed in consistency with both the literature and the visual patterns. The limitations of the research must also be acknowledged: the study presents no measurements relating to variables such as user behavior, attention duration, or interaction performance, and its findings are interpretive rather than experimental in nature. Furthermore, since the bento grid concept does not yet carry a settled definition in the poster design literature, the research offers an original conceptual proposal that adapts this concept to the context of contemporary poster design rather than testing an existing theory. In this capacity, the study functions as a conceptual framework and starting point for future empirical research on the subject.

4. Conceptual Framework: Bento Grid and Poster Design

Bento Grid is a contemporary approach to visual organization based on the arrangement of rectangular modules of varying sizes on a shared surface in a balanced and coherent compositional manner. The term draws on the compartmented structure of Japanese bento boxes, referring to a modular organizational logic in which each compartment carries its own content while the whole is perceived as a common order. In the context of digital design, this

approach has become visible especially in web interfaces, product landing pages, dashboards, and social media content through the arrangement of different types of information as cards or blocks.

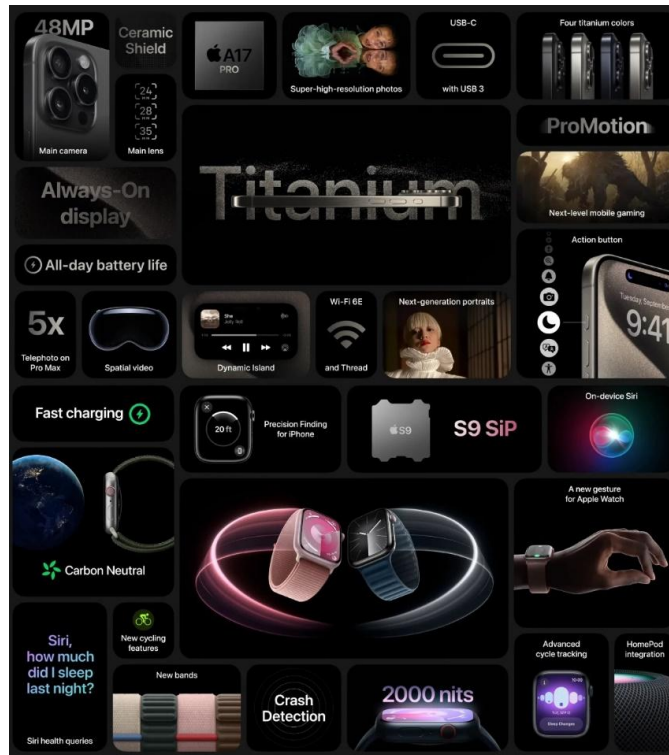


Fig. 2. Bento grid-based information organization in Apple Event 2023 presentations. Hierarchical presentation of product features through modules of varying sizes.²

Apple's product launch visuals may be considered one of the contemporary examples of this structure. As shown in Fig. 2, the camera system, processor, display specifications, battery performance, accessories, and smartwatch functions are presented within modules of different sizes. Larger modules positioned centrally carry the primary message, while smaller surrounding blocks support secondary information. In this way, a multi-layered yet legible information architecture is constructed on a single surface.

² URL-2

The significance of Bento Grid for poster design lies in its capacity to offer an alternative to presenting information within a single linear flow: it allows visual and textual elements with different functions to be arranged as independent yet interrelated modules. In traditional poster compositions, the title, image, date, venue, and explanatory text are typically placed within a certain hierarchical sequence, whereas in the Bento Grid logic these elements can be distributed across blocks of different sizes. The poster surface thus transforms from a single-centered composition into a modular information field with multiple entry points—offering a functional design possibility particularly for posters that are rapidly scanned in digital environments, require adaptation to different screen ratios, and carry multiple layers of information simultaneously.



Fig. 3. Comparison of Traditional Linear Poster Layout (left) and Bento Grid Layout (right).³

The foundations of this approach include principles such as asymmetric modularity, spatial hierarchy, content differentiation, visual rhythm, and scalability. Asymmetric modularity refers to the use of modules of different sizes together within the same composition, as distinct from a classical grid structure composed of equal-sized cells. Spatial hierarchy, meanwhile, enables the visual determination of the order of information importance through module sizes and positions. For instance, the primary message or key image may be presented in a

³ URL-3

larger module while dates, venues, institutional information, or calls to action are organized within smaller modules—allowing the viewer to perceive information on the poster surface in a graduated manner. Visual rhythm is created through the direction of eye movement by means of modules of varying sizes, negative spaces, and alignment relationships. Considering the function of grid systems in providing order, clarity, and hierarchy in design, the Bento Grid may be understood as a contemporary approach that adapts this tradition to the modular and variable structure of digital culture (Müller-Brockmann, 1996; Samara, 2017).

The theoretical background of Bento Grid can be closely associated with modular design thinking. Alexander's (1977) pattern language approach argues that design problems can be resolved through units that are independent yet mutually supportive. In this regard, each module in the Bento Grid may be conceived as a unit that carries a specific meaning in itself but, in concert with the other modules, constitutes a broader visual coherence. Similarly, the principle of modularity emphasized by Manovich (2001) in the context of digital culture notes that new media objects can exist as independent components and that these components can be recombined in different arrangements. The Bento Grid materializes this modular logic at the level of visual organization, carrying the fragmented, adaptable, and multi-layered character of digital culture into poster design.

In this context, the Bento Grid can be treated not merely as a formal arrangement technique but as a conceptual model applicable to explaining the transformation of contemporary poster design within digital culture. It must be noted, however, that this approach cannot be said to offer a necessary or superior solution for every type of poster. In posters relying on a single powerful image, dramatic effect, or emotionally intensive narration, a modular structure may weaken the integrity of the message. The Bento Grid should be considered a more appropriate visual organization approach specifically for contemporary posters characterized by high information density, multi-platform publication, and alignment with interface aesthetics.

5. Discussion

The Bento Grid approach can be evaluated in contemporary poster design not merely as a formal trend but as a functional system with respect to information

organization, visual hierarchy, and multi-platform use. In traditional poster design, information flow generally follows a linear logic, with the title, image, explanatory text, and call-to-action elements placed according to a specific sequence. This structure is compatible with the static reading habits of print media, yet it may prove limited with respect to rapid scanning behaviors in digital environments and multi-layered information presentation. Bento Grid, by presenting information not as a single flow but as interconnected modules, provides the viewer with the opportunity to engage with content from multiple entry points—an alignment with the non-linear information architecture of new media (Manovich, 2001).

The modular structure also offers significant advantages from the perspective of content management. The priority of which information is foregrounded, which elements serve a supportive function, and which areas remain at a secondary level can all be determined through the sizes, positions, and visual weights of modules. Content prioritization is thus established not only through textual means but also through a spatial language. According to Lupton and Phillips (2015), visual hierarchy is one of the fundamental design tools determining the sequence in which the message is perceived. Tufte's (1990) information design approach similarly demonstrates that complex content can be rendered more comprehensible through simple and hierarchical surface organization. The Bento Grid system reinforces this hierarchy at the level of surface organization.

The organization of information into small, meaningful clusters can be associated with the cognitive process known in cognitive psychology as “chunking” (Miller, 1956). The user's perception of complex content in a disaggregated form facilitates attention management and increases comprehensibility at first glance. The Bento Grid approach therefore offers a structure that is functional not only aesthetically but cognitively.



Fig. 4. Use of modular grid systems in contemporary poster design.

From the perspective of visual hierarchy, the use of modules of different sizes within the same composition can directly affect the distribution of attention. Larger modules carry greater visual weight, becoming the primary focal point, while smaller modules can serve as auxiliary information areas. Supported by color, contrast, typographic weight, and the use of negative space, this structure creates a multi-layered reading order (Tondreau, 2009). Given that users on digital screens generally exhibit F- and Z-shaped scanning tendencies, the strategic positioning of the primary module can direct the flow of attention (Nielsen & Pernice, 2010). According to Ware (2021), human visual perception is sensitive to differences in scale, contrast, and position. The Bento Grid may therefore be treated not merely as a surface-partitioning technique but also as an instrument of attention management.

Platform compatibility is another salient dimension of the Bento Grid approach. Today, posters are typically produced not for a single surface but for numerous media including social media posts, story formats, web banner areas, presentation screens, and mobile devices.



Fig. 5. Multi-platform adaptation capacity of the Bento Grid system.

Whereas traditional single-piece compositions generally require redesign when adapted to different ratios, the modular structure of the Bento Grid enables the repositioning of content blocks. In parallel with Marcotte's (2011) responsive design approach, this structure facilitates the preservation of the design's function across different screen sizes. Krug's (2014) user-centered digital design approach similarly emphasizes that simple and rapidly comprehensible structures are more effective in digital environments. In this framework, the Bento Grid can also provide advantages in terms of production economy, time management, and the consistency of institutional visual identity.

Within the digital cultural context, the boundaries between the poster and the interface are seen to be growing increasingly blurred. While the traditional poster was most often a passively viewed communication surface, digital posters can incorporate modes of interaction such as clicking, scrolling, tapping, or redirection links. According to Norman (2013), user experience-oriented design should evaluate objects not merely by their appearance but by the relationship they establish with the user. The Bento Grid can transform the poster into an experiential structure by enabling each module to be designed as an independent interactive field. Garrett's (2011) user experience model reveals the influence of structural decisions on interaction quality—suggesting that the poster is becoming not merely a surface to be viewed but a communication system to be used.

When application contexts are considered, Bento Grid structures can be assessed through three primary patterns of use. In product-focused structures, technical specifications, product images, and performance data are presented in hierarchical modular areas. In information-dense structures, data, service, or process information is categorized through different blocks. In cultural and event-focused structures, titles, dates, venues, artist information, and visual content are organized around multiple focal points. This classification demonstrates that the Bento Grid approach can be flexibly adapted to different communicative purposes while also revealing that each type requires its own design decisions.

One aspect of the Bento Grid approach that requires attention is the risk of distraction and cognitive overload that may arise when a large number of modules are used on the same surface. In particular, when the hierarchy between modules is not clearly established, the user may have difficulty determining which information to prioritize. As Norman (2013) notes, good design should be able to guide the user without imposing unnecessary mental effort. From the perspective of Sweller's (2011) cognitive load theory, unnecessary complexity can negatively affect user performance. The success of the Bento Grid therefore depends not on the number of modules but on how clearly the relationships between them are established.

A further limitation is that not every type of poster is suited to this structure. In posters that aim to create strong emotional impact, rest on a single symbolic image, or carry a minimal dramatic narrative, the modular structure may diminish the intensity of the message. Lupton (2017) notes that narrative impact is often amplified through a focused and uninterrupted visual experience. The Bento Grid should therefore be regarded not as a universal solution but as a suitable option for specific communicative contexts.

The Bento Grid approach carries significant potential from the perspective of design education. Grid systems have long been taught in graphic design education as fundamental tools for establishing order, building hierarchy, and managing content (Elam, 2004). The Bento Grid updates this pedagogical tradition, offering students the opportunity to experience contemporary competencies such as modular thinking, multi-platform design, content prioritization, and digital surface organization. According to Ambrose and Harris (2011), contemporary

design education should cultivate not only aesthetic skill but also systems thinking and strategic organizational competence. The Bento Grid approach therefore merits attention not only with respect to professional practice but also in terms of the renewal of design education.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that digital culture has transformed poster design not only with respect to production and distribution but also in terms of its visual organizational logic. The Bento Grid approach, within this transformation, may be regarded as a contemporary model that disaggregates information into modular units, reorganizes visual hierarchy across the surface, and enables the poster to be conceived as a design system adaptable to multiple platforms. In this respect, the Bento Grid constitutes an alternative to the single-centered compositional logic of traditional poster design, proposing a visual order consonant with the fragmented, rapidly scanned, and multi-layered communicative structure of digital culture.

The conceptual framework of the study explains the function of Bento Grid in the context of poster design through three axes: modular information management, the structuring of visual reading direction via spatial hierarchy, and multi-platform adaptability. These three functions operate not as independent dimensions but as complementary and mutually reinforcing ones. Modular arrangement lays the groundwork for information organization, spatial hierarchy guides the viewer's reading flow, and platform adaptability enables this structure to respond to the multi-channel publication requirements of the digital age. In this context, the Bento Grid may be regarded not merely as a formal compositional technique but as a model of visual organization integrated with content management and digital publication strategy.

The theoretical contribution of the research lies in its treatment of the relationship between Bento Grid and poster design through the axes of modular design, new media, and visual hierarchy. Alexander's pattern approach grounded in modular thinking, Manovich's principle of modularity in new media, and Lupton and Phillips's evaluations of visual hierarchy together provide a powerful framework within which to explain the function of Bento Grid in contemporary poster design. This framework makes it possible to conceive the poster not merely

as an aesthetic surface but as a visual system in which information is organized, directed, and adapted to different contexts.

The Bento Grid approach should not be regarded as a universal solution for every type of poster. In posters relying on a single powerful image, intense emotional impact, or minimal narrative, the modular structure may weaken the integrity of the message. Furthermore, the use of a large number of modules on the same surface can increase cognitive load—when hierarchy is not clearly established—and fragment the viewer’s attention. The success of the Bento Grid therefore depends not on the number of modules but on the clarity of the relationships between modules, the use of negative space, typographic balance, and the suitability of the message to its communicative purpose.

The framework developed by this study suggests that Bento Grid may be regarded not as a transient design fashion but as a sustainable model of organization arising from the structural requirements of digital communication environments.

In future research, the effects of Bento Grid-based posters on viewer perception, attention flow, and reading process could be examined through eye-tracking, user testing, or experimental design methods. Comparative analysis of posters produced in different cultural contexts could render more visible the universal or context-dependent dimensions of this approach. From the perspective of design education, the Bento Grid may be assessed as a contemporary application model capable of equipping students with skills in modular thinking, content prioritization, multi-platform adaptation, and digital surface organization. The Bento Grid thus gains significance both as a theoretical approach that explains contemporary poster design and as a functional tool for design practice and education.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests:	No conflicts of interest were reported for this article.
Financial Support:	It has been reported that this study did not receive financial support from any person/institution or organization during the research and writing phase.
Statement of Support and Acknowledgment:	
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