



# An analysis of banks' instagram posts in the context of cultural and artistic sponsorship activities

## Kültür ve sanat sponsorluk faaliyetleri bağlamında bankaların instagram paylaşımları üzerine inceleme

And Algül<sup>1\*</sup> , Şeyma Yaşar<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Dr., Üsküdar University, Faculty of Communication, Department of Visual Communication Design, İstanbul, Turkey

<sup>2</sup> Master's Student, Üsküdar University, Faculty of Communication, İstanbul, Turkey

**Abstract:** Culture and the arts reflect a society's values, beliefs, and ways of life, shaping collective identity and sustaining cultural continuity across generations. Recognized as forces that strengthen shared consciousness and bridge differences, cultural and artistic practices have received growing attention and support in Turkey in recent years. This study investigates which banks in Turkey contribute to culture and the arts, and to which artistic domains, as well as the forms these contributions take. We reviewed the 2022 annual reports of all 62 domestic and foreign banks operating in Turkey. After identifying the two institutions with the highest level of cultural and artistic support, we conducted a content analysis of their Instagram accounts. Findings show that banks' engagement extends beyond sponsorships to include digital public relations and social media strategies aimed at broadening audience access. Such initiatives not only enhance corporate brand image but also serve broader societal value-creation goals and, concomitantly, the expansion of customer portfolios. The results highlight the multifaceted role of financial institutions in the cultural ecosystem and point to the strategic integration of cultural support into contemporary communication practices.

**Keywords:** Culture, art, sponsorship, Instagram, digital marketing

**Özet:** Kültür ve sanat, bir toplumun değerlerini, inançlarını ve yaşam biçimini yansıtan temel ifade biçimleridir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de bankacılık sektörünün kültür ve sanat alanına katkılarını inceleyerek, kurumsal kimlik ve dijital halkla ilişkiler stratejileri açısından özgün bir bakış sunmaktadır. Araştırma kapsamında, 2022 yılında Türkiye'de faaliyet gösteren 62 bankanın yıllık faaliyet raporları incelenmiş ve kültür-sanat sponsorluk faaliyetleri karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz edilmiştir. Excel ortamında gerçekleştirilen bu ön değerlendirme sonucunda, kültürel ve sanatsal etkinliklere en fazla destek veren iki banka olarak Akbank ve Yapı Kredi belirlenmiştir. Çalışmanın ikinci aşamasında, bu iki bankanın resmi Instagram hesaplarındaki 2022 yılı paylaşımları nitel içerik analizi yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Analiz sürecinde, içerik türü, tematik odak, görsel-işitsel unsurlar, etkileşim göstergeleri ve iletişim stratejileri değerlendirilmiştir. Bulgular, bankaların kültür ve sanata yönelik faaliyetlerinin yalnızca sponsorlukla sınırlı kalmadığını; aynı zamanda sosyal medya üzerinden yürütülen dijital halkla ilişkiler stratejileriyle bütünleştiğini göstermektedir. Çalışma, Türkiye'de finans sektörünün kültür-sanat alanındaki görünürlüğünü ve bu alanın kurumsal imaj üretimindeki rolünü ortaya koyarak literatüre özgün bir katkı sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kültür, sanat, sponsorluk, Instagram, dijital pazarlama

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## Extended Abstract

**Introduction:** Culture and art are among the most powerful forms of social expression that embody the values, identities, and collective consciousness of societies. They play a decisive role in transmitting cultural heritage across generations, promoting critical reflection, and fostering social cohesion. In recent years, cultural and artistic activities in Turkey have gained growing significance through the active participation of both public and private institutions. Within this context, the banking sector has become one of the major supporters of cultural production, integrating sponsorship initiatives into its corporate social responsibility strategies. Beyond their financial functions, banks have increasingly sought to position themselves as actors contributing to cultural and artistic development. This transformation has been accompanied by the growing use of digital communication platforms, particularly social media, which enable institutions to promote cultural initiatives, enhance visibility, and strengthen engagement with wider audiences. Instagram, with its visual-centric interface and participatory culture, has emerged as a particularly effective medium for communicating sponsorship activities. Accordingly, this study explores how banks in Turkey represent their cultural and artistic sponsorship activities through Instagram, analyzing the content strategies, thematic orientations, and communicative approaches that shape their digital presence.

**Purpose:** The primary aim of the research is to examine the ways in which banks in Turkey construct their corporate identities through cultural and artistic sponsorships on social media. The study specifically focuses on how such institutions utilize Instagram to communicate cultural value, corporate responsibility, and aesthetic identity. It investigates the extent to which banks employ visual, textual, and symbolic strategies to reinforce their brand image, enhance cultural engagement, and establish emotional connections with audiences. Furthermore, it aims to identify the similarities and differences between institutions in terms of their representational approaches, particularly in their use of hashtags, mentions, and visual formats. The research questions are therefore structured around understanding (1) which banks actively support the cultural and artistic sphere, (2) which artistic fields they prioritize, (3) how they reflect these activities through digital communication, and (4) what types of posts generate higher levels of user engagement. Through this analysis, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of cultural sponsorship in shaping institutional representation and public perception within digital spaces.

**Methodology:** The study uses qualitative content analysis to evaluate the Instagram posts of selected banks. In the first stage, the annual activity reports of 62 banks operating in Turkey were examined to identify institutions that were actively involved in cultural and artistic sponsorship activities in 2022. During this process, data from 62 banks was collected in Excel format and analyzed by the researcher using a 32-item evaluation form. The data was collected from the official Instagram accounts of these institutions and analyzed according to a 32-item evaluation form designed by the researcher. The criteria included content type, thematic focus, visual and auditory elements, posting frequency, hashtag and mention usage, and interaction indicators such as likes and comments. Subsequently, a comparative analysis was conducted to examine the communication strategies, representational tendencies, and aesthetic orientations of both banks. This methodological approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how digital public relations and sponsorship intersect in the production of cultural meaning and corporate identity.

**Ethics and Privacy Statement:** All Instagram data used in this study were obtained from the publicly accessible official accounts of the banks. No private or user-generated content was collected or analyzed. The research complies with academic ethical standards and adheres to the privacy and data protection policies of the social media platform.

**Scope:** The study covers the period between January 1 and December 31, 2024, focusing on posts shared by Akbank Sanat and Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat accounts on Instagram. A total of 387 posts from Akbank and 249 posts from Yapı Kredi were included in the analysis. The research does not consider Reels, Stories, or paid promotional content; instead, it concentrates on organic posts representing cultural and artistic sponsorship activities. The scope of the analysis is limited to the banks' cultural-artistic initiatives and excludes other corporate communication domains such as finance, sustainability, or human resources. Within this framework, the study seeks to evaluate how sponsorship activities are positioned within digital communication strategies and how they reflect each institution's broader corporate philosophy.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that Akbank and Yapı Kredi, despite operating in the same sector and sharing similar sponsorship goals, adopt distinct digital communication strategies. Akbank's Instagram content exhibits a strong orientation toward announcement and event-based posts, emphasizing dynamism and reach through audiovisual diversity. The bank frequently employs posters (32%) and

videos (30.6%), complemented by a high rate of hashtag usage (96.12%), reflecting a communication model centered on visibility and audience expansion. Conversely, Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat displays a more balanced and representation-focused strategy, characterized by an emphasis on posters (41.7%) and photos (32.5%) that convey cultural continuity and institutional identity. Hashtag usage is similarly high (96.79%), yet Yapı Kredi's strategy integrates brand-centered hashtags—such as #YapıKrediKùltürSanat—more systematically, reinforcing its corporate narrative. Thematic analysis demonstrates that Akbank prioritizes content related to digital art, concerts, and playlists, representing diversity and multidimensionality in aesthetic experience. In contrast, Yapı Kredi foregrounds content related to recitals, exhibitions, and commemorations, thereby constructing a cultural memory-oriented and emotionally resonant communication style. Crisis communication examples further illustrate these distinctions: Akbank's transparency during the 2022 Contemporary Artists Exhibition controversy revealed a rapid yet reactive strategy, while Yapı Kredi's preventive communication in announcing event postponements demonstrated proactive responsibility. Collectively, the findings support the hypotheses that Akbank follows a reach- and announcement-oriented model, whereas Yapı Kredi emphasizes cultural continuity, aesthetic sensitivity, and emotional engagement. Additionally, thematic and aesthetic posts were found to generate higher engagement levels than purely informative announcements.

**Conclusion:** The research concludes that cultural and artistic sponsorships function as key instruments in the strategic communication and identity construction of banks in Turkey. Through social media, these institutions not only fulfill their corporate social responsibility obligations but also produce and disseminate cultural meaning. The comparative analysis of Akbank and Yapı Kredi reveals that while Akbank's strategy aligns with visibility and audience expansion goals, Yapı Kredi's approach underscores the creation of long-term cultural value and brand heritage. Both cases illustrate the integration of sponsorship activities into the digital communication ecosystem, where representation, engagement, and meaning-making converge. The study thus contributes to the literature by framing cultural-artistic sponsorships as multidimensional communication processes that intertwine marketing, culture, and digital strategy. Future research could build upon these findings by conducting longitudinal or cross-platform analyses to explore how sponsorship communication evolves across time and digital environments. Additionally, integrating quantitative engagement metrics with qualitative thematic coding could enhance the measurement of impact. Ultimately, this study underscores that cultural and artistic sponsorships, when strategically communicated through social media, serve as not only tools of visibility but also mediums of cultural participation, institutional identity formation, and social transformation.

## Introduction

Culture and art have long been regarded as cornerstones of individual and social development throughout history. These fields not only provide an aesthetic experience but also contribute to the continuity of the social structure by fostering critical thinking, nurturing empathy and imagination, and building a shared memory and sense of belonging. The ecosystem—ranging from institutional structures such as museums, libraries, performing arts institutions, and independent cultural initiatives to neighborhood-scale workshops and collectives—establishes the circulation, archiving, and educational relations of cultural production. Thus, culture and art function as a form of social infrastructure that impacts not only the level of representation but also everyday practices, urban space, and economic value chains (Avcı Çölgeçen, 2008).

In today's world, the acceleration observed in this ecosystem enhances intercultural communication and interaction while diversifying forms of participation. With digitalization, practices such as online exhibitions, live-streamed performances, podcasts, data-driven curation, and social media-based community management have become widespread; hybrid event models have partially removed spatial and temporal barriers, making cultural experiences more accessible to broader audiences. Accessibility policies (subtitles, sign language, audio description), open archives, and open licensing approaches have also emerged as complementary tools that deepen cultural participation (Ercansungur & Çetin, 2023).

However, the increasing dependence on digital platforms also presents risks such as commercialization pressures, algorithmic visibility inequalities, excessive focus on superficial engagement metrics, and precarious working conditions for cultural laborers. The persistence of the digital divide limits the participation of certain communities, while issues of sustainable cultural diversity make public policies, fair funding mechanisms, and ethical data use increasingly critical. Under these conditions, safeguarding the transformative power of culture and art becomes possible through participatory production models, co-design with local communities, long-term capacity building, and evaluation frameworks that measure impact not solely through “view counts” but also through indicators of learning, inclusivity, and social benefit (Özcan et al., 2023).

Banks operating in Turkey are also closely following these developments; through their sponsorship activities in the fields of culture and art, they aim both to implement corporate social responsibility strategies and to strengthen their brand image. Social media, in particular, increases the visibility of such activities, making institutions' social contributions more accessible and traceable (Konak & Demir, 2022). The purpose of this study is to analyze how banks in Turkey reflect their sponsorship activities in the field of culture and art through the Instagram platform. In this context, the research seeks to answer the following questions: How do the formats of banks' posts differ? How are hashtag and mention usages associated with brand identity? Which types of content generate higher levels of engagement?

The significance and originality of this study lie in its integrated analysis of cultural sponsorship and digital public relations practices in the Turkish banking sector. While previous research has examined sponsorships largely in terms of economic or reputational outcomes, this study adopts a cultural communication perspective that evaluates how financial institutions construct meaning, aesthetic orientation, and audience engagement through social media. By combining institutional reports with Instagram-based qualitative content analysis, the research provides a holistic view of how banks mediate cultural representation within the dynamics of digital platforms. This approach contributes to the literature by bridging corporate communication, cultural studies, and digital media analysis, offering an original framework for understanding the intersection of culture, art, and finance in the digital era.

The study aims to reveal not only banks' contributions to culture and art at the level of sponsorship but also the ways in which they engage with target audiences within the context of digital communication strategies. Through Instagram posts, the study evaluates how cultural representation and social sensitivity are shaped and which communication elements come to the forefront.

Within the scope of the study, the sponsorship and social media activities of 62 banks operating in Turkey in the field of culture and art were examined. For analysis, two banks with the highest intensity of content production—Akbank and Yapı Kredi—were selected. In this context, data obtained from their Instagram accounts in 2022 were evaluated using content analysis. During the examination process, a specially designed 32-item evaluation form developed by the researcher was used; criteria such as content type, frequency of posts, use of visual-auditory elements, hashtag usage, and engagement levels were comparatively analyzed. Accordingly, the study focuses on comparative analysis of content formats, thematic orientations, hashtag and mention usage, and levels of engagement.

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Cultural and artistic sponsorship does not solely aim to provide corporate support; it also carries strategic significance for enhancing brand value, creating an emotional bond with the target audience, and fostering a sense of social responsibility. Research indicates that banks position their activities in this field not merely as an economic investment but also as the production of cultural capital (Eser and Dolunay, 2014; Çitilbeg, 2015). In this regard, it aligns with Stuart Hall's cultural studies perspective of representation: institutions do not merely

“present” content through cultural-artistic activities but also produce and recirculate meaning; thus, corporate identity is reconstructed in the social sphere through sign systems and discourses (Hall, 1997; Hall, 2013). This perspective makes it necessary to investigate the differences between institutions' content formats and thematic preferences.

Studies have identified which banks strengthen their corporate identities, increase their visibility on social media, and contribute to customer loyalty through support for culture and the arts (Aydoğdu, 2010; Okmeydan, 2020). In particular, the rise of social media has led institutions to shift their public relations efforts toward digital platforms; in this context, Instagram has emerged as one of the leading channels due to its user-friendly interface and visual-centered design (Çetinkaya & Özdemir, 2014; İlgin, Çelik & Uruç, 2019).

Bozpolat and Duran (2021) emphasize that Instagram is an effective tool for disseminating cultural-artistic content, while Güler (2021) found that banks increase both their visibility and cultural interaction by sharing posts related to artists and events on this platform. Similarly, Türkmenoğlu (2014) notes that Instagram serves as an alternative gallery for presenting digital artworks. Accordingly, the comparative examination of formal preferences such as video, poster, and hashtag usage is therefore significant. Soygür and Gülmez (2018) observe that some banks manage their cultural-artistic content through external accounts, thereby addressing their intended artistic audiences with a more specialized communication language. Akbank Sanat and Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat are prominent examples of this model. These accounts prioritize visual content, employ short and informative written texts, and use hashtags to expand their reach (Çetinkaya & Özdemir, 2014).

Historical perspectives on the development of cultural and artistic sponsorship in Turkey are also found in the literature. Rastgeldi (2019) notes that Türkiye İş Bankası and Ziraat Bank have supported cultural events since the early years of the Republic, while Saydam and Kirel (2022) emphasize Yapı Kredi's significant contribution to artistic diversity in the 1950s. Similarly, differences between announcement-oriented and representational content orientations can still be observed today.

Currently, banks' budgets allocated to cultural and artistic activities are also increasing. For instance, Akbank supported cultural and artistic projects with a budget of 36.8 million TL in 2022, covering a wide spectrum from exhibitions and seminars to digital art and film events (Akbank, 2022). A more recent reflection of this trend can be seen in 2024, when Akbank, through the 34th Akbank Jazz Festival, brought together nearly 200 artists and 25,000 listeners, supported young talents with the JAmZZ Masterclass program, reached 183,451 young people through the Akbank Youth Academy, and staged the 52nd year of the Akbank Children's Theatre play “Ne Olacağım Ben” throughout the year. The 20th Akbank Short Film Festival deepened its international impact with 2,421 submissions from 71 countries, 96 short films and 2 feature-length screenings from 41 countries, while the “Award-Winning Film at Your University” event reached 5,000 students across 43 campuses in 22 cities. In addition, Akbank contributed to contemporary art through its main partnership with the 19th edition of Contemporary Istanbul, the “Oyun Oyunu Bozar” exhibition, the Georg Baselitz: The Last Decade exhibition (in collaboration with Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi [SSM]), and the 42nd Contemporary Artists Award Exhibition, as well as creative capacity and social well-being through 343 photography/stop-motion workshops (Akbank, 2024). Yapı Kredi, meanwhile, supported theatre awards, exhibitions, talks, and publishing with an expenditure of 11.9 million TL in the same year (Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, 2022). This tendency became more evident in 2024 (the bank's 80th anniversary): as part of the Yapı Kredi 80th Anniversary Events, performances by Imany, Fuerza Bruta Wayra, Gipsy Kings, and Peaky Blinders: The Redemption of Thomas Shelby were staged in Turkey; Yapı Kredi Publishing printed a total of 4,869,561 books, including 199 new titles among 959 published works; and the Yapı Kredi Museum hosted 97,596 visitors. In the same year, its cultural-art sponsorship and CSR expenditures reached 97 million TL, while donations and aid amounted to 136.5 million TL (Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, 2024).



Türkiye İş Bankası, on the other hand, reached 19 million readers through its museum, publishing, and child-focused educational projects (Türkiye İş Bankası, 2022). Banks such as DenizBank, Odea Bank, Şekerbank, Kuveyt Türk, and Albaraka Türk have also supported cultural exhibitions, theatre, children's art events, and publishing activities (DenizBank, 2022; Odea Bank, 2022; Kuveyt Türk, 2022). These activities are emphasized as contributing to banks' reliability, reputation, and levels of social responsibility in the public eye (Dervişoğlu, 2008). The impact of such investments on social media performance will be empirically tested through engagement levels; in particular, whether thematic/aesthetic content generates higher engagement compared to announcement content will be examined.

From a public relations perspective, cultural-artistic sponsorships represent one of the effective ways of creating a positive corporate image with target audiences. Özdemir (2012) and Karakoyun, Çetin, and İraz (2012) emphasize the impact of public relations on corporate performance, while Tarhan and Salih (2020) highlight the decisive role of public relations strategies in bank preference.

Digital public relations, on the other hand, refers to the restructuring of traditional models within social media. Yaşar (2022) and Tanyıldızı (2021) note that digital platforms make institutional-public relations more transparent and interactive, with Instagram positioned at the center of digital public relations strategies.

## Methodology And Data

The Turkish banking system, with its scale and ownership diversity, provides a strong institutional support base for the cultural and artistic ecosystem; the number of banks and their group distribution within the system clearly demonstrate the scope of this potential. A total of 62 banks operate in Turkey: 34 deposit banks, 19 investment and development banks, and 8 participation banks; in addition, 1 bank operates under the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (SDIF). Among the deposit banks, 17 are foreign-capitalized, 5 operate exclusively in digital banking, 9 are privately owned, and 3 are publicly owned. Of the development and investment banks, 3 are state-owned, 13 are privately owned, and 4 are foreign-capitalized. As for the participation banks, 3 are state-owned, 2 are privately owned, and 3 have foreign capital structures (TBB, 2023).

Within this overall structure, some banks go beyond financial services to take on the function of generating social contribution. For the purposes of this study, 10 banks actively engaged in the field of culture and the arts were identified. This reflects the banking sector's role not only in economic development but also in cultural and social development.

To provide a deeper understanding of banks' engagement in cultural and artistic activities, this study employs qualitative content analysis. In the first stage, the annual reports of all 62 banks operating in Turkey were examined to identify institutions that were actively involved in cultural and artistic sponsorships in 2022. The data from all banks were collected in Excel format and analyzed using a 32-item evaluation form developed by the researcher. This evaluation form included criteria such as content type (e.g., exhibitions, concerts, theatre, digital art, publications), thematic focus (e.g., cultural memory, aesthetic diversity, emotional themes), visual and auditory elements (e.g., photos, videos, reels, posters), posting frequency and timing, hashtag and mention usage, and interaction indicators such as likes, comments, and shares.

Subsequently, a comparative analysis was conducted to examine the communication strategies, representational tendencies, and aesthetic orientations of both Akbank and Yapı Kredi, the two banks identified as the most active in 2022. The study also considers how these banks leverage social media to reach audiences, manage cultural representation, and sustain engagement, thereby providing insights into the intersection of digital public relations and cultural sponsorship.

Table 1. Types of Activities Carried Out by Banks in Turkey in 2022

Bank Name	Categories of Activity
Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat	Exhibition, Music-Concert, Cinema, Sponsorship, Digital Art, Recital, Dance, Theatre, Publishing, Museum
Akbank Sanat	Exhibition, Music-Concert, Cinema, Art Academy, Digital Art, Recital, Dance, Theatre, Sponsorship
İş Sanat	Exhibition, Music-Concert, Sponsorship, Digital Art, Recital, Theatre, Publishing, Museum
Odea Bank	Exhibition, Sponsorship, Art Academy, Digital Art, Theatre, Publishing, Architecture
DenizBank	Exhibition, Music-Concert, Cinema, Theatre, Publishing
Ziraat Bankası	Exhibition, Sponsorship, Digital Art, Museum
Albaraka Türk Katılım Bankası	Exhibition, Sponsorship, Art Academy, Publishing
Kuveyt Türk Katılım Bankası	Exhibition, Sponsorship, Art Academy
Türkiye Sınai Kalkınma Bankası	Music-Concert, Sponsorship
Şekerbank	Publishing

Table 1: Source: Compiled from the 2022 annual reports and official corporate websites of the banks (Akbank T.A.Ş., 2022; Albaraka Türk Katılım Bankası A.Ş., 2022; DenizBank A.Ş., 2022; Kuveyt Türk Katılım Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Odea Bank A.Ş., 2022; Şekerbank T.A.Ş., 2022; Türkiye İş Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Türkiye Sınai Kalkınma Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Yapı ve Kredi Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Ziraat Bankası A.Ş., 2022).

Table 1 demonstrates that, throughout 2022, banks made multidimensional contributions to the field of culture and the arts. In terms of scope, Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık was active in 10 different categories, while Akbank Sanat was active in 9. This finding indicates that among privately owned banks, these two institutions stand out in terms of category breadth. Other banks also made meaningful contributions in areas such as exhibitions, performing arts, publishing, and sponsorship, although the diversity of activities varies from one institution to another.

To provide analytical depth, the sample was narrowed to Akbank and Yapı Kredi for detailed examination. The selection was based on three criteria: (i) their broadest coverage in terms of activity diversity, (ii) their prominence in sponsorship and participation intensity, and (iii) the volume and continuity of their social media posts (particularly on Instagram), which provided sufficient and comparable data for content analysis. Accordingly, the 2022 Instagram accounts of these banks were analyzed using content analysis. The findings indicate that, thanks to the widespread use of social media, access to art audiences has become easier, while communication costs have remained relatively low.

It was further determined that exhibitions represented a common field of activity for Akbank, Yapı Kredi, DenizBank, İş Bankası, Ziraat Bankası, Odea Bank, Albaraka Türk Katılım Bankası, Türkiye Sınai Kalkınma Bankası, and Kuveyt Türk Katılım Bankası. In contrast, Şekerbank's lack of activity in the exhibition domain is noteworthy.

From the perspective of cultural and artistic sponsorship, Akbank, Yapı Kredi, İş Bankası, Ziraat Bankası, Odea Bank, Albaraka Türk Katılım Bankası, Türkiye Sınai Kalkınma Bankası, and Kuveyt Türk Katılım Bankası were found to be included within this scope, whereas DenizBank and Şekerbank did not engage in cultural and artistic sponsorships in 2022.

As of 2022, among privately owned Turkish banks, Akbank and Yapı Kredi stand out as the main contributors to cultural and artistic activities. Akbank provided support across a wide range of fields, including exhibitions, concerts, cinema, art academies, digital art, seminars, dance, and theatre. Yapı Kredi, meanwhile, was active in exhibitions, concerts, seminars, theatre, museums, and publishing. These findings are based on the 2022 reports of the respective banks (Akbank T.A.Ş., 2022; Albaraka Türk Katılım Bankası A.Ş., 2022; DenizBank A.Ş., 2022; Kuveyt Türk Katılım Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Odea Bank A.Ş., 2022; Şekerbank T.A.Ş., 2022; Türkiye İş Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Türkiye Sınai Kalkınma Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Yapı ve Kredi Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Ziraat Bankası A.Ş., 2022).

In the analysis stage of the research, Akbank and Yapı Kredi were selected as the two banks most actively engaged in cultural and artistic activities and most prominent in sponsorships. Within this scope, the Instagram posts (excluding Reels and Stories) of both banks for the 2022 calendar year were analyzed through content analysis. The dataset comprised 387 posts for Akbank and 249 posts for Yapı Kredi.

The active use of social media by society facilitates these banks' ability to reach art audiences, while also enabling them to conduct communication processes at lower costs and with broader impact (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2023; Rodríguez-Vera et al., 2024).

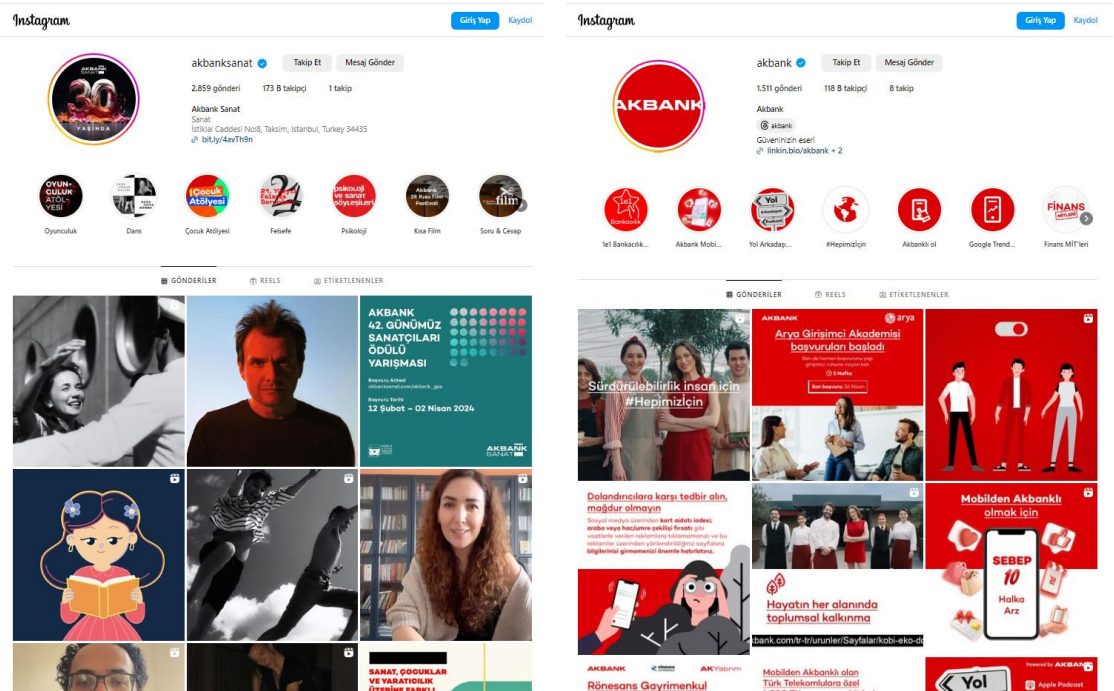


Figure 1. (Left) A post from the official Instagram account of Akbank Sanat (Akbank, 2024)

Figure 2. (Right) A post from the corporate Instagram account of Akbank (Akbank, 2024)

Founded on January 30, 1948, Akbank operates as one of Turkey's most established and reputable banks. Beyond providing banking services, contributing to the development of culture and the arts is among Akbank's core missions. In this context, Akbank Sanat, founded in 1993 with the mission of being "the place where change never ends," has played a significant role in the advancement of Turkey's cultural and artistic environment since its establishment. This is also supported by the examples presented in Figures 1 and 2 (Akbank Sanat, n.d.).

Akbank Sanat hosts approximately 1,000 events annually and organizes many activities that have become strongly associated with its name. Two remarkable examples are the 33rd Akbank Jazz Festival and the 19th Akbank Short Film Festival, both held in 2022, which brought art enthusiasts together and made significant contributions to Istanbul's cultural atmosphere (Akbank, 2022).



Touching nearly every branch of art, Akbank is among the leading banks in Turkey associated with cultural activities. It actively engages in a wide range of fields such as exhibitions, music and film festivals, sponsorships, art academies, digital art projects, seminars, dance, and theatre performances, while promoting these events through a dedicated Instagram account named Akbank Sanat (Akbank Sanat, n.d.).

This practice is linked to the bank's efforts to add value to its corporate image not only as a financial service provider but also through culture and the arts. Indeed, the fact that the follower count of the Akbank Sanat Instagram account exceeds that of the bank's official corporate account supports this. As of April 2024, the Akbank Sanat account had reached 173,000 followers, while the bank's official account had 118,000 followers in the same period. These figures indicate that Akbank makes effective use of Instagram to promote its artistic activities and engage with art audiences (Akbank Sanat, 2024).

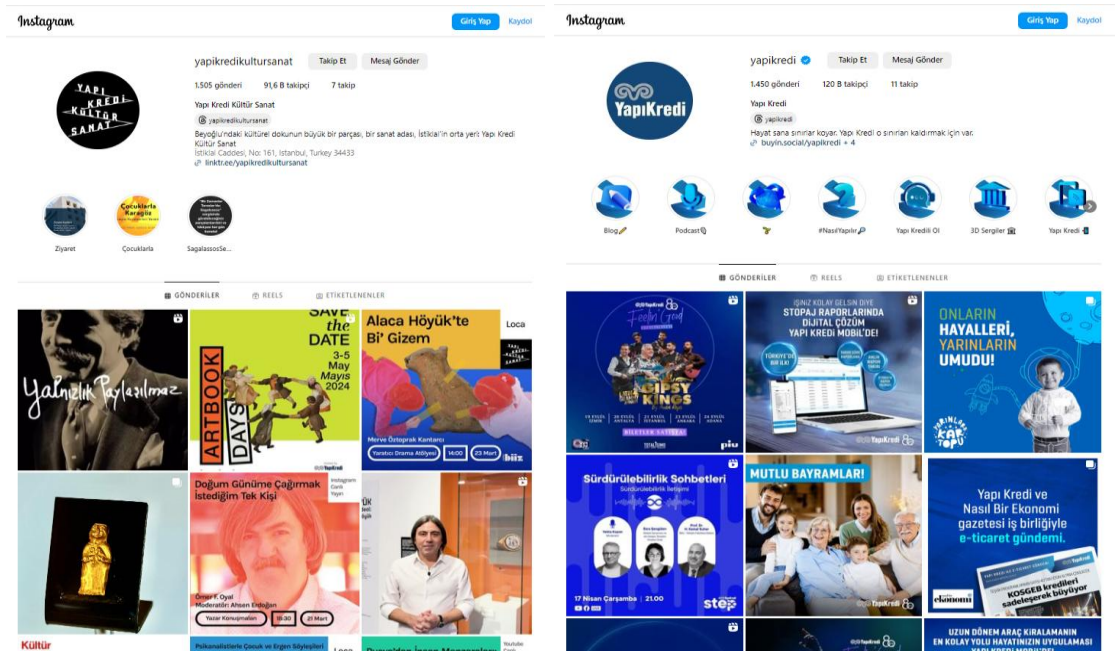


Figure 3. (Left) Instagram profile interface of Yapı Kredi K lt r Sanat (Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, 2024)

Figure 4. (Right) Official Instagram profile interface of Yapı Kredi (Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, 2024)

Founded in 1944, Yapı ve Kredi Bankası is a long-established institution that holds the distinction of being Turkey's first private bank (Yapı ve Kredi Bankası A.Ş., n.d.-a). The bank has adopted the mission of contributing not only to economic development but also to cultural and artistic advancement. In line with this vision, its founder Kazım Taşkent established the "Cultural and Arts Consultancy" during the bank's founding phase and appointed Vedat Nedim T r as its head (Yapı ve Kredi Bankası A.Ş., n.d.-b).

Since 1953, with the involvement of experts such as İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı and Şevket Rado, Yapı Kredi began to build its collections. These collections have continued to be preserved and exhibited under the Yapı Kredi M zesi, which was opened in 1992 as a private museum affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This historical trajectory is also illustrated by Figures 3 and 4 (Yapı ve Kredi Bankası A.Ş., n.d.-c; Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, n.d.).

Transferring this deep-rooted approach in culture and the arts into the digital sphere, Yapı Kredi regularly shares its activities both through its corporate Instagram account and a separate account under the name Yapı Kredi K lt r Sanat. The bank operates across a wide variety of fields, including museum exhibitions, art talks, cultural publishing, literary events, concerts, theatre performances, seminars, and sponsorships, and it reflects this diversity consistently and carefully through social media. In doing so, it not only informs art audiences but also strengthens its cultural policies through digital public relations.

As of April 2024, the corporate Instagram account of Yapı Kredi had reached 120,000 followers, while the Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat account had reached 91,600 followers. This demonstrates that the bank communicates its cultural and artistic activities regularly to the public via two separate accounts, thereby reinforcing its cultural identity in the digital environment. When examining the digital posts of Akbank and Yapı Kredi—the two most active banks in cultural and artistic sponsorships in 2022—it was found that Akbank made a total of 387 posts, while Yapı Kredi made 249 posts.

Akbank's 387 posts were distributed across 241 days of the year, revealing an average of 1.6 posts per day. However, no posts were made on 124 days. The increased posting frequency during certain periods and the absence of posts on others suggest that this pattern was strategically planned. This variability indicates that the bank preferred certain days and times as part of its social media strategy. Furthermore, posting frequency decreased during periods of limited content production, while it increased during times when the target audience was most active. It was also determined that external factors such as algorithm changes, special occasions, and holidays affected posting frequency. This shows that social media activities were carried out within the framework of deliberate strategic planning.

An analysis of Yapı Kredi's cultural and artistic posts revealed a one-to-one ratio between posting days and the number of posts, indicating an average of one post per day. The data obtained demonstrate that both banks adopt a regular, consistent, and attentive approach in their cultural and artistic posts.

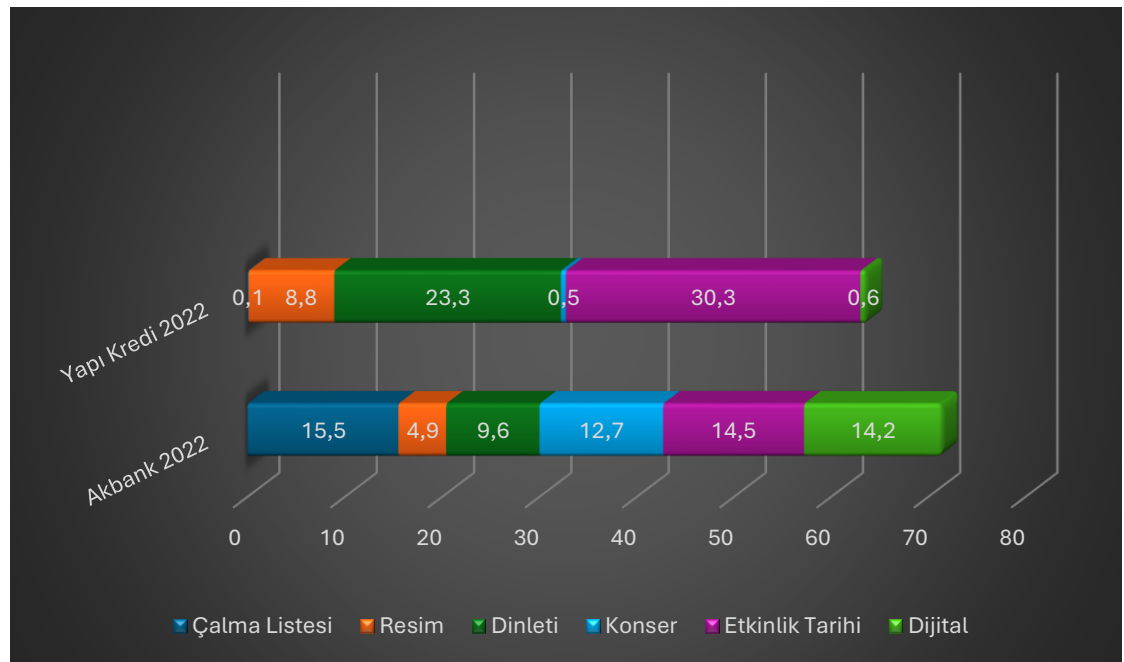


Figure 5. Content of Instagram Posts by Akbank Sanat and Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat

When examining the distribution of Akbank Sanat's Instagram content for 2022, it is evident that the posts spanned across different fields of art and that diversity was maintained in a relatively balanced way. According to the data presented in Figure 5, the categories with the highest representation were Playlist (15.5%), Digital (14.2%), Event Date (14.5%), and Concert (12.7%). These categories indicate that the institution did not solely focus on event announcements but also aimed to engage audiences through digital art practices, musical events, and cultural experience diversity.

Other categories such as Painting (4.4%), Dance (4.9%), and Recital (9.6%) appear more limited in proportion; however, they demonstrate Akbank Sanat's effort to provide representation for different artistic disciplines. This diversity shows that the institution positions art in its social media strategy not as a one-dimensional communication tool but as a holistic reflection of

various forms of aesthetic experiences. Therefore, the 2022 content analysis reveals that Akbank Sanat pursued a strategy in its digital communication that prioritized diversity in artistic representation and aesthetic depth. This approach not only contributed to the institution's brand image through cultural values but also enabled it to establish a stronger and multidimensional bond with its audience.

When examining Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat's Instagram posts for 2022, it becomes clear that a strategy based on rich thematic variety was adopted. According to the data in Figure 5, the categories with the highest representation were Event Date (30.3%) and Recital (23.3%), which indicates that the institution placed particular emphasis on artistic activities and performative events in its posts. In addition, categories such as Painting (8.8%), Mixed (6.3%), Sculpture (7.6%), History (5.2%), and Commemoration (3.2%) were represented to a certain extent. This diversity shows that Yapı Kredi developed an approach that not only focused on event announcements but also emphasized cultural memory, aesthetic representation, and artistic pluralism. Categories with lower representation (e.g., Theater, Concert, Photography, Poetry, etc.) point to an inclusive strategy aimed at expanding the institution's scope of cultural and artistic activities.

Overall, the 2022 data demonstrates that Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat followed a content policy in its digital communication that highlighted cultural continuity, contributed to collective memory, and emphasized aesthetic diversity. This strategy reveals that the institution functions not only as an economic actor but also as an active stakeholder in the production of cultural capital.

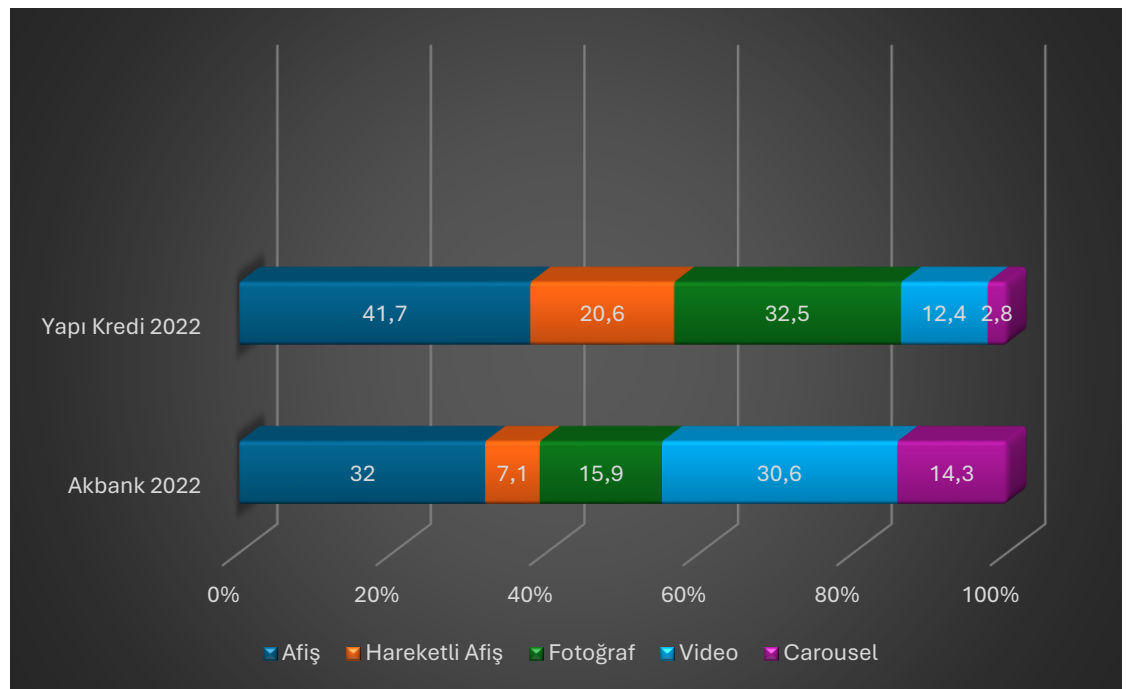
When comparing the content strategies of both institutions in 2022, significant differences emerge. Akbank Sanat's content distribution had a more balanced and diversity-oriented structure, establishing a certain equilibrium between digital art, concerts, playlists, and event announcements. This indicates Akbank's effort to highlight multidimensionality and aesthetic diversity in artistic activities. In contrast, Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat's content was marked by higher proportions of Event Date (30.3%) and Recital (23.3%). This trend suggests that Yapı Kredi adopted a strategy prioritizing the continuity of artistic events and contributions to collective memory. Moreover, its emphasis on cultural memory through themes such as painting, sculpture, history, and commemoration highlights a more thematic and historically referenced approach compared to Akbank.

Analyses of 2022 content indicate that while Akbank Sanat foregrounds diversity and the multidimensional nature of aesthetic experience, Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat constructs an artistic identity anchored in cultural memory, commemoration, and thematic continuity. This divergence suggests that the institutional priorities shaping each bank's culture-arts sponsorships and digital communication strategies follow distinct orientations. Accordingly, we posit the following hypothesis: H1c — Akbank's share of announcement/event-date posts exceeds that of Yapı Kredi, whereas cultural-memory/aesthetic themes are more prevalent in Yapı Kredi's posts.

In the comparative analysis of post content presented in Figure 6, an examination of the 2022 Instagram posts of Akbank Sanat and Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat reveals that both institutions adopted distinct tendencies in their content strategies. Akbank Sanat concentrated heavily on posters (32.0%) and videos (30.6%), followed by photos (15.9%), animated posters (7.1%), and carousel posts (3.3%). This distribution, calculated from a total of 387 posts, indicates that in 2022, Akbank Sanat prioritized promoting its cultural events through eye-catching formats such as posters and videos. This demonstrates the institution's emphasis on audiovisual diversity and its adoption of an engagement-oriented approach in its content strategy.

By contrast, the 2022 Instagram content distribution of Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat reflects a more balanced structure. The institution concentrated on posters (41.7%) and photos (32.5%), while videos (12.4%), animated posters (10.6%), and carousel posts (2.6%) appeared less frequently. Based on a total of 249 posts, the calculations show that Yapı Kredi prioritized more traditional

visual tools, such as posters and photos, in announcing its cultural events, while making relatively limited use of videos.

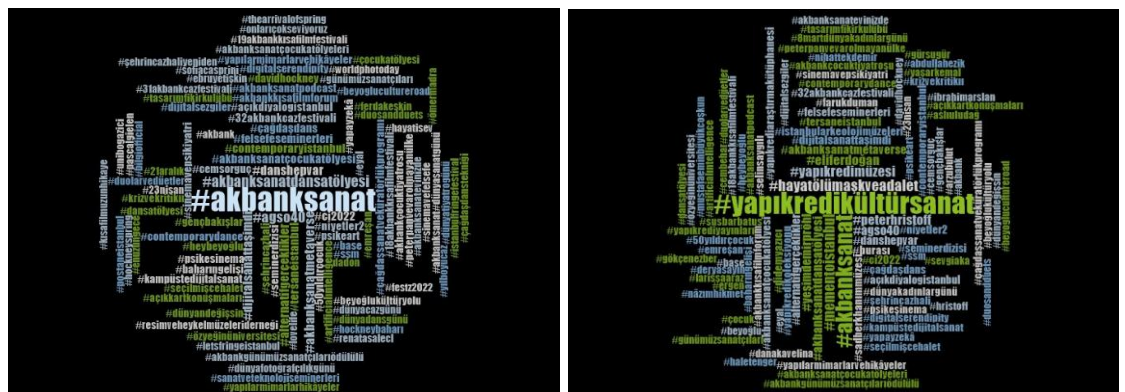


*Figure 6. Content of Instagram Posts by Akbank Sanat and Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat*

From a comparative perspective, Akbank Sanat followed a more modern and dynamic communication strategy through video-driven content, whereas Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat adopted a more traditional and consistent sharing style centered on posters and photos. When examined in the context of Stuart Hall's Representation Theory, it can be argued that Akbank—through its reliance on video and posters—sought to represent the dynamism and visual energy of its events, while Yapı Kredi—through its emphasis on posters and photos—focused on cultural continuity and the construction of institutional identity. This differentiation suggests that the digital representation strategies of the two institutions in the field of culture and the arts are shaped not only by technical preferences but also by corporate identity and ideological orientations. On the basis of this finding, the following hypothesis is proposed: H1a – The ratio of video/poster content in Akbank's posts is higher than that of Yapı Kredi.

Figure 7a. (Left) Hashtag word cloud derived from Akbank Sanat's 2022 Instagram posts (Created by the researcher; data source: Akbank Sanat Instagram profile)

Figure 7b. (Right) Hashtag word cloud derived from Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat's 2022 Instagram posts (Created by the researcher; data source: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Instagram profile)



In Akbank Sanat's 2022 Instagram content (Figure 7a), hashtag usage reached a remarkably high rate of 96.12%. This figure indicates that in-platform reach, campaign visibility, and discoverability played a central role in the institution's social media strategy. The intensive use of hashtags demonstrates Akbank's aim to reach a broader audience with its cultural and



artistic content and its adoption of a reach-oriented communication model. In this context, the frequent use of the hashtag #akbanksanat is particularly noteworthy (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Kim & Lee, 2022). From the perspective of Stuart Hall's theory of representation, this form of usage reflects the institution's effort to recontextualize its artistic events in the digital domain and communicate them to diverse audiences (Hall, 1997).

During the same period, the mention usage rate was measured at 73.38%. This suggests that Akbank's social media strategy was not limited to reach but also emphasized digital interaction with artists, events, and partners. However, since mentions were used less frequently than hashtags, the strategy appears to have been primarily announcement- and visibility-oriented in 2022. From an academic standpoint, this approach aligns with the "reach-oriented communication" model.

An examination of Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat's 2022 Instagram content (Figure 7b) shows a hashtag usage rate of 96.79%, very close to Akbank's level. However, in Yapı Kredi's strategy, the corporate hashtag #YapıKrediKültürSanat stands out, reinforcing brand identity. This practice can be associated with what the literature defines as a "brand-centered hashtag ecology." Hashtags in this case serve not only as tools of visibility but also as mechanisms for strengthening corporate identity. The mention usage rate for Yapı Kredi was 72.69%, which is comparable to Akbank's figure. This finding demonstrates Yapı Kredi's orientation toward building digital networks with stakeholders. In particular, mentions directed at artists, event organizers, and cultural actors indicate that the institution adopted a strategy focused not only on reach but also on relational interaction.

Both banks, therefore, achieved very high levels of hashtag usage in 2022 and adopted this tool as a fundamental visibility strategy in their social media communication. While Akbank Sanat demonstrated a more reach- and announcement-oriented approach, Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat used brand-specific hashtags to reinforce its corporate identity. In terms of mentions, both banks showed similar rates; however, Yapı Kredi's use of mentions reflected a more balanced and representation-oriented strategy of cultural collaboration and engagement with artistic actors. These findings indicate that as of 2022, Akbank Sanat followed a reach-oriented social media strategy, while Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat pursued a strategy focused on brand identity and interaction (Hall, 1997; Dwivedi et al., 2021). This leads to the following network strategy hypothesis:

H1d – While both banks demonstrate similarly high levels of hashtag use, brand-specific core hashtag usage (e.g., #YapıKrediKültürSanat) is more intensive at Yapı Kredi. Although the visibility of the #akbanksanat tag is also high, Yapı Kredi's corporate core hashtag provides a more systematic backbone for its communication strategy.

Crisis management refers to the strategic communication processes that institutions develop in order to protect their reputation and maintain trust with stakeholders in unexpected situations (Coombs, 2007). In the era of social media, crises are not only related to rapidly circulating content but are also directly shaped by the language of representation used by institutions, their level of transparency, and their sensitivity toward stakeholders. The social media post presented in Figure 8, dated 2022, provides a noteworthy example of Akbank Sanat's crisis management.

On June 1, 2022, a poster for the 40th Contemporary Artists Exhibition was shared, in which a quoted artwork, overlooked by the jury, had been selected. This triggered a large volume of negative comments from followers. On June 4, 2022, the institution issued a statement acknowledging the mistake and announcing that corrective actions had been taken. However, this statement further escalated the criticism because the artist and jury members were directly tagged and exposed, leading to an increase in sarcastic and critical comments.

This incident illustrates that while Akbank Sanat embraced the principle of transparency in its crisis communication, strategically inappropriate tagging decisions damaged the institution's image. From an academic perspective, this case highlights that crisis



management on social media is not only about rapid response but also about the representational language employed and the degree of stakeholder sensitivity considered.

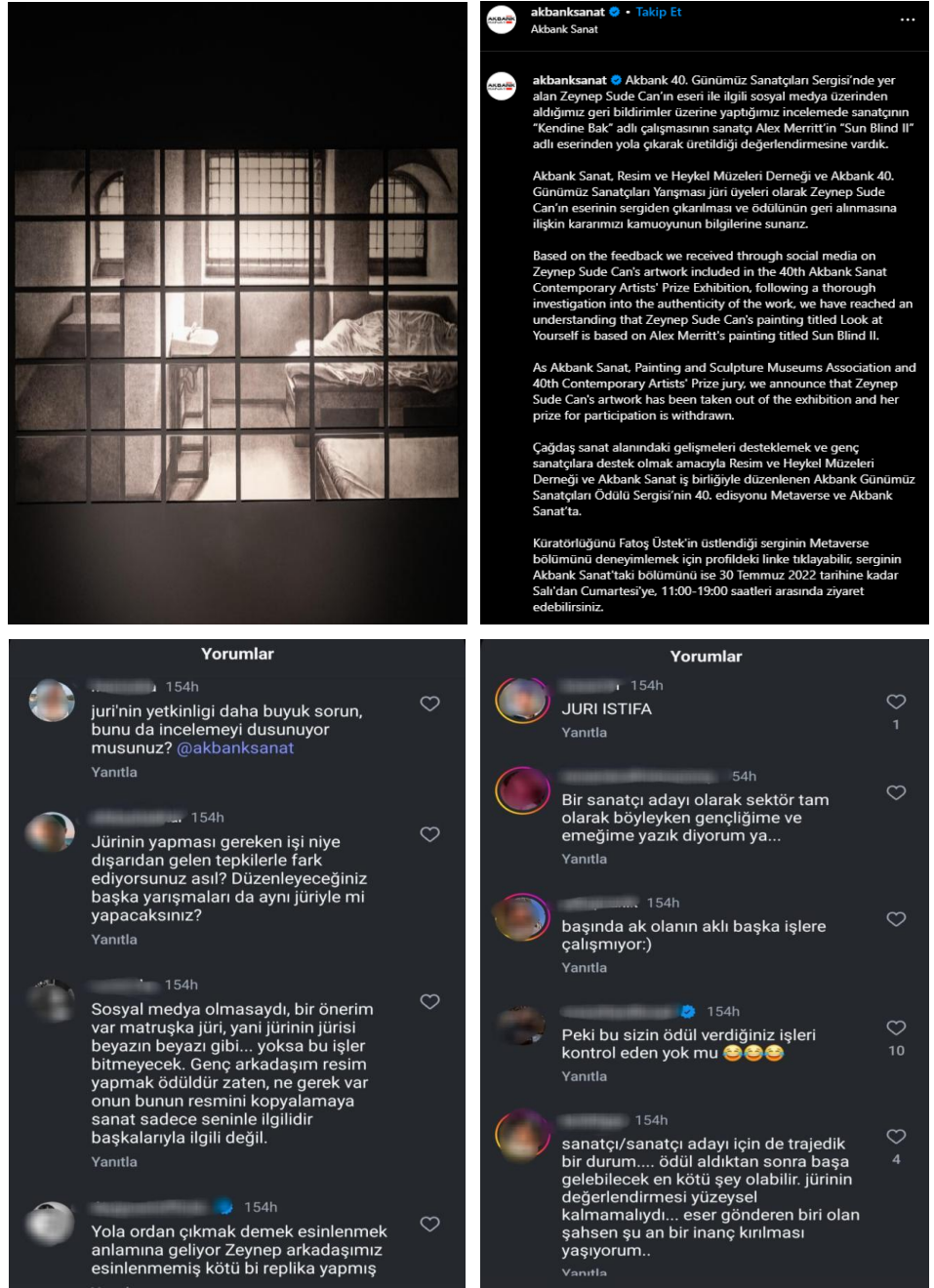


Figure 8. Akbank Sanat's 2022 post on the Contemporary Artists Competition and user comments

Furthermore, this experience suggests that Akbank may have subsequently adopted a more cautious, representation-focused communication strategy, avoiding crises in later periods (as of 2023). In this sense, Figure 8 does not merely represent a crisis moment but also reflects the institution's evolving organizational reflexes, shaped by "learning from experience" in the context of social media management.

Social media platforms function not only as channels for announcements and information but also as spaces where institutions engage in multidimensional communication with their audiences. In these environments, institutions simultaneously pursue multiple objectives: rapid response during crises, event promotion, stakeholder engagement, strengthening brand identity, and building trust. Thus, the use of social media should be evaluated not merely as

one-way information transfer but as a domain where institutional identity is represented and strategic communication is developed.

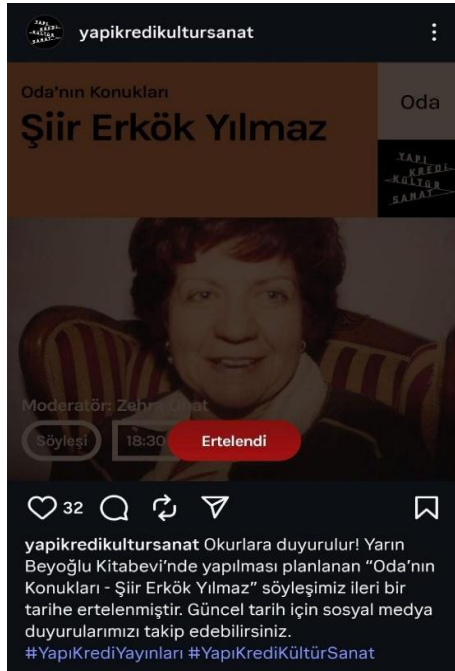


Figure 9. Example of a Post Announcing the Postponement of an Event by Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat (Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat, 2022)

The post by Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat, represented in Figure 9, reflects the institution's communication strategy in cases of postponements or cancellations of cultural and artistic events. The use of direct and transparent language in the announcement demonstrates a proactive approach that reinforces corporate responsibility toward followers. This method indicates a tendency to manage potential setbacks through preventive communication strategies rather than postponing or passively handling crisis management.

From an academic perspective, Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat's approach illustrates how crisis communication can be employed as a preventive tool in line with the principles of transparency, reliability, and corporate accountability. This practice not only serves to inform followers but also functions as a strategic move that supports the institution's representational power and brand value in the cultural field.

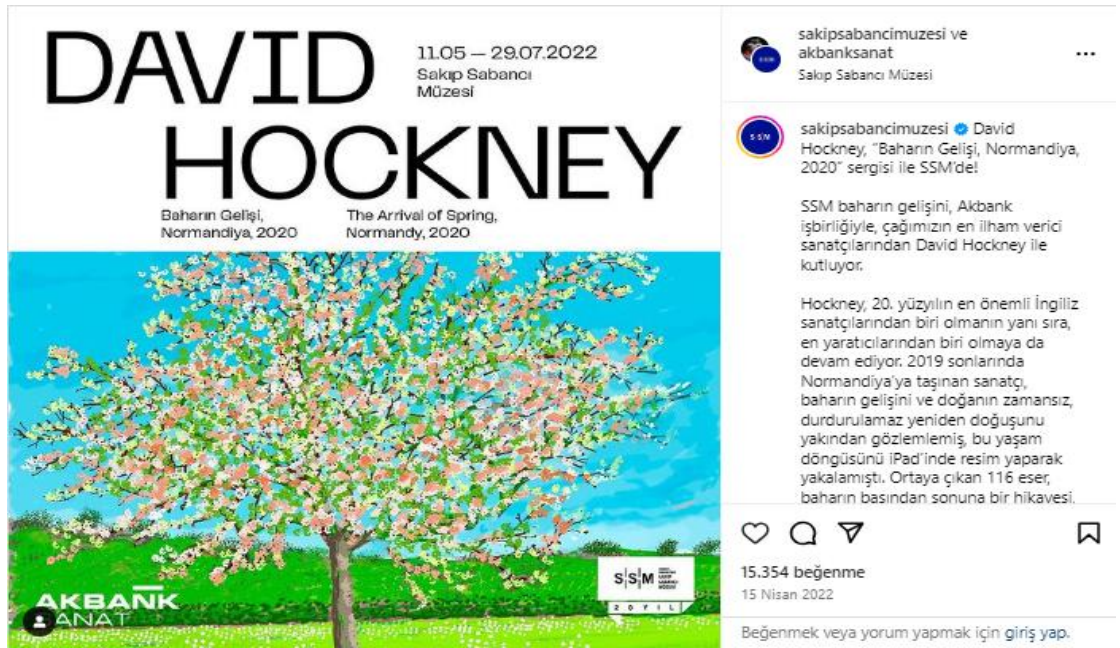


Figure 10. Akbank Sanat Post (Alternative Realities + NFT; David Hockney – The Arrival of Spring)

On the other hand, the announcement of the David Hockney – The Arrival of Spring exhibition, presented in Figure 10, was among the most highly engaged posts on the Akbank Sanat page in 2022. This post stands out as a successful example in terms of both its ability to foster an emotional connection with the target audience. The color palette, textual harmony, and timing used in the post exemplify an engagement-oriented sharing strategy, representing art within an accessible and contemporary framework.

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Figure 11. Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat's commemorative post themed "Life, Death, and Love" (2022)

The post themed "Life, Death, and Love" presented in Figure 11 illustrates Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat's emphasis on emotional and philosophical themes within its content strategy. The choice of such themes suggests that the institution's corporate social media account is not limited to functioning as a tool for event announcements but also seeks to build a deeper connection with the audience through cultural memory, aesthetic sensitivity, and existential representations. In this sense, the institution positions social media not only as a medium of information dissemination but also as a platform for cultural meaning-making and intellectual engagement. Based on this, the following hypothesis is formulated: H1b – The proportion of thematic/emotional commemorative content is higher in Yapı Kredi's posts than in Akbank's.

At this point, clear differences can be observed between the 2022 communication strategies of Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat and Akbank Sanat. Yapı Kredi emphasized emotional and philosophical elements in its thematic content, establishing a representational language grounded in aesthetic sensitivity; whereas Akbank Sanat focused more on event announcements and information on current exhibitions to strengthen its institutional visibility. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed: H1c – The proportion of announcement/event date posts is higher in Akbank's content than in Yapı Kredi's, while cultural memory/aesthetic themes are more prominent in Yapı Kredi's content.

Taken together, the posts presented in Figures 8–11 reveal that the two institutions adopt different tendencies in terms of crisis communication, aesthetic stance, and representational strategies in their social media management. Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat pursues an approach centered on transparent information sharing and emotional engagement, while Akbank Sanat follows a more controlled and announcement-driven strategy. These distinctions represent significant indicators differentiating the corporate communication practices and digital representations of the two banks in the field of culture and the arts.

In light of these findings, the following hypotheses are proposed for testing:

H1c– The proportion of announcement/event date posts is higher in Akbank's content than in Yapı Kredi's, while cultural memory/aesthetic themes are more prominent in Yapı Kredi's content.

H1e– Thematic/aesthetic content generates higher engagement rates compared to announcement content.



Therefore, the study's findings indicate that the banks develop differentiated strategies in their social media communication, which aligns with perspectives in the literature on cultural representation, crisis communication, and digital public relations. Building on this, the conclusion section will present the overall assessment of the study and its forward-looking implications.

## Conclusion

Culture and the arts are not merely parts of an aesthetic experience; they are also regarded as strategic domains for constructing collective memory, ensuring the continuity of cultural transmission, and encouraging public participation. In this context, investments in culture and the arts contribute not only to individual development but also to the strengthening of collective consciousness and social identity. The growing interest of financial institutions in Turkey in recent years constitutes a strong indicator of both corporate social responsibility and strategic communication practices.

In this study, the cultural and artistic sponsorship activities of sixty-two banks operating in Turkey between January 1–December 31, 2022, were examined, and ten banks that made active contributions were identified. Akbank Sanat and Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat were evaluated in detail due to their high follower counts, production intensity, and consistent digital communication practices. The qualitative analysis conducted on Instagram content revealed that, despite sharing similar fields of activity, these two institutions exhibit different modes of representation, shifting engagement models, and distinct corporate orientations.

The findings indicate that event announcements, poster shares, concert promotions, and talk/seminar content are prominent on both accounts; however, there are meaningful divergences in strategic emphasis and representational language. While Akbank Sanat's content is predominantly reach-oriented and anchored in announcement- and calendar-based messaging, Yapı Kredi Kùltür Sanat's content more visibly foregrounds cultural memory, aesthetic sensibility, and the goal of fostering emotional connection. This differentiation signals a positioning related not only to formal choices but also to the institutions' ideological orientations and approaches to corporate representation.

The study's theoretical contribution lies in addressing cultural–arts sponsorships within the social media context at the intersecting axes of representation, aesthetics, and identity construction. Anchored in Stuart Hall's approach to representation, the analysis demonstrates that social media is more than a technical channel for announcements; it is an ideological arena in which cultural meaning is produced and circulated. Linking the discussion to the literature on social media reach and network strategies further shows that hashtag intensity and the use of mentions function as two distinct axes that calibrate the balance between reach-oriented communication and relational engagement.

The study's methodological contribution stems from integrating visual, textual, and digital data within a single qualitative content analysis framework, thereby rendering institutional communication strategies visible in a multidimensional manner. The separate examination of hashtag and mention usage shows that reach and stakeholder relations are constructed through different tactics, while the joint evaluation of post formats and thematic orientations confirms that artistic representation acquires meaning not only through content headings but also through formal–aesthetic choices.

Beyond its contribution to the literature, the study also yields concrete implications for practitioners. Bank communication teams should establish a coherent balance between tactics that increase reach and approaches that build emotional and representational ties. From a sponsorship governance perspective, complementing financial support with content-related and curatorial contributions enables corporate identity to develop an organic, long-term relationship with the cultural field. From the standpoint of art institutions, bank

sponsorships should be understood not merely as an economic resource but as a partnership platform that shapes the direction of cultural representation.

The hypothesis set H1a–H1e provides an analytical scaffold for testing these findings in alignment with the theoretical framework. The assumptions that Akbank's share of video and poster formats exceeds that of Yapı Kredi, that Yapı Kredi's proportion of thematic and emotional content is higher than Akbank's, that institutions differ along the announcement versus representational content divide, that brand-specific hashtags are used more intensively as a network strategy, and that thematic/aesthetic content tends to yield higher engagement than announcement content together offer testable propositions for future quantitative research. These hypotheses can be examined using chi-square tests, two-proportion comparisons, independent-samples t-tests, or, where parametric assumptions are not met, the Mann–Whitney U test, thereby enabling an empirical assessment of social media engagement levels. In cases where reach data are limited, proxy indicators—such as ratios of likes and comments to follower counts—can enhance the comparability of engagement differences. To capture time-sensitive patterns, applying time-series analyses that incorporate posting intensity and engagement variation will reveal calendar effects at peak moments such as festival periods or special days. For cross-platform comparisons, considering Instagram data alongside the formal and algorithmic specificities of platforms like YouTube, X, or Facebook will improve the generalizability of the findings.

The overall conclusion drawn from the findings is that cultural–arts sponsorships are not merely indicators of corporate social responsibility for banks; they have become fundamental components of branding, audience engagement, cultural capital production, and digital visibility strategies. The role assumed by banks in the cultural and artistic sphere elevates them from being solely financial actors to becoming producers of cultural representation and collective memory. In this framework, providing more balanced support across different branches of the arts, strengthening sponsorships through creative and content-based partnerships in addition to financial contributions, developing participatory models that incorporate the views of artists and audiences, and investing in education-focused programs that enhance digital access and cultural awareness will foster the institutionalization of a sustainable and inclusive sponsorship approach. Beyond academic debate, these recommendations offer a practical roadmap for decision-makers in cultural governance and communication strategy.

The limitations of the study should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. Restricting the analysis universe to a single year may lead to evaluations that are not purified of period effects; therefore, studies conducted with multi-year datasets will produce stronger evidence regarding the persistence of trends. Limiting the platform to Instagram increases the influence of platform-specific algorithmic and formal features on the findings; thus, cross-platform comparisons will strengthen the generalizability of the results. Evaluating engagement metrics through proxy indicators—such as comment and like counts—in the absence of reach data constrains definitive causal interpretations; institutional collaborations that provide access to official reach and impression data would increase statistical power. While the content analysis is predominantly qualitative—enriching thematic depth—it limits the confirmatory power of the hypotheses unless complemented by statistical tests; hence, future research should favor quantitative modeling and mixed-method designs.

The conducted research approaches the digital communication practices of banks in Turkey within the field of culture and arts through a comparative lens, opening up a holistic discussion on representation, strategic communication, and engagement. The findings and hypotheses developed provide a solid starting point for probing more deeply into the symbolic world of cultural–arts sponsorships and their role within digital public spheres, both in terms of academic literature and practical applications. In this regard, future studies enriched with multi-year datasets, cross-platform comparisons, and reach-based engagement metrics are expected to make the cultural impact of institutional communication strategies more visible on a broader scale.



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Yazarlar çalışmaya eşit katkıda bulunmuştur / The authors contributed equally to the study.

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Uygulanamaz / Ethics committee declaration not applicable

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**Veri erişilebilirliği / Availability of data**

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**Orcid**

And Algül  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5516-5249>

Şeyma Yaşar  <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4865-5870>

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### Figure References

Figure 1. A post from the official Instagram account of Akbank Sanat (Akbank, 2024). (March 2024).

Figure 2. A post from the corporate Instagram account of Akbank (Akbank, 2024). (March 2024).

Figure 3. Instagram profile interface of Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat (Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, 2024). (March 2024).

Figure 4. Official Instagram profile interface of Yapı Kredi (Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, 2024). (March 2024).

Figure 5. Content of Instagram Posts by Akbank Sanat and Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat.

Figure 6. Content of Instagram Posts by Akbank Sanat and Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat.

Figure 7a. Hashtag word cloud derived from Akbank Sanat's 2022 Instagram posts (Created by the researcher; data source: Akbank Sanat Instagram profile).

Figure 7b. Hashtag word cloud derived from Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat's 2022 Instagram posts (Created by the researcher; data source: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Instagram profile).

Figure 8. Akbank Sanat's 2022 post on the Contemporary Artists Competition and user comments. (March 2024).

Figure 9. Example of a Post Announcing the Postponement of an Event by Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat (Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat, 2022). (March 2024).

Figure 10. Akbank Sanat Post (Alternative Realities + NFT; David Hockney – The Arrival of Spring). (March 2024).

Figure 11. Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat's commemorative post themed "Life, Death, and Love" (2022). (March 2024).

### Table References

Table 1: Source: Compiled from the 2022 annual reports and official corporate websites of the banks (Akbank T.A.Ş., 2022; Albaraka Türk Katılım Bankası A.Ş., 2022; DenizBank A.Ş., 2022; Kuveyt Türk Katılım Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Odea Bank A.Ş., 2022; Şekerbank T.A.Ş., 2022; Türkiye İş Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Türkiye Sınai Kalkınma Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Yapı ve Kredi Bankası A.Ş., 2022; Ziraat Bankası A.Ş., 2022).