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Identifying and Screening Components and Indicators of Brand Management Positioning in Art

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: The objective of this study is to identify and screen the components and indicators of brand management positioning within the art industry.

Methodology: This research employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study is interpretive, with an inductive approach, and is classified as cross-sectional. Data collection involved a combination of library and field studies. The qualitative section analyzed 166 articles using open, axial, and selective coding to identify key positioning components. The quantitative section involved a purposive sample of 28 industry and academic experts from the seven fields of art, who participated in a fuzzy screening process to evaluate the importance of the identified components and indicators.

Findings: The qualitative analysis resulted in the identification of 83 initial indices, which were grouped into 15 general components and ultimately categorized into three main dimensions: resources and assets, capabilities, and benefits of positioning. The fuzzy screening process revealed that the importance of these components varied across the seven artistic fields. The most emphasized indices for effective positioning were understanding audience needs, audience relationship management, brand identity, use of new technology, innovative products/services, advertising and public relations, sales policy, and brand reputation. Key components included audience-centricity, financial resources, brand assets, financial benefits, audience engagement, marketing capabilities, relational benefits, differentiation from competitors, and networking capabilities.

Conclusion: This study provides a structured framework for brand positioning in the art industry, emphasizing the need for a tailored approach based on the specific characteristics of each artistic field.

Keywords: *Brand Management Positioning, Art, Qualitative Content Analysis, Systematic Review, Fuzzy Screening.*

1 Introduction

Following the transformations brought about by the widespread use of the internet and the emergence of new technologies, individuals, companies, and traditional businesses realized they had no choice but to embrace the transition. New approaches in the management of businesses operating in various industries emerged to navigate the current challenging conditions and align with technological changes. Utilizing the results of research from various scientific domains in the form of interdisciplinary studies paved the way for managers seeking sustainable competitive advantages. Among these, the application of marketing knowledge concepts in the field of art, specifically the exploitation of the concept of positioning—which underpins the creation and shaping of audience perceptions about a brand—can be highlighted (Sancak, 2023).

Creating a unique identity and establishing a superior position over competitors in the minds of target audiences is impossible without leveraging these positioning resources. Particularly in a selection crisis, where audiences, overwhelmed by an explosion of products/services, media, and advertisements, seek to simplify their decisions based on criteria that are often not the competitive advantages of art brands, a brand that neglects positioning and fails to provide the necessary resources for this strategic action has no place in the minds of the audience or in the competitive world (Eze et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2023).

Capabilities act as the glue that connects these resources, enabling art brands to utilize them optimally. A complex set of skills and competencies facilitated by organizational processes ensures superior coordination of functional activities. For instance, networking capabilities allow art brands to not only develop their own abilities but also effectively leverage the capabilities of network members, benefiting from effective relationships with key stakeholders while optimizing capital expenditure (Akbari et al., 2021).

Marketing capabilities lay the groundwork for the optimal use of assets and customization of services offered to audiences through effective pricing strategies and strategic brand management, leading to brand leadership in the market (Lin et al., 2023). Brand performance indicates its success in a competitive environment based on market share and sales growth. For any business operating in the art field, it is crucial to monitor both its financial performance and non-financial outcomes (Borah et al., 2023).

The metrics and components for assessing the benefits of brand positioning in art have gained increasing attention in this field and remain a vital topic for many brands. One of the research priorities supported by marketing scholars over the past decade is how to measure the benefits of positioning. This importance arises from the fact that improving brand performance from a positioning perspective enhances overall brand performance and increases brand credibility, especially during economic cycles (Baudier et al., 2023).

Paying attention to effective measurement components of positioning benefits plays a crucial role in the long-term success of a business. Consequently, evaluating brand performance in positioning is considered a key action for senior management of art businesses. Achieving financial and market goals by artists and practitioners in this field in today's rapidly changing environment requires an efficient set of effective positioning benefit assessment indicators (Taecharungroj, 2022).

Positioning in art, or more precisely, discovering the unique identity of an artist or artwork and using that identity for the growth and development of contemporary society, is a necessity that has created a scientific relationship between the fields of art and business management, drawing the attention of researchers from both fields to the concept of marketing for artists. In essence, artist marketing is a specific process aimed at expanding audience interest and awareness of an artwork created by an artist. Artists use marketing to attract audiences to their artworks through suitable environments, various online platforms, or even effective word-of-mouth advertising (Altuntaş Vural et al., 2021; Dou et al., 2010; Mogyorósi et al., 2022).

The connection between marketing and art to address the artist's concern about creating a unique identity in the minds of the audience is formed through positioning. Positioning, as a concept more related to the audience's mind than the world of commerce, requires leveraging the artist's multiple capabilities and competencies. Entering and remaining in the audience's mind cannot be achieved merely through financial resources and expensive advertisements, distinctive pricing strategies and discounts, creative distribution methods, or even novel design and production ideas, especially in a context where everything is quickly copied and imitated (Sandhya & Chatterjee, 2023).

What an art practitioner does for positioning themselves, their idea, artwork, or art business is to convert it into recognizable and understandable information that the audience can base their decisions on. This could include decisions to accept an idea, purchase an artwork, attend an art exhibition, or recommend an artist as a personal brand to others. Positioning is a crucial action for any individual,

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idea, artwork, or business because it gives the audience a reason to remember, trust, be loyal, buy, support, and follow (Mogyorósi et al., 2022).

However, one of the most significant limitations regarding positioning in art is identifying valid and reliable criteria and characteristics to create, develop, and strengthen a desirable position in the audience's minds. Limited research in this area has failed to provide a coherent and integrated framework and is often case-specific and scattered. Most studies have focused on individual audience perspectives and have been conducted in manufacturing or service industries. Despite the importance of this topic, art field researchers have rarely engaged in empirical research in this area.

Therefore, in the first step of this research, we will examine the research discourses on brand positioning using qualitative content analysis and review national and international scientific articles published in this field. With a comprehensive insight into the indicators and factors of brand positioning in art, the second step of this research will use industry and academic experts to screen and extract the most important and practical indicators and concepts in brand management in art. Based on this, we will present a practical framework for brand positioning management in the seven fields of art.

2 Methods and Materials

According to the research onion, the philosophy of this study is interpretive, utilizing an inductive approach. Additionally, a mixed-methods methodology (combining qualitative and quantitative methods) was employed to collect and analyze data. This study is classified as cross-sectional in terms of the time horizon. Data collection methods in this research included a combination of library and field studies. The qualitative research population comprised articles and studies published by theorists on the concept of positioning, with a final sample of 166 articles. In the quantitative section, the population consisted of industry experts and academics, with a purposive sample size of 28 university professors and practitioners in the seven fields of art, all with over ten years of experience in execution and teaching in the arts and familiarity with the concepts in the questionnaire.

The validity of the qualitative research step was ensured through intratopic agreement and confirmation by two expert coders. The coded text and extracted propositions were sent to two experts knowledgeable in the field of art and positioning in art, and their suggestions were incorporated into the coding. The reliability of the research was confirmed with a Holsti reliability coefficient of 95%. Data conceptualization and analysis began with open coding, converting propositions into semantic sentences, then transforming concepts into codes, and shaping the concepts and their characteristics. During axial coding, codes were categorized based on similarities, and similar categories were grouped. The results of this analysis were presented as a set of indices, categories, and dimensions necessary for positioning in art.

Fuzzy screening is essentially the Delphi technique, but it is conducted in a single round with the primary goal of initially screening criteria or indicators from the perspective of specialists in a specific field. Given that the screening method aims to make decisions and reach a consensus on issues with unspecified goals and parameters, and since expert evaluations rely on individuals' competencies and are subjective, it is better to use fuzzy numbers instead of definite numbers.

The questionnaire for the quantitative analysis, designed based on the fuzzy screening method, utilized content validity. Experienced practitioners in the seven fields of art and university professors in the art field provided specialized opinions on the content of questions related to the variables in the questionnaire, with implemented revisions indicating approved validity. Furthermore, in non-parametric statistical methods, such as fuzzy screening, validity and reliability are not addressed in the conventional manner of parametric research with hypotheses due to the use of non-parametric tests.

3 Findings and Results

To achieve the main research objective, the text of the selected articles was entered into software, and words, concepts, and phrases were identified as open codes, resulting in 83 indices. These were then defined into 15 general components through axial coding and ultimately categorized into three main dimensions during selective coding, as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1

Coding and Concept Extraction

Stage	Coding Type	Result
First Stage	Open Coding	Identification of initial codes and conversion into 83 indices
Second Stage	Axial Coding	Assignment of 83 indices to 15 general components
Third Stage	Selective Coding	Assignment of 15 general components to 3 dimensions

The three dimensions of resources, capabilities, and benefits of positioning, extracted from the review of selected articles, are identified as the most important positioning components for brands active in the art field:

Table 2

Extracted Codes Related to Positioning Resources in Art

Freq.	Source	Index	Component	Dimension
3	(Butt et al., 2017; Gitau, 2010; Sagar et al., 2011)	Understanding audience needs	Audience-centric	Resources and Assets
4	(Gitau, 2010; Sagar et al., 2011; Sagar et al., 2006; Slater & Narver, 1995)	Responding to audience expectations		
3	(Gitau, 2010; Gulati et al., 2009; Sagar et al., 2011)	Audience relationship management		
4	(Chen-Yu et al., 2016; Emari et al., 2012; Gitau, 2010; Huang & Sarigöllü, 2014)	Audience experience management		
4	(Aaker, 1996; Blankson et al., 2014; Iyer et al., 2019; Sagar et al., 2006)	Brand identity	Brand Assets	
5	(Blankson et al., 2014; Chen-Yu et al., 2016; Mahboobi Renani et al., 2021; Matear et al., 2004; Rajabi, 2011)	Brand heritage		
3	(Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1995; Day, 1994; Hooley & Greenley, 2005)	Copyright and patents	Differentiation from competitors	
2	(Darling, 2001; Pechmann & Ratneshwar, 1991)	Use of new technology		
5	(Aaker, 1996; Butt et al., 2017; Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1995; Day, 1994; Wang & Ahmed, 2007)	Innovative products/services		
4	(Aaker, 1996; Kamoche, 1996; Keller, 1993; Mahoney, 1995)	Value of product/service from the audience's perspective		
5	(Chung et al., 2013; Emari et al., 2012; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010; Huang & Sarigöllü, 2014; Lee & Liao, 2009)	Superior product/service quality		
4	(Darling, 2001; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010; Gwin & Gwin, 2003; Keller et al., 2008)	Uniqueness of product/service		
5	(Aaker, 1996; Kamoche, 1996; Keller, 1993; Mahoney, 1995; Urban & Hauser, 1993)	Access to unique resources		
5	(Chung et al., 2013; Fill, 2002; Gitau, 2010; Kalafatis et al., 2000; Pechmann & Ratneshwar, 1991)	Advertising and public relations	Audience Engagement	
8	(Dou et al., 2010; Hansen & Tambo, 2011; Limani et al., 2018; Melović et al., 2020; Morakanyane, 2017; Oey et al., 2020; Reinartz et al., 2019; Sadiku, 2019)	Use of e-commerce tools		
9	(Bogea & Brito, 2018; Eze et al., 2020; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010; Istrefi-Jahja & Zeqiri, 2022; Järvinen, 2016; Kamoche, 1996; Krishnaprabha & Tarunika, 2020; Limani et al., 2018; Melović et al., 2020; Sadiku, 2019)	Use of digital marketing tools		
5	(Budac & Baltador, 2013; Garachkovska et al., 2021; Hooley et al., 1998; Lubytė, 2021; Porter, 1996)	Liquidity and financial resources	Financial Resources	
3	(Dawes, 2000; Dawes et al., 2009; Malik & Sudhakar, 2014)	Effective cost management		
5	(Gulati et al., 2009; Perks & Moxey, 2011; Sawhney & Zabin, 2002; Tsai, 2002; Tuškej et al., 2013)	Identifying network members	Networking	Capabilities
4	(Perks & Moxey, 2011; Slater & Narver, 1995; Spralls et al., 2011; Tsai, 2002)	Effective relationship management with network members		
3	(Gulati et al., 2009; Perks & Moxey, 2011; Sawhney & Zabin, 2002)	Knowledge exchange among network members		
6	(Gulati et al., 2009; Perks & Moxey, 2011; Savabieh et al., 2020; Sawhney & Zabin, 2002; Slater & Narver, 1995; Spralls et al., 2011)	Mutual trust among network members		
3	(Hooley & Greenley, 2005; Lee & Liao, 2009; Nath et al., 2010)	Marketing programs	Marketing	
2	(Butt et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2008)	Pricing		

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3	(Mahboobi Renani et al., 2021; Mariadoss et al., 2011; Nath et al., 2010)	Brand management		
4	(Hooley & Greenley, 2005; Hooley et al., 2008; Mariadoss et al., 2011; Nath et al., 2010)	Sales policy		
3	(Allen et al., 2008; Matear et al., 2004; Voss & Voss, 2000)	Sales	Financial	Benefits
4	(Allen et al., 2008; Dawes, 2000; Voss & Voss, 2000; Zhu & Nakata, 2007)	Profitability		
3	(Allen et al., 2008; Singh & Ranchhod, 2004; Voss & Voss, 2000)	Return on investment		
2	(Bilgili & Ozkul, 2015; Day, 1994)	Audience loyalty	Relational	
2	(Lenox & King, 2004; Paulraj et al., 2008)	Brand preference by audience		
7	(Blankson et al., 2014; Chen-Yu et al., 2016; Gitau, 2010; Gwin & Gwin, 2003; Iyer et al., 2019; Matear et al., 2004; Rajabi, 2011)	Brand reputation		

In the second step, the fuzzy screening questionnaires related to the positioning indices and components in the seven fields of art were analyzed. This method, based on a two-step process, includes three components. The first component is a set of decision options from which the researcher intends to select a subset for further examination. In this study, the positioning indices and components were extracted from the first step of the research and qualitative content analysis of the articles. The second component is a set of criteria for evaluation, which in this research are the selected criteria for fuzzy screening, comprising the seven artistic fields: music, performing arts, visual arts, fine arts, literary arts, dramatic arts, and cinema. The third component is a group of experts (or panel) whose opinions are decisive in the screening process. In this study, the opinions of 28 specialists and experts in brand positioning were used. Each expert was asked to indicate to what extent each option meets various criteria. This evaluation of criteria satisfaction by the options was conducted using the elements of the scale were as follows:

- VH: Very High
- H: High
- M: Medium
- L: Low
- VL: Very Low

Based on the above scale, each expert provided a set of n values (corresponding to the number of criteria) for each option. These values represent the degree of satisfaction of the option in relation to criterion j.

In the second stage of the fuzzy screening process, the evaluations provided by the experts were combined to obtain an overall assessment of each option. The first step in this stage was to define a consensus function (Q) for the decision-making body. This function indicates the number of experts' agreement needed for an option to be accepted and pass the screening process. The consensus function is defined as follows:

$QA(k) = Sb(k)$

$B(k) = Int[1+(k(q-1)/r)]\ k = 1, 2, ..., r$

Considering that a five-point scale was used in this study, the number 5 was substituted for q, and since 28 individuals responded to the questionnaire, the number 28 was substituted for r:

$B(k) = Int[1+(4/28)k]$

After selecting an appropriate consensus function, the OWA operator can be used for expert consensus. Here, for each of the m options, a single score was provided by expert k (k = 1, 2, ..., r). Then, for each option, the experts' scores must be arranged in descending order. Bij represents the jth highest score for solution i, based on which the overall evaluation of solution i can be calculated as follows:

$ui = \max j\ \{Q(j) \cap Bij\}\ i = 1, 2, ..., m$

Based on the information obtained from the questionnaire, the importance of each index was determined. The following shows the importance of each index as evaluated by the participating experts in the fuzzy screening step.

Table 3

Importance of Indices

Factor	Importance	Factor	Importance	Factor	Importance	Factor	Importance	Factor	Importance	Factor	Importance	Factor	Importance
1	VH	6	H	11	H	16	H	21	H	26	VH	31	H
2	H	7	H	12	H	17	H	22	H	27	H	32	VH
3	VH	8	VH	13	H	18	H	23	H	28	H		
4	H	9	VH	14	VH	19	H	24	H	29	H		
5	VH	10	H	15	H	20	H	25	H	30	H		

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Based on the information obtained from the questionnaire and the importance of the codes, the indices deemed to be of very high importance as the output factors of the fuzzy screening are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Output Indices from Fuzzy Screening

Importance Rank	Index
1	Understanding audience needs
2	Audience relationship management
3	Brand identity
4	Use of new technology
5	Innovative products/services
6	Advertising and public relations
7	Sales policy
8	Brand reputation

Table 5 presents the importance ranking of positioning components for brands as evaluated by the experts participating in the fuzzy screening.

Table 5

Importance of Positioning Components

Importance Rank	Component
1	Audience-centric
2	Financial resources
3	Brand assets
4	Financial benefits
5	Audience engagement
6	Marketing capabilities
7	Relational benefits
8	Differentiation from competitors
9	Networking capabilities

Table 6

Importance of Positioning Components for Brands in the Seven Artistic Fields

Artistic Field	Higher Importance Components
Music	Relational benefits
	Audience engagement
	Marketing capabilities and financial benefits
Performing Arts	Differentiation from competitors
	Relational benefits
	Audience-centric
Visual Arts	Differentiation from competitors
	Brand assets
	Audience engagement
Fine Arts	Differentiation from competitors
	Brand assets
	Relational benefits
Literary Arts	Audience-centric
	Relational benefits
	Differentiation from competitors
Dramatic Arts	Differentiation from competitors
	Relational benefits
	Audience-centric
Cinema	Differentiation from competitors
	Audience engagement
	Marketing capabilities and audience-centric

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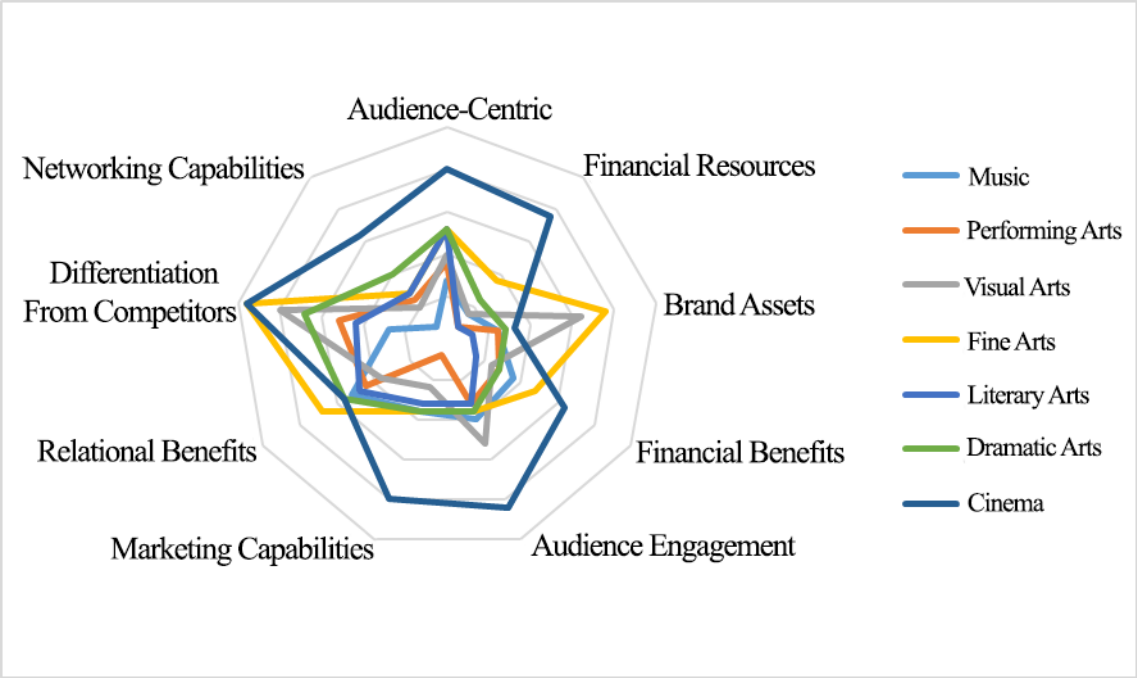
This research also analyzed the components and indices separately for the seven artistic fields, with the results shown in Table 6 and Figure 1.

Figure 1

Segmentation of Positioning Components for Brands in the Seven Artistic Fields



4 Discussion and Conclusion

For the first time, based on the results of scientific research, this study introduces a categorization of positioning indices and components in the art field within three dimensions: resources and assets, capabilities, and benefits. Resources accumulated by businesses or artists, such as copyrights and patents, the use of new technology, innovative products/services, product/service value from the audience's perspective, superior quality, and uniqueness, as well as access to unique resources, act as competitive advantages shaping the audience's mental image of the brand and establishing a superior position compared to competitors. The brand's position in the customer's mind is influenced by the brand's investment in raising audience awareness, alongside brand heritage and identity.

Shaping audience experience through understanding and responding to their needs and expectations, maintaining relationships with target audiences, and customizing products/services lead to a unique purchase and consumption experience for the audience, providing a foundation for brand positioning. Advertising and public relations, leveraging e-commerce capabilities, and effective digital marketing activities can serve as efficient sources of brand communication, offering a significant competitive advantage for brands aiming for effective positioning in the art field.

Understanding brand positioning aspects is crucial for art practitioners to dominate the audience's minds, which play a decisive role in the artist's success and growth. Positioning creates a unique role in the growth of art and personal branding by providing informational and trust-building value for the audience. Establishing a well-known brand in the audience's minds is a valuable tool for artists operating in a dynamic industry influenced by all trends in art consumption. In the current competitive environment, effective brand positioning is critical for an artist's success or failure. Failure to manage the brand's position in the audience's minds not only risks losing the audience but also results in significant material and immaterial costs.

The indices and components approved from the qualitative section of this research were evaluated and surveyed by art experts and subjected to fuzzy screening analysis. The data analysis results in this step revealed that

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the importance of indices and components is not uniform across the seven artistic fields. Experts in each artistic field considered some indices and components more critical for effective positioning than others.

The most emphasized indices for positioning art brands, according to experts, were understanding audience needs, audience relationship management, brand identity, use of new technology, innovative products/services, advertising and public relations, sales policy, and brand reputation. The most important positioning components identified by participating experts were audience-centricity, financial resources, brand assets, financial benefits, audience engagement, marketing capabilities, relational benefits, differentiation from competitors, and networking capabilities.

This research also analyzed the components and indices separately for the seven artistic fields, with results indicating that effective positioning for art brands in the music field is most influenced by relational benefits, including audience loyalty, brand preference by the audience, and brand reputation. Audience engagement, marketing capabilities, and financial benefits ranked second and third.

For performing arts, visual arts, fine arts, dramatic arts, and cinema, the most crucial component was differentiation from competitors, focusing on new technology use, innovative products/services, product/service value from the audience's perspective, superior product/service quality, uniqueness, copyrights and patents, and access to unique resources. Brand assets and relational benefits ranked second and third in these fields.

In literary arts, the most influential component for successful positioning was audience-centricity, including understanding audience needs, responding to audience expectations, audience relationship management, and audience experience management. Relational benefits and differentiation from competitors ranked second and third.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that managers and artists in the seven artistic fields leverage this research's results by investing in audience minds through enhancing capabilities and positioning resources to pave the way for brand growth via a distinct position in target audiences' minds to achieve competitive advantages. Practitioners in various art fields should allocate their material and immaterial resources to indices and components specific to their artistic activities' nature based on this research's findings.

Art brands in the music field should emphasize attracting audience loyalty, increasing brand preference by the audience, and enhancing brand reputation, focusing on relational benefits which have the greatest impact on brand positioning in music. Simultaneously, interacting with the audience, strengthening marketing capabilities, and developing financial benefits will help dominate target audiences' minds. To enhance customer loyalty, music brands could implement loyalty programs such as points programs that reward customers for purchasing various products/services or performing specific activities like sharing brand activities on social media. Tiered loyalty programs that offer different benefits based on the level of loyalty, value-based loyalty programs providing unique benefits for high-value customers, and personal recommendation programs based on data analysis of customer behavior and preferences can be highly effective.

Regarding brand preference, music brands should develop and execute advertising campaigns highlighting the brand's distinguishing benefits over competitors, maintain and continuously update customer profiles to offer tailored suggestions, and analyze customer behavior on websites and social media to improve services. Increasing customer interaction and creating a strong emotional connection through regular surveys and feedback analysis, supporting customers throughout their journey, and anticipating their buying behavior can significantly enhance brand preference.

For reputation management, music brands should invest in creating and maintaining a strong and favorable brand image, utilizing appropriate advertising spaces, conducting targeted advertising campaigns, and leveraging multiple media platforms. Collaborating with the media, participating in events, partnering with celebrities, and engaging in charitable activities can effectively enhance brand reputation. Effective communication with customers, using methods like phone, email, and social media, and promoting customer feedback and opinions can further strengthen brand reputation.

In performing arts, visual arts, fine arts, dramatic arts, and cinema, differentiation from competitors, emphasizing new technology use, innovative products/services, superior quality, and uniqueness, is the most important component. Effective positioning in these fields requires appropriate pricing strategies, identifying and addressing the needs of well-segmented target customers, creating unique customer experiences in product/service presentation, and offering unique sales propositions. Utilizing differentiation techniques, including vertical differentiation (improving product/service features), horizontal differentiation (attracting customers based on product/service

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specifications and personal preferences), and mixed differentiation (combining vertical and horizontal techniques) can effectively establish brand superiority.

In literary arts, audience-centricity, focusing on understanding audience needs, responding to expectations, relationship management, and experience management, has the most significant impact on positioning. It is recommended that literary art brands maintain effective two-way communication, subtly guide audience opinions, avoid biased approaches, focus on mutual benefits and win-win strategies, maximize visual appeal, and create a sense of empathy and unity with the brand to establish a distinct position in audience minds.

Future researchers are encouraged to use this study's results with a gap analysis approach to examine the current and desired positioning of active brands in the seven artistic fields, facilitating the identification of gaps and their resolution. Investigating the strengths and weaknesses of art brands based on positioning resources, capabilities, and benefits is an essential topic for future research, helping brands, artists, and art stakeholders leverage these strengths in developing the seven arts in Iran. Future research on the positioning of art brands can also draw practical insights for practitioners, and benchmarking the best practices in the seven artistic fields can guide researchers in developing art brands by learning from successful examples.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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