

## Effects of reward management system on elite athletes' success

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### Aim of abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the motivational effects of a reward management system on sportive success. This study covers athletes who received a financial grant from the Turkish Government as a result of their athletic achievements and participated in one of the last three Summer or Winter Olympic Games. Reward Management is a well-addressed topic in organizational behaviour literature, but rewarding athletic performance through government led policies is a scientifically uncovered subject due to the fact that many countries do not financially reward successful athletes with exorbitant amounts.

### Literature review

In Turkey, the reward policies for the success in sports are regulated by the Council of Ministers. In addition to their regulations, each federation has its own reward policy in accordance with the main regulations. Although Turkey ranked the fourth highest in bonus payouts at the London 2012 Olympic Games, Turkish athletes won only 5 medals and 2 of these medals are currently under doping investigation. The Turkish athletes who won gold medals were each rewarded 583 thousand Euros, while U.S athletes received 19.5 thousands Euros (BBC Sport Olympics, 2012). The total number of Olympic medals won by U.S. athletes at the 2012 Olympic Games is greater than the total number of medals won by Turkish athletes since they first participated in the Olympic Games 104 years ago.

Reward management should be constructed on a well-articulated philosophy. Reward management should not only encompass pay and benefits; instead, it should incorporate non-financial rewards such as recognition, training, and development. (Mitchell, 1982). We currently believe that; success is becoming identified monetarily rather than with purpose.

Should there be something more valuable than just money given under the term "bonus"? The philosophy of reward management must be strategic in the sense that "it addresses longer-term issues relating to how people should be valued for what they do and what they achieve" (Armstrong, 2007). Being an Olympic or national athlete requires dedication, self-discipline, passion and effort and these athletes should maintain these feelings consistently throughout their athletic career.

The main reason behind this study is our concern whether such a great bonus system has a negative impact on athlete's performances, contrary to popular beliefs or not. This research seeks to find an answer to the following question; what motivational effects do such rewards have on the performance of athletes to achieve and maintain success over the long term? Learning about the deficiencies in the reward management system could result in constructive resolutions. Therefore, the results may help the Council of Ministers create a new, more well rounded, reward management system that implements

reward policies, processes and practices to support the lifetime achievements of elite sports athletes.

### Methodology

Primary source analysis is performed on recorded transcripts generated from in-person interviews with 12 Turkish elite athletes. In this research, semi-structured in-depth interviews will be conducted with elite Turkish athletes who were rewarded as a result of their sportive success in team or individual sports at prominent international contests. A semi-structured interview is one of the most commonly used quantitative methods in social sciences, allowing the researcher to examine social processes. An in-depth interview further examines the social actors meanings and interpretations (Blaikie, 2000). Each interview is recorded and later transcribed. A focused coding process will be employed in order to develop deeper sub-themes, patterns and strategies (Esterberg, K. G., 2002). Data generated from the interviews will be content analyzed, and the results will be examined in comparison to the findings in existing literature.

### Results

This is a work-in-progress study and therefore the results and discussions are as yet to be determined. Data acquisition and analyses are on going. The early findings in our study revealed that financial rewards are more important for the athletes who participate in individual sports; because individual athletes earn far less in comparison to team branches, financial rewards provide them an opportunity to have a more financially secure future. Another important finding, the motivational effects vary from athlete to athlete.

### References

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