



Review article

The Olympic Journey of Turks

Gokhan ACAR¹, Fatma SERIN², Ayse Dilek AKINCI²

¹ Usak University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Usak

² Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Burdur

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine Turkey's participation and medal performance in the Olympic Games between 1908 and 2024 using the "Time Series Analysis" method. The methodology of the research relies on Time Series Analysis, which involves analyzing data collected sequentially over time. Time Series Analysis aims to understand and predict future trends, cycles, and random (residual) changes based on past data. According to the findings of the study, countries like the United States and China stand out due to their extensive infrastructure, athlete training programs, and emphasis on sports culture. In contrast, Turkey lags behind in this regard, highlighting deficiencies in winning medals across a broader range of disciplines. This situation became even more evident during the 2024 Paris Games, where Turkey failed to secure a gold medal, winning only three silver and five bronze medals, with a total of eight. Although Turkey's performance in the Olympic Games has shown improvements during certain periods (e.g., 1948 London, 1960 Rome, and 2020 Tokyo), it remains limited compared to Olympic powerhouses like the United States and China. Despite participating in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games with 101 athletes across 18 different disciplines, Turkey ranked 64th in the medal standings. This position sharply contrasts with the performances of the 204 participating countries and 329 events (32 sports and 48 disciplines), underscoring the need for a more comprehensive development process in Turkish sports. Considering its young population and potential, Turkey, with its long-standing Olympic history, needs to establish a large pool of athletes, increase infrastructure investments, and develop realistic programs for training athletes across diverse disciplines. These efforts are critically important for enhancing Turkey's success in the Olympic Games.

This article is an extended version of the study titled "Turkey's Olympic Journey: From The First Participation to The Present Day", which was presented as a full-text oral presentation at the 10TH International Aegean Conferences held on October 05-07, 2024.

Derleme makalesi

Türklerin Olimpiyat Serüveni

Gökhan ACAR¹, Kayhan SERİN², Ayşe Dilek AKINCI²

¹ Uşak Üniversitesi, Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi, Uşak

² Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Burdur

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'nin 1908-2024 yılları arasındaki Olimpiyat Oyunları'na katılım ve madalya performansı 'Zaman Serisi Analizi' yöntemi kullanılarak incelemektir. Araştırmanın yönteminde Zaman Serisi Analizi (Time Series Analysis) zaman içinde sıralı olarak toplanan verilerin analizine dayanmaktadır. Zaman serisi analizi, geçmiş verilere dayanarak gelecekteki trendleri, döngüleri ve rastgele (residual) değişiklikleri anlamayı ve tahmin etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma sonucunda elde edilen bulgulara göre, ABD ve Çin gibi ülkeler, geniş altyapı sporcu yetiştirme programları ve spor kültürüne verdikleri önemle ön plana çıkmaktadır. Buna karşın, Türkiye bu anlamda rekabetin gerisinde kalmaktadır. Bu durum, Türkiye'nin daha geniş bir branş yelpazesinde madalya kazanma konusunda eksiklik yaşadığını göstermektedir. Bu durum 2024 Paris Oyunlarında bu durum daha da belirgin hale gelmiş ve altın madalya kazanılamamış, 3 gümüş, 5 bronz olmak üzere toplam madalya sayısı da 8'de kalmıştır. Türkiye'nin Olimpiyat Oyunları'ndaki başarı grafiği, bazı dönemlerde (1948 Londra, 1960 Roma ve 2020 Tokyo) artış göstermiş olsa da, dünya genelinde ABD ve Çin gibi olimpiyat devleriyle kıyaslandığında sınırlı kalmaktadır. Türkiye'nin 2024 Paris Olimpiyat Oyunları'na 101 sporcu ile 18 ayrı branşta katılmasına rağmen, diğer 204 ülke ve 329 etkinlik (32 branş, 48 dal) gibi geniş bir branş yelpazesinde madalya sıralamasında 64. sırada yer alması, Türkiye'nin spor alanında daha kapsamlı bir gelişim sürecine ihtiyaç duyduğunu göstermektedir. Genç nüfusu ve potansiyeli göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, köklü bir olimpiyat deneyimine sahip olan Türkiye'nin geniş bir sporcu havuzu oluşturması, altyapı yatırımlarını artırması ve farklı branşlarda sporcu yetiştirilmesine yönelik gerçekçi programlar geliştirmesi, olimpiyatlardaki başarısını artırmak için kritik öneme sahiptir.

Bu makale 05-07 Aralık 2024 tarihinde düzenlenen 10TH International Aegean Kongresinde, "Türkiye'nin Olimpiyat Yolculuğu: İlk Katılımdan Günümüze" başlığı ile sözel tam metin olarak sunulan çalışmanın genişletilmiş halidir.

Introduction

The Olympic Games are an international organization with roots tracing back to ancient Greece and are considered one of the most enduring sports events in history. Originally held in honor of Zeus, the ancient Olympic Games eventually became one of the most significant social and cultural events of Greek society (Swaddling, 1999). These games came to an end in 393 A.D. when Roman Emperor Theodosius I abolished them due to their association with pagan traditions. However, in the 19th century, French baron Pierre de Coubertin revived the Olympics in a modern context. Coubertin's goal was to bring the spirit of the ancient Olympic Games back to life in the modern world to promote peace, friendship, and solidarity (Mouratidis, 1984). This effort culminated in the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896, marking the beginning of a tradition that has been carried out every four years since (Lee, 1998).

Modern Olympic Games are organized into two main categories: the Summer and Winter Olympics. These include summer sports such as athletics, swimming, and football, as well as winter sports like skiing, figure skating, and luge (Girginov & Parry, 2005). The Olympics have evolved beyond being a platform for showcasing physical endurance and performance to become a symbol of international peace and friendship. In addition to serving as an arena for global athletic competition, the Games contribute to the development of diplomatic relations between nations (Cull, 2008).

The symbols of the Olympic Games play a vital role in reinforcing the universality and unifying spirit of the organization. The five interlocking rings symbolize the five continents, while the Olympic torch represents the enduring tradition of the Games from ancient pagan times to the modern era. Every Olympic Games begin with the lighting of the torch in Olympia, Greece, a ritual that connects the rich pagan history of the Olympics to the present day (MacAloon, 2013).

Turkey's participation in the Olympic Games began during the Ottoman Empire and continued to develop in the Republican era. Turkey first participated in the 1906 Athens Intercalated Games with individual athletes and gained official representation after the establishment of the Ottoman National Olympic Committee in 1908 and its acceptance into the International Olympic Committee in 1911 (Ziyagil, 2021). The first major achievement in Turkey's Olympic history came in the 1936 Berlin Games when Yaşar Erkan won a gold

medal. In subsequent years, achievements in wrestling, weightlifting, and taekwondo strengthened Turkey's presence in the Olympic Games (Turkish National Olympic Committee, 2024a).

This study aims to examine Turkey's participation and medal performance in the Olympic Games from a historical perspective. It seeks to explore how Turkey's involvement in the Games evolved from its initial participation during the Ottoman Empire to its development in the Republican era. Furthermore, the study will evaluate Turkey's successes in various sports disciplines, particularly wrestling, and analyze the dynamics of its development in the field of sports within the context of the Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games and Their History

The Olympic Games, originating from ancient Greece, have evolved into the most prestigious and widely attended international sporting event in the world today. The first Olympic Games were held in 776 BCE in Olympia, Greece (Romano, 2007). Initially held every four years, these ancient games were religious rituals and ceremonies participated in exclusively by Greek city-states. The Olympics began as sports events organized in honor of the pagan god Zeus and gradually became one of the most significant social and cultural events of ancient Greek geography (Spivey, 2012).

The games came to an end in 393 CE when Roman Emperor Theodosius I abolished them due to their association with pagan traditions (Crowther, 2007). However, the foundations of the modern Olympic Games were laid in the 19th century by French baron Pierre de Coubertin. Inspired by the ancient games, Coubertin envisioned reviving the Olympics in a modern context to promote international sports in an environment of peace and solidarity. This vision culminated in the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896, and since then, they have been organized every four years on a global scale (Pop, 2013).

Modern Olympic Games are categorized into two main events: the Summer and Winter Olympics. Since 1924, the Winter Olympics have been organized to include sports specific to colder climates. While athletics, swimming, gymnastics, and boxing dominate the Summer Olympics, skiing, ice skating, and luge are prominent in the Winter Olympics (Guttman, 2002).

The Olympic Games have transcended being merely a platform for physical endurance and performance, becoming a symbol of international peace and friendship. For athletes, these games represent not only global competition but also a platform for fostering diplomatic relations between nations (Callebat, 1998). Held every four years, the Olympics bring together athletes from around the world to compete in a spirit of friendship, sportsmanship, and fair play, creating a global arena for unity and shared values (Middleton, 2008).

Paganism, as an ancient nature-based polytheistic belief system, is rooted in rituals (Crowther, 2007). The rituals of the modern Olympics are based on the traditions of ancient pagan beliefs. The symbols of the modern Olympic Games reflect the organization's significance: the five-colored Olympic rings represent the unity of five continents and the universality of the games, while the Olympic torch symbolizes continuity from ancient to modern times. Every Olympic Games begins with the lighting of the torch in Olympia, Greece, followed by ceremonies transporting it to the host country. This ritual is considered a bridge between the ancient and modern Olympics (MacAloon, 2013).

Over time, the Olympic Games have evolved beyond a purely sports-focused event, becoming a platform for political, cultural, and social exchange. As an arena where athletes and spectators overcome national differences to unite around universal values, the Olympics remain one of the most significant events that promote peace, unity, and human dignity (Kanin, 2019). However, the 2024 Paris Olympic Games' opening and closing ceremonies faced criticism from Pope Francis, a leader of the Catholic Christian world, and members of other religious groups. This controversy has called into question the Olympic Committee's claims of promoting peace, unity, well-being, and human dignity, challenging its credibility.

Turkey's Olympic Journey

The Ottoman Empire Period

The Ottoman Empire's interest in the modern Olympic Games emerged in the late 19th century. Athletes from the Ottoman Empire participated individually in the 1906 Athens Intercalated Games. Greek and foreign athletes from Izmir, Thessaloniki, and Istanbul competed in athletics and rowing. Among these, the most notable figure was Yorgo Aliprantis from the Tatabla Heraklis Club, who set world and Olympic records in the 10-meter rope climbing event. However, despite being an Ottoman citizen at the time, his achievement was

recorded in favor of Greece at the athlete's request (Turkish National Olympic Committee, 2024b).

The Ottoman Olympic Committee was established in 1908 but was officially recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1912 as one of the first 16 committee members. The Ottoman Olympic Committee first participated in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. Selim Sırrı Bey (Tarcan), known as a pioneer of modern sports in Turkey, played a significant role in this period. However, the presidency of the Ottoman Olympic Committee was assigned to former athlete Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz, while Selim Sırrı Tarcan assumed the position of secretary-general (Turkish National Olympic Committee, 2024b; Sinoforoglu, 2020).

The first recorded athlete to represent the Ottoman Empire at the 1908 London Olympics was Aleko Mulos, a student of Galatasaray High School and a member of the Tatavla Heraklis. Competing in gymnastics, Mulos became the first athlete to represent the Ottoman Empire in the Olympics. Selim Sırrı Bey was also the Ottoman Empire's first representative at the IOC, attending the IOC meeting held in Berlin in 1909. His efforts led to the establishment of the Ottoman Olympic Committee, aiming for more organized and formal participation in the Olympic Games. Through Selim Sırrı Bey's endeavors, Turkey's inclusion in the Olympic movement accelerated (Acar, 2023).

The 1912 Stockholm Olympics marked the first official participation of the Ottoman Empire. According to Selim Sırrı Bey, advertisements with the title "*Looking for Sports Enthusiasts and Benefactors were published in newspapers such as İkdam and Sabah. In response, two Armenian athletes, Mıgırđıç Mıgıryan and Vahram Haret Papazyan, applied to participate in the Olympics. Both Robert College students obtained the necessary information from Tarcan and learned they had to cover their travel expenses to Sweden on their own*" (Turkish National Olympic Committee, 2024b). With Selim Sırrı Bey's support, the Armenian athletes represented the Ottoman Empire. Papazyan competed in the 800 and 1500-meter races but did not achieve a ranking. Mıgıryan participated in decathlon and pentathlon events, becoming one of the first athletes to represent the Ottoman Empire. During this period, athletes had to rely on their own resources to participate, as state support was minimal (Acar, 2023).

Thanks to Selim Sırrı Bey's contributions, the Ottoman Empire began to recognize the importance of sports, particularly the Olympic Games. However, the 1916 Berlin Olympics

were canceled due to World War I, and the Ottoman Empire could not sustain further participation in subsequent years (Turkish National Olympic Committee, 2024b).

Republic of Turkey Period

The Republic of Turkey's first participation in the modern Olympic Games was at the 1924 Paris Olympics. Young Turkey, in line with Atatürk's emphasis on the importance of sports, placed significant focus on the development of physical education and sports. With the organization of the Turkish Training Associations Alliance (TICI) and the Turkish National Olympic Committee (TMOK), Turkish athletes competed in events such as wrestling, football, and athletics at the Paris 1924 Games. These games marked a significant milestone as Turkey's first official step onto the international sports stage (Acar, 2023).

At the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Turkey won its first medal in wrestling. Ahmet Kireççi (known as Mersinli Ahmet) earned a bronze medal in freestyle wrestling, marking Turkey's initial encounter with an Olympic medal. In the same Olympics, Yaşar Erkan claimed a gold medal in Greco-Roman wrestling, becoming Turkey's first Olympic champion. This achievement is regarded as a pivotal moment that initiated Turkey's dominance in wrestling (Turkish National Olympic Committee, 2024b).

The 1948 London Olympics stand out as a turning point in Turkish sports history. Turkish wrestlers achieved remarkable success, winning four gold medals. Figures such as Nasuh Akar and Gazanfer Bilge became legends on the wrestling stage during this period. Moreover, Ruhi Sarıalp won a bronze medal in triple jump, becoming the first Turkish athlete to secure an Olympic medal in athletics (Ozsoy, 2017).

Turkey's regular participation in the Olympics began with the 1924 Paris Games. However, there were certain occasions when Turkey could not participate. The country was not invited to the 1920 Antwerp Games due to its status following World War I and did not attend the 1932 Los Angeles Games due to distance and financial constraints (Ozdemir, 2013). Turkey also boycotted the 1980 Moscow Games, joining several Western countries in protest of the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan (Turkish National Olympic Committee, 2024b).

Turkey's Participation and Medal Status in Summer and Winter Olympics

Turkey has won the majority of its Olympic medals in the wrestling category at the Summer Olympics. In total, Turkey has secured 111 medals: 41 gold, 29 silver, and 41 bronze. Sports

such as wrestling, weightlifting, and taekwondo are the primary areas where Turkey has achieved success. Wrestling, in particular, stands out as the sport with the most medals, accounting for 68 of Turkey's total medals, underscoring the country's significant achievements in this field (Anadolu Agency, 2024).

In contrast, Turkey has not yet won any medals at the Winter Olympics, highlighting the need for further development and strategic planning in this area. Turkey's low participation rate in terms of the number of athletes and its lack of medals in the Winter Olympics remain critical shortcomings (Anadolu Agency, 2024).

Achievements in the Olympics

Turkey's Olympic achievements are historically rooted in wrestling. The country won its first gold medal in wrestling at the 1936 Berlin Olympics with Yaşar Erkan. At the 1948 London Games, wrestlers such as Nasuh Akar, Celal Atik, and Yaşar Doğu solidified Turkey's success in this field. Additionally, in weightlifting, world-renowned athletes like Naim Süleymanoğlu and Halil Mutlu brought gold medals to Turkey (Anadolu Agency, 2024).

In recent years, Turkey has also excelled in taekwondo, with Servet Tazegül standing out at the 2012 London Olympics and Taha Akgül in wrestling at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics. Beyond wrestling, Turkey diversified its achievements at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, where Mete Gazoz won a gold medal in archery and Busenaz Sürmeneli claimed gold in women's boxing, further expanding the country's successes.

Method

In this study, Turkey's participation and medal performance in the Olympic Games between 1908 and 2024 were analyzed using the Time Series Analysis method. Time series analysis enables the examination of data that changes over time and allows for the identification of whether these changes exhibit specific trends and patterns. The data include Turkey's participation counts and the number of medals won in the Olympic Games, which are held every four years.

Time Series Analysis is based on the examination of data collected sequentially over time. Time series data typically consist of observations or measurements recorded at regular intervals within a specific time frame. This method aims to understand and predict future trends, cycles, and random (residual) changes based on historical data. By modeling these

components separately, time series analysis provides a better understanding of the data structure (Kirchgässner et al., 2012; Hamilton, 2020).

The data used in the analysis cover Turkey's participation in the Summer Olympics during both the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey periods, including the number of athletes and medal-winning rates. The study aims to evaluate the changes in Turkey's performance in the Olympic Games over time.

The analysis focused on participation years, the total number of athletes, and the number of gold, silver, and bronze medals won. Particular attention was given to the increasing participation and medal-winning rates starting from the 1936 Berlin Olympics to observe trends over time.

Findings

Distribution of Medals by Sport and Time Series Analysis Participation Trends: As shown in Table 1, the number of participations in the Olympic Games during the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey periods reveals fluctuations in athlete participation, beginning with the 1908 London Games. For instance, participation was not possible in the 1920 Antwerp Games due to World War I, and no athletes were sent to the 1932 Los Angeles Games due to economic and distance-related challenges. Notably, regular and increasing participation has been observed since the 1948 London Games.

Table 1. Turkey's Participation in the Summer Olympic Games (1908–1932)

Country	Olympics	Number of Athletes	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total Medals	Rank
Ottoman Empire	1908 London	1	0	0	0	0	–
Ottoman Empire	1912 Stockholm	2	0	0	0	0	–
Ottoman Empire	1920 Antwerp	Not invited due to World War I					
Republic of Turkey	Fransa 1924 Paris	22	0	0	0	0	–
Republic of Turkey	Hollanda 1928 Amsterdam	31	0	0	0	0	–
Republic of Turkey	1932 Los Angeles	Did not participate due to economic challenges and distance constraints					

When examining Table 1, it is evident that during the Ottoman Empire period (1908-1912) and the early years of the Republic of Turkey (1924-1928), participation in the Olympics remained symbolic, as no medals were won during these years.

Table 2. Distribution of Total Medals Won by Turkey in the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympic Games by Discipline

Medal	Games	Athlete	Discipline	Event
Gold	1936 Berlin	Yaşar Erkan	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 61 kg
Bronze	1936 Berlin	Ahmet Kireççi	Wrestling	Erkekler serbest 79 kg

As shown in Table 2, Turkey won its first Olympic medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, securing 1 gold and 1 bronze medal with the participation of 48 athletes. The consistency in participation highlights the development of Turkey's sports policies, while factors such as wars and economic difficulties negatively impacted the number of participants. In terms of medal performance, Turkey's ability to win Olympic medals has shown an upward trend over time. Since the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Turkey has particularly excelled in the discipline of wrestling, further strengthening its performance in this sport.

Table 3. Distribution of Total Medals Won by Turkey in the 1948 London Summer Olympic Games by Discipline

Medal	Games	Athlete	Discipline	Event
Gold	1948 London	Nasuh Akar	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 57 kg
Gold	1948 London	Gazanfer Bilge	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 62 kg
Gold	1948 London	Celal Atik	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 67 kg
Gold	1948 London	Yaşar Doğu	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 73 kg
Gold	1948 London	Ahmet Kireççi	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman +87 kg
Gold	1948 London	Mehmet Oktav	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 62 kg
Silver	1948 London	Halit Balamir	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 52 kg
Silver	1948 London	Adil Candemir	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 79 kg
Silver	1948 London	Kenan Olcay	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 52 kg
Silver	1948 London	Muhlis Tayfur	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 79 kg
Silver	1948 London	Halil Kaya	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 57 kg
Silver	1948 London	Ruhi Sarıalp	Athletics	Men's Triple Jump

In Table 3, Turkey achieved a significant leap in medal count at the 1948 London Olympic Games, winning 6 gold, 4 silver, and 1 bronze medal in wrestling. This accomplishment not

only solidified Turkey's success on the international wrestling stage but also highlighted wrestling as the country's flagship sport. Furthermore, the bronze medal won in athletics marked Turkey's first-ever medal in a discipline other than wrestling, making it a historic achievement.

Table 4. Distribution of Total Medals Won by Turkey in the 1960 Rome Summer Olympic Games by Discipline

Medal	Games	Athlete	Discipline	Event
Gold	1960 Rome	Müzahir Sille	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 62 kg
Gold	1960 Rome	Mithat Bayrak	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 73 kg
Gold	1960 Rome	Tevfik Kış	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 87 kg
Gold	1960 Rome	Ahmet Bilek	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 52 kg
Gold	1960 Rome	Mustafa Dağıstanlı	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 62 kg
Gold	1960 Rome	Hasan Güngör	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 79 kg
Gold	1960 Rome	İsmet Atlı	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 87 kg
Silver	1960 Rome	İsmail Ogan	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 73 kg
Silver	1960 Rome	Hamit Kaplan	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle +87 kg

In Table 4, the increase in the number of medals at the 1960 Rome Games is notable, with Turkey winning 7 gold and 2 silver medals in wrestling, highlighting its dominance in this discipline. On the other hand, the lack of medals in other disciplines, such as athletics and gymnastics, reveals Turkey's inability to establish the desired sports infrastructure in these key areas.

Table 5. Distribution of Total Medals Won by Turkey in the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games by Discipline

Medal	Games	Athlete	Discipline	Event
Bronze	1984 Los Angeles	Eyüp Can	Boks	Men's Flyweight (51 kg)
Bronze	1984 Los Angeles	Turgut Aykaç	Boks	Men's Featherweight (57 kg)
Bronze	1984 Los Angeles	Ayhan Taşkın	Güreş	Men's Freestyle Wrestling +100 kg

According to Table 5, the decrease in the number of medals at the 1984 Los Angeles Games, with only 3 bronze medals won, highlights an inconsistency in performance. However, the two bronze medals achieved in boxing stand out as significant milestones in Turkey's Olympic journey.

Table 6. Distribution of Total Medals Won by Turkey in the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympic Games by Discipline

Medal	Games	Athlete	Discipline	Event
Gold	1988 Seoul	Naim Süleymanoğlu	Weightlifting	Men's 60 kg
Silver	1988 Seoul	Necmi Gençalp	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 82 kg

As shown in Table 6, the medal count at the 1988 Seoul Games remained limited to 1 gold and 1 silver medal, reflecting a continued decline. This underlines Turkey's insufficient investment in sports disciplines despite its growing Olympic experience.

A standout achievement of these Games was the gold medal won by Naim Süleymanoğlu, a Bulgarian Turk who sought asylum and competed for Turkey. Süleymanoğlu would go on to win gold medals at the 1992 Barcelona and 1996 Atlanta Olympics, becoming a legendary figure in the history of the sport. Known as "Pocket Hercules," Süleymanoğlu institutionalized weightlifting in Turkey through his personal efforts and left an indelible mark on Olympic history. His success paved the way for other champions in weightlifting, such as Halil Mutlu, solidifying his place as an unforgettable icon in Turkey's Olympic journey.

Table 7. Distribution of Total Medals Won by Turkey in the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympic Games by Discipline

Medal	Games	Athlete	Discipline	Event
Gold	2020 Tokyo	Mete Gazoz	Archery	Men's Individual
Gold	2020 Tokyo	Busenaz Sürmeneli	Boxing	Women's Welterweight
Silver	2020 Tokyo	Buse Naz Çakıroğlu	Boxing	Women's Flyweight
Silver	2020 Tokyo	Eray Şamdan	Karate	Men's Kumite 67 kg
Bronze	2020 Tokyo	Hakan Reçber	Taekwondo	Men's 68 kg
Bronze	2020 Tokyo	Hatice Kübra İlgün	Taekwondo	Women's 57 kg
Bronze	2020 Tokyo	Rıza Kayaalp	Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 130 kg
Bronze	2020 Tokyo	Yasemin Adar	Wrestling	Women's Freestyle 76 kg
Bronze	2020 Tokyo	Ferhat Arıcan	Cimnastik	Men's Parallel Bars
Bronze	2020 Tokyo	Taha Akgül	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 125 kg
Bronze	2020 Tokyo	Ali Sofuoğlu	Karate	Men's Kata
Bronze	2020 Tokyo	Merve Çoban	Karate	Women's Kumite 61 kg
Bronze	2020 Tokyo	Uğur Aktaş	Karate	Men's Kumite +75 kg

According to Table 7, the 2020 Tokyo Games represent the highest medal count in Turkey's Olympic history, with a total of 13 medals (2 gold, 2 silver, and 9 bronze). While this is numerically significant, the lack of gold medals in comparison to Turkey's earlier achievements—such as 6 golds in the 1948 London Games and 7 golds in the 1960 Rome Games—highlights a disparity in quality over quantity.

Nevertheless, the diversification of medal-winning disciplines, such as archery, gymnastics, karate, and women's boxing, highlights promising developments beyond Turkey's traditional strengths in wrestling and weightlifting. Particularly noteworthy is Busenaz Sürmeneli, who secured Turkey's first-ever gold medal in women's boxing—a recently introduced Olympic discipline—firmly establishing herself as a standout athlete in this field.

Table 8. Distribution of Total Medals Won by Turkey in the 2024 Paris Summer Olympic Games by Discipline

Medal	Games	Athlete	Discipline	Event
Silver	2024 Paris	Şevval İlayda Tarhan & Yusuf Dikeç	Shooting	Mixed 10m Air Pistol
Silver	2024 Paris	Hatice Akbaş	Boxing	Women's Bantamweight (54 kg)
Silver	2024 Paris	Buse Naz Çakıroğlu	Boxing	Women's Flyweight (50 kg)
Bronze	2024 Paris	Abdullah Yıldırım, Mete Gazoz, Ulaş Tümer	Archery	Men's Team
Bronze	2024 Paris	Buse Tosun Çavuşoğlu	Wrestling	Women's Freestyle 68 kg
Bronze	2024 Paris	Esra Yıldız Kahraman	Boxing	Women's Featherweight (57 kg)
Bronze	2024 Paris	Taha Akgül	Wrestling	Men's Freestyle 125 kg
Bronze	2024 Paris	Nafia Kuş	Taekwondo	Women's +67 kg

According to Table 8, Turkey won a total of 8 medals (3 silver and 5 bronze) at the 2024 Paris Games, reflecting a decline in medal count. This decrease highlights a lack of investment in the necessary sports infrastructure.

Examining the temporal trends and shifting performance range, it is evident that Turkey's success in the Olympic Games has experienced fluctuations, with certain periods showing notable improvement. While Turkey achieved significant success in wrestling during the 1936–1960 period, recent years have witnessed Turkey's emergence in other disciplines such as archery, boxing, and taekwondo, signaling a broader spectrum of achievements.

Table 9. Distribution of Total Medals Won by Turkey in Summer Olympic Games (1936–2024) by Discipline

Discipline	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Wrestling	29	18	21	68
Weightlifting	8	1	2	11
Taekwondo	1	3	6	10
Boxing	1	5	4	10
Judo	1	0	1	2
Archery	1	0	1	2
Karate	0	1	3	4
Shooting	0	1	0	1
Athletics	0	0	2	2
Gymnastics	0	0	1	1
Total (10 Disciplines)	41	29	41	111

According to Table 9, from the first Olympic medal won at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, Turkey has won a total of 111 Olympic medals: 41 gold, 29 silver, and 41 bronze, achieved by 86 athletes.

The analysis conducted through Time Series Analysis reveals a continuous upward trend in Turkey's participation and medal performance in the Olympic Games. Particularly after 1936, Turkey achieved remarkable success in wrestling, which later extended to other sports disciplines starting from the 2000s.

Results

Turkey's achievements in the Olympic Games have historically been rooted in traditional sports such as wrestling, but in recent years, notable successes have been achieved in diverse disciplines. This continuity of success was highlighted at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, where Turkey participated with its largest delegation in history—108 athletes across 18 sports—and secured 13 medals: 2 gold, 2 silver, and 9 bronze. However, the 2024 Paris Olympic Games marked a significant decline. Despite participating with 101 athletes across 18 disciplines, Turkey failed to win any gold medals, earning a total of 8 medals: 3 silver and 5 bronze. This performance underscored inadequacies in sports policies and a lack of emphasis on infrastructure. It suggests that the Ministry of Youth and Sports has not developed an effective strategic plan to support athletes' international success. This also indicates that the medals won largely reflect the individual efforts of the athletes.

In the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, Turkey secured medals in various disciplines with a total of 8 athletes. In shooting, Şevval İlayda Tarhan and Yusuf Dikeç won silver in the mixed 10-meter air pistol event. In boxing, Hatice Akbaş (women's 54 kg) and Buse Naz Çakıroğlu (women's 51 kg) earned silver medals. The men's archery team, consisting of Mete Gazoz, Ulaş Berkim Tümer, and Abdullah Yıldırım, achieved bronze. In wrestling, Buse Tosun Çavuşoğlu (women's freestyle 68 kg) and Taha Akgül (men's freestyle 125 kg) secured bronze medals. Additionally, Esra Yıldız Kahraman (women's 57 kg) in boxing and Nafia Kuş Aydın (women's +67 kg) in taekwondo completed the Games with bronze medals.

Since the Ottoman Empire, Turkey has regularly participated in the Summer Olympic Games since the establishment of the Republic in 1924. Turkey's achievements, particularly in wrestling, have been noteworthy. The ascent began with Turkey's first gold medal at the 1936 Berlin Olympics and became more pronounced in the 1948 London and 1960 Rome Olympics. To date, Turkish athletes have won a total of 111 Olympic medals: 41 gold, 29 silver, and 41 bronze. The majority of these successes have been in disciplines such as wrestling and weightlifting.

Despite Turkey's deep Olympic tradition, a noticeable decline was observed at the 2024 France Olympic Games compared to the previous Olympics. After winning 13 medals (2 gold, 2 silver, and 9 bronze) at the 2020 Tokyo Games, Turkey managed only 8 medals (0 gold, 3 silver, and 5 bronze) in Paris. This decline highlights a stagnation in Turkey's success in traditionally strong disciplines such as wrestling, archery, and boxing.

The reasons for this decline may include shortcomings in nurturing young athletes, ineffective implementation of sports policies, or insufficient competitive development. This situation points to the need for Turkey to develop a broader sports policy to maintain its competitiveness in the Olympics.

When assessing Turkey's Olympic performance relative to other countries, it becomes evident that Turkey shines in specific periods (e.g., 1948 London, 1960 Rome) but generally exhibits limited success. Despite its young population and significant potential, and its notable achievements in wrestling and weightlifting on the global stage, Turkey struggles to compete in the overall medal standings against other nations.

Countries like the United States, China, the United Kingdom, and Russia dominate the Olympics across a wide range of disciplines, whereas Turkey's medal successes are

concentrated in a few sports such as wrestling and weightlifting. This reveals a gap in Turkey's ability to win medals across a broader spectrum of sports.

Turkey's successes are predominantly in individual sports, with limited achievements in team sports compared to other nations. Countries like the United States and China stand out due to their extensive infrastructure, athlete development programs, and emphasis on sports culture, while Turkey lags in these areas.

In conclusion, while Turkey's Olympic success has shown periodic growth, it remains limited when compared to the global Olympic powerhouses. As one of the original 16 committee members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Turkey's struggles in winning medals across a wide range of events, particularly at the 2024 France Olympic Games, highlight the need for a more comprehensive development process in the field of sports. Expanding the pool of athletes, investing in infrastructure, and developing programs to train athletes in diverse disciplines are critical for enhancing Turkey's Olympic success.

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