

**Host organization: Middle East Technical University**

**Country: Turkey**

**Organization role: Coordinator**

**Name of the researcher: Mürüvvet Büyükboyacı**

**Project Acronym: FeedbackTeamContest**

**Project start and end date: 01/04/2015-21/07/2017**

**Type of MSC action, H2020: IF**



**Project objectives and research field:**

The overall aim of the project is to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of teams (in any setting) by using the tools of Experimental Economics. The experiment in the first part of the project was designed by using two different tasks, which vary whether participants compete individually or compete in teams where each member must complete each task; or compete in teams where the agents can divide tasks between them and potentially specialize in the task they do best. The aim of the first part was to understand whether the team output would fall due to free riding when each team member must complete each task and whether the team output would increase due to comparative advantage when each team member has potential to specialize. The second part of the project focused on the role of endogenous formation of teams on productivity as well as how teams are formed endogenously.

**Tell us why the topic is important and/ or how it brings to advancement in your research field:**

The use of team contests can raise two different questions in terms of team members' performances. First, whether team members' performances would decrease (due to

free riding) or increase (not to let down their teammates). Second, how team members direct their efforts into the tasks, i.e. whether team members work on the tasks in which they have comparative advantages. The first part of the project focused on the second question, which is mostly ignored in the literature.

There are studies in the literature showing positive effect of endogenous team formation on team output. However, this work has thus far focused on how much effort teammates exert, rather than how they allocate effort across distinct tasks or whether endogenous team formation can enable agents to form teams that exploit skill complementarities. Despite the prevalence of self-managed work teams, there is little direct evidence that teammates are able to successfully coordinate on an allocation of tasks that maximizes team productivity; nor is there evidence that they anticipate such coordination and sort themselves into teams that enable them to take advantage of skill complementarities. To address these questions, the second part of the project turned to the endogenous formation of teams and its effect on production, in team contests when specialization either is or is not feasible.

### **What are the benefits of participating in a MSC action?**

The outcomes of this project can help employers to increase employees' performances in the workplace. These outcomes are in line with work place innovation policy of Europe, which aims at "... improving staff motivation, thereby enhancing labour productivity, organisational performance, innovation capability, and consequently business competitiveness". Further, other than work places, the outcomes can be used in many places in which team contests are used. For instance, students' performances can be increased with such contest organizations.

If firms implement team contests with the goal of maximizing workers' output, then the question of whether teammates can self-organize and divide work efficiently is fundamental to understanding the productivity of teams. There are multiple tasks in the design of the project, which is different from the studies in the literature. The existence of multiple tasks, which can be performed by any team member, is both a natural feature of the workplace and allows for potential complementarities in worker skills.

This funding helps the fellow to run experiments, travel around and meet new scholars, extending her network in the beginning of her career.

### **Did you encounter any challenges during application/ implementation and did you get any help?**

The only issue faced during project implementation was related to the usage of maternity leave. The fellow gave birth to her first child during the implementation of the project. The project officer at the European Commission was extremely helpful

with the necessary amendments to finish the project successfully. The support of the university regarding financial management and administrative issues as well as the support from National Contact Points - TÜBİTAK was significant. METU Office of Sponsored Projects had been a bridge between TÜBİTAK and the fellow by responding to all questions.

**Would you recommend others to apply? What useful advice/ tips can you give them?**

The H2020 MSCA fellowships are crucial to enable researchers to share their knowledge and experiences with other researchers in their field or other fields with its interdisciplinary aspect. Moreover, it gives an opportunity to researchers for building up their career on a specific topic by providing attractive working conditions without any administrative and financial disruptions. Also, researchers acquire new skills through advanced training, international and intersectoral mobility. Since this programme is based on a mobility rule for application, it is advised to researchers to make their plans and to look for a supervisor for applying MSCA-IF before holding their PhDs.

**What strategies did your organization use to attract the fellow/s? Are they in line with national strategies supporting the widening EC policy?**

The Office of Sponsored Projects (PDO) under the Research Coordination Office of Middle East Technical University, has been organising general information days including workshops and team studies since 2009, the year it was established. These info days aim to specifically inform a set of researchers selectively matched with the respective call. What is more, PDO carries out one-on-one meetings with researchers when they are either (i) trying to prioritize their call applications amongst a vast selection of choices or determining the call matching their research question or (ii) developing a proposal to an already selected call (most frequently ERC, MSCA-IF and national funding programmes). Such meetings are realized upon request and they average to about 3/week. This methodology aims to contribute to the success rate of a developed proposal by informing researchers about the different expected impacts of different calls.