ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH CENTERS: RESOURCE, ORIENTATION AND PERFORMANCE (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH CENTERS: RESOURCE, ORIENTATION AND PERFORMANCE

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Principal Topic

This research investigates the fundamental dimensions of entrepreneurship research centers (ERC), analyzes the determinants of research performance, and suggests a taxonomy that may help a deeper understanding of the heterogeneity of strategic patterns among centers.

Entrepreneurship continues to flourish, with more than 1,600 centers dedicating to entrepreneurial research and education; centers represent a relevant unit of analysis, due to the inherently collaborative nature of entrepreneurship.

Research on individual and institutional factors behind performance of research centers has mainly focused on science and engineering based disciplines. To the best of our knowledge entrepreneurship has been so far neglected. Which are the performance determinants of ERC? Given the heterogeneity of ERC (considering factors such as research orientation, stakeholder, and openness), can we suggest a taxonomy? Can this taxonomy help us understanding differences in ERC’s scientific performance?

Method

We surveyed 46 Entrepreneurship Research Centers worldwide through questionnaires (to center directors) on center characteristics, governance, research areas, key activities, resources and director profile. We assessed the research performance (citations, publications and h-index) of each center and sought for determinants. Elaborating on previous literature, we formulated a taxonomy based on center commitment on research, education, and services. The taxonomy is used as a control dimension in the analysis of performance determinants.

Results and Implications

Descriptive statistics show, among others, consistent differences in orientation, ambition and performance between US and European centers. The taxonomy is robust as it helps better explaining the centers’ performance. Entrepreneurship confirms the role of knowledge transfer dynamics, since collaboration and transfer activities do not hamper publication performance. The issue is relevant because such relationship reveals the peculiarities of entrepreneurship as a scientific discipline: the orientation to collaborate (both with business and government) does occur and fosters scientific productivity. Entrepreneurship may compensate a less developed theoretical paradigm (normally a prerequisite for the transfer of scientific knowledge) with a structural inclination towards involvement with businesses.

The research provides policy recommendations and managerial insights, revealing how a different mix of activities and stakeholders can increase the research performance of ERCs.

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