ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND REGIONAL INEQUALITY IN ROMANIA

BÂRZU RALUCA

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Romania
E-mail: barzudraluca@gmail.com

Abstract - This study examines the organizational and institutional determinants of regional entrepreneurial activity in Romania. Using a panel dataset covering the eight Romanian NUTS2 development regions during 2016–2023, the analysis investigates whether institutional quality and university presence help explain regional differences in startup density. Entrepreneurial activity is measured through enterprise births per 1,000 inhabitants, institutional quality through European Union funds absorbed per inhabitant, and university presence through tertiary education students per 1,000 inhabitants. The results indicate that GDP per capita is the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial activity. University presence is positively associated with startup density, while institutional quality does not exhibit a statistically significant direct effect. However, the interaction between institutional quality and university presence is positive and marginally significant. The findings suggest that entrepreneurship in Romania remains closely linked to existing regional development advantages and that organizational and institutional factors operate through complementary rather than independent effects.

Keywords - Regional Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Activity, Institutional Quality Startup Density, Regional Development