

Factores condicionantes de la creación de empresas en Puerto Rico: un enfoque institucional

Aponte García, Marinés

Abstract

In this research the institutional analysis is applied to the study of new venture creation in Puerto Rico. The research was structured in three levels of analysis: 1) the macroeconomic level of new venture creation; 2) the formal environmental constraints level and 3) the informal environmental constraints level. A quantitative methodology was applied in all levels of analysis although the phase of personal interviews included in the second level provided a qualitative touch to the study.

In the first level of the research the structure of commercial establishments categorized by size according to the number of employees was analyzed. The trend in the business start-up activity during the last two decades and the relationship between the start-ups index and several macro economic indicators selected were also studied. The business start-ups index was calculated from 1980 to 1997 as the annual growth rate of commercial establishments. The Economic Census for Puerto Rico and the Economic Report to the Governor were used as database in the first level of analysis.

The objective of the second level of analysis was to determine which are the formal environmental constraints related to new venture creation in Puerto Rico. Formal environmental constraints were studied through the compilation of detailed information of the laws and regulations related to business creation and operation in Puerto Rico. The knowledge and valuation that entrepreneurs founders of new ventures have concerning support institutions was also studied. New ventures were defined as those founded since 5 years or less. Interviews were conducted to a sample of 50 entrepreneurs.

The third level of analysis was oriented towards the study of the perceptions and attitudes that Puerto Ricans have towards new venture creation and the entrepreneur. In this phase a survey was conducted to two samples of the Puerto Rican society: 500 persons from the general population older than 21 years and 435 university students majoring in business administration, economics and engineering.

The research concludes that in the last two periods studied a significant increase in new venture creation has taken place in Puerto Rico. However, an important part of the entrepreneurial activity increase is being carried out by foreign owners of the commercial establishments. On the other hand, the environmental factors that inhibit the process are basically formal, opposed to the general perception that Puerto Ricans lack entrepreneurial spirit.