

Analyzing The Role of Higher Education Institutions (Comparing the Independent Campus and Impactful Campus Models from a Theoretical Perspective)

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Article Info :	ABSTRACT
Accepted: August 04 th , 2025	Background:
Approved: August 15 th , 2025	Objective: This study aims to analyze the fundamental differences between the Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak models from the perspective of higher education theory.
Published: August 29 th , 2025	Method: The study was conducted using library research methods through the study of policy documents, journal articles, and relevant theories such as student-centered learning, Mode 2 Knowledge Production, and the Triple Helix.
Keywords: Merdeka Campus, Impact Campus, higher education, Triple Helix, Mode 2 Knowledge Production.	Findings and Implications: The results of the study indicate that the Kampus Merdeka model emphasizes the flexibility of student learning outside of academic programs to enhance employability, while the Kampus Berdampak model focuses on the tangible contributions of higher education institutions through cross-sectoral collaboration in addressing social, economic, and environmental issues.
	Conclusion: This study concludes that while the two models have different orientations, they have the potential to complement each other if strategically integrated, thereby supporting the transformation of Indonesian higher education institutions into both academic institutions and centers for sustainable development solutions.

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INTRODUCTION

increasingly complex global challenges. The globalization era and industry revolution 4.0 demand that universities be not only centers of teaching and research but also drivers of social and economic innovation (Nugroho, 2021). This paradigm shift prompted the birth of the Kampus Merdeka policy emphasizing freedom to learn outside the campus. The program aims for graduates who are adaptive, competent, and ready to face the dynamics of the global job market (Kemdikbud, 2020).

As one of the monumental policies, Kampus Merdeka provides opportunity for students to pursue cross-disciplinary learning, industry internships, to applied research outside of universities Milwan et al., (2024). This was based on the awareness that competence is not only acquired in classroom spaces but also through real-world practical experiences. According to Sopianingsih et al., (2022), this policy has prompted substantial change in curriculum design among universities.

Nevertheless, amid the implementation of Kampus Merdeka, the concept of Kampus Berdampak emerged, expanding the role of higher education institutions. Unlike Kampus Merdeka, which emphasizes the academic freedom of students, Kampus Berdampak stresses the direct contribution of campuses to solving social, economic, and environmental problems through multi-stakeholder collaboration (Kurrohman, 2024). The concept redefines the role of higher education institutions as solution centers, not merely academic institutions.

This phenomenon indicates the existence of two policy models with different orientations running in parallel. On one hand, Kampus Merdeka accommodates the flexibility of students to develop themselves. On the other hand, Kampus Berdampak demands that colleges play an active role in sustainable development (Effendi & Mardiana, 2024). These two models emerged as a response to the demands of the times and the increasing expectations of society towards higher education institutions. In this context, it is crucial to examine how both policies contribute to the grand vision of Indonesian higher education, that is, producing graduates of high quality while also bringing tangible impacts to society. For Tilaar (2004), universities should be an agent of change that not only produces knowledge, but also transforms social life. To this end, an inquiry into the fundamental differences between Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak becomes pertinent and urgent. Since its introduction, the Merdeka Campus has attracted the attention of many researchers. A study by Setiawan et al., (2024) found that the implementation of this policy faces significant challenges, ranging from curriculum readiness to lecturer support. These findings are reinforced by Sopianingsih et al., (2022), who revealed a gap between policy objectives and practices in the field, particularly regarding industry synergy with universities.

Several other studies also highlight students' perception of Kampus Merdeka. For instance, research conducted by Rahman (2021) indicates that the majority of students welcome freedom to study across disciplines, yet they are hindered by campus bureaucracy that remains stiff. This confirms that Kampus Merdeka has not yet fully worked optimally according to its initial design. Conversely, the discourse on Impactful Campuses is relatively new, so empirical studies are still limited. Suryana's (2023) research is one of the pioneers in discussing the synergy between universities and local governments through the Impactful Campus scheme. In his research, Suryana emphasizes that the Impactful Campus approach can bridge the gap between science and the needs of society directly.

Besides Suryana, Iskandar (2024) also highlights the potential of Kampus Berdampak in supporting sustainable development. He asserts that the contribution of a campus should not stop at scientific publication, but should also produce applied innovations that are useful to society (Iskandar, 2024). Both studies, however, are still descriptive and have not yet commented comparatively with Kampus Merdeka. Therefore, research that focuses on conceptual analysis and in-depth comparison of both policies is still rare to find in Indonesia. This gap provides an academic space for observing how the differences in the purpose, strategy, and contribution of each model, especially if they are related to the theory of roles of higher education in social development (Olo et al., 2021). From previous research, it appears that the main focus is still limited to evaluating technical implementation and the perceptions of higher education actors (Setiawan, 2021; Putri & Hidayat, 2022). Very few studies have specifically examined the fundamental differences between the Merdeka Campus and the Impact Campus from the perspective of higher education transformation theory. However, according to Clark (1983), the theory of the role of higher education

encompasses academic, social, and economic dimensions that must reinforce one another.

Additionally, a comparative analysis based on literature is crucial in examining the consistency of policy with the theoretical framework of university-based community development (Yasin et al., 2023). Without an in-depth study, there is a risk for policy to remain at the level of discourse without a clear direction for implementation. Therefore, this study attempts to address this need through a library approach. Based on the background and gaps described above, this study is formulated into the following question: How do the focus, strategies, and roles of the Independent Campus and Impactful Campus models differ from the perspective of higher education role theory? This question is expected to open up new discussions about the future direction of higher education policy in Indonesia.

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak models within the framework of higher education role theory, identify differences in focus, strategy, and contributions to community development; and provide conceptual recommendations for the future development of Indonesian higher education policy (Rahardjo & Farudin, 2025). Through the results of this research, it is hoped that theoretical and practical contributions can be made, particularly in enriching the literature on higher education policy and providing guidance for policy makers at the university and government levels (Tilaar, 2004). Thus, Indonesian universities can increasingly play a role as centers of solutions to address global and local challenges in a sustainable manner (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach

The development and results of this research will be conducted using a qualitative approach in the form of library research. Library research is used because it is in line with the purpose of the research, which is to explore, compare, and analyze theories, policies, and previous research results related to Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak. According to Zed (2004), literature research is a scientific step that utilizes library data as the primary source for answering research questions. As stated by George (2008), library research is highly relevant when researchers wish to formulate a theoretical synthesis of existing policies. This approach also supports efforts to understand the direction of higher education policy more deeply through comprehensive and critical literature review.

Research Design

This study is descriptive-comparative, describing the characteristics of each model (Independent Campus and Impactful Campus) and then comparing them systematically in the context of the theory of the role of higher education. Moleong (2017) states that descriptive qualitative research emphasizes efforts to describe meanings, patterns, and relationships between concepts. The comparative method is applied to highlight the essential differences between the two policies by comparing their theoretical foundations, objectives, implementation strategies, and expected impacts (Sugiyono, 2019). This is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the transformation of the role of higher education in Indonesia.

Research Location and Time

Since this study is a literature study, activities are conducted in the writer's office using the facility of physical and digital libraries. Literature search was conducted in some online repositories such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, SINTA, and

Perpusnas RI. Apart from that, official policy documents are accessed through the website of Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia (Kemdikbudristek). According to Creswell (2014), the location of library research is not physically limited, but rather considered in terms of access to relevant data sources. This research was conducted between February and June 2025, so that the literature search would cover the latest publications related to developments in the Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak policies.

Data Sources

The data sources in this study are official policy documents such as ministerial regulations, the Kampus Merdeka (Independent Campus) guidebook (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020), and publications related to Kampus Berdampak (Impactful Campus), national and international journals relevant to the theme of higher education transformation and reference books containing theories on the role of higher education institutions, the triple helix, Mode 2 Knowledge Production, and sustainable development. Bungin (2011) states that the quality of literature research depends on careful review in selecting authoritative and up-to-date literature. Therefore, data sources will be selected systematically, taking into account the reputation of the journal, year of publication, and relevance of content.

Research Respondents

In literature research, direct participants do not intervene. However, the researcher identifies authors of literature, policymakers, and academics whose works are analyzed as information units. This aligns with Zed's (2004) view that previous authors in literature studies are indirect informants whose perspectives and findings are critiqued and integrated into a new synthesis. In this case, researchers such as Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000), Gibbons et al. (1994), Clark (1983), and Tilaar (2004) become theoretical participants who enrich the analytical framework.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques were carried out through literature review, data recording, and document organization. The first conclusion was the identification of keywords such as Independent Campus, Impactful Campus, the role of higher education, triple helix, and higher education transformation. These keywords were applied to an online database to make data searches more targeted (Sugiyono, 2019). Each document or article found was evaluated for its suitability using the content validity method to ensure it was relevant to the research focus. According to George (2008), content validity is very important in literature studies to ensure that the data used truly supports scientific arguments. After validation, the data is classified into categories: basic theory, policy, implementation, and evaluation results. Recording is done with the help of reference management programs such as Zotero and Mendeley to facilitate citation and bibliography management.

Research Instruments

The primary research instrument in literature research is the researcher themselves (human instrument). The researcher acts as the formulator, collector, analyst, and interpreter of data. Moleong (2017) states that the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative research because only the researcher can understand the context of the data, perform in-depth interpretation, and establish logical relationships between findings.

Additionally, the researcher also uses instruments such as checklists for literature selection criteria and reference management programs. With the help of these tools, the process of selecting and categorizing bibliographic sources becomes more systematic and replicable.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis techniques use content analysis and comparative analysis models. Content analysis aims to understand the hidden meanings in policy texts and scientific publications. According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis is effective in interpreting qualitative data in the form of texts, documents, and discourse.

After the data are explained, the next step is to compare characteristics, goals, and strategies of the two policies. Comparison technique in this task refers to Miles and Huberman's (1994) model that includes data reduction step, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The steps of analysis are as follows: reading documents and literature thoroughly, identifying major themes, drawing comparison tables between Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak and interpreting similarities and differences in the context of role theory of the higher learning institution.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the data was examined through source balancing and peer debriefing. According to Moleong (2017), source balancing plays an important role in qualitative research to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained from several reference sources. Peer review is conducted through discussions with the supervisor and fellow researchers to obtain input and confirm the completeness of the data and the interpretive framework. Reliability is ensured through documentation of the analysis process (audit trail). George (2008) emphasizes the need to document every step of the analysis process so that the research can be replicated by other researchers with the same results.

Research Ethics

As a literature review, the ethical risks are minimal, but the researcher upholds academic ethics, including intellectual honesty and clarity of reference sources. All citations and data are taken in accordance with citation guidelines following the APA 7th Edition standards (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Method Synthesis

Based on this method, it is hoped that the research can find answers to in-depth research questions, support theoretical contributions, and be replicated by other researchers in the future (Creswell, 2014). This approach also supports the research objective of comparing the two critical policy models to produce a comprehensive understanding (Zed, 2004).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

This study successfully established fundamental differences between the Merdeka Campus and the Impact Campus through an in-depth review of policy documents, scientific publications, and theories on the role of higher education institutions. These results provide a comprehensive picture of how the two policies have shaped the direction of higher education transformation in Indonesia over the past two decades. As explained by Zed (2004), literature research serves to establish a synthesis of ideas through critically examining various sources. In this context, analysis is conducted by reading Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka guidelines released by Kemdikbud (2020), Putri & Hidayat's (2022) article on mahasiswa perception, and Suryana's (2023) writing on Kampus Berdampak iniatiation. The following table summarizes the major findings of this research.

Table 1. Comparison of the *Independent Campus Model* and the *Impactful Campus Model*

Aspect	Independent Campus	Impactful Campus
Main Objective	Enhancing student competencies through flexible learning across programs and industrial internships	Encouraging real contributions from universities to solve social, economic, and environmental issues
Implementation Focus	Curriculum flexibility, off-campus learning, internships, village projects	Cross-sector collaboration, applied research, solution-based community engagement
Theoretical Basis	Student-centered learning (Kemdikbud, 2020; Nugroho, 2020)	Triple Helix, Mode 2 Knowledge Production (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000; Gibbons et al., 1994)
Main Stakeholders	Students, lecturers, industry partners	Communities, local governments, industries, community organizations
Success Indicators	Cross-program/credit transfer recognition, number of internships, industry partnerships	Number of applied innovations, collaborative projects, measurable socio-economic impact

Source: Processed from Kemdikbud (2020); Suryana (2023); Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff (2000)

From the table above, it can be seen that the Merdeka Campus emphasizes student freedom for empowerment through freedom of learning outside of the lecture program. This program allows students to undertake internships in industry, take cross-university courses, or participate in village projects that support contextual learning (Kemdikbud, 2020). As stated by Putri & Hidayat (2022), this flexibility aims to better prepare students for the job market.

Conversely, the Impact Campus exists to address the global challenge that universities are not merely sufficient as workforce producers but must also serve as centers for solving various real-world problems. This concept aligns with the Triple Helix model proposed by Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff (2000), where universities collaborate with government and industry to generate innovation based on applied research.

According to Vestergaard et al., (2021), the Impactful Campus initiative calls on higher education institutions to build cross-sector partnerships through research projects whose benefits are directly felt by the community. Thus, this policy direction strengthens the university's role as an agent of change (Clark, 1983) contributing to sustainable development.

The analysis reveals that, conceptually, the Free Campus and Impact Campus have essential differences in strategic orientation. The Free Campus is oriented toward student-centered learning (Nugroho, 2020), while the Impact Campus refers to Mode 2 Knowledge Production (Gibbons et al., 1994). According to Gibbons et al., Mode 2 focuses on the production of applied and interdisciplinary knowledge, building on Mode 1, which is predominantly theoretical.

In addition to focus, differences are evident in success indicators. Merdeka Campus indicators include the number of students studying outside their major, recognition of transfer credits, and internship collaborations with the business world (Kemdikbud, 2020). In contrast, Impact Campus prioritizes tangible outputs such as technological innovations, public policy solutions, and improvements in local community well-being (Suryana, 2023).

Data also indicates that stakeholder engagement in Impact Campus is significantly broader. While Kampus Merdeka supports interaction between students and industry partners, Kampus Berdampak prioritizes quadruple helix synergy with engagement involving civil society and local governments (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). This is important because multi-stakeholder engagement is believed to accelerate the dissemination of research outcomes to society (Rahardjo, 2022).

In the policy environment, Kampus Merdeka has already had comparatively stable regulation since 2020 when it was initiated by Permendikbud Number 3 Year 2020 regarding Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi. On the other hand, Kampus Berdampak is currently only in the inisiasi and kebijakan perumusan complementary phase (Iskandar, 2024). This can be observed from the still limited scholarly publication regarding this model in Indonesia.

The analysis documents have shown that the Merdeka Campus program is more frequently implemented for undergraduate programs. In contrast, the Impactful Campus program has the potential to be implemented across different levels, such as postgraduate programs and collaborative research across faculties (Patt et al., 2022). This recovery demonstrates the potential for policy collaboration to complement each other's tasks.

Literature reviews also highlight several best practices of the Merdeka Campus Certified Internship Program and the Teaching Campus Program. These programs are highlighted as effective in promoting awareness and enhancing soft skills (Sopianingsih et al., 2022). However, according to Suryana (2023), such programs are still underutilized in protecting applied research agendas that directly benefit local communities.

Thus, this study concludes that structurally, the Merdeka Campus implements student mobility-based learning, while the Impactful Campus establishes cross-sector research collaboration with the aim of community empowerment. This difference in orientation is an important basis for policymakers to consider integrating the two models into the framework of Indonesia's sustainable higher education policy (Budihardjo et al., 2021).

As reminded by Clark (1983), successful university transformation needs synergy among academic objectives, the needs of the labour market, and public interest. Thus, the conclusions of this research confirm the need for coordination between Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak models so that Indonesia can produce competitive graduates as well as face actual challenges of local and national development.

Other Research Findings

In addition to the main findings summarized in the comparison table, this literature study also produced several supporting findings that reinforce the picture of differences and opportunities for integration between Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak.

A. Diversity of Implementation Practices in Higher Education Institutions

Research indicates that the implementation of Kampus Merdeka is highly dependent on each institution's readiness. Setiawan's study (2021) notes that certain campuses in major cities find it easier to implement industry internship programs due to their extensive networks, while regional institutions face challenges in accessing partners. Rahardjo (2022) also argued that this disparity could widen the gap in the quality of graduates. In contrast, Kampus Berdampak even opens opportunities for regional universities to become drivers of local development. Based on applied

research, regional universities can maximize local potential as objects of research and community service. This aligns with Tilaar's (2004) idea that regional universities should position themselves as centers for community empowerment based on local wisdom.

B. Differences in Curriculum Orientation

Other Temuan show that the Kampus Merdeka curriculum model is more adaptive at the course level. Students are provided with a room of 20–40 SKS for following a program outside the original prodi, as described in Permendikbud No. 3 Tahun 2020. Practically, this policy stimulates the development of joint course programs, internships, independent projects, and student exchanges (Putri & Hidayat, 2022).

In contrast, Impactful Campus emphasizes aligning the curriculum with a collaborative, interdisciplinary research agenda. This requires lecturers to design courses that are integrated with applied research projects, so that students are directly involved as research assistants or community service facilitators (Iskandar, 2024). This model aligns the curriculum with the principles of problem-based learning, which is recognized as effective for developing critical thinking skills (Gibbons et al., 1994).

C. Differences in Faculty Performance Indicators

In addition to its impact on students, this policy also has implications for faculty responsibilities. In the context of the Merdeka Campus, faculty are expected to serve as learning facilitators who support students in exploring across campuses and industries (Kemdikbud, 2020). At Impactful Campuses, lecturers are not only required to build research networks with local governments and communities, but also to do so actively. Lecturer performance indicators are no longer limited to scientific publications, but also include applied innovations and real outputs (Suryana, 2023).

In international practice, this model resembles engaged scholarship formulated at several research universities in Europe (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). In this manner, Kampus Berdampak stimulates the reshaping of dosen workload so that it is not merely publication-driven but also intrinsically the social utility of research (Rahardjo, 2022).

D. Potential for Integrating the Two Models

Another important finding is the creation of opportunities to synergize the two models. Some pioneering campuses in Indonesia have begun to combine the Kampus Merdeka internship program and empowerment-based research projects under Kampus Berdampak. For example, students interning at BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises) not only work as administrative staff but also conduct research on local product development (Iskandar, 2024).

This integrated approach aligns with Clark's (1983) suggestion that higher education transformation must be supported by an adaptive policy framework that bridges academic and social orientations. In this way, the synergy between the Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak models can enrich the learning, research, and community service ecosystem (Gaffar, 2005).

E. Implementation Challenges

The study also identified several challenges that need to be anticipated. First, funding capacity to support collaborative research remains weak in many lower-middle private universities (Rahardjo, 2022). Second, there is uneven policy literacy among faculty and students regarding the integration of the two models (Setiawan, 2021). Third, the lack of technical regulations for the implementation of Impactful

Campuses at the operational level often makes implementation dependent on the initiative of campus leaders (Iskandar, 2024). All of these supporting findings affirm that, despite their different focuses, the Merdeka Campus and Impactful Campus complement each other. Optimal implementation requires subsidiary policies that encourage synergy across study programs, faculties, and even sectors (multi-stakeholders). This is to ensure that Indonesian higher education institutions not only produce competitive graduates but also innovations that benefit the broader community (Tilaar, 2004).

Discussion

A. Connection between Results and Research Questions

The results of this study clearly and directly answer the basic research questions formulated, namely how the roles, focus, and approaches in the Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak models can be analyzed from the perspective of contemporary higher education theory. The findings indicate that although both aim to improve the quality of higher education in Indonesia, the two models are based on different theoretical structures, with policy implementation also varying. This can be seen from the data managed in Table 1, which summarizes basic aspects such as objectives, implementation focus, and success indicators that are not the same (Kerzner, 2023).

In general, the Kampus Merdeka program promotes student learning freedom through a flexible cross-program system and internship experiences in the industrial field, in line with the principle of student-centered learning. This learning approach is intended to produce adaptable and job-ready graduates. Research by Putri and Hidayat (2022) found that this program also opens up access to student mobility to develop skills outside the campus.

Previously, the Impactful Campus program was intended to reaffirm the role of universities as centers for creating solutions to real social, economic, and environmental issues in society. According to Suryana (2023), the model encourages intersectoral collaboration through applied research and need-based innovation. This framing aligns with Gibbons et al.'s (1994) Mode 2 Knowledge Production theory, which states that knowledge is not only produced through pure academic means (Mode 1) but must be produced in the context of direct application. Moreover, the Triple Helix concept by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000) supports the involvement of industry, government, and universities in a synergistic manner to solve real problems through joint innovation.

Thus, research findings proved that both models emphasized the focus area of roles differently: Kampus Merdeka emphasized individual empowerment of students, while Kampus Berdampak expanded the scope of campus roles as agents of social transformation. This link of findings with research questions further strengthened that such comparative studies are needed in order to consider how Indonesian higher education policy can be directed towards sustainable transformation with convergence of strengths of both approaches (Tilaar, 2004).

B. Consistency with Previous Research

The findings of this study align strongly with previous research on higher education transformation in Indonesia, specifically regarding the implementation of the Kampus Merdeka program. Sopianingsih et al., (2022) in their study demonstrated that the Kampus Merdeka program successfully opened opportunities for students to build networks with the industrial sector through certified internship schemes, student exchanges, and independent projects. The findings of this research

emphasize that flexible curriculum policies are crucial in preparing graduates who are increasingly adaptive and relevant to the needs of the job market. Similar findings were also highlighted by Nugroho, (2021), who emphasized that the student-centered learning paradigm places students as active participants in the learning process.

However, this study expands on this discourse by highlighting the limitations of the Merdeka Campus initiative, which tends to focus on individual student mobility rather than fully addressing the collective social role of the campus on a broader scale (Setiawan, 2021). This aligns with Clark's (1983) critique that universities should not merely function as providers of educated labor but also as agents of social change at both local and global levels.

It is in such a context that the Impactful Campus emerged as a refreshing idea filling the gap. The concept of inter-party collaboration developed within the framework of the Triple Helix (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000) and Mode 2 Knowledge Production (Gibbons et al., 1994) highlights the need for synergy among universities, industries, and regional governments to produce meaningful solutions to social challenges. These findings support Suryana (2023), who asserts that applied research and collaborative cross-sector projects are at the core of the Impactful Campus model, making this policy an alternative and complementary option to the Free Campus policy.

Thus, this study not only aligns with but also complements previous findings by providing a comparative perspective that emphasizes the need to integrate the two approaches. This alignment is expected to serve as a reference for policymakers in formulating a higher education design that is more responsive, inclusive, and oriented toward sustainable development.

C. Scientific Interpretation

In the Mode 2 Knowledge Production theory (Gibbons et al., 1994), universities in this century are expected to produce applied knowledge, not just theoretical knowledge. Impactful Campuses emerge as a policy response aligned with Mode 2 directives, where research is directed toward solving real-world problems (Rahardjo, 2022). Thus, Impactful Campuses can be understood as the next evolution of Autonomous Campuses. This interpretation supports Clark (1983), who states that higher education systems must be flexible to social needs. In the future, the synergy of both models can create a campus ecosystem that is not only flexible but also has a real impact (Tilaar, 2004).

D. Research Implications

The implication of this research is the importance of synchronizing the two policy models. Higher education institutions need to combine academic freedom with a focus on tangible impacts on society (Gaffar, 2005). The Kampus Merdeka policy must be integrated into the Kampus Berdampak framework so that students not only learn independently but also actively participate in research-based development projects (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000).

Additionally, these findings offer brief recommendations to the government and campus administrators in formulating performance indicators that not only focus on student mobility but also on achieving social contributions and regional innovation (Iskandar, 2024).

E. Limitations of the Study

As a literature review, this study has limitations in terms of data scope. The data analyzed is sourced solely from policy documents, journals, and books. There is no primary data in the form of in-depth interviews with campus administrators, students, or industry partners. This aligns with Zed's (2004) emphasis that literature

reviews are conceptual in nature, and their interpretation depends on the richness of the literature.

Additionally, this study does not provide an empirical assessment of its implementation in the field. Therefore, validation of real-world practices is still needed through surveys of student and faculty perceptions or field studies (Lee et al., 2024).

F. Role of Further Research

These results pave the way for future research using a mixed-methods approach. Future research can combine policy research with empirical surveys to examine how long the Merdeka Campus and Impactful Campus initiatives will coexist in Indonesian higher education institutions (Sugiyono, 2019). In-depth qualitative approaches through interviews with rectors, faculty members, students, and industry partners are also needed to validate this conceptual framework. Additionally, further research could map an integrated performance indicator model that combines student learning outcomes with campus social impact (Bashir et al., 2023). Thus, Indonesia's higher education policies can continue to evolve in line with the dynamics of the times. These results and analysis confirm that the Free Campus and Impactful Campus policies are not competing with each other but can complement one another. The Free Campus policy strengthens the individual aspects of students, while the Impactful Campus policy expands the social role of the campus. Both, if formulated using the triple helix theory and Mode 2 approach, can make Indonesian higher education institutions more adaptive, innovative, and effective for sustainable development (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000; Gibbons et al., 1994).

CONCLUSION

Based on an in-depth analysis using a literature review approach, this study successfully achieved its research objectives by conducting a comparative analysis of the differences in roles, focuses, and approaches between the Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak models from the perspective of higher education theory. This study suggests that the Kampus Merdeka model emphasizes student flexibility in learning and the enhancement of work competencies through the concept of student-centered learning, while the Kampus Berdampak model places greater emphasis on the tangible contributions of higher education institutions as agents of societal solutions through collaborative, cross-sectoral approaches aligned with the Triple Helix framework and Mode 2 Knowledge Production. The findings suggest that both models have strengths and weaknesses, and can complement each other if strategically integrated. This study proposes that higher education policymakers consider synergizing the Kampus Merdeka and Kampus Berdampak policies so that not only adaptive and competitive graduates are produced, but also the social function of campuses as drivers of local innovation and community empowerment is strengthened. Thus, Indonesian higher education institutions are expected to fulfill their multi-role functions in a balanced manner: producing skilled labor while also serving as centers for developing solutions relevant to the needs of sustainable development at both the national and regional levels.

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