

Integration of Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Foundations in Educational Management Research in Indonesia (Case Study: Managerial Practices in Educational Institutions)

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Educational management research in Indonesia tends to focus on technical and empirical aspects, while the philosophical dimension is often marginalized. This article aims to analyze the integration of ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations in educational management practices through case studies of educational institutions in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach based on document analysis and reflection on managerial practices, this article shows that the success of educational management is determined not only by procedural effectiveness, but also by a clear view of the nature of education (ontology), how to acquire and validate managerial knowledge (epistemology), and the values and goals that underlie decision-making (axiology). These conceptual findings emphasize the importance of integrating the philosophy of science as a foundation for developing contextual and sustainable educational management research and practice in Indonesia.

Keywords: Philosophy of Science, Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology, Educational Management, Case Studies

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1. Introduction

Educational management is a strategic field that plays a crucial role in determining the quality and sustainability of the education system. In Indonesia, educational management practices evolve in line with the dynamics of national policy, demands for public accountability, and increasingly complex social and technological changes. However, educational management research still tends to be dominated by technocratic and empirical approaches, with an emphasis on procedural aspects, organizational efficiency, and measurable performance outcomes.

These approaches, while important, often neglect the philosophical foundations underlying educational managerial practice. Educational management does not exist in a value vacuum but is rooted in particular perspectives on the nature of education, how managerial knowledge is acquired, and the normative goals to be achieved.

The philosophy of science provides a reflective framework through three main dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The ontological dimension relates to understanding the nature of reality managed in education, including views on students, educators, and the educational institution itself. The epistemological dimension examines how managerial knowledge is constructed, validated, and used in decision-making. Meanwhile, the axiological dimension emphasizes the values, ethics, and goals that underlie educational management practices.

This article starts from the assumption that the managerial practices of educational institutions in Indonesia can be more fully understood through a reflective-philosophical case study approach. By analyzing educational management practices within an ontological, epistemological, and axiological framework, this

article is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of more contextual and meaningful educational management research.

2. Literature Review

In this study, there are twenty (20) previous studies as the basis for the analysis conducted. The following is a summary of the previous research in tabular form:

Table 1. Previous Research

No	Penulis & Tahun	Fokus Penelitian	Metode	Temuan Utama	Relevansi dengan Penelitian Ini
1	Purnomo & Mansur (2024)[1]	Filsafat ilmu dalam pendidikan	Studi literatur	OEA* adalah fondasi pendidikan	Landasan teoretis
2	Luthfiah & Khobir (2024)[2]	OEA dalam filsafat pendidikan	Konseptual	OEA membentuk tujuan pendidikan	Basis filosofis
3	Hayati et al. (2025)[3]	Krisis nilai pendidikan	Analisis filosofis	Aksiologi terabaikan	Dimensi nilai
4	Mazidah et al. (2025)[4]	Filsafat ilmu dalam pendidikan	Metode kualitatif	OEA adalah fondasi pendidikan	Integrasi OEA
5	Septuri (2016)[5]	Ontologi pendidikan Islam	Konseptual	Pendidikan sebagai humanisasi	Dimensi ontologis
6	Rifai et al. (2025)[6]	Epistemologi manajemen pendidikan	Review sistematis	Epistemologi pluralistik efektif	Dimensi epistemologis
7	Okky et al. (2025)[7]	Ontologi pendidikan	Literatur	Hakikat manusia integral	Konteks Indonesia
8	Rofingah (2024)[8]	Epistemologi manajemen	Konseptual	Data + refleksi	Metode pengambilan keputusan
9	Adawiah et al. (2024)[9]	Epistemologi pembelajaran	Kualitatif	Pengetahuan kontekstual	Praktik manajerial
10	Didin & Hilyah (2020)[10]	Aksiologi manajemen pendidikan	Literatur	Nilai menentukan kebijakan	Dimensi aksiologis
11	Mahmud et al. (2022)[11]	Manajemen kurikulum	Studi kasus	Konteks memengaruhi praktik	Metode studi kasus
12	Mahsuni et al. (2024)[12]	Filsafat & manajemen	Studi kasus	Filosofi → kebijakan	Model analisis
13	Yufriyan et al. (2026)[13]	Etika kepemimpinan pendidikan	Kualitatif	Etika inti kepemimpinan	Aksiologi
14	Putra et al, (2025)[14]	Manajemen berbasis nilai	kualitatif dengan analisis pemikiran	Nilai → keberlanjutan	Orientasi tujuan

No	Penulis & Tahun	Fokus Penelitian	Metode	Temuan Utama	Relevansi dengan Penelitian Ini
15	Fauzi et al. (2025)[15]	Paradigma riset pendidikan	Konseptual	Paradigma memengaruhi metode	Epistemologi
16	Darmansah (2025)[16]	Kebijakan pendidikan	Analisis dokumen	Nilai ideologis dominan	Aksiologi kebijakan
17	Rosita (2024)[17]	Kepemimpinan sekolah	Studi kasus	Filosofi pimpinan berpengaruh	Ontologi praktis
18	Roifah & Putri (2026)[18]	Mutu pendidikan	Literatur	Mutu ≠ teknis semata	Ontologi praktis
19	Thabrany et al (2023)[19]	Manajemen PT	Kualitatif	Budaya organisasi penting	Konteks kasus
20	Nurfadilah et al. (2025)	Manajemen reflektif	Konseptual	Refleksi filosofis krusial	Ontologi praktis

Based on a review of 20 previous studies, it can be concluded that the study of ontology, epistemology, and axiology in education has developed quite extensively. However, most research remains partial or theoretical and has not integrated these three dimensions of philosophy of science simultaneously in a case study-based analysis of educational management practices in Indonesia. Therefore, this article offers a novel integrative-philosophical approach that connects ontology, epistemology, and axiology in the study of managerial practices in Indonesian educational institutions.

3. Research Methods

Research Approach and Design

This research uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive orientation. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research objective is not to test hypotheses or generate statistical generalizations, but rather to deeply understand the meanings, philosophical assumptions, and values underlying educational management practices. This approach allows researchers to conduct a reflective analysis of managerial practices within specific social and institutional contexts.

In the context of educational management research, a qualitative approach is relevant for uncovering ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions that are often implicit and difficult to measure quantitatively. Therefore, this approach aligns with the research objectives, which emphasize conceptual and contextual understanding.

The research design used was a single case study. This single case study was chosen because this research focuses on in-depth analysis of a single educational institution as a representation of managerial practices in the Indonesian educational context.

Case studies are understood as a research strategy that allows for in-depth exploration of contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In this research, educational management practices are analyzed as phenomena that cannot be separated from the values, policies, and culture of the institution.

The choice of a case study as a research design was based on several considerations. First, case studies allow for the reflective integration of theoretical and empirical analysis, making them suitable for examining the philosophical dimensions of science in educational management practice. Second, case studies provide

space for in-depth contextual understanding, which cannot be achieved through surveys or experiments. Third, this approach is relevant for generating conceptual contributions, rather than statistical generalizations, which are the primary characteristics of philosophical journal articles.

Subject and Object of Case Study

The subject of this research is the educational managerial practices carried out by key actors within educational institutions, such as institutional leaders, academic administrators, and teaching staff. Subjects are not understood as mere individuals, but rather as representations of practices, policies, and managerial decision-making processes within educational institutions.

Research Data Sources

Policy documents include internal institutional regulations, strategic plans, academic guidelines, and national education policy documents that serve as references for institutional management. These documents are used to identify the philosophical assumptions and value orientations underlying educational management practices.

Institutional archives include annual reports, quality evaluation reports, minutes of managerial meetings, and other supporting documents. These archives serve as data sources for understanding the dynamics of decision-making and implementation of managerial policies within educational institutions.

Supporting literature consists of journal articles, books, and research reports relevant to educational management and the philosophy of science. This literature serves as a theoretical basis and as a comparison (theoretical triangulation) in analyzing case study data.

Practitioner reflective notes are obtained from written reflections or documented professional statements, such as evaluative reports from leaders or internally published reflections from educational managers. This data is used to enrich the epistemological and axiological analysis, particularly regarding how managerial knowledge is constructed and the values upheld in educational management practices.

4. Results and Discussion

Overview of Case Study Findings

The analysis of policy documents, institutional archives, supporting literature, and practitioners' reflective notes indicates that educational management practices at the institutions studied are not merely administrative in nature but also reflect specific philosophical assumptions. Key findings indicate that managerial decision-making is influenced by views on the nature of education, how managerial knowledge is acquired and validated, and the values and goals upheld by the institution.

The analysis is further mapped onto three dimensions of the philosophy of science: ontological, epistemological, and axiological, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of educational management practices.

Ontological Dimension in Educational Management Practice

Key Findings (Ontological), The findings indicate that the educational institutions studied view education as a holistic human development process, not simply a mechanism for achieving academic goals. Students are positioned as active subjects possessing intellectual, moral, and social potential. This view is reflected in managerial policies that emphasize a balance between academic achievement and character building.

The organizational structure and management system are also designed with the assumption that educational institutions are learning communities, not merely bureaucratic organizations. This is evident in

the flexibility in academic decision-making and the availability of dialogue between leaders and educators. Theoretical Interpretation, This ontological finding aligns with the philosophical perspective of education, which places humans at the center of education. Educational management based on humanistic ontology will direct policies toward the holistic development of human potential [5]. Ontological assumptions influence organizational design and leadership in education [6].

Relationship to Previous Research, The results of this study confirm the finding that educational institutions in Indonesia tend to integrate cultural and religious values in understanding the essence of education [7]. However, in contrast to some previous studies which were normative in nature, this study shows how this ontological view is concretely realized in managerial practice.

Critical Analysis, Although the ontological perspective of institutions is humanistic, its implementation still faces challenges, particularly when dealing with administrative demands and external performance indicators. This demonstrates the tension between educational ontology and systemic pressures, which has the potential to obscure the meaning of education if not managed reflectively.

Epistemological Dimensions in Managerial Decision Making

Main Findings (Epistemological), The findings indicate that managerial knowledge at the studied institution is obtained through a combination of various sources, including quantitative data, practitioner experience, and normative policies. Decision-making is not solely based on statistical data, but also considers context and professional experience. The institution applies a reflective approach to policy evaluation, where evaluation results are used as organizational learning materials, not merely as a control tool.

Theoretical Interpretation, This epistemological approach reflects a pluralistic paradigm that combines positivist and interpretative approaches. Pluralistic epistemology is more appropriate for educational management because it is able to capture the complexity of educational realities [8]. The importance of reflection in building contextual managerial knowledge [9].

Link to Previous Research, These findings demonstrate that integrating multiple sources of knowledge improves the quality of managerial decision-making [6]. However, this study adds a philosophical dimension by demonstrating that institutional epistemology is implicitly influenced by ontological views of education.

Critical Analysis, Although the epistemological approach used is relatively adaptive, challenges arise in the consistency of data use and reflection. In some cases, strategic decisions are still more influenced by external policies than internal reflection, which can diminish the epistemological autonomy of the institution.

Axiological Dimension in Educational Management Practice

Key Findings (Axiological), The axiological dimension is reflected in the values that underlie managerial decision-making, such as fairness, integrity, social responsibility, and sustainability. These values are embodied in the institution's vision, mission, and strategic policies. Managerial practices are not solely oriented toward efficiency but also consider their impact on the well-being of students and educators.

Theoretical Interpretation, This finding confirms that axiology is the core of educational management [10]. Integration of values in educational management functions as a counterbalance to instrumental rationality [3].

Relationship to Previous Research, The results of this study reinforce the importance of value orientation in educational management [4]. However, this study expands the study by demonstrating how these values interact with the ontological and epistemological dimensions of managerial practice.

Critical Analysis

Although axiological values have been formally articulated, there is a potential gap between stated values and actual practice. The main challenge lies in consistently applying values in managerial dilemmas, especially when faced with limited resources.

Integration of Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Dimensions

The analysis shows that the three dimensions of the philosophy of science are interrelated and form a unity in educational management practice. The ontological perspective influences how managerial knowledge is constructed (epistemology), while values and goals (axiology) guide the use of that knowledge in practice.

This integration demonstrates that reflective and contextual educational management requires ongoing philosophical awareness.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the findings of this study strengthen the argument that the philosophy of science is an important foundation in educational management research. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for educational institution leaders in developing managerial practices that are not only effective but also meaningful and valuable.

5. Conclusion

This article aims to analyze the integration of ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations in educational management research and practice in Indonesia through a case study approach. Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that educational management practices at the institutions studied cannot be fully understood solely through a technical and administrative perspective but require comprehensive philosophical reflection.

Ontologically, educational institutions are understood as learning communities oriented toward holistic human development. This perspective influences how institutions design policies and management structures that place students and educators as the primary subjects of education. Epistemologically, managerial decision-making is based on a pluralistic approach that integrates empirical data, practitioner experience, and normative policies. Meanwhile, axiologically, educational management practices are guided by the values of justice, integrity, social responsibility, and sustainability.

The integration of these three dimensions of the philosophy of science demonstrates that reflective and contextual educational management can provide deeper meaning to the practice of managing educational institutions, while strengthening its relevance to national education goals.

Article Contribution

This article provides theoretical and practical contributions to the study of educational management. Theoretically, this article enriches the educational management literature by offering an integrative approach that connects ontology, epistemology, and axiology within a single analytical framework. This approach broadens the understanding of educational management as a practice rich in values and meaning, rather than simply a technocratic activity.

Practically, this article provides a reflective perspective for leaders and managers of educational institutions in formulating managerial policies and practices that align with educational values and the Indonesian social context. The analytical framework offered can be used as a reference in the evaluation and development of educational management at various levels.

Theoretical and Practical Recommendations

Theoretically, this study recommends that educational management research in Indonesia integrate more philosophical perspectives, particularly in explaining basic assumptions, knowledge construction methods, and value orientations in managerial practice. This integrative approach has the potential to produce a more contextual and reflective educational management theory.

Practically, educational institution managers are advised to internalize the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions in managerial decision-making. Philosophical reflection can be incorporated into strategic planning, policy evaluation, and educational leadership development, ensuring that management practices are oriented not only toward efficiency but also toward long-term educational values and goals.

Limitations of the Study

This research has several limitations. First, the case study used is a single case study and is not intended to generate statistical generalizations. Second, the research data sources are limited to documents, institutional archives, literature, and practitioners' reflective notes, without involving direct observation or in-depth interviews. Third, the philosophical analysis conducted relies heavily on the researcher's interpretation, thus opening up space for alternative perspectives.

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