

A Systematic Literature Review on the Branches and Schools of Philosophy and Their Contemporary Relevance

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Abstract: This study aims to identify and analyze the main schools and branches of philosophy and explain how each contributes to the development of human thought. The research employs a systematic literature review method using databases obtained from Google Scholar. Researchers applied criteria to collect journal article data, including article types, journals published within the last four years, and keywords such as schools of philosophy, branches of philosophy, and philosophy. The results show that a total of fifteen research articles discussed schools and branches of philosophy. This study aims to enhance our understanding of various branches and schools of philosophy and how they help shape the framework of thought and decision-making processes in various aspects of life. This research highlights that the main branches of philosophy, including ontology, epistemology, ethics, logic, axiology, philosophy of education, and philosophy of science, each focus on essential aspects of understanding the world and human life. Various schools of philosophy, including materialism, realism, idealism, empiricism, rationalism, existentialism, and others, offer different perspectives on the world and the knowledge of it as we understand today.

Keywords: Branches of Philosophy, Schools of Philosophy, Systematic Literature Review

A. Introduction

Philosophy may be broadly understood as a systematic and reflective mode of inquiry that employs reason to investigate reality, knowledge, and values, thereby providing a foundational framework for human understanding and scientific reasoning. As the intellectual foundation of many disciplines, philosophy has historically shaped the development of knowledge and civilization through critical reflection and the pursuit of truth (Milasari et al., 2021).

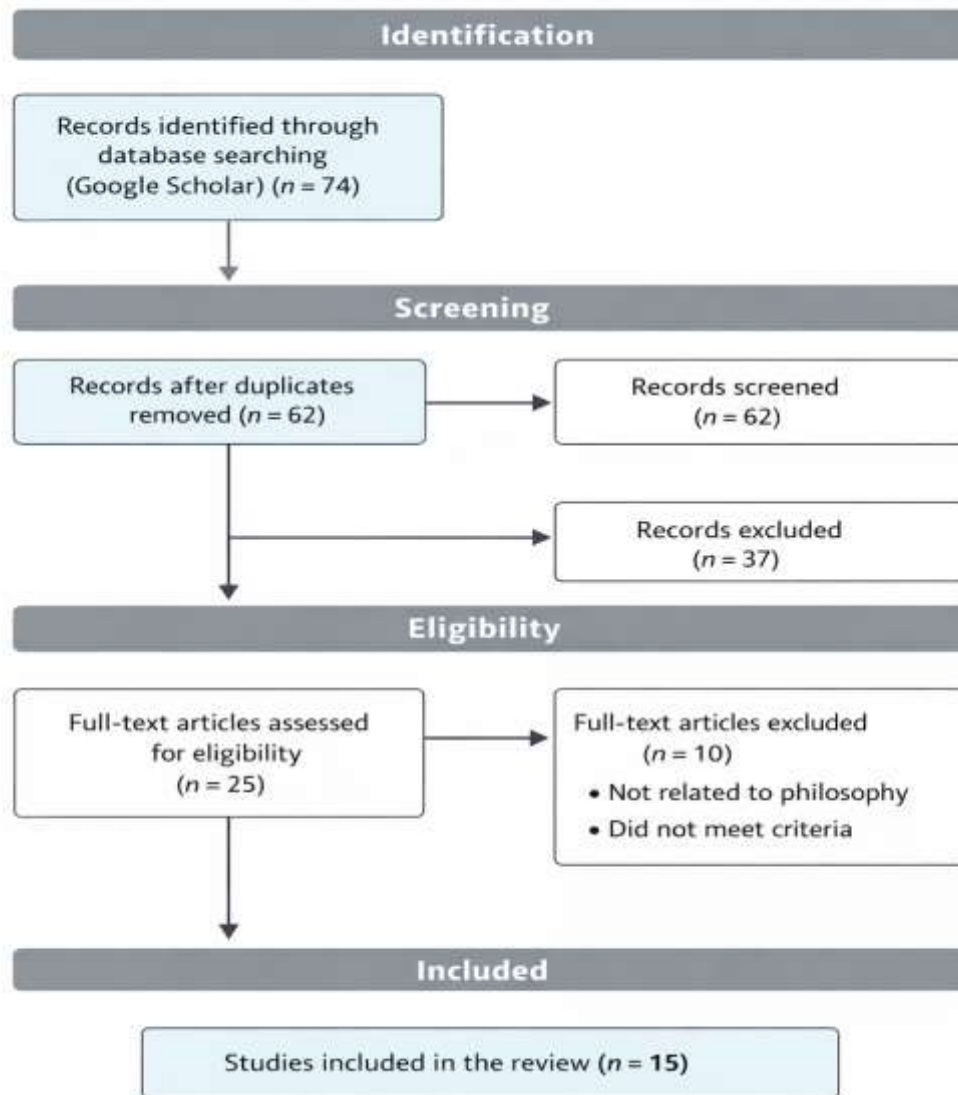
While the major branches of philosophy metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology along with their associated schools such as rationalism, empiricism, idealism, pragmatism, and existentialism, have been extensively discussed in classical and Western philosophical literature, fewer studies have examined how these philosophical frameworks are interpreted, contextualized, and applied within contemporary Indonesian scholarship, particularly in the field of education. Existing literature tends to present philosophy as a universal and static body of knowledge, leaving a gap in understanding its dynamic role within specific cultural, historical, and educational contexts.

This review addresses that gap by mapping recent Indonesian academic discourse on the branches and schools of philosophy, with particular attention to their conceptualization and application in educational thought and practice. By situating philosophical traditions within Indonesia's contemporary intellectual and educational landscape, this study contributes a contextual perspective that complements and extends the predominantly Western-centered philosophical literature. Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How are the core branches of philosophy conceptualized in recent Indonesian scholarly literature?
2. Which schools of philosophical thought are most prevalent in Indonesian academic discourse, and in what educational or practical contexts are they applied?

B. Methods

A systematic literature review is a process of identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all available research relevant to a specific research question (Daffa Maulana et al., 2024). The purpose of conducting a systematic literature review is to discover strategies for solving problems, to identify various perspectives related to the research topic, and to develop theories relevant to the study of branches and schools of philosophy. In this study, the selection of articles followed the PRISMA procedure, which consists of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. In the identification stage, articles were gathered through the Google Scholar database using predefined keywords. A total of 15 articles published between 2021 and 2025 were initially identified. During the screening stage, duplicate articles were removed, and titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess their relevance to the research topic. In the *eligibility* stage, the full texts of the remaining articles were examined based on predefined inclusion criteria, particularly their relevance to the branches and schools of philosophy. Finally, in the inclusion stage, only studies that met all criteria were retained for analysis.



C. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Selected Journal Articles

No	Title	Author(s)	Research Objective	Research Findings	Conclusion
1	Axiological Review of the Pancasila Student Profile in the Merdeka Curriculum	(Trisnawati et al., 2022)	To examine the philosophy of science focusing on the axiological (value-oriented) aspects of the Pancasila Student Profile in the Merdeka Curriculum.	Three dimensions were identified: descriptive ethics, four dimensions of normative ethics, and three dimensions of meta-ethics.	This study focuses on the axiological domain, namely the ethical components found in the Pancasila Student Profile, including global descriptive ethics, normative ethics, and meta-ethics.
2	Science in the View of Philosophy: Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology	(Munip, 2024)	To discuss scientific knowledge from the perspective of philosophy ontology, epistemology, and axiology.	Ontology focuses on the nature of science; epistemology focuses on methodology and the way scientific knowledge develops; axiology discusses the usefulness or value of science.	This study discusses ontology (existence), epistemology (knowledge development), and axiology (the value and utility of science).
3	Fundamental Understanding of the Nature of Science in Philosophical Perspective: Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology	(Pratiwi et al., 2024)	To examine theoretically the essence of science through ontology, epistemology, and axiology.	Ontology is the first stage in creating knowledge, dealing with everything that exists. Epistemology is the second stage, involving inquiry to find answers.	Ontology, epistemology, and axiology are three interrelated and inseparable aspects in understanding knowledge.
4	The Relationship Between Ethics and Branches of Philosophy	(Kiamani, 2023)	To provide an actual understanding of the inseparable relationship between ethics and the branches of philosophy.	Ethics guides humans on how to live their lives through various daily behaviors and helps people adopt appropriate perspectives and conduct.	Ethics helps individuals adopt proper perspectives and behavior in daily life.

5	Islamic Educational Philosophy in the Perspective of Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology	(Qadafi et al., 2024)	To determine the systematic structure of philosophy, namely epistemology, ontology, and axiology, which discuss the use of knowledge.	Ontology studies the nature of existence, epistemology examines how and what knowledge is produced, and axiology explores the use of knowledge.	Educational philosophy is a theory or ideology that arises from an educator's philosophy, experience, and studies related to education.
6	Pancasila Educational Philosophy in the Perspective of Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology	(Pristiwiyanto, 2021)	To analyze how Indonesia's national education system reflects philosophical views rooted in Pancasila.	The Pancasila educational philosophy should be internalized as the spirit of Indonesia's national education system and as a reference for strategic planning.	The principles of Pancasila – religiosity, humanity, unity, respect for diversity, democracy, and justice – form the core values of Indonesia's educational philosophy.
7	Axiology-Based National Education	(Zulfahmi & Aprison, 2022)	To describe the benefits and value of axiology and its application in Indonesia's national education system.	Students develop conceptual and procedural understanding of axiology-based education, encouraging moral and wise character development.	The axiological foundation of national education is based on Pancasila values, particularly religiosity and humanity.
8	Objects of Study in the Philosophy of Science (Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology) and Their Urgency in Islamic Studies	(Afriandi & Hakim, 2024)	To analyze ontology, epistemology, and axiology in the philosophy of science and their urgency in Islamic studies.	Philosophy of science contributes to understanding theological reasoning, Islamic law, and ethics.	The study concludes that ontology, epistemology, and axiology are essential in Islamic studies, enriching both academic discourse and practical applications of Islamic values.
9	Epistemology of Philosophy	(Pajriani et al., 2023)	To explore how things occur, how humans know them, and how to differentiate them across time and space.	Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that studies how humans think and acquire knowledge.	Epistemology discusses how to obtain true knowledge philosophia means love of wisdom, emphasizing knowledge gained through reflective reasoning.
10	Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology of Islamic Philosophy	(Ilmu & Islam, 2024)	To discuss the concepts of ontology, epistemology, and axiology in Islamic education.	Ontology explores the nature of education, epistemology focuses on sources and methods, and axiology highlights educational	Educational philosophy, through ontology, epistemology, and axiology, provides a solid framework for understanding and

11	The Existence of Legal Science from the Perspective of Philosophical Epistemology	(Sidik, 2022)	To analyze the existence and nature of legal science.	values. Legal science is distinctive – normative, practical, and prescriptive.	guiding Islamic education. Legal science primarily studies legal norms but also covers ethics, morality, justice, and law implementation, making it an integral part of human knowledge.
12	The Influence of Rationalist Philosophy on Mathematics: Immanuel Kant’s Thought	(Taufik Qurohman, 2022)	To determine the influence of rationalist philosophy on mathematics according to Immanuel Kant.	Rationalism views mathematical truth as a priori knowledge. Kant argues that mathematics is synthetic a priori – universal and independent.	Kant concludes that mathematical truths are synthetic a priori in nature, forming the basis of arithmetic and geometry as distinct yet related disciplines.
13	Schools of Thought in Educational Philosophy	(Khaerunnisa et al., 2024)	To analyze educational schools from philosophical perspectives and their ideological frameworks.	Materialism, realism, and idealism play important roles in educational philosophy.	Each philosophical school essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, humanism, realism, and idealism offers unique views on educational goals and methods.
14	Comparative Study of Major Schools of Islamic and Western Educational Philosophy	(Laily Navi’atul Farah, 2022)	To examine three Islamic and four Western philosophical schools of education.	Islamic education includes religious-conservative (Al-Ghazali), religious-rational (Ikhwan al-Safa), and pragmatic-instrumental (Ibn Khaldun) schools; Western education includes progressivism, essentialism, perennialism, and reconstructionism.	Both Western and Islamic philosophical schools contribute to educational thought with different orientations and emphases.
15	Study of the Nature, Goals, and Schools of Educational Philosophy in the MBKM Curriculum	(Chrismastianto et al., 2023)	To analyze the nature, goals, and philosophical schools influencing the MBKM curriculum.	Philosophical schools such as progressivism, pragmatism, existentialism, and critical pedagogy underpin the MBKM curriculum.	The MBKM curriculum formulates normative principles and values guiding human behavior and social relations.

Results

The selection of studies followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. A total of 15 records were identified from Google Scholar (2021–2025). After screening titles, abstracts, and full texts, all 15 studies met the inclusion criteria, focusing specifically on branches and schools of philosophy.

Narrative Synthesis of the Reviewed Studies

1. **Dominant Philosophical Orientation:** Of the 15 studies reviewed, 12 studies (80%) explicitly focused on the triad of ontology, epistemology, and axiology (O-E-A), demonstrating its centrality as a foundational framework for understanding knowledge, existence, and values.
2. **Application Context:** The majority of studies were situated in educational settings (n = 10), including the Merdeka Curriculum / MBKM (n = 3) and Islamic education (n = 3). The remaining studies explored broader educational philosophy, legal studies, mathematics, and Islamic scholarship.
3. **Schools of Thought:** The most frequently discussed schools of thought were pragmatism, progressivism, and existentialism, applied to curriculum design, value-based education, and pedagogical practices.
4. **Emphasis on Axiology:** Axiology (values and ethics) was a recurring theme, particularly in the Pancasila Student Profile, national education ethics, and Islamic educational philosophy.
5. **Integration in Islamic Studies:** Several studies highlighted the relevance of O-E-A for Islamic scholarship, demonstrating its role in developing theological reasoning, jurisprudence, and ethical awareness.

Discussion

Theme 1: The Centrality of the Core Triad

The reviewed literature consistently emphasizes the interrelationship between ontology, epistemology, and axiology, making the triad a foundational framework for philosophical inquiry. This framework allows scholars to link theoretical concepts with practical applications in education, ethics, and Islamic studies. The predominance of this triad (appearing in 80% of the studies) reflects its enduring significance in understanding knowledge, existence, and value across diverse contexts.

Theme 2: Philosophy as an Educational Foundation

The Indonesian educational system serves as the primary site for philosophical

discourse, as evidenced by 10 of the reviewed studies focusing on educational contexts. The prevalence of progressivism, pragmatism, and existentialism in curricula such as MBKM highlights the integration of philosophical principles into national educational goals, including student autonomy, moral development, and value-based learning. This demonstrates how philosophy underpins curriculum design and educational policies in Indonesia.

Theme 3: Integration and Tension

Several studies show how Western philosophical traditions (e.g., pragmatism, progressivism, existentialism) are integrated with local and Islamic values. This creates synergy, where global concepts are adapted to local cultural and religious norms. At the same time, tensions emerge when individualistic aspects of Western thought meet communal and spiritual priorities inherent in Pancasila and Islamic education. These dynamics reveal both challenges and opportunities in contextualizing philosophy for Indonesian educational and social contexts.

D. Conclusions

Based on the systematic review of 15 recent Indonesian studies on philosophy, several key findings emerge. The core branches ontology, epistemology, and axiology remain central in scholarly discourse, with strong emphasis on their application within educational contexts. The review highlights how philosophical schools such as pragmatism, progressivism, and existentialism are integrated into curriculum design and value-based education, demonstrating the interplay of knowledge, ethics, and practical application. This mapping provides valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and philosophers by showing how philosophical frameworks can inform educational practice and policy. It underscores the importance of embedding ethical and epistemological considerations in teaching and curriculum planning. This review is limited to articles published in Indonesian journals and accessible through Google Scholar, potentially introducing language and publication biases. It also focuses specifically on the Indonesian educational context, which may limit generalizability to other cultural or national settings. Future studies could conduct comparative systematic literature reviews between Indonesian and Western scholarship to identify convergences and divergences in philosophical interpretation. Ethnographic or classroom-based research is also needed to explore how these philosophical principles are enacted.

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