PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCE FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING STRATEGIC INNOVATION TO IMPROVE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Endang Tri Pujiastuti
Universitas Darma Persada, Jakarta, Indonesia
Email: endangfeunsada@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores how the philosophy of science can serve as a rational foundation for strategic innovation in managing private universities in Indonesia. The research is driven by the observation that many innovation management policies in private universities remain largely technical and lack a reflective, philosophical basis. Using a systematic review of SINTA-indexed and international journal articles published between 2021 and 2025, this study examines how the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of the philosophy of science relate to institutional innovation indicators such as intellectual property management, industry collaboration, and university governance. The findings show that the ontological dimension helps universities define research directions and institutional goals that align with academic realities. The epistemological dimension strengthens approaches to validating knowledge and advancing research outcomes, while the axiological dimension underlines the importance of accountability, collaboration, and ethical values in university management. Overall, this study highlights that incorporating philosophical perspectives into strategic innovation provides a rational and sustainable framework for improving the quality and competitiveness of private universities in Indonesia the findings indicate that the integration of the three dimensions of the philosophy of science provides both a rational and normative foundation for strategic innovation in private universities. The philosophy of science functions not only as a reflective theory but also as a conceptual framework that strengthens policy effectiveness, social legitimacy, and the sustainability of institutional innovation. Theoretically, this study contributes by proposing an integrative model that links the philosophical foundations of science with innovation performance indicators. Practically, it offers an evaluative instrument for university leaders to assess the alignment between institutional values and the strategic direction of innovation. Therefore, the philosophical approach to science serves as a rational foundation that ensures higher education innovation is systematic, sustainable, and oriented toward values.

Keywords: *Axiology; Epistemology; Philosophy of Science; Strategic Innovation; Private Universities.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Previous research revealed that innovation management policies in universities significantly support the ability of institutions to produce and manage institutional innovations; For example, Yulinda et al. (2022) found that the implementation of the Permenristekdikti policy Number 24 of 2019 is still far from optimal, so a more integrated policy framework is needed for institutions. In addition, Hadijah, Jumardi, & Yusran (2023) show that the quality of governance and organizational performance indicators greatly affect the results of institutional innovation in higher education. The study of the philosophy of education put forward by Mora et al. (2024) emphasizes that epistemological foundations and normative values are important so that innovation policies are not only technical but also rationally oriented and accountable. Research on Islamic educational institutions by Selvia (2024) shows

that the application of the philosophy of science framework in institutional management provides a systematic direction for innovation. Meanwhile, a study on institutional innovation in Islamic boarding schools (Fuad & Iswantir, 2024) confirms that synergy between policies, organizational culture, and rational reason is a key factor in institutional transformation. Thus, the common thread of these five studies states that an integrated innovation policy framework, accompanied by a foundation of science philosophy and strong governance indicators, is an essential rational foundation to increase the effectiveness of strategic innovation in the management of private universities.

Various studies show that strengthening institutional governance and organizational performance indicators are key factors in increasing the competitiveness and capacity of institutional innovation in universities. For example, Sitti Hadijah, Jumardi & Muh. Yusran (2023) found that improvements in the governance system and organizational performance indicators greatly affect the feasibility of a university towards BLU status. Furthermore, a study of the governance system in higher education by P. Indriati et al. (2022) shows that the effectiveness, efficiency, and competence of human resources are important elements in institutional performance. In addition, a meta-analysis study by Talika Khairunisa et al. (2025) confirms that GUG (Good University Governance) principles such as transparency and accountability are directly related to the performance of private universities. Further research by Liviawati Liviawati, Gusmarila Eka Putri & Aljufri Aljufri (2024) shows that the governance and competence of lecturers significantly affect the performance of faculty organizations at private universities in Pekanbaru. And research by A. R. Rahmanda (2022) at the local government level shows that good governance is very important for institutional innovation, the analogy of which can be applied in universities. Thus, the common thread of these five studies is that managerial quality through institutional governance and measurable performance indicators is the main driver of institutional innovation in private universities.

Various recent studies have emphasized that the epistemological foundation, namely the way of acquiring and validating knowledge, has a significant influence on the design of research methods and institutional policies in education. For example, research by Mahidin, Natsir, & Haryanti (2022) shows that the epistemology of Islamic education provides a strategic framework to face the challenges of science and scientific methods in the 4.0 era. Meanwhile, Indah (2024) emphasized that the integration of revelation and reason in the epistemology of Islamic education is important to form valid and contextual knowledge. A study by Piswatama, Manurung, et al. (2024) on the epistemology of Pancasila philosophy proves that epistemological understanding affects the development of science and curriculum. Ginting & Usiono (2024) found that epistemological values in the national education system play a role in designing the strategic framework of institutions. In addition, Asyibli et al. (2025) in a study of the epistemological dimension of Islamic education shows that epistemic dissection influences educational policies and institutional management. Thus, it can be concluded that the articulation of epistemology explicitly becomes a rational foundation that allows institutional strategic innovation to become more accountable, systematic, and measurable.

The latest study confirms that the philosophy of science approach applied in education management, including in Islamic educational institutions, provides a normative and critical framework so that institutional innovation is not only technical but in harmony with institutional values and goals. For example, Ahmad Saifudin & M. Yusuf (2022) affirm that the paradigm and foundation of Islamic educational management philosophy include epistemology as a "second foundation" that directs managerial. Selvia (2024) stated that the study of philosophy of science in the realm of Islamic education makes a critical contribution to designing a value-oriented institutional system. In addition, the study "Epistemological Aspects of Innovation in Islamic Education Management" (2024) found that the epistemological dimension determines the direction of effective innovation and in accordance with institutional

principles. Then the study "Harmonization of Spirit, Intellect, and Body Education in an Islamic Perspective" (2025) emphasizes that the normative value of educational philosophy is a bridge between theory and managerial practice. Thus, the common thread of the five studies shows that the integration of philosophy of science, especially the epistemological and axiological dimensions, into education management provides a rational basis and completeness that allows strategic innovation to become more systematic, critical, and in harmony with institutional identity.

Several recent studies on faith-based educational institutions confirm that institutional transformation requires synergy between institutional policies, organizational culture, and rational reason as the foundation for strategic innovation. For example, research on the Amanatul Ummah Islamic Boarding School in Mojokerto shows that institutional innovation occurs through changes in organizational values and structures supported by internal policy bases. (Chotimah & Khomsiyah, 2024) Another study on Islamic boarding schools within the framework of Law No. 18/2019 identified opportunities for institutional innovation related to regulation, governance and organizational cultural adaptation. (Setyawan et al., 2024) A broader study of Islamic education emphasizes that institutional innovation should not only be administrative technical but also include the value-normative dimension and managerial rationality. (Safitri, 2025) Studies on Islamic education management based on local wisdom emphasize that a strong organizational culture and rational policy basis are prerequisites for sustainable institutional innovation. (Scott, 2025) An analysis of institutional governance in madrassas shows that rational sense and formal regulation along with organizational culture reinforce each other when innovations are implemented. (Dalimunthe, 2025) Thus, the common thread of these five studies is that an approach that combines formal policies, organizational culture, and managerial rationality through reflection on the philosophy of science becomes a foundation that allows institutional innovation to be not only technical but also systematic, measurable, and sustainable.

Although the literature on university innovation management has shown that institutional policies play an important role, there is still a gap in the operational mapping between the philosophy of science framework and innovation indicators such as IPR management and research commercialization. For example, research by Yulinda, Aripin, Waskitoaji, Heryadi, and Kurniawan (2022) found that the implementation of innovation management in state universities has not been optimal, especially in the commercialization stage of research products and the management of intellectual property rights. However, the study does not explicitly link the ontological-epistemological aspects of philosophy of science to the structure and process of innovation in private universities. Thus, there is a need to formulate a measurable construct that bridges the relationship between institutional philosophical values and the output of institutional innovation.

To close this gap, it is recommended to conduct mixed methods research that first conceptualizes the dimensions of onology, epistemology, and axiology as measurable operational constructs (e.g., applied vs. fundamental research orientation; institutional value norms; knowledge validation model), and secondly conducts multi-PTS quantitative surveys to test the relationship between these constructs and institutional innovation indicators, then thirdly facilitates case studies pilot intervention in a number of private universities to observe changes in strategic decisions, budgets, and innovation outputs for 12–24 months. This approach is believed to yield contributions to private universities by providing (a) a theoretical model that connects the foundations of philosophy of science with strategic decision-making for innovation, (b) measurement instruments that private university leaders can use to assess and align institutional values with innovation priorities, and (c) interventional empirical evidence that supports internal policy recommendations and advocacy to regulators, so that private universities are better able to increase innovation capacity and competitiveness

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research departs from the premise that philosophy of science provides a rational foundation that can influence the direction, legitimacy, and effectiveness of strategic innovations in the management of private universities (PTS). The philosophy of science encompasses the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions into a reflective framework that guides how knowledge is constituted, validated, and assessed in the context of higher education institutions (Mora, Radiana, & Wicaksono, 2024). The ontological perspective determines basic assumptions regarding academic reality and institutional goals; The epistemological perspective regulates the criteria of truth, research methods, and the legitimacy of evidence; while the axiological perspective places institutional values as the basis for prioritizing strategies and policies (Mora et al., 2024). The integration of these three dimensions allows for strategic decision-making that is not just the adoption of technology or administrative procedures, but the enforcement of a rational orientation that aligns the institution's mission with innovation practices.

In the higher education innovation management literature, institutional innovation is understood as planned changes in the structure, procedures, culture, and research outputs that increase the relevance, competitiveness, and sustainability of institutions (Yulinda, Aripin, Waskitoaji, Heryadi, & Kurniawan, 2022). Concrete indicators that are often used include the quantity and quality of IPR, industrial partnerships, commercialization of research results, and internal policy changes that support applied R&D (Yulinda et al., 2022). However, a purely technical-organizational approach without a philosophically reflective basis has the potential to produce innovations that are inconsistent in value or vulnerable to failures of social legitimacy, for example, mission conflicts between commercial orientation and educational responsibility (Hadijah, Jumardi, & Yusran, 2023). Therefore, an integrative theory that connects the foundations of the philosophy of science with the managerial construct of innovation is needed to explain the mechanism by which philosophical orientation mediates policy, resource allocation, and measurement of innovation output in private universities.

Previous research presented a number of relevant findings that became the empirical and theoretical basis for this study. First, Yulinda et al. (2022) evaluated the implementation of the Higher Education Innovation Management (MIPT) policy and found that, although national policies are available, their implementation at institutions has not been consistent, especially at the downstream and commercialization stages of research which indicates a gap between formal regulations and institutional practices (Yulinda et al., 2022). These findings point to the need for studies that not only assess policies, but also the normative and epistemic factors-funders that determine how institutions interpret and implement those policies.

Second, a study on governance and organizational performance by Hadijah, Jumardi, & Yusran (2023) shows that improvements in governance systems and performance indicators are significantly related to institutional feasibility towards BLU status and institutional innovation capacity (Hadijah et al., 2023). This research strengthens the argument that managerial aspects such as transparency, accountability, and human resource competence are the main determinants of innovation performance, but the research is relatively limited in revealing the role of philosophical foundations as mediators or antecedent of governance practices.

Third, studies in the field of philosophy of education (Mora et al., 2024) and research on the philosophy of science in Islamic education management (Selvia, 2024) emphasize the need for epistemological and axiological foundations to make innovation not just technical, but rational and sustainable. Mora et al. (2024) emphasized that the integration of educational philosophy helps institutions formulate research priorities and knowledge validation methods that are relevant to the challenges of the digital era, while Selvia (2024) shows how the philosophy of science framework helps systematize innovation in faith-based educational

institutions. Both studies offer strong conceptual arguments but a lack of multi-institutional quantitative evidence that examines the direct influence of philosophical dimensions on institutional innovation indicators.

Fourth, studies in the context of religious education and Islamic boarding schools (Fuad & Iswantir, 2024; Chotimah & Khomsiyah, 2024) shows that institutional transformation occurs when there is a synergy between institutional policies, organizational culture, and managerial rationality. These findings highlight elements of cultural values and local wisdom as factors supporting innovation that often escape conventional management analysis (Fuad & Iswantir, 2024; Chotimah & Khomsiyah, 2024). However, generalization of findings to secular private universities or diverse academic characteristics requires broader validation.

Fifth, empirical research on Good University Governance (GUG) and PTS performance (Liviawati, Putri, & Aljufri, 2024) suggests that governance and lecturer competence contribute significantly to the performance of faculty organizations. These results are relevant to enrich innovation management models because academic competence and institutional leadership function as internal drivers for the realization of strategic innovation (Liviawati et al., 2024). However, there is still a lack of research that explicitly examines the role of construct-philosophy (e.g., epistemic orientation, institutional value) as an antecedent or moderator variable in the relationship between governance → innovation.

Based on the analysis of these studies, there is a consistent pattern: (1) empirical evidence that governance and managerial capabilities have an effect on innovation performance, and (2) strong conceptual arguments about the importance of philosophy of science as a normative/epistemic framework. However, empirical evidence that examines the causal relationship between the foundations of the philosophy of science (operationalization of ontology, epistemology, axiology) and institutional innovation indicators in private universities is still limited. This gap is the fulcrum for this research.

C. METHOD

This study uses a systematic literature review method with a descriptive-analytical approach, which aims to examine, synthesize, and critically analyze the results of previous research related to the application of philosophy of science as a rational basis in strategic innovation and governance of private universities in Indonesia. Secondary data were obtained from scientific articles published in SINTA-accredited national journals and reputable international journals over the last five-year period (2021–2025). The search process was carried out through official databases such as Sinta (sinta.kemdikbud.go.id), Garuda, and Google Scholar, with keywords: *philosophy of science, strategic innovation, higher education management, good university governance,* and *private universities*. Inclusion criteria include Indonesian or English articles that have an active DOI, explicit scientific methodology, and direct relevance to the topic of the relationship between philosophy of science and institutional innovation.

The analysis stage is carried out following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework which includes four main steps: (1) identification of articles according to keywords, (2) *screening* based on topic suitability and journal accreditation quality, (3) *feasibility* based on abstracts and full content, and (4) *inclusion* articles that meet the criteria of in-depth analysis. Each selected article was studied thematically using *a content analysis* approach to find concept patterns, methodologies, and empirical findings. The results of the analysis were then critically compared to identify the knowledge gap (*research gap*), methodological limitations, and opportunities for theoretical integration between the ontological, epistemological, and axial dimensions of philosophy of science with strategic innovation practices in private universities (Hadijah, Jumardi, & Yusran, 2023; Yulinda et al., 2022; Mora, Radiana, & Wicaksono, 2024)

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Referring to the theoretical foundations and previous empirical findings, the framework of this research is built on the proposition that the foundations of the philosophy of science (independent) influence institutional strategic innovation (dependent) through certain channels of mediation and moderation. Operationally, the foundational construct of the philosophy of science is formulated in three main dimensions: (a) *Ontological orientation assumptions* about the institutional goals and nature of the reality of science (e.g. application vs. theory orientation); (b) *Epistemological orientation of* preference methods of knowledge validation (e.g., applied, interdisciplinary, participatory research); and (c) *Axiological orientation of* institutional value systems that determine priorities (e.g., accountability, sustainability, social concern). These dimensions will be measured through a questionnaire of the perception of R&D leaders, lecturers, and managers and analyzed in relation to innovation indicators such as the number of IPR, the ratio of application-applied publications, the volume of industry partnerships, and the proportion of R&D budgets to the total budget of the institution. This concept integrates the findings of Hadijah et al. (2023) on governance and Liviawati et al. (2024) on governance, with the conceptual ideas of Mora et al. (2024) and Selvia (2024) regarding the role of philosophy of science as a normative framework.

In causal logic, the framework proposes several hypothetical paths: (1) a strong and articulated foundation of the philosophy of science will increase the clarity of strategic priorities, which then improve resource allocation and increase innovation output; (2) an epistemological orientation that leans towards applied and interdisciplinary research accelerates the downstream of research findings; (3) axiological values that emphasize accountability and collaboration strengthen governance mechanisms that support industrial partnerships and commercialization. In addition, governance (GUG) and lecturer competence are positioned as control or moderator variables that can strengthen or weaken the influence of the foundation of philosophy of science on innovation output (Hadijah et al., 2023; Liviawati et al., 2024).

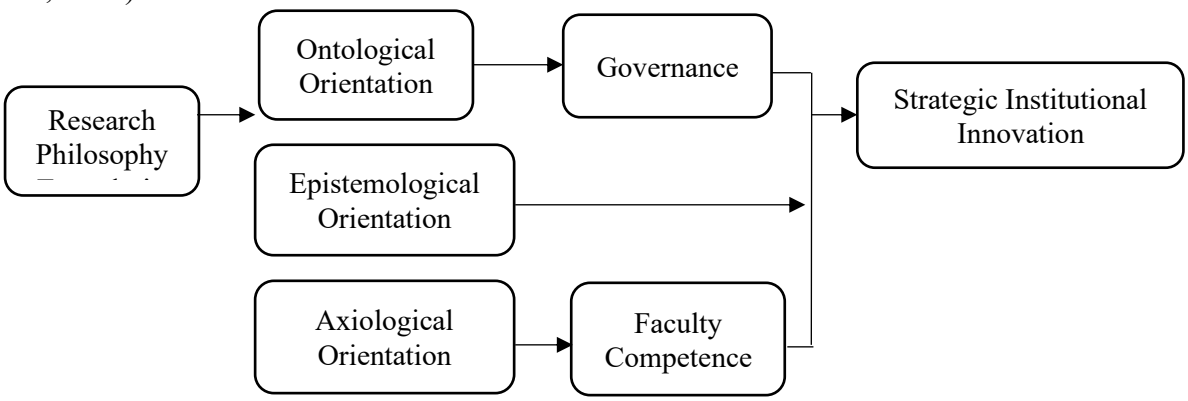

Figure 1. Frame of Mind

The causal relationship between variables in this research framework illustrates the influence of the foundation of philosophy of science as an independent variable on institutional strategic innovation as a bound variable. The three dimensions of the foundation of the philosophy of ontological, epistemological, and axiological science are the basis for shaping the way universities understand, develop, and apply science. A clear ontological orientation reinforces the strategic direction of the institution, focusing resources on research activities relevant to the institution's goals. An epistemological orientation that leans towards applied and interdisciplinary research accelerates the transformation of research results into useful innovations. Meanwhile, an axiologic orientation that emphasizes the value of accountability and collaboration encourages the creation of ethical and socially advantage-oriented governance.

Furthermore, governance (GUG) and lecturer competence play a role as control or moderator variables that affect the strength and weakness of these relationships. Good governance increases the effectiveness of the implementation of philosophy of science values in innovation policies and programs, while lecturer competence accelerates downstream research through creativity and collaboration with industry. The combination of a strong philosophical foundation, transparent governance, and high faculty competence will result in a significant increase in institutional strategic innovation. In conclusion, the success of innovation in higher education is highly determined by the synergy between the philosophical basis of the institution and its strengthening factors, namely good governance and competent human resources

Based on the above frame of thought, this study proposes the main hypotheses and derivative hypotheses as follows: Main Hypothesis (H1). The foundation of philosophy of science (a combination of ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions) has a positive and significant effect on the level of institutional strategic innovation in private universities.

H1a. A strong epistemological orientation (emphasis on applied research and relevant validation methods) has a positive effect on the quantity and quality of IPR and downstream research.

H1b. An axiological orientation that places accountability and collaboration as the main values moderates the relationship between governance (GUG) and innovation output so that the influence of governance on innovation becomes stronger in institutions that have a high axiological orientation.

H1c. A clear ontological orientation (clarity of application vs. fundamental) improves strategy coherence so that it correlates positively with the proportion of R&D budgets devoted to downstream activities and industrial partnerships.

These hypotheses are designed to be tested through mixed-methods: cross-state quantitative analysis (survey and secondary data of innovation indicators) complemented by case studies and action-studies in a number of private universities to obtain interventional evidence regarding causal mechanisms and ecological validity of quantitative findings (Yulinda et al., 2022; Hadijah et al., 2023). This approach is expected to close the identified research gap, namely the lack of research that empirically links the constructs of science with the output of institutional innovation and produces theoretical and practical contributions to the management of innovation in private universities.

E. CONCLUSION

The philosophy of science approach that includes ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions has proven to be a rational foundation for strategic innovation in the management of private universities (PTS). The answer to the formulation of the problem in the introduction shows that philosophy of science plays an important role in shaping directions, values, and strategic decision-making methods oriented towards strengthening the capacity of institutional innovation. The ontological dimension helps private universities set institutional goals and research directions that are in accordance with academic reality; the epistemological dimension strengthens the validity of scientific methods and the downstream of research; Meanwhile, the axiological dimension emphasizes the values of ethics, accountability, and collaboration in higher education governance. Thus, philosophy of science not only functions as a reflective theory, but also as a rational tool that is able to guide innovation to remain measurable, valuable, and relevant to the mission of higher education institutions.

The foundation of philosophy of science with institutional innovation indicators, such as the management of intellectual property rights (IPR), industrial partnerships, and commercialization of research results. To close this gap, further research needs to develop

conceptual models and measurable instruments that can test the causal relationship between the dimensions of philosophy of science and strategic innovation practices in various private universities. Through the integration of modern philosophy of science and management theory, it is hoped that private universities can build innovation systems that are not only adaptive to external changes, but also based on rational and normative values. In conclusion, the philosophy of science approach is a rational pillar that ensures that strategic innovation in higher education develops systematically, sustainably, and meaningfully in academic and social contexts

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