

Philosophical Analysis of Problem-Based Learning Model in Sociology Learning: Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Perspectives

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Abstract. This study analyzes the Problem-Based Learning model in Sociology Learning through an educational philosophy approach covering ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions. Through the literature study method, this study aims to analyze how the PBL model reflects the ontological dimension in sociology learning, knowledge is constructed epistemologically through PBL, and axiological values that emerge from the application of PBL. The results of the literature study show that ontologically, PBL reflects real and contextual social reality as a source of problems to be analyzed. Epistemologically, PBL emphasizes the construction of knowledge through the process of scientific inquiry, orientation of students to problems, organizing students for learning, guiding students in individual and group investigations, improving and presenting the results of student work, and analyzing and evaluating the problem-solving process. Meanwhile, axiologically, PBL instills the values of creativity, critical thinking, independent learning, motivation, responsibility for learning, collaboration, and group cooperation. Thus, the application of the PBL model in sociology learning has a strong relationship between the dimensions of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The limitation of this study is the lack of direct empirical validation. Therefore, further research is recommended to test the implementation of PBL through classroom action research or experiments to obtain concrete evidence regarding its effectiveness.

Keywords: Problem Based Learning (PBL), Sociology, Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology

INTRODUCTION

Sociology education plays a fundamental role in fostering critical thinking, fostering deep empathy, and awakening social awareness in each individual student. As we enter the first half of the 21st century, the demand for quality and relevance in sociology education is becoming increasingly urgent, not only to produce cognitively intelligent students, but also individuals with high social literacy, the ability to think divergently and innovatively, collaborate effectively across boundaries, and most importantly, become proactive and positive agents of change in a society that is constantly evolving (Muftiana Sahra Pasa dkk., 2025).

Amidst rapid technological developments and social change, conventional learning models focused on memorization are considered less relevant. Therefore, a learning approach is needed that can encourage students to actively identify and solve real-world problems around them. One approach considered effective in addressing this challenge is Problem-Based Learning (PBL), a learning model that places students at the center of the learning process through independent and collaborative solution of contextual problems (Sari & Kuntari, 2025).

The application of PBL in sociology learning has been widely carried out by previous researchers, some of whom are: 1) Research conducted by (Nur dkk., 2023). This study discusses the application of problem-based learning models in increasing student participation and learning achievement at SMA Negeri 10 Maros in sociology subjects. In cycle II, it showed a significant increase with the achievement of learning completeness of 77.4%. These results reflect positive changes in students' attitudes, interests, and activities, as well as an increase in their ability to complete individual and group assignments. The problem-based learning model has been proven effective in improving students' sociology learning outcomes, along with changes in attitudes and more active involvement in the learning process. 2) Research conducted by (Zohiro dkk., 2024) on improving students' critical thinking skills through the application of problem-based learning models assisted by quartet card media in sociology subjects. The learning approach using problem-based learning assisted by quartet card media successfully increased students' understanding of the material, sparked students' interest in learning, encouraged active involvement, and became a trigger for students to participate in critical thinking. The success of the learning process by implementing the problem-based learning model assisted by quartet cards depends on students' critical thinking skills in solving contextual challenges in card games. 3) Research conducted by (Sawindu dkk., 2022) on the Implementation of the Problem-Based Learning Model Using the Good Edu Application in Subjects. The results of the study stated that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning model using the Good Edu application had been carried out in accordance with the RPP consisting of preliminary activities, core activities, and closing activities. The results shown were that students were able to develop critical thinking skills by individually conducting, discovering, and transforming the knowledge they had acquired. From the results of the study, there are three domains of learning outcomes that have become teachers. Among them are in the domain of knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

A literature review of three journals on the application of PBL in sociology learning revealed that previous research focused on examining the impact or effectiveness of PBL implementation in sociology learning, without understanding the philosophical foundations of the science itself. In this context, sociology learning serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge about social phenomena but also as a platform for developing critical awareness.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to analyze the Problem-Based Learning Model in Sociology Learning through an educational philosophy approach encompassing ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions. By examining these philosophical aspects, the research provides a new perspective on how PBL is not only a pedagogical strategy but also a reflection of perspectives on social reality, knowledge construction, and human values in learning.

The urgency of this research is to strengthen the philosophical foundation for applying PBL to sociology learning. In today's educational context, learning models are often applied without a thorough understanding of their foundations. Educational philosophy plays a crucial role in determining the direction, depth, and meaning of the learning process itself. This research not only strengthens the theoretical foundation of PBL but also demonstrates its relevance in shaping students' social awareness and critical thinking skills in sociology learning.

Based on the problems above, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled Philosophical Analysis of the Problem-Based Learning Model in Sociology Learning: Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Perspectives. This research aims to answer the following research questions: (1) How does PBL reflect the ontological dimension in sociology learning? (2) How is knowledge constructed epistemologically through PBL? (3) What axiological values emerge from the application of PBL?

METHOD

This research uses a literature review approach as the primary method for data collection and analysis. This literature review was chosen because it was deemed relevant and aligned with the research objectives. PBL analysis reflects the ontological dimension of sociology learning, the epistemological construction of knowledge through PBL, and the axiological values that emerge from the application of PBL. This approach allows the author to explore various theories, previous research findings, and practices reviewed by experts in the philosophy of science. By reviewing relevant literature, the author can develop a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the Philosophical Analysis of Problem-Based Learning Models in Sociology Learning: Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Perspectives.

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through a process of searching and selecting literature sourced from national and international scientific journals, academic books published by reputable publishers, articles from educational websites, and research documents or reports from credible institutions.

The search process was conducted using various keywords such as "philosophy of science," "PBL model," "ontology," "epistemology," and "axiology" through academic search engines like SINTA, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and journal databases like ScienceDirect, JSTOR, and Garuda. The literature found was then selected and organized based on its relevance to the research focus.

The literature selection criteria for this study encompassed three main aspects: relevance, credibility, and year of publication. In terms of relevance, only literature directly discussing the Philosophical Problem-Based Learning Model in Sociology Learning: Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Perspectives was selected. Source credibility was determined based on the publisher's reputation, writing quality, and recognition within the academic community (e.g., through the number of citations). Meanwhile, the year of publication was considered to ensure the research maintained the most up-to-date data and references, with priority given to literature published within the last five years, except for classic literature deemed important for theoretical foundations.

After the literature was collected, the next step was to conduct data analysis techniques, including synthesis and critical analysis of the content of each selected source. Synthesis is conducted by grouping information based on the themes or aspects discussed, such as the philosophy of science and the application of PBL in sociology learning. Next, the author conducts a critical analysis to assess the suitability, strengths, and limitations of each approach found in the literature. This analysis can also be used to identify common patterns and differences in perspectives among researchers, which can enrich understanding of the study topic.

By using a systematic and structured literature review method, this research is expected to produce a comprehensive overview of the philosophical approach of the Problem-Based Learning Model in Sociology Learning: Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Perspectives. Furthermore, this approach also allows researchers to formulate relevant and adaptive findings based on verified scientific evidence and provide recommendations for the development of similar studies in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Philosophy of Science

Knowledge without foundations can be likened to a building without a foundation, which will inevitably collapse. This analogy reflects the importance of having a strong foundation in the pursuit of knowledge. A solid foundation is essential for knowledge to be both robust and sustainable. The philosophy of science plays a central role in the development of science. It is not merely an abstract theory but also a concrete foundation that guides the epistemology, ontology, and axiology of science. Understanding the concepts of the philosophy of science provides a strong foundation for the systematic, logical, and critical development of science. The philosophy of science plays an integral role in guiding the journey of science. Philosophical thinking involves not only conceptual understanding but also forms the basis of values and ethics that guide the development of science. Therefore, understanding and applying the philosophy of science is increasingly crucial in maintaining the integrity, sustainability, and relevance of science in various fields and contexts (Muzakir, 2024).

In the context of education, particularly in sociology, the philosophy of science plays a crucial role as a guide in understanding social reality and developing students' critical thinking patterns. The philosophy of science does not stop at the theoretical level but serves as a concrete foundation for every scientific approach used in the learning process, including the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model. In this regard, the philosophy of science also serves as a basic framework that guides teachers and students in understanding the nature of science.

2. PBL and Ontological Dimension in Sociology Learning

Ontology comes from the Greek word *on* or *ontos* which means being and the word *logos* which means science (logic), or the science of being as it is integrally with all its aspects. Ontology is the science that discusses the nature of existence, which is the ultimate reality in both physical/concrete and spiritual/abstract forms. The word ontology means the idea of the purest event of science that investigates the universe. An ontology provides a meaning for an explicit explanation of the concept of knowledge representation in a knowledge base. An ontology can also be interpreted as a hierarchical structure of terms to explain a domain that can be used as a foundation for a knowledge base, thus ontology is a theory about the meaning of an object, the properties of an object, and the relations of the object that may occur in a knowledge domain. Based on this, it can be concluded that, in a philosophical perspective, ontology is the study of what exists (Nurasa dkk., 2022).

Albadri dkk., (2023) explains several characteristics of ontology, as expressed by Bagus, which can be

simplified as follows:

- 1) Ontology is a branch of philosophy that studies the order and structure of reality in the broadest possible sense, using categories such as: being or becoming, actualization or potentialization, real or appearance, essence or existence, perfection, space and time, change, and so on.
- 2) Ontology is a branch of philosophy that attempts to describe the ultimate essence of existence, namely the One, the Absolute, Eternal Form, Perfection, and the existence of everything that is absolutely dependent on it.
- 3) It is a branch of philosophy that studies the status of reality, whether it is real or illusory, whether thought is real, and so on.

The characteristics of ontology above are relevant to the characteristics of sociology itself as a science. Sociology has empirical and rational characteristics, meaning it relies on logical (a priori) thinking while also being patient with the realities or facts of a society. A small example of this sociological practice is the mutually influential interaction between individuals and their environments, both physical and social. This environment is perceived and felt by the individual, creating certain impressions and feelings (Mygirl Divania Abidin & Binti Maunah, 2024).

In the context of sociology learning, ontology focuses on social reality, namely life as dynamic, complex, and filled with mutually influencing social interactions. Social reality is not static but constantly changing according to the cultural, economic, and moral contexts of society. This is reflected in the nature of sociology as a science.

Building on this understanding, the problem-based learning model reflects this ontological dimension by making social reality the primary source and direct object of learning. PBL does not build the learning process from abstract theory, but rather from concrete problems faced by students in everyday life, such as poverty, social inequality, juvenile delinquency, and gender discrimination.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the learning process through solving real-life problems relevant to everyday life contexts to initiate innovative learning and teaching, thereby enabling students to learn actively (Kurniawan dkk., 2023).

Based on this reality, the problem-based learning model reflects the ontological dimension of sociology learning because it:

- 1) Makes real social reality the starting point for learning.
- 2) Understands social phenomena as complex, dynamic, and meaningful.
- 3) Guides students to investigate the nature of human and societal relationships.
- 4) Integrates empirical experience with theoretical reflection.

This is illustrated in research conducted by (Yulianti & Mulyani, 2023). The implementation of the PBL (Problem-Based Learning) learning model is a learning implementation model that includes a series of processes, namely presenting a problem and then finding a solution to that problem. The results of the research on the implementation of learning using the Problem-Based Learning model are able to make students better understand case examples where solutions to social problems are found through reading sources or based on opinions obtained from the students' own experiences, so that students can actively participate in learning activities through discussions with their group members.

3. Epistemology and Knowledge Construction of PBL

Epistemology discusses the process of acquiring knowledge, what must be considered to obtain true knowledge, what is true, and what constitutes a standard. The study of epistemology aims to question how something occurs, how we know it, how we distinguish it from others, and so on regarding the state and condition of something in space and time. So what is the epistemological basis that allows for the acquisition of knowledge about logic, ethics, and aesthetics, as well as the methods and procedures for obtaining scientific truth, moral beauty, artistic beauty, and moral goodness (Pajriani dkk., 2023)?

a. Knowledge as a Social Construction

In sociology learning, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) places students in problematic situations that reflect real-life social phenomena such as social conflict, value changes, or economic disparities. This process encourages students not to simply accept sociological theories from the teacher, but rather to construct social meaning through experience and interaction. The foundation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) rests on the principles of constructivist learning theory, which requires active student involvement in

understanding knowledge and honing their reasoning skills. Furthermore, students are expected to develop critical thinking skills by analyzing problems and then applying their findings to the real world (Esemadkk., 2012). Lev Vygotsky's constructivist theory posits that knowledge is constructed through social interaction, whether between two or more people or learning in groups, which significantly assists children in constructing their knowledge. Lev Vygotsky also believed that communication between teachers and students is crucial as a way to help students develop new concepts and consider how to understand concepts at a higher level (Amahorseya & Mardliyah, 2023).

b. Epistemological Process in Problem-Based Learning

PBL contains steps that reflect the epistemological stages in constructing knowledge, namely:

a. Orienting Students to the Problem

In this session, the teacher will convey the educational objectives and conduct apperception to explore the initial knowledge of their students. The teacher will motivate students to participate in the given case, thus fostering students' motivation to complete the task.

c. Organizing Students for Learning

In this session, the teacher will organize and focus students on completing the tasks they encounter. This session will also involve a question-and-answer session between students and the teacher, or vice versa. The teacher's role is as a data provider to their students.

d. Guiding students in individual and group investigations

In this session, the teacher will guide students in conveying the data they have obtained to their group mates. The teacher will also guide students in determining solutions to the problems presented. The teacher's role in this session is to encourage all students to actively participate in finding and solving problems.

e. Improving and presenting student work

In this session, the teacher provides opportunities for other groups to share their opinions on the results of the discussions presented. Furthermore, the teacher also provides reinforcement and sufficient explanations related to the results of the discussions. The teacher explains the rules for presenting the results of intergroup discussions; some groups will be able to present their results. From the student perspective, they can still understand what the teacher has explained.

f. Analyzing and evaluating the problem-solving process

In this session, research results show that the teacher's role is to reflect on or refine learning summaries and guide students in compiling summaries of educational outcomes. From the student perspective, they carefully consider the summaries and reflections provided by the teacher, continue to guide them in analyzing problems, and summarize educational outcomes (Veronika Tiara dkk., 2024).

Thus, the epistemology in PBL emphasizes that: (1) Knowledge is constructed, not given; (2) Students are active epistemic subjects, not passive recipients; (3) Critical thinking and reflection are central to knowledge formation; (4) Real-life social experiences serve as a laboratory for the development of sociological knowledge; (5) Dialogue and collaboration serve as tools for validating social knowledge.

4. Axiological Values in the Problem-Based Learning Model in Sociology

Axiology, in general, is the study of the theory of value, or the study of anything that has value or benefits. Value is a phenomenon but does not exist in a specific space or time. Furthermore, values are logical essences and can be understood through reason (Rosnawati dkk., 2021). Axiological values in learning are a crucial dimension that emphasizes the purpose of education, not merely as a process of knowledge transfer, but also as a means of character development and social awareness in students. In the context of sociology instruction at the high school level, the application of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) naturally shapes the values that emerge based on the learning objectives to be achieved in the learning process:

Table 1. Axiological Values Contained in the PBL Model in Sociology Learning

No.	Title and Author	Contained Axiological Values
1.	The Influence of Problem Based Learning (PBL) Learning Model on Students' Creative Thinking Skills in Sociology Subjects in Grade X of SMA N 5 Pariaman (Sahada & Febriani, 2025)	Creativity, critical thinking, independent learning
2.	Implementation of Problem Based Learning Model to Increase Student Learning Motivation in Sociology (Saragih, 2022)	Motivation, responsibility for learning, collaboration

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3. Implementation of Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Group Cooperation Sociology Learning for Class X-6 of SMA Negeri 1 Padarincang (Sari & Kuntari, 2025)
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5. The Relationship between Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Dimensions in the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Model in Sociology Learning.

The study of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Model in sociology learning needs to be understood comprehensively through a philosophy of science perspective, encompassing ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions. These three dimensions do not stand alone but are interconnected, forming the conceptual foundation and practice of learning.

To provide a more systematic overview of the conceptual relationship between these three dimensions of philosophy of science, the following table illustrates the relationship between the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions in the application of the PBL model to sociology learning:

Table 2. Relationship between Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Dimensions in the Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

No.	Philosophical Dimension	Main Focus	Meaning in PBL	Inter-Dimensional Interrelationships
1.	Ontology	The nature of social reality as an object of learning	PBL starts from real and contextual social reality as a source of problems to be analyzed.	Ontology is the basis of epistemology because understanding social reality determines how students acquire knowledge.
2.	Epistemology	Methods and processes of acquiring social knowledge	PBL constructs knowledge through the process of orienting students to problems, organizing students for learning, guiding students in individual and group investigations, enhancing and presenting student work, analyzing and evaluating the problem-solving process.	Epistemology connects reality (ontology) and values (axiology) because by initiating the scientific thinking process, students critically interpret social meanings.
3.	Axiology	The purpose and values of applying science	PBL instills the following values: Creativity, critical thinking, independent learning, motivation, responsibility for learning, collaboration, and group work	Axiology is the end result of the application of ontology and epistemology because values are formed through learning experiences from social reality.

The table above shows that the application of the PBL model in sociology learning has a strong relationship between the dimensions of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The three form a complete unity, where social reality in PBL reflects the ontological dimension in sociology learning, knowledge is constructed epistemologically through PBL, and in the learning process, axiological values are realized from the application of PBL.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the philosophical analysis of the problem-based learning model in sociology learning presents a comprehensive integration between the dimensions of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The research findings show that ontologically, PBL reflects real and contextual social reality as a source of problems to be analyzed. Epistemologically, PBL emphasizes the construction of knowledge through the process of scientific inquiry, orienting students to problems, organizing students for learning, guiding students in individual and group investigations, improving and presenting students' work, analyzing and evaluating the problem-solving process. Meanwhile, axiologically, PBL instills the following values: creativity, critical thinking, independent learning, motivation, responsibility for learning, collaboration, and group cooperation. However, this study has limitations, especially relying only on literature study methods without direct empirical validation in the classroom context. Therefore, the conclusions presented are based

on secondary sources and conceptual analysis, not field data. For further research, it is recommended to conduct empirical studies in schools, for example, by testing the application of the philosophical analysis PBL model with implementation through classroom action research or experiments. Such research will provide concrete evidence of its effectiveness in the analysis of the PBL philosophy in sociology learning.

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