

DETERMINANTS OF STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION: A CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS APPROACH

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Abstract

Religious moderation has become a central issue in Indonesia's pluralistic religious landscape, where differences in faith and cultural traditions coexist within a shared national framework. Among university students, however, the understanding and application of moderation values remain uneven, as indicated by challenges such as the rise of intolerant attitudes and limited opportunities for constructive intergroup dialogue. This study seeks to examine the level of religious moderation among students and to identify the most significant factors that influence its formation within the context of Islamic higher education. The research employed a quantitative design using a survey of 95 students at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung. The instrument measured four core dimensions of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation to local culture. Data were analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with the assistance of Lisrel 8.8 software. The results indicate that students' religious moderation is at a moderate level, suggesting a reasonably good foundation while highlighting the need for reinforcement in specific areas. More importantly, several indicators recorded high loading factor values, namely cooperation, empathy, openness, and acceptance of differences. These findings reveal that interpersonal and relational attitudes play a pivotal role in shaping moderate religious orientations. The study concludes that strengthening these high-loading factors, alongside the four main dimensions, can significantly enhance students' capacity to internalize and practice religious moderation, thereby supporting a more harmonious and inclusive educational environment.

Keywords: Religious moderation, Islamic higher education, Interfaith dialogue, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Indonesia.

Abstrak

Moderasi beragama telah menjadi isu sentral dalam lanskap keagamaan yang pluralistik di Indonesia, di mana perbedaan keyakinan dan tradisi budaya hidup berdampingan dalam bingkai

kebangsaan. Namun, di kalangan mahasiswa, pemahaman dan penerapan nilai-nilai moderasi masih belum merata, yang ditunjukkan oleh munculnya sikap intoleran serta terbatasnya ruang dialog antar kelompok. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji tingkat moderasi beragama mahasiswa serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor signifikan yang memengaruhi pembentukannya dalam konteks perguruan tinggi Islam. Penelitian menggunakan desain kuantitatif dengan survei terhadap 95 mahasiswa STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung. Instrumen penelitian mengukur empat dimensi inti moderasi beragama, yaitu komitmen kebangsaan, toleransi, anti-kekerasan, dan akomodasi terhadap budaya lokal. Data dianalisis dengan Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) menggunakan perangkat lunak Lisrel 8.8. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tingkat moderasi beragama mahasiswa berada pada kategori sedang, yang mencerminkan dasar pemahaman dan penerapan nilai-nilai moderasi yang cukup baik, namun masih memerlukan penguatan di beberapa aspek. Lebih jauh, beberapa indikator ditemukan memiliki nilai loading factor tinggi, yaitu kerja sama, empati, keterbukaan, dan penerimaan terhadap perbedaan. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa sikap interpersonal dan relasional berperan penting dalam membentuk orientasi keagamaan yang moderat. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan faktor-faktor dengan loading tinggi, bersamaan dengan penguatan empat dimensi utama, dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan kapasitas mahasiswa dalam menginternalisasi dan mempraktikkan moderasi beragama, sehingga mendukung terciptanya lingkungan pendidikan yang harmonis dan inklusif.

Kata kunci: Moderasi beragama, Perguruan tinggi Islam, Dialog antaragama, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Indonesia..

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, the world confronts numerous interconnected challenges, ranging from inter-religious conflict and extremist ideologies to social polarization and humanitarian crises, that have direct repercussions even within Indonesia's diverse social fabric. As the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation and a deeply multicultural society, Indonesia bears a moral and social responsibility to exemplify peaceful coexistence and interfaith harmony. Within this context, religious moderation emerges as a pivotal strategy for addressing global tensions at the local level, by promoting tolerance, respect for difference, and peaceful dialogue, particularly within higher education institutions. As Subchi et al. (2022) found, religious moderation policies—spanning national commitment, rejection of violence, and cultural accommodation—are instrumental in preserving interfaith harmony among Indonesian Muslim students (Subchi, et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the concept of moderation in Indonesia aligns closely with inclusive theology and dialogue initiatives that encourage mutual understanding and reduce social tensions (Fitriani, et al., 2024). When compared across Southeast Asia, this approach aligns with broader regional models that emphasize inclusive theological engagement and educational dialogue to foster peace in plural societies. In Southeast Asia, comparable initiatives underscore the regional salience of religious moderation as a pathway to interfaith harmony. In Malaysia, a data-driven framework for socio-religious harmony in Sabah highlights how state-community coordination and everyday intergroup contact sustain peaceful

coexistence in a highly diverse setting, offering a policy blueprint that complements Indonesia's emphasis on national commitment, anti-violence, and cultural accommodation (Khalli & Sintang, 2022). In the Philippines, interfaith dialogue has been institutionalized in conflict-affected Mindanao through faith-based movements and peace-education programs, which have demonstrably fostered trust, reduced prejudice, and supported post-conflict reconciliation—an approach that parallels Indonesian higher-education efforts to embed moderation values in curricula (Corpuz, 2025).

In Thailand's southern border provinces, recent evidence from student populations shows that acceptance of cultural differences is driven by factors such as religious upbringing, attitudes toward diversity, and supportive interpersonal relations, suggesting that educational interventions which amplify empathy, openness, and cooperation can measurably strengthen intergroup harmony—again resonating with Indonesia's high-loading indicators (Tepsing, et al., 2025). Collectively, these cases indicate that Indonesia's model of religious moderation aligns with—and can learn from—regional practices that rely on education, community dialogue, and policy scaffolding to stabilize plural societies (Subchi, et al., 2022). As the most populous Muslim country and a multicultural society, Indonesia has a moral and social responsibility to be a role model or pioneer in fostering a harmonious religious life. Religious moderation is a key approach to addressing this global challenge. This concept encourages society, particularly in the context of higher education, to uphold the values of tolerance, respect for differences, and promote peace. As Junaedi (2022) emphasized, moderation is not just a religious approach, but a national cultural strategy in strengthening the values of religious freedom and constitutional tolerance (Junaedi, 2022).

In the context of Indonesia, which has diverse religions and beliefs, interfaith harmony is crucial for maintaining national stability and security. To address these challenges in religious life, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has launched religious moderation since 2016. Religious moderation essentially involves believing in absolute doctrines and allowing space for the beliefs of others (Ali, 2020). According to Ansori (2020), the Ministry of Religion uses a model of religious moderation to think inclusively and revive the spirit of mutual cooperation in society (Anwar & Muhayati, 2021). Religious moderation in Indonesia is a step to prevent radicalism, as moderate Islam is most appropriate for Indonesia, a country with diverse cultures. This is crucial for students' future progress, and they must instill moderate Islamic values to prevent the spread of radicalism.

The Ministry of Religion has established four characteristics of religious moderation, namely national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture (Kemenag, 2019). National commitment is part of the indicators for understanding the paradigm, attitude patterns, and practices of individual social religiosity towards their commitment to the basic consensus of

the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, especially towards the existence of Pancasila as the ideology of the Indonesian state and various basic principles of the nation as stated in the 1945 Constitution and the laws and regulations under it; Tolerance is a pattern of attitude, and practice of a person's social religiosity in respecting and accepting differences in social life as natural law; Anti-violence, namely an understanding or attitude (action) towards individuals who are oriented towards replacing the social and political system in Indonesia through various forms of violence in the name of religious teachings; and Accommodation towards local culture. These four indicators of religious moderation can be the basis of values in the formation of individual religious character so that they can be moderate in responding to the plurality of local wisdom that has become a tradition, namely culture in various regions in Indonesia (Islamy, 2022).

While religious moderation is an ideal concept, its implementation among university students remains challenging. Several studies have shown a growing tendency toward extremism, intolerance, and exclusivism in various universities. The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) stated that seven state universities are suspected of being influenced by radicalism (Murtadlo, 2021). Based on a survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI), 31% of students showed an intolerant attitude, with their level of understanding of diversity and cultural diversity being assessed as low (Anwar & Muhayati, 2021). According to the Alvara Research Center report (2017), around 23.4% of students are exposed to radical ideology (Chadidjah, et al., 2021).

Interviews with several students at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung revealed that they understand the concept of religious moderation quite well. This is evidenced by their understanding of the concept, their ability to articulate the values of religious moderation, although not fully, their ability to demonstrate good interfaith attitudes, and their ability to communicate effectively with others. However, the reality is that some students are still influenced by rigid and closed religious beliefs. This may be due to a lack of moderate religious literacy and limited interfaith and interschool dialogue within the academic environment.

Research by Jamaludin (2022) states that within the university environment, there is diversity among students, both in terms of ethnicity, religion, and race. This diversity can be highly susceptible to the emergence of intolerant attitudes (Jamaludin, 2022). In line with research by Ardiansyah (2022), the problem of intolerance on campus does not only cover religious or ethnic issues, but also concerns differences in political views, sexual orientation, gender, and ideology (Ardiansyah & Erihadiana, 2022). Ardiansyah et al. (2024) found that 43% of students in West Java still did not understand religious moderation, while 57% had a good understanding. However, gaps remain in addressing misunderstandings and vulnerability to extremism, despite Pancasila being widely accepted as a unifying concept and general support for diversity and tolerance (Ardiansyah, et al, 2021).

Although the concept of religious moderation has been widely discussed in Indonesian scholarship, the majority of studies remain qualitative or normative in nature, focusing on conceptual definitions and descriptive accounts. Only a limited number of works have attempted to measure religious moderation empirically using robust quantitative methods, and even fewer have applied advanced statistical tools such as Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). This gap is particularly evident in the context of Islamic higher education, where students play a strategic role in shaping the future of interfaith harmony in Indonesia's pluralistic society. Addressing this gap, the present study employs CFA to validate the core dimensions of religious moderation and to identify high-loading factors—such as empathy, cooperation, openness, and acceptance of differences—that are crucial for cultivating tolerance and peaceful coexistence. By doing so, this research not only enriches the theoretical understanding of religious moderation but also strengthens its practical relevance as a foundation for interfaith harmony in Indonesia and comparable multicultural societies.

This study attempts to fill this gap by presenting a quantitative CFA-based approach to identify the key factors shaping university students' religious moderation. Furthermore, the focus on Islamic-based institutions provides a relevant contribution to understanding the internal dynamics of Islamic higher education, while broadening our understanding of the practice of religious moderation in higher education. Although this study was conducted in a religiously homogeneous environment, the values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture, have broad implications in Indonesia's pluralistic and multi-religious social context. These findings suggest that moderate attitudes among Islamic students have the potential to become important social capital in strengthening interfaith cohesion and harmony at the national level.

This study aims to analyze the level of religious moderation among students at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung and identify the main factors influencing their understanding and application of religious moderation values. The research focuses on the four main dimensions of religious moderation as defined by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) approach, this study seeks to provide a deeper and more measurable understanding of the formation of moderate religious attitudes among students at private Islamic universities.

To achieve this goal, this study formulated two main questions: (1) What is the level of religious moderation among students at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung? and (2) What factors significantly influence the formation of moderate attitudes in religion among students, in particular to what extent do indicators such as national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence attitudes, and accommodation to local culture contribute positively to strengthening religious moderation? This

question aims to identify which dimensions are most dominant in forming moderate attitudes.

This research has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the results are expected to enrich the academic literature on religious moderation, particularly with a quantitative approach, which is still rarely used in the context of private Islamic universities. Practically, the findings of this study can be utilized by universities, educators, and policymakers in designing academic and non-academic programs that support strengthening religious moderation among students. Furthermore, the results of this study can be used by community organizations in designing strategies to develop a young generation that is religious, inclusive, and tolerant of diversity.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using the survey method as the primary data collection technique. This approach was selected because it enables objective, structured, and statistically testable measurement of relationships between variables (Bekman, 2022). The survey method facilitated the collection of data from a relatively large number of respondents, providing a general overview of the factors influencing students' religious moderation.

The population of the study consisted of all students at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung, deemed relevant to the theme of religious moderation. Random sampling was applied, ensuring that each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected (Sugiyono, 2017). A total of 95 students participated in the study, which was considered representative for describing the phenomenon under investigation (Fitriyati, 2022).

The research instrument was a questionnaire designed according to the research variable, Religious Moderation, which was operationalized through four indicators (Table 1). Respondents rated their level of agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Data were analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) within the structural equation modeling framework in LISREL 8.8. CFA was employed to assess the validity and reliability of the construct, ensuring that each indicator accurately represented the latent variable of religious moderation (Qomusuddin & Romlah, 2022; Umar & Nisa, 2020).

CFA was chosen for its methodological rigor in validating theoretical constructs and testing the alignment of measurement models with empirical data. Unlike exploratory approaches, CFA enables precise testing of hypotheses regarding the dimensions of religious moderation, allowing each indicator to be evaluated for its contribution to latent factors (Hair, 2019). It also facilitates the assessment of construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity — key criteria for confirming that dimensions such as empathy, openness, and cooperation are measured accurately and consistently within the context of Islamic

higher education. Thus, CFA not only functioned as a statistical tool but also as a methodological instrument that strengthened the theoretical validity of this study while addressing the gap in quantitative research on religious moderation in Islamic higher education institutions.

Table 1.
Research Variables and Indicators

Latent Indicators		Indicators
Moderation Religious (MB)	National	Attitude (K1)
	Commitment (K)	Support for democratic principles and practices (K2)
		Openness to diversity (K3)
		Nationalism (K4)
		Respectful attitude (T1)
	Tolerance (T)	Accepting differences both personally, socially and politically (T2)
		Attitude of giving space (T3)
		Able to respond to the presence of minorities (T4).
		Attitude of Dialogue (A1)
	Anti-Violence (A)	Attitude of Deliberation (A2)
		Openness (A3)
		Empathy (A4)
	Accommodating to Local Culture (L)	Friendly attitude (L1)
		Participation (L2)
		Cooperation (L3)
		Collaboration (L4)

Ethical aspects were carefully observed throughout the research process to ensure the integrity of the study and the safety of participants. Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the internal ethics committee of STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay. All participants were fully informed about the objectives and procedures of the research before completing the survey. The privacy and confidentiality of respondents were strictly maintained: all data were anonymized and used solely for academic purposes. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no coercion or pressure applied, and respondents were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Based on Table 1, the study hypothesizes that national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture have a positive and significant influence on students' religious moderation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Respondent Profile

Based on the descriptive analysis of the data as explained in Table 2, the majority of respondents in this survey were male (74.7%), while females were only 25.3%, indicating a dominance of male participation. Viewed by semester level, the largest number of respondents came from the final semester (7 & 8) with a percentage of 43.2%, followed by semesters 5 & 6 at 26.3%, semesters 3 & 4 at 18.9%, and semesters 1 & 2 with the smallest number, namely 11.6%. Viewed from participation in religious organizations, the majority of respondents joined Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) at 49.5%, followed by Syarikat Islam (SI) at 22.1%, and Persatuan Islam (PERSIS) at 7.4%. Meanwhile, no respondents were involved in Muhammadiyah or the Islamic Community Association (PUI), while the other 21.1% joined religious organizations other than those mentioned. Regarding their understanding of the term "Religious Moderation," 82.1% of respondents stated they were familiar with the term, while 17.9% were unaware. This data indicates that the majority of respondents have a fairly good understanding of religious moderation, and most are final-year students active in religious organizations, particularly Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

Table 2.
Respondent Profile

Item	Profile	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	24	74,7%
	Female	71	25,3%
Semester Level	First (1 & 2)	11	11.6%
	Second (3 & 4)	18	18.9%
	Third (5 & 6)	25	26.3%
	Fourth (7 & 8)	41	43.2%
Religious Organizations Followed	Nahdatul Ulama (NU)	47	49.5%
	Muhamadiyah	0	0.0%
	Persatuan Islam (PERSIS)	7	7.4%
	Persatuan Umat Islam (PUI)	0	0.0%
	Syarikat Islam (SI)	21	22.1%
	Other Organizations	20	21.1%
Getting to Know the Term "Religious Moderation"	Knowing	78	82.1%
	Not Knowing	17	17.9%

Source: processed data, 2025

Descriptive Analysis

Table 3 below shows that the level of religious moderation among students at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung is in the moderate category, reflected in the

average value of each measured variable. National commitment has an average value of 3.84, indicating that students' attachment to the principles of the state is quite good. Tolerance has an average value of 4.02, indicating that students are able to accept differences and appreciate diversity, although it still needs to be improved. Nonviolence has the highest average value, namely 4.41, which is included in the very moderate category, indicating a high awareness in rejecting violence in all its forms. Meanwhile, accommodation to local culture has an average value of 4.14, reflecting a fairly good attitude in respecting local culture. Overall, religious moderation has an average value of 4.10 and is categorized as moderate, indicating acceptance of the values of moderation in religious life, although efforts are still needed to improve their understanding and application in daily life.

Table 3.
Descriptors of Religious Moderation

Variable/Indicators	Mean	Kategori
National Commitment (K)	3.84	Moderate
Tolerance (T)	4.02	Moderate
Anti-Violence (A)	4.41	Very Moderate
Accommodating to Local Culture (L)	4.14	Moderate
Religious Moderation (MB)	4.10	Moderate

Source: processed data, 2025

Normality Test

One of the requirements for using covariance-based SEM analysis is that the data must be normally distributed through a normality test (Ivan Fanani Qomusuddin & Siti Romlah, 2022). A random variable is said to be normal if the p-value is greater than 0.05 (Ivan Fanani Qomusuddin & Siti Romlah, 2022). Based on the results of the normality test with the Lisrel 8.8 program, it can be seen that the p-value is greater than 0.05, so it can be said that the data is normally distributed, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4.
Normality Test Results

Indicators	p-value	Conclusion
National Commitment (K)	0.770	Normal
Tolerance (T)	0.632	Normal
Anti-Violence (A)	0.260	Normal
Accommodating to Local Culture (L)	0.443	Normal

Source: Lisrel processed data, 2025

Validity and Reliability Test

Validity testing in research aims to ensure that the data collected is relevant, accurate, and can be used in further analysis (Sugiyono, 2017). An instrument is

said to be valid if the factor loading value is greater than 0.4 (Hair,, 2019). Meanwhile, for the Reliability test using the Construct Reliability (CR) value, the Construct Reliability value must be greater than 0.60 (Ivan Fanani Qomusuddin & Siti Romlah, 2022). The validity and reliability results can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5.
Loading Factor, CR and AVE Values

Indicators	Loading Factor	CR	AVE
Attitude (K1)	0.75	0.75	0.53
Support for democratic principles (K2)	0.68		
Openness to diversity (K3)	0.46		
Nationalism (K4)	0.70		
Respectful attitude (T1)	0.67	0.76	0.55
Accepting differences (T2)	0.80		
Attitude of giving space (T3)	0.54		
Able to respond to the presence of minorities (T4).	0.64		
Attitude of Dialogue (A1)	0.73	0.85	0.65
Attitude of Deliberation (A2)	0.74		
Openness (A3)	0.77		
Empathy (A4)	0.82		
Friendly attitude (L1)	0.67	0.85	0.65
Participation (L2)	0.77		
Cooperation (L3)	0.85		
Collaboration (L4)	0.75		

Source: Lisrel processed data, 2025

The loading factor value of all indicators was recorded above 0.46, which is above the minimum threshold set at 0.4 (Hair,, 2019), Thus, it can be concluded that the respondents' responses to the questions posed were able to represent the construct or variable being studied. Meanwhile, all CR values were above the minimum threshold of 0.70 (Donkoh et al., 2023). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the constructs ranged from 0.53 to 0.65 all above the minimum threshold of 0.5 (Donkoh et al., 2023). which indicates that the items used to measure the construct explain more than 50% of the variance in the construct and are reliable. These results can also be seen in Figure 1.

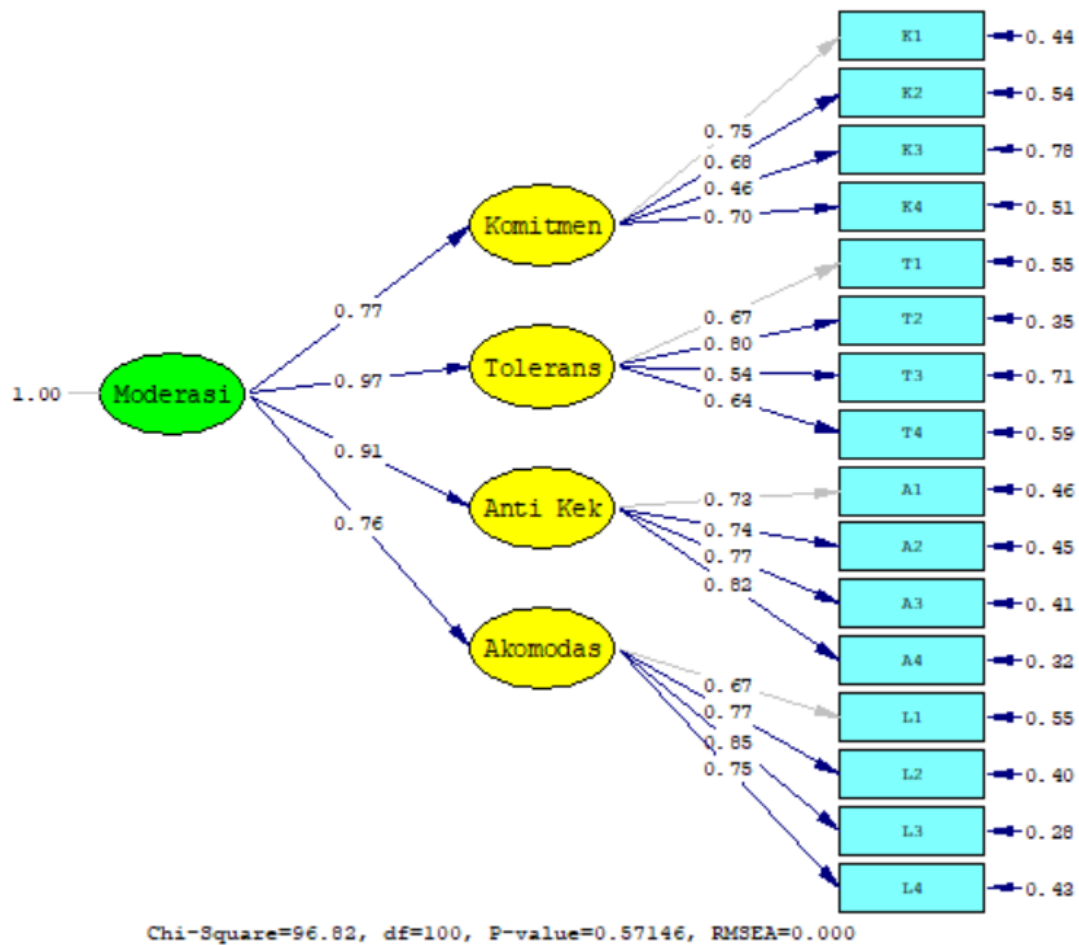


Figure 1. CFA results of Lisrel 8.8

Goodness of Fit Model Testing

The model's suitability to the factor pattern was carried out using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Testing was carried out to ensure that each indicator validly explains the construct being measured (Groskurth, K., Bluemke, M. & Lechner, 2024). The suitability index obtained is shown in Table 6. Based on the results of the goodness of fit test, all indicators indicate that the model has met the required suitability criteria. All observed values are within the specified cut-off value limits, so the model can be declared suitable and worthy of further analysis at the results interpretation stage.

Table 6.
Goodness of Fit Model Testing

<i>Goodness of Fit</i>	<i>Model Fit</i>	Output	Result
RMSEA	$RMSEA \leq 0.05$	0.000	<i>Good Fit</i>
NFI	$NFI \geq 0.90$	0.95	<i>Good Fit</i>
RFI	$GFI \geq 0.90$	0.94	<i>Good Fit</i>
IFI	$IFI \geq 0.90$	1.00	<i>Good Fit</i>
<i>p-value</i>	$p-value \geq 0.05$	0.57146	<i>Good Fit</i>

Source: Lisrel processed data, 2025

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the significance of the relationship between variables in accordance with the research objectives, using the t-value criterion. Based on the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using Lisrel 8.8, the obtained t-values are shown in Table 7.

Table 7.
Hypothesis Testing

Correlation	Coefesien	t-value	Result (>1.96)
National Commitment – Religious Moderation	0.77	5.97	Significant
Tolerance – Religious Moderation	0.97	6.66	Significant
Anti-Violence – Religious Moderation	0.91	7.10	Significant
Accommodation of Local Culture – Religious Moderation	0.76	5.62	Significant

Source: Lisrel processed data, 2025

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing conducted in Lisrel 8.8, several important findings can be highlighted. The analysis shows that national commitment has a significant positive relationship with religious moderation, as indicated by a t-value of 5.97, which is greater than the critical value of 1.96. This suggests that individuals with stronger national commitment also tend to demonstrate higher levels of religious moderation. Tolerance likewise shows a strong and significant relationship with religious moderation, with a t-value of 6.66. This means that the more tolerant a person is, the better they are able to understand and practice the principles of religious moderation in their daily lives.

Among all the variables tested, anti-violence attitudes demonstrate the strongest influence on religious moderation, with a t-value of 7.10, the highest in this analysis. This finding highlights that individuals who consistently reject violence are more likely to embody religious moderation in both perspective and behavior. Finally, accommodation to local culture also shows a significant relationship with religious moderation, reflected in a t-value of 5.62. This indicates

that embracing and respecting local cultural traditions contributes positively to strengthening religious moderation.

Taken together, these findings affirm that national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and accommodation to local culture are all important factors that reinforce religious moderation among students. Each dimension contributes in its own way to shaping a more inclusive and balanced understanding of religion within the context of Indonesian society.

Discussion

Based on the findings above, it is known that the level of religious moderation of students at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung is in the moderate category. This finding reflects that in general, students have a non-extreme understanding and religious attitudes, both in the context of internal diversity and interfaith relations. However, there is still room for strengthening the values of moderation, especially in dimensions that require deeper understanding, such as national commitment and accommodation to local culture. This moderate category also indicates that students have internalized most of the basic values of religious moderation, but continuous strengthening through education, training, and cross-cultural experiences is still needed to improve the quality of inclusive and constructive religious attitudes in social and academic life (Masyhur, L. S., Hermanto, B., Palawa, A. H., Ansor, M., & Amin, 2024).

Furthermore, based on the results of the hypothesis test, all hypothesized dimensions have a positive and significant influence on religious moderation. The t-values for the four main indicators—national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation to local culture—were all above the significance threshold of 1.96. These findings indicate that each of these dimensions significantly contributes to shaping religious moderation among students at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung.

National Commitment has a significant influence on Religious Moderation. This indicates that the higher a person's national commitment, the higher their level of religious moderation. The interconnectedness of religious moderation with national consciousness and the reality of the plurality of Indonesian society is reflected in the diversity of religions, ethnicities, races, cultures, and traditions that this nation possesses. The relationship between religion and the state is complementary and interactive, with religion providing moral guidance through its teachings, while the state establishes regulations as shared guidelines. Both act as a harmonious bond in maintaining balance and harmony between religious and national life (Yani, 2022).

Tolerance has a significant influence on Religious Moderation. This means that tolerance is strongly linked to religious moderation, with more tolerant individuals tending to have a better understanding and practice of religious

moderation. Tolerance is the main foundation in creating a harmonious life amidst diversity, because it allows every individual and group to live side by side peacefully without having to sacrifice their religious identity. This is reflected in the relationship between Hindus and Muslims in Bali, where when Nyepi Day coincides with Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha, Muslims are still given space to carry out their worship while respecting the provisions of Nyepi Day. This understanding is a concrete manifestation of the value of tolerance upheld by the Balinese people, while also demonstrating the meeting point of harmony between religious communities in a pluralistic social life (I Made Arsa Wiguna, Heny Perbowosari, Agus Subagya, Chozinatul Asror, 2024).

An anti-violence stance has been shown to significantly contribute to the development of religious moderation. The stronger a person's rejection of violence, the greater their tendency to practice moderate religious values. From an Islamic perspective, the teachings of peace, respect for others, and the rejection of acts of violence in the name of religion are fundamental principles. Individuals with a moderate character not only reject violence but also possess the ability to manage emotions, cultivate empathy, uphold ethics, and serve as role models in their social environment. They prioritize inner calm over anger and use rationality as their guide in action rather than relying on physical strength (Rasbi, 2023).

Accommodation to Local Culture has a significant influence on Religious Moderation. This indicates that acceptance of local culture contributes positively to religious moderation. A local cultural approach can be key to building a paradigm and attitude of religious moderation, where religion and local culture support each other. This is reflected in the wisdom that combines religion and culture, creating harmony between the two. Local culture values serve as an important tool in strengthening togetherness, solidifying solidarity, and fostering mutual respect. Furthermore, local wisdom also plays a strategic role in mitigating potential conflicts that could disrupt social harmony and weaken the collective solidarity that has formed within an integrated community (Ulul Huda, 2024)

Based on the results of the analysis, it can also be seen that the most dominant factors influencing religious moderation are cooperation (0.85), empathy (0.82), accepting differences (0.80), openness (0.77), and collaboration (0.75). This indicates that aspects of social participation, openness, and mutual respect have a strong influence in shaping moderate religious attitudes. In addition, the dimensions of Dialogue and Deliberation Attitude (CR: 0.85, AVE: 0.65) and Cooperation and Collaboration (CR: 0.85, AVE: 0.65) have a high level of reliability, indicating that these factors have a strong consistency in influencing religious moderation.

Theoretically, this finding aligns with Habermas's (2008) view, which emphasizes the importance of interreligious dialogue as a foundation for building social harmony. Openness and the ability to engage in dialogue are crucial aspects in creating an inclusive religious life (Rafli Yoga Ramadhan., 2022). The interfaith

dialogue approach is seen as an effective psychological and social strategy in fostering a moderate attitude that upholds the principle of non-violence (Silvester Nusa, 2022). In this context, the open integrity approach is considered relevant and in line with the values of religious moderation, because it is able to create a space for constructive interfaith dialogue without sacrificing the faith identity of each party (Madiyono, 2023).

In addition, religion has great potential as a source of values of peace and rejection of violence in a multicultural society, as long as its teachings are understood and applied contextually and wisely (Dwi Afriyanto, 2023). In its application, effective communication patterns are the key to strengthening religious moderation in diverse social environments (Fatikh, M Alfin, 2023; Kafa et al., 2023; Siti Fatimah, 2024). This can be seen from young people who are active in various organizations and demonstrate the values of tolerance and harmonious social interaction. (Muhimatul Kibtiyah, 2023).

On the other hand, the culture of mutual cooperation which is deeply rooted in Indonesian society is a real example of collaboration and cooperation as a form of religious moderation (Sutrisno, E. S., Marsidi, 2024; Wahyuddin, Ismail, 2024). Arts activities and discussion forums have also proven to be effective in attracting cross-group participation and encouraging a more open understanding of the importance of tolerance and collaboration (Muh. Maksum, 2024; Mustolehudin, Muntakhib, A., Muawanah, S., 2024; Zakiyah, 2019). These findings are reinforced by the perspective of Adi Pratama Awadin (2023), who states that religious moderation encompasses values such as tolerance, respect for diverse viewpoints, and rejection of all forms of violence—all of which are strongly reflected in the research indicators that exhibit high loading factor values (Awadin, Adi Pratama, 2023).

Furthermore, this study reveals that moderate values, such as empathy, openness, cooperation, and acceptance of differences, play a significant role in shaping moderate religious attitudes among university students. Although this research was conducted in an Islamic university environment, these values are universal and relevant to Indonesia's multi-religious society. This demonstrates that religious moderation can be applied in various social contexts, not only relevant within the context of educational institutions but also contributing significantly to the creation of social harmony in a pluralistic society. These findings also support the policy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, which emphasizes the importance of strengthening the education system with a religious moderation perspective. This policy includes the development of curricula, teaching materials, and learning processes that support the values of tolerance, peace, and respect for diversity. (Kemenag RI, 2019).

In relation to this, Umami's research (2025) emphasized that religious moderation education at the student level plays an important role in shaping them

into strategic actors of social change that have a positive impact on society (Umami, S., & Saputra, 2024). Legally, religious moderation is in line with the principle of religious freedom as stated in the 1945 Constitution and related regulations, such as the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs, which encourages harmony between religious communities.. (Kementerian Agama RI dan Kementerian Dalam Negeri RI, 2006). Furthermore, fostering moderate attitudes among students has the potential to have a multiplier effect when they return to society as educators, religious leaders, community leaders, or bureaucrats. Thus, the results of this study reinforce the importance of incorporating religious moderation into the curriculum and culture of educational institutions, as a strategic step in maintaining social harmony and strengthening national integration.

This study has several limitations that require attention. One major limitation lies in its scope, which only covered one institution, namely STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung. This means the results cannot be generalized to a broader context, particularly at public universities or those with greater religious diversity. Furthermore, the questionnaire-based survey method used in this quantitative approach risks not fully reflecting the depth of students' understanding and experiences regarding religious moderation.

Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to involve samples from various types of higher education institutions, including public, interfaith, and cross-regional universities, to allow for richer and more contextualized comparative analysis. A mixed methods approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative data, can also provide a deeper understanding of the internal dynamics of students in developing moderate religious attitudes. Furthermore, future studies can add new variables such as the influence of digital media, family background, and involvement in religious organizations to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the factors shaping religious moderation among the younger generation.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that the level of religious moderation among students at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay Bandung falls within the moderate category, shaped by four main indicators: national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and accommodation of local culture. Values such as cooperation, empathy, openness, and acceptance of differences emerged as dominant factors, underscoring their importance in fostering intergroup harmony and multicultural coexistence. The findings affirm that religious moderation develops through the interaction of religious teachings, national identity, and local culture, aligning with broader studies across Southeast Asia.

The results carry both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, they enrich the literature on religious moderation by validating key constructs

through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Practically, they highlight the need to embed moderation values into higher education through curriculum design, student activities, and community engagement. Educational institutions and policymakers are encouraged to strengthen policies that promote inclusivity, interfaith dialogue, and lecturer-student capacity-building. Moreover, government agencies such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education could use these insights to integrate religious moderation into national curriculum policies, faculty development, and student-centered programs.

This study is limited by its focus on a single institution and the predominance of male participants, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. Future research should expand to include interfaith and cross-institutional contexts, as well as variables such as family influence and social media. Despite these limitations, the study makes an important empirical contribution by applying CFA to validate constructs of religious moderation and by offering both academic insights and strategic policy recommendations for fostering inclusivity and social harmony within Indonesia's multicultural higher education landscape.

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