

# Religious Moderation Research (2016-2025): Systematic Review and Bibliometric Mapping

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## Abstract

*Religious moderation has gained increasing scholarly attention as societies confront rising polarization, yet existing research remains fragmented between normative discourse and policy-driven interpretations. Few studies systematically map how the field has evolved conceptually and how it intersects with interfaith harmony at a global level. This study addresses this gap by conducting a Systematic Literature Review using the PRISMA protocol combined with bibliometric analysis to examine Scopus-indexed publications on religious moderation from 2016 to 2025. The dataset consists of 235 peer-reviewed journal articles, and the analysis integrates descriptive statistics, thematic coding, and VOSviewer-based mapping of co-authorship and keyword networks. The findings show a rapid expansion of research after 2020, with Indonesia emerging as the dominant contributor and education-related contexts becoming the most frequently explored domain. Bibliometric mapping identifies three major thematic clusters: religious moderation in educational and civic settings, local wisdom and cultural practices, and digital-era challenges related to radicalism and polarization. Conceptually, the field is shifting from state-centered narratives toward relational ethics that emphasize interfaith coexistence. These results highlight the need for broader cross-regional collaboration and more comparative, theory-driven studies that move beyond national policy frameworks. The study concludes that religious moderation is evolving into a multidisciplinary lens for understanding interfaith relations and recommends future research focusing on leadership, digital citizenship, and community-based interfaith engagement.*

**Keywords:** Civic Education, religious moderation, Systematic literature review, Islamic education, Interfaith Harmony

## Abstrak

Moderasi beragama semakin mendapat perhatian akademik seiring meningkatnya polarisasi sosial, namun penelitian yang ada masih terfragmentasi antara wacana normatif dan interpretasi berbasis kebijakan. Hanya sedikit studi yang secara sistematis memetakan perkembangan konseptual bidang ini serta keterkaitannya dengan harmoni antaragama pada tingkat global. Penelitian ini mengisi kesenjangan tersebut dengan melakukan Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis menggunakan protokol PRISMA yang dipadukan dengan analisis bibliometrik terhadap publikasi terindeks Scopus mengenai moderasi beragama pada periode 2016 hingga 2025. Dataset terdiri dari 235 artikel jurnal terbitan sejawat, dan analisis dilakukan melalui statistik deskriptif, pengodean

tematik, serta pemetaan jejaring penulis dan kata kunci menggunakan VOSviewer. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan pesat penelitian setelah tahun 2020, dengan Indonesia sebagai kontributor dominan dan konteks pendidikan sebagai domain yang paling sering dikaji. Pemetaan bibliometrik mengidentifikasi tiga kluster tematik utama yaitu moderasi beragama dalam konteks pendidikan dan kewargaan, kearifan lokal dan praktik budaya, serta tantangan era digital terkait radikalisme dan polarisasi. Secara konseptual, bidang ini bergerak dari narasi berpusat pada negara menuju etika relasional yang menekankan koeksistensi antaragama. Hasil ini menegaskan perlunya kolaborasi lintas kawasan dan penelitian komparatif yang lebih berorientasi teori di luar kerangka kebijakan nasional. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa moderasi beragama berkembang menjadi lensa multidisipliner untuk memahami relasi antaragama dan merekomendasikan penelitian lanjutan mengenai kepemimpinan, kewargaan digital, dan keterlibatan antaragama berbasis komunitas.

**Kata kunci:** Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan, Moderasi Beragama, Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis, Pendidikan Islam, Harmoni Antaragama

## INTRODUCTION

Globally, the discourse on religious moderation has gained momentum as societies confront polarization, extremism, and religion-based conflicts (Tausch, 2021). International initiatives such as the Abu Dhabi Document on Human Fraternity and the Abraham Accords highlight interreligious dialogue, mutual recognition, and cooperation as foundations for peace (Tinambunan et al., 2025). These developments signal a broader shift in which religious moderation operates not merely as a theological principle, but as a transnational framework shaping diplomacy, education, and social coexistence across diverse religious contexts (Bahri et al., 2025).

Within this global landscape, Indonesia represents an important but not exclusive reference point, where religious moderation has been institutionalized through education, civic programs, and community initiatives (Cholil, 2022; Yusuf et al., 2023). Educational institutions and youth-based initiatives have contributed to translating moderation into interfaith learning and ethical engagement in everyday life (Athoillah et al., 2024; Muhsin et al., 2024). However, these policy narratives primarily describe implementation, leaving limited analytical space to examine how religious moderation functions conceptually beyond national governance frameworks (Pajarianto et al., 2023).

Beyond policy-oriented and doctrinal interpretations, religious moderation can be reframed as an interfaith harmony discourse centered on relational ethics among religious communities. In this perspective, moderation functions as a shared social vocabulary through which diverse faith groups negotiate coexistence, mutual recognition, and peaceful interaction, rather than as an internal regulatory mechanism of a single religious tradition. This conceptual shift positions religious moderation as a dynamic interfaith social practice embedded in education, civic engagement, and plural public life, offering analytical relevance for global religious studies and interreligious scholarship.

Despite growing scholarship, significant research gaps remain (Zamroni et al., 2025). Existing studies largely focus on national or policy-based analyses and rarely employ quantitative mapping to trace broader intellectual structures

(Chotimah et al., 2025). More importantly, no prior Scopus-based bibliometric study has systematically examined how research on religious moderation intersects with interfaith harmony as a cross-regional and cross-religious discourse. Current bibliometric and review studies tend to situate moderation within Islamic studies or public policy, overlooking how themes of relational ethics, coexistence, and pluralism evolve across disciplines and global scholarly networks.

Religious moderation is commonly understood as a perspective emphasizing balance, justice, tolerance, non-violence, respect for local culture, and commitment to national integrity (Fadil et al., 2024; Hayat et al., 2025; Irawan & Nasrun, 2025). While this definition highlights both personal and social dimensions, it often remains normatively descriptive and insufficiently connected to empirical patterns of interfaith interaction at the global level.

Nevertheless, the implementation of religious moderation in the contemporary era faces complex challenges. The rise of radicalism and extremism poses tangible threats to social cohesion (Hamzah, 2022; Putri, 2023). While increasing intolerance and polarization indicate that the values of moderation have not yet been fully internalized within society (Chotimah et al., 2025; Putri, 2023). Technological developments exacerbate this situation through the spread of radical content and the emergence of cyberterrorism (Hasan & Juhannis, 2024; Ma'arif et al., 2023). Furthermore, the complexity of multicultural and multi-religious societies demands adaptive approaches in managing cultural and religious diversity (Dewi et al., 2025; Muhsin et al., 2024; Untung et al., 2025).

In addition to these challenges, there is empirical evidence of violations associated with religious moderation. In several lower-to-middle-class communities, resistance to moderation emerges due to its perception as a Western ideological construct, leading to intolerance and social fragmentation (Mahmudah et al., 2025). Within the sphere of social behavior, studies show that religious beliefs may heighten sensitivity to perceived violations of fairness norms, resulting in negative word-of-mouth behavior in service encounters, although religious priming has been shown to enhance forgiveness (Casidy et al., 2021). More extreme cases include intolerance-driven violence such as the burning of places of worship, bombings, and stabbing attempts in churches across North Sumatra, illustrating how the absence of religious moderation can provoke severe threats to public safety (Marpaung et al., 2024). Moreover, state policies designed to promote moderation are not exempt from criticism, as they are sometimes perceived as infringing upon freedom of religion or belief. The handling of the Gafatar case, for instance, highlights how state apparatuses have invoked legal legitimacy to justify repressive actions (Cholil, 2022; Liem et al., 2024).

Compared to earlier studies, previous scholarship tended to emphasize doctrinal and security aspects, often neglecting the practical dimensions of moderation in daily life (Amri et al., 2024; Nanuru et al., 2025). Conversely, recent scholarship has shifted its focus toward practical implementation through

educational curricula, community programs, and interfaith dialogue, all of which contribute to strengthening tolerance and reducing conflict (Muhsin et al., 2024; Pajarianto et al., 2023; Untung et al., 2025). In this regard, a systematic literature review (SLR) is particularly relevant as it synthesizes insights from diverse studies, identifies research gaps, and offers new perspectives on understanding and applying religious moderation (Ismail et al., 2025; Ma et al., 2023; Zaluchu et al., 2025).

The primary rationale for conducting the present SLR is to establish a systematic understanding of religious moderation through empirical analysis and the exploration of recurring themes. (Ismail et al., 2025; Ma et al., 2023). Furthermore, this SLR aims to address the lack of multidimensional research on religious moderation in contemporary contexts. (Zaluchu et al., 2025). The synthesis generated herein is expected to provide a comprehensive framework that not only informs future academic inquiry but also serves as a valuable reference for the formulation of effective policies. Such policies are crucial to ensuring that the principles of religious moderation are implemented in alignment with democratic values, religious freedom, and social security.

From a methodological standpoint, a systematic literature review (SLR) offers significant advantages in terms of rigor, transparency, and reproducibility through the use of standardized protocols such as PRISMA or SPIDER. (Schweizer & Nair, 2017; Shrivastava & Mishra, 2025; Višić, 2022). This ensures that the findings are less prone to bias, more reliable, and serve as a solid foundation for both academic inquiry and practical decision-making. In practical terms, the outcomes of an SLR can support policy formulation aimed at preventing extremism, strengthening democratic values, and designing educational programs that instill tolerance and peaceful coexistence. (Ismail et al., 2025; Ma'arif et al., 2023; Shrivastava & Mishra, 2025).

Another strength of SLR lies in its interdisciplinary nature. This approach is not only relevant to religious and social studies but can also be applied in psychology, health sciences, and political science, making it a versatile research instrument with broad applicability. (Camilo & Vaz Garrido, 2019; Shrivastava & Mishra, 2025; Višić, 2022). Accordingly, conducting an SLR on religious moderation is an essential step toward consolidating knowledge, responding to global challenges, and providing both conceptual and practical frameworks for the future of research and policy development.

This study aims to systematically examine the current state and evolution of research on religious moderation, evaluating its significance as a growing field of scholarly and practical concern. Specifically, it seeks to map thematic trends, disciplinary distributions, and conceptual developments that shape the global discourse on religious moderation. The study is guided by the following research questions: What are the major themes and trajectories of scholarship on religious moderation? How is research on religious moderation distributed across

disciplines, countries, and methodological approaches? What theoretical insights and practical implications can be derived to inform future studies and practices on religious moderation?

Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the PRISMA protocol and bibliometric analysis with VOSviewer, the study analyzes peer-reviewed Scopus publications up to September 30, 2025. Combining qualitative synthesis with quantitative mapping enables a comprehensive overview of research structures and thematic evolution, while situating religious moderation within debates on interfaith harmony, relational ethics, and pluralism. This study contributes a global, interfaith-oriented map of religious moderation research, identifies emerging conceptual shifts beyond policy-centered approaches, and outlines future research directions in leadership, education, and digital citizenship.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a hybrid methodological framework combining a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis to examine the academic landscape of research on religious moderation. The review process follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol to ensure transparency, rigor, and replicability in study identification, screening, and synthesis. (Chotisarn & Phuthong, 2025). Data collection was conducted on September 30, 2025, using the Scopus database, selected for its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals and its established reliability in bibliometric research. The literature search was performed using a focused Boolean query applied to titles, abstracts, and keywords: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("religious moderation") AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR, 2016–2025)). The keyword "religious moderation" was deliberately chosen as the core search term because it functions as a formalized and policy-relevant concept in contemporary academic and institutional discourse, particularly within religious studies, education, and public policy. Using a single, concept-specific keyword allows for analytical consistency and ensures that the retrieved publications explicitly engage with religious moderation as a central analytical framework rather than as a peripheral or loosely related theme.

However, this study explicitly acknowledges that reliance on a single keyword may exclude conceptually relevant interfaith research that employs alternative terminologies such as interfaith dialogue, religious tolerance, pluralism, or interreligious harmony without explicitly using the term religious moderation. Consequently, the findings of this study should be interpreted as representing scholarly discourse that explicitly adopts the language and framing of religious moderation, rather than the entirety of interfaith or pluralism-related research. This methodological choice reflects a trade-off between conceptual precision and thematic inclusiveness and is taken into account when interpreting thematic trends and research gaps. No additional databases (e.g., Web of Science or Dimensions)

were included, as Scopus was considered sufficient to capture the core global publication patterns relevant to this study's objectives. While this decision may limit coverage of certain regional or non-indexed publications, it enhances data consistency and comparability within the bibliometric analysis. These limitations are addressed in the discussion to contextualize the scope and generalizability of the findings.

The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2016 and 2025, written in English, and thematically relevant to religious moderation, including issues of interfaith relations, tolerance, pluralism, and sociopolitical dynamics. Documents were excluded if they were not journal articles (e.g., books, book chapters, conference proceedings, reviews, or errata), written in non-English languages, or duplicated and incomplete. These criteria ensured that only original, peer-reviewed empirical and conceptual studies were retained. The search initially identified 902 documents. After filtering for keyword relevance, 267 records remained. Excluding 24 non-article documents, seven non-English documents resulted in 235 eligible articles for full analysis (see figure 1).

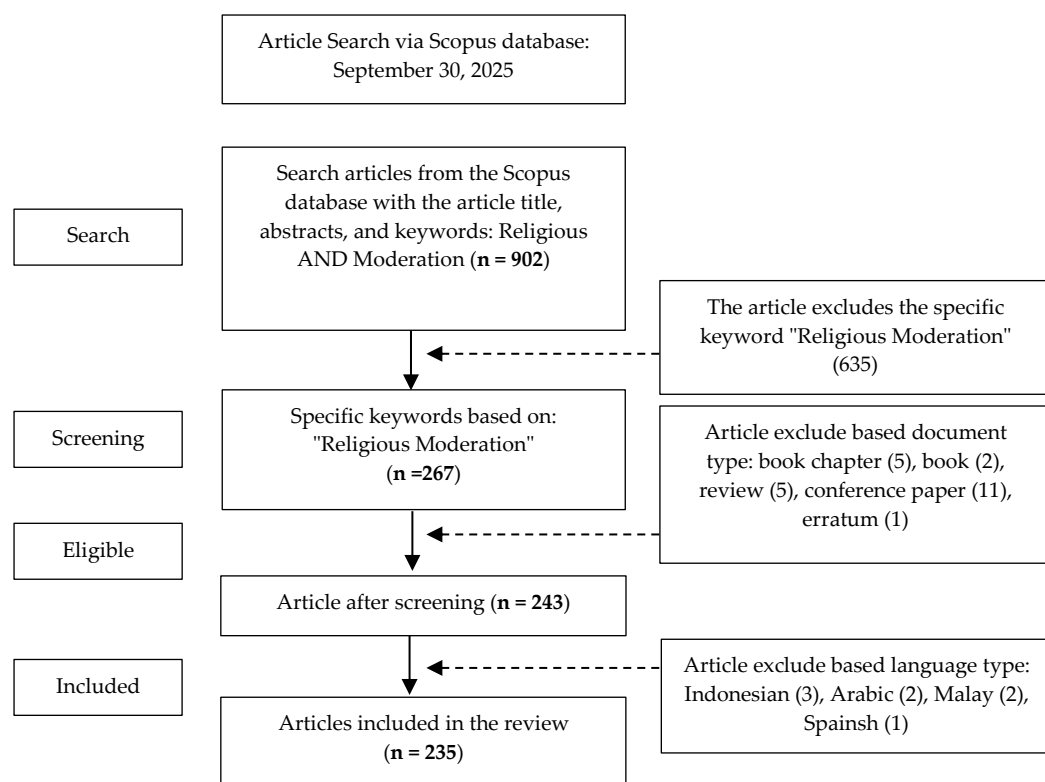


Figure 1. Systematic Literature Review information flow using PRISMA

Data extraction followed a structured protocol that included bibliographic information (author, year, journal, DOI), geographic data (country and institution), bibliometric indicators (citations, co-authorship networks, and keyword co-occurrence), methodological characteristics (research design, data source, and focus area), and conceptual themes (dominant topics, theoretical frameworks, and

emerging issues). Quality assessment was limited to peer-reviewed status and Scopus indexing, which was deemed appropriate given the bibliometric nature of this review (Ni & Abdullah, 2025). Bibliometric mapping was conducted using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20, with data cleaning and standardization performed using Microsoft Excel. The parameters applied included a co-authorship and co-occurrence threshold of two documents per author and two keyword occurrences, a normalization method based on fractional counting, and a similarity measure using association strength. Visualization was presented through density and overlay maps to illustrate thematic evolution and intellectual structures in the field.

This integrated approach enabled the identification of influential authors, institutions, and journals, as well as the mapping of thematic clusters that reflect intellectual trajectories and research gaps. (Marzi et al., 2025). To ensure transparency and reproducibility, the raw dataset, including the Scopus export file (CSV format), the cleaned bibliometric data, and R scripts used for analysis, will be made available through the Mendeley Data Repository (DOI pending). These articles were systematically analyzed to address the research questions: *RQ1: What are the major themes and trajectories of scholarship on religious moderation? RQ2: How is research on religious moderation distributed across disciplines, countries, and methodological approaches? RQ3: What theoretical insights and practical implications can be drawn to inform future studies and practices on religious moderation?*

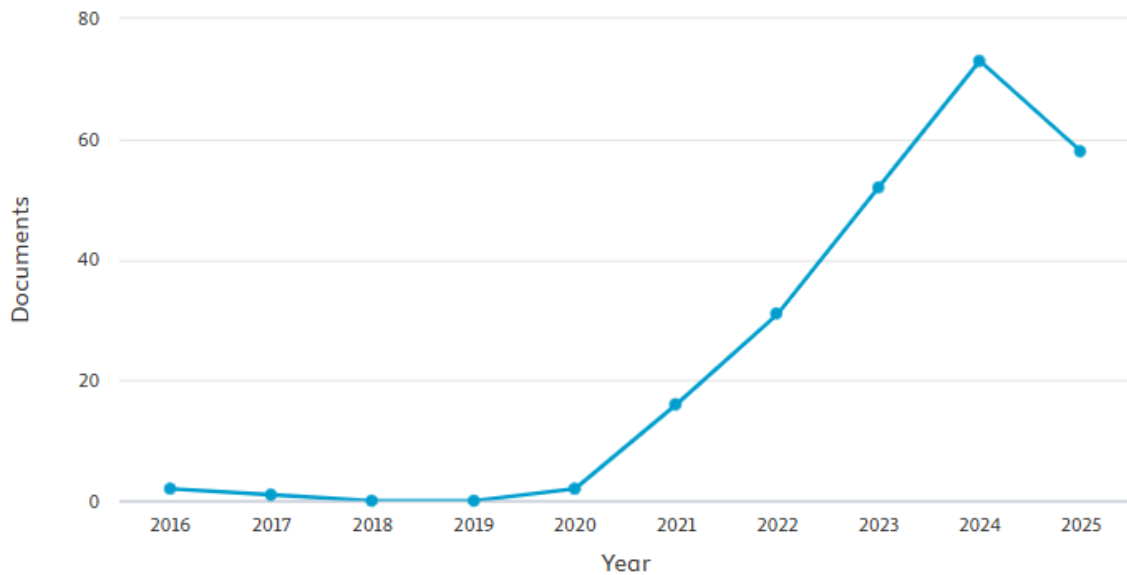
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Statistics of Publication on Religious Moderation

The results of this study are based on 235 articles selected from the Scopus database on *Religious Moderation*. The data analysis covers publication trends from 2016 to 2025, including the yearly distribution of articles, the journals most frequently publishing in this domain, and the evolution of thematic clusters. In addition, the study identifies the most influential contributors, highlighting leading authors, institutional affiliations, and countries most active in advancing scholarship on religious moderation. The finding below highlights the major themes and trajectories of scholarship on religious moderation.

Based on Scopus data, 235 publications on religious moderation appeared between 2016 and 2025, showing a strong upward trend in scholarly attention (see figure 2). Early research activity was minimal, with only one publication in 2017 and little output before 2020. The field began gaining momentum in 2020 with two studies, rising steadily in 2021 (16 documents) and sharply in 2022 (31 documents). Publications continued to increase in 2023 (52 documents) and peaked in 2024 with 73 studies, before slightly declining to 58 in 2025. Overall, this trajectory demonstrates that religious moderation has developed from a scarcely studied topic into a vibrant, rapidly expanding interdisciplinary field.

## Documents by year



Source: Scopus database

Figure 2. Number of Religious Moderation Publications

The scholarly exploration of *religious moderation* can be traced back to the mid-2010s, with Gutkowski (2016) Highlighting the Amman Messages as a model for positioning Jordan's foreign policy around moderate Islamic values. In subsequent years, attention increasingly turned toward the educational domain, with Suhendi et al. (2020) Examine how integrative curricula in higher education could serve as a preventive measure against radicalism. This educational perspective was further reinforced by Pratidinal Jadid (2021), who analyzed the integration of religious moderation concepts within Islamic culture history textbooks for elementary-level madrasahs under the Ministry of Religion. The discourse expanded in 2022 with a focus on contextualizing national identity, as Rasyid et al. (2022), explored the actualization of national fiqh in fostering religious moderation in Indonesia. Building upon this, Azizah et al. (2023), investigated the role of intellectual traditions in Islamic boarding schools, particularly within the context of the Industrial Era 4.0, as a pathway toward deradicalization.

More recently, research has turned toward localized and cultural approaches. Zaman et al. (2024) analyzed local wisdom embedded in Javanese traditions and its role in peacebuilding through religious moderation as reflected in Shodiq Hamzah's *Tafsīr al-Bayān*. By 2025, the field will have increasingly incorporated digital and technological perspectives, with Syarifin & Lestari (2025) emphasizing the use of educational technology to broaden access to local wisdom practices in advancing religious moderation. Taken together, these works demonstrate that the scholarship on religious moderation has evolved from early state-centered discussions of political identity toward a multifaceted field

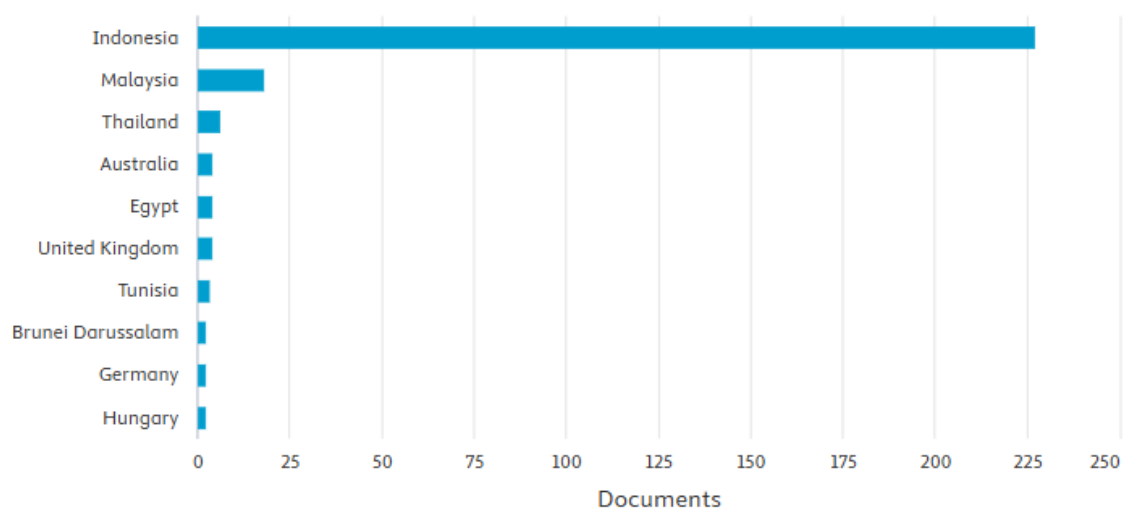


encompassing education, cultural heritage, local wisdom, and digital innovation, thereby highlighting both the theoretical depth and the practical applications of religious moderation in diverse societal contexts.

***Studies on religious moderation are distributed across disciplines, countries, and methodological approaches***

The analysis of the distribution of research on religious moderation across 235 articles was carried out by classifying the studies according to academic discipline, regional focus, institutional affiliation, publication outlets, and contributing authors, with particular emphasis on the top ten in each category. Mapping this distribution generates important insights for scholars and practitioners, offering guidance in shaping future research agendas and fostering a more comprehensive as well as interdisciplinary understanding of religious moderation.

First, the distribution of research on religious moderation is overwhelmingly dominated by Indonesia with 227 publications, followed by Malaysia (18) and Thailand (6). Other contributors include Australia, Egypt, and the United Kingdom (4 each), Tunisia (3), and Brunei Darussalam, Germany, and Hungary (2 each). This pattern highlights Southeast Asia—particularly Indonesia—as the primary hub of scholarly discourse on religious moderation, with limited yet notable contributions from neighboring and Western countries (see Figure 3).



Source: Scopus database

Figure 3. Number of articles by country or territory (top 10 countries)

The distribution of publications across countries reveals a highly uneven global pattern, as summarized in Table 1. Indonesia stands out as the most prolific contributor, followed by Malaysia and Thailand, with comparatively modest outputs from Middle Eastern and European countries. This concentration of

research activity in Southeast Asia underscores Indonesia’s dominant role in shaping the academic discourse on religious moderation, both conceptually and empirically. At the same time, the presence of contributions from other regions, although still limited, signals a growing international engagement with the topic and lays the groundwork for future cross-regional collaboration.

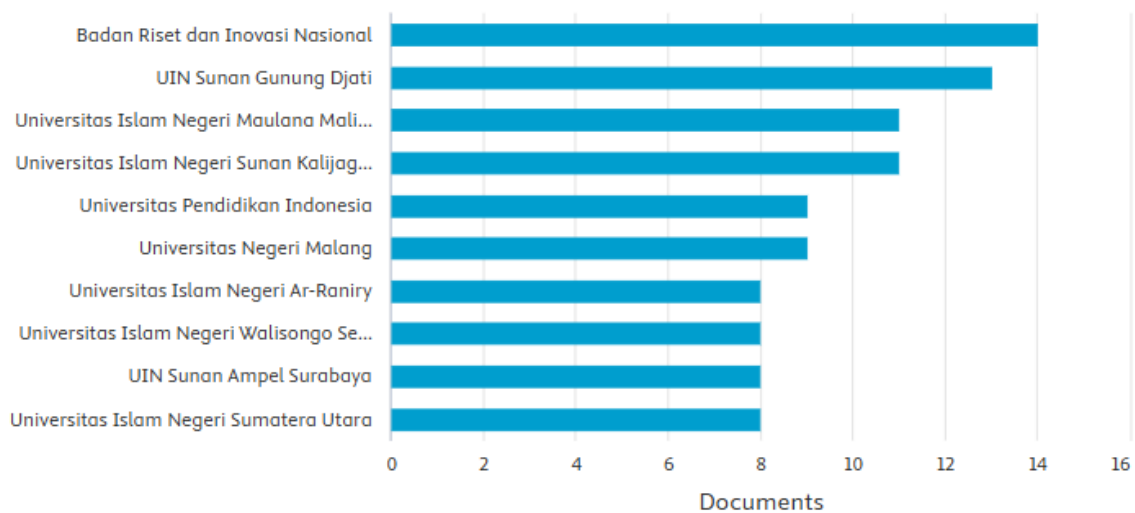
**Table 1.**  
**Top 10 Countries Publishing on Religious Moderation (2016–2025)**

Rank	Countries	Number of Publications	Percentage
1	Indonesia	227	96.60%
2	Malaysia	18	7.66%
3	Thailand	6	2.55%
4	Australia	4	1.70%
5	Egypt	4	1.70%
6	United Kingdom	4	1.70%
7	Tunisia	3	1.28%
8	Brunei Darussalam	2	0.85%
9	Germany	2	0.85%
10	Hungary	2	0.85%

Source: Scopus database

Furthermore, the visualization generated using VOSviewer illustrates international collaborative linkages, where Indonesia demonstrates the strongest network ties with Malaysia and Thailand, extending further to Europe, the Middle East, and Australia (see Figure 4). Such interconnections highlight not only Indonesia’s centrality but also the emerging pathways of collaboration across regions. These patterns suggest that religious moderation, though rooted in specific cultural and political contexts, is gradually becoming a transnational research agenda. Strengthening these collaborations may open opportunities for comparative studies, interdisciplinary approaches, and innovative frameworks that enrich the global discourse on promoting tolerance and coexistence.





Source: Scopus database

Figure 5. Number of articles by affiliation (top 10 affiliations)

The institutional distribution of publications (Table 2) shows that research on religious moderation from 2016 to 2025 is largely concentrated in Indonesia's State Islamic Universities (UIN), emphasizing the pivotal role of Islamic higher education in promoting tolerance, pluralism, and peacebuilding. The inclusion of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) among the top contributors reflects strong collaboration between academia and government research initiatives, reinforcing Indonesia's leadership in developing a comprehensive, context-based framework for religious moderation.

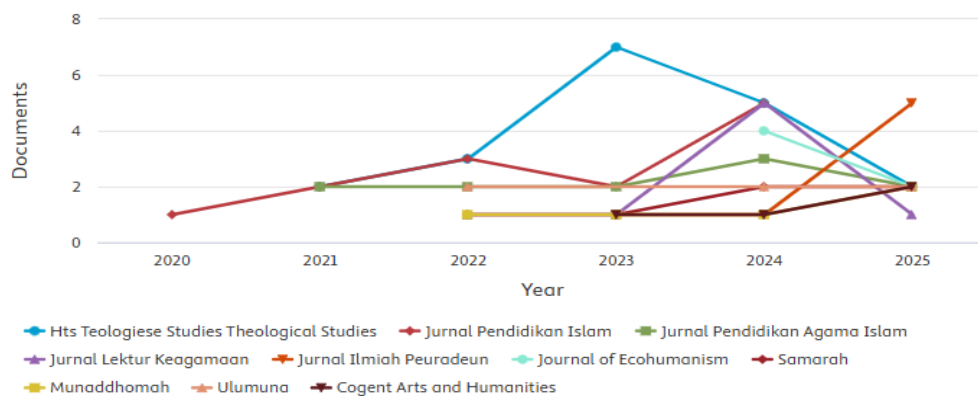
**Table 2.**  
**Top 10 Institutions Contributing to Research on Religious Moderation (2016–2025)**

Rank	Institution	Number of Publications	Percentage
1	Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional	14	5.96%
2	UIN Sunan Gunung Djati	13	5.53%
3	Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang	11	4.68%
4	Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta	11	4.68%
5	Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia	9	3.83%
6	Universitas Negeri Malang	9	3.83%
7	Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry	8	3.40%
8	Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang	8	3.40%
9	Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya	8	3.40%
10	Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara	8	3.40%

Source: Scopus database

The distribution of publications on religious moderation is led by HTS Teologiese Studies, which published 19 documents and maintained consistent

contributions throughout the study period. It is followed by Jurnal Pendidikan Islam (13 documents) and Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (11 documents), both of which show steady growth between 2020 and 2025. Other notable sources include Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan (8), Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun (7), and Journal of Ecohumanism, Samarah, and Ulumuna with six documents each, while Munaddhomah contributed five publications. This distribution indicates that although *HTS Teologiese Studies* serves as the main international outlet for research on religious moderation, a substantial share of publications appears in reputable national journals. This trend highlights the increasing academic interest and broader institutional collaboration in exploring religious moderation across both international and Indonesian platforms (see Figure 6).



Source: Scopus database

Figure 6. Number of articles by sources (top 10 sources)

The following table presents the top 10 academic source outlets publishing research on religious moderation from 2016 to 2025. These journals represent both international and national platforms, illustrating the diversification and institutionalization of the topic across interdisciplinary domains.

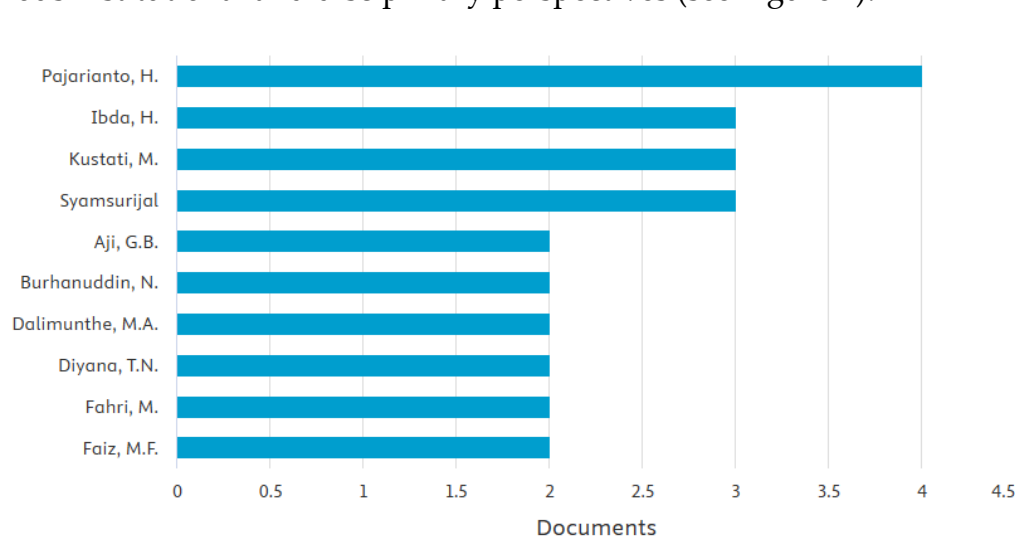
**Table 3.**  
**Top 10 Source Outlets Publishing Research on Religious Moderation (2016–2025)**

Rank	Source	Number of Publications	Percentage
1	HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies	19	8.09%
2	Jurnal Pendidikan Islam	13	5.53%
3	Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam	11	4.68%
4	Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan	8	3.40%
5	Jurnal Ilmiah Peuredeun	7	2.98%
6	Journal of Ecohumanism	6	2.55%
7	Samarah	6	2.55%

Rank	Source	Number of Publications	Percentage
8	Ulumuna	6	2.55%
9	Munaddhomah	5	2.13%
10	Cogent Arts and Humanities	4	1.70%

Source: Scopus database

Fourth, the distribution of scholarly contributions based on authors indicates a relatively balanced yet identifiable concentration among several leading researchers. The most prolific author is *Hanafi, Y.*, with 8 publications, followed by *Diyana, T.N.*, and *Saefi, M.*, each with 5 publications. Other notable contributors include *Pajarianto, H.*, and *Yani, M.T.*, with four publications each, while *Faizin, N.*, *Hazin, M.*, *Ibda, H.*, *Kustati, M.*, and *Syamsurijal* each produced three documents. This distribution reflects a collaborative, multi-authored landscape of scholarship on religious moderation, in which academic productivity is shared among multiple scholars rather than concentrated in a single individual. Such diversity of contributors highlights the growing collective engagement within Indonesia's academic community in advancing discourse on religious moderation from various institutional and disciplinary perspectives (see Figure 7).



Source: Scopus database

Figure 7. Count of publications by author (top 10 authors)

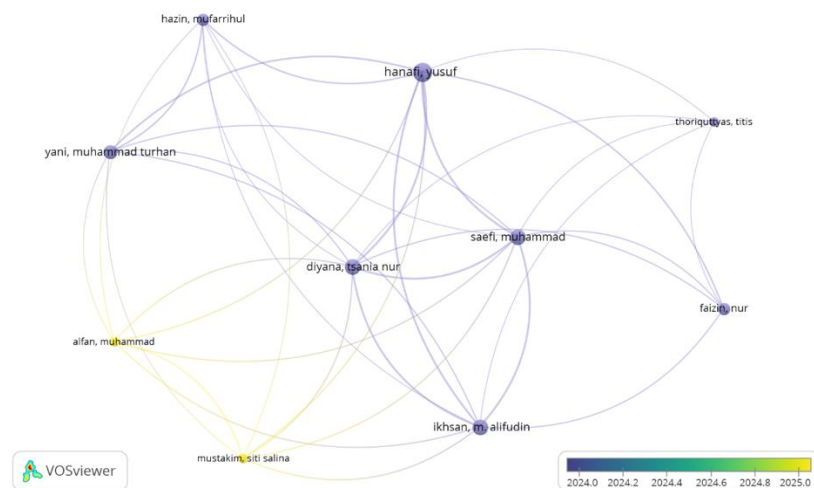
The following table presents the top 10 most productive authors contributing to the field of religious moderation between 2016 and 2025. The data reveal a balanced authorship pattern, with no single scholar dominating the field. Instead, research development relies on collective and collaborative contributions from multiple academics across various disciplines, enriching the discourse through diverse perspectives and methodological approaches.

**Table 4.**  
**Top 10 Authors Publishing on Religious Moderation (2016–2025)**

Rank	Authors	Number of Publications	Citations	Link Strength	Percentage
1	Hanafi, Y.	8	24	30	3.40%
2	Diyana, T. N.	5	13	25	2.13%
3	Saefi, M.	5	13	25	2.13%
4	Pajarianti, H.	4	55	2	1.70%
5	Yani, M.T	4	12	15	1.70%
6	Faizin, N.	3	12	10	1.28%
7	Hazin, M.	3	9	11	1.28%
8	Ibda, H.	3	20	1	1.28%
9	Kustati, M.	3	10	3	1.28%
10	Syamsurijal	3	9	7	1.28%

Source: Scopus database

Figure 8 illustrates the co-authorship network on religious moderation research based on Scopus-indexed publications, visualized using VOSviewer. Each node represents an author, with node size reflecting productivity and line thickness indicating collaboration strength. The visualization shows *Hanafi, Yusuf*, as the most central and productive author, forming a main collaboration cluster with *Saefi, Muhammad*, *Diyana, Tsania Nur*, and *Faizin, Nur* during 2024–2025. A smaller yellow cluster, including *Alfan, Muhammad* and *Mustakim, Siti Salina*, demonstrates limited connections with the main group. Overall, the map reveals that research on religious moderation in Indonesia is concentrated among a few key authors, highlighting both the strength of existing collaborations and the potential to broaden the scholarly network in the future.

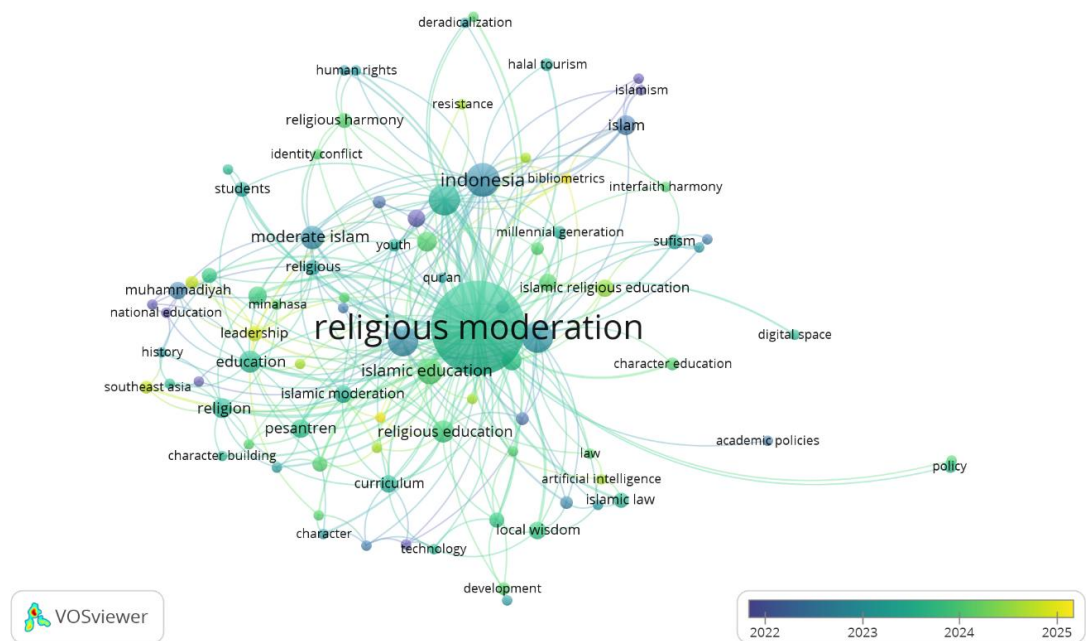


Source: Scopus database

**Figure 8. Co-Authorship Network**

**Theoretical insights and implications to inform future studies and practices on religious moderation**

The VOSviewer-based bibliometric analysis reveals that *religious moderation* stands as the central theme in current scholarly discourse, closely interconnected with concepts such as *tolerance*, *radicalism*, and *Indonesia*. This indicates that religious moderation is viewed not only as a theological notion but also as a response to broader social and national dynamics. Keywords like *Islamic education*, *higher education*, and *pesantren* underscore the vital role of both formal and non-formal education in promoting moderation, while terms such as *leadership*, *moderate Islam*, and *religion* reflect its exploration through leadership and identity perspectives. Additional keywords—*curriculum*, *multiculturalism*, and *local wisdom*—highlight the importance of education design and cultural context. The most frequent terms, including *religious moderation* (146), *tolerance* (17), *radicalism* (16), and *Indonesia* (19), confirm that the discourse primarily centers on moderation and its educational and societal implications, as summarized in Table 2.



Source: Output VOSviewer software  
Figure 9. Co-occurrence framework and representation of key terms



**Table 5.**  
**Keyword by authors**

Rank	Keyword	Occurrences	Total Link Strength
1	Religious Moderation	146	178
2	Indonesia	19	45
3	Radicalism	16	40
4	Tolerance	17	36
5	Moderation	15	28
6	Islamic Education	11	22
7	Education	8	20
8	Higher Education	7	17
9	Religious Education	8	17
10	Moderate Islam	9	16

Source: Output VOSviewer software

The mapping and keyword analysis reveal that research on religious moderation has primarily focused on tolerance, radicalism, and education in the Indonesian context. At the same time, themes such as leadership, curriculum design, multiculturalism, and local wisdom remain underexplored. Future studies should address these gaps to enrich both theoretical and practical understandings of religious moderation. The thematic clusters identified—education, pesantren, local wisdom, and digital engagement—reflect Indonesia’s efforts to institutionalize moderation through curricula, grassroots religious education, cultural heritage, and digital citizenship. Together, these domains align with the Ministry of Religious Affairs’ agenda to integrate moderation principles across traditional and digital learning spaces.

## DISCUSSION

Religious moderation is generally understood as a balanced perspective, attitude, and practice in religious life that consistently avoids extremes while upholding harmony between individual rights and collective responsibilities (Hanif et al., 2025; Roqib et al., 2025). This concept serves as an important foundation for building inclusive communities within culturally and religiously diverse societies, where balance, tolerance, and respect for universal humanity are emphasized as guiding values (Untung et al., 2025). Beyond its local significance, religious moderation also serves as a critical tool for addressing global challenges such as terrorism and religious conflicts, making tolerance and moderation indispensable values for sustaining peace. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia articulates this framework through four primary indicators: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture (Dewi et al., 2025; Nanuru et al., 2025).

Furthermore, religious moderation is deeply connected to justice and tolerance, guiding believers to adopt a centrist, fair, and non-extremist stance that fosters harmonious relationships in plural societies (Chotimah et al., 2025; Syarifin & Lestari, 2025). It emphasizes the importance of respect, understanding, and ethical awareness, particularly in multicultural and educational contexts, including the development of hybrid learning approaches that instill tolerance and diversity appreciation among students (Anggaira et al., 2025). Within the Islamic educational tradition, *pesantren* play a vital role in operationalizing religious moderation by integrating classical Islamic wisdom with modern pedagogical approaches, thereby strengthening resilience against radical ideologies while promoting tolerance and pluralism (Ubaidillah & Faiz, 2025).

More broadly, religious moderation represents a balanced, inclusive, and tolerant approach that rejects both radical extremism and excessive liberalism (Muliadi et al., 2025). It is a crucial element in sustaining social stability across multicultural societies such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and India, where the coexistence of diverse religious groups demands strategies that reconcile religious freedom with social cohesion (Liu et al., 2025). At the same time, scholars emphasize that religious moderation should not be understood as an inherent theological essence in sacred texts such as the Qur'ān and Hadith, but rather as a social construction that evolves through interpretation and contextual application (Saebani & Rahman, 2025). In the Indonesian context, religious moderation is a vital necessity to counter extremism, promote peace and humanity, and ensure coexistence within its diverse society (Suyuti Yusuf et al., 2025). Taken together, these perspectives highlight religious moderation as a comprehensive framework that nurtures tolerance, justice, and harmony, positioning it as an indispensable approach for both national resilience and global peace.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has established a comprehensive framework for religious moderation through four primary indicators: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. This policy framework, which is also aligned with the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), seeks to address contemporary challenges such as extremism, radicalism, and intolerance (Cholil, 2022; Singgih, 2023; Yusuf et al., 2023). Each indicator reflects an integrated approach that combines religious values with national identity, social harmony, and cultural sensitivity.

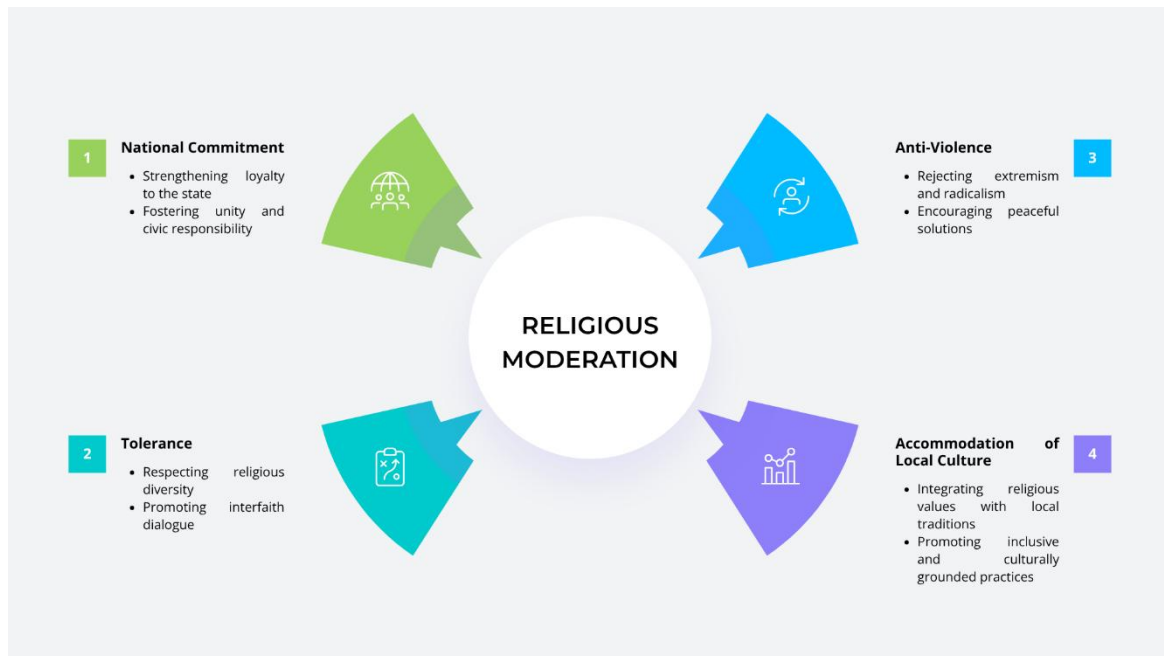


Figure 10. Core Indicators of Religious Moderation Framework (Cholil, 2022; Singgih, 2023; Yusuf et al., 2023)

The first indicator, national commitment, highlights the importance of fostering loyalty to the state and unity among citizens. This principle is implemented through educational programs and the integration of religious moderation into the curricula of Islamic higher education institutions, ensuring that students develop a strong sense of nationalism and civic responsibility (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Rofik et al., 2022). The second indicator, tolerance, emphasizes mutual respect and the acceptance of religious diversity. Initiatives such as interfaith dialogues and collaborative cultural programs have been developed to cultivate tolerance and reduce religious polarization in society (Hayat et al., 2025; Nanuru et al., 2025; Tinambunan et al., 2025).

The third indicator, anti-violence, reflects the Ministry's firm stance against extremism and the use of religion to justify violent acts. Public officials and educators are actively involved in promoting non-violence and countering radical ideologies by embedding these values into institutional policies and learning processes (Benawa & Wardhani, 2024; Cholil, 2022; Itmam & Aouich, 2024). Finally, the fourth indicator, accommodation of local culture, underlines the need to integrate Islamic teachings with indigenous traditions and cultural practices. By incorporating local wisdom into religious activities, the Ministry seeks to create a form of religious expression that is both inclusive and culturally grounded (Hayat et al., 2025; Suleman et al., 2025).

The implementation of this framework can be observed across three primary domains: educational institutions, public policy, and community engagement. In education, pesantren and universities play a pivotal role by embedding the principles of moderation into formal curricula and extracurricular activities

(Benawa & Wardhani, 2024; Nasir & Rijal, 2021). At the policy level, the Ministry has introduced regulations, such as halal certification reforms and guidelines for mosque loudspeakers, as part of efforts to align governance with moderation values (Furqan & Ab. Nasir, 2024). Meanwhile, at the community level, interfaith initiatives and cultural programs encourage collaboration among diverse groups, strengthening social cohesion and mutual trust (Nanuru et al., 2025; Tinambunan et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, the policy also faces challenges and criticisms, particularly regarding the balance between promoting moderation and safeguarding religious freedom. Some scholars argue that while the policy is well-intentioned, it raises debates about the limits of state involvement in regulating religious life (Cholil, 2022). Hence, further empirical research is needed to evaluate its effectiveness in practice and to identify strategies for addressing potential gaps (Hayat et al., 2025; Zulkifli et al., 2023).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has been central in institutionalizing religious moderation as a foundation for peace, tolerance, and inclusivity. Beginning with the *Religious Moderation* book (2019) and the *Road Map for Strengthening Religious Moderation* (2020), the Ministry provided conceptual and practical frameworks to counter extremism and encourage balanced expressions of faith (Qoumas et al., 2024; Singgih, 2023). Through training programs and curriculum integration in Islamic higher education institutions, it has sought to prevent radicalism and instill values such as tolerance, non-violence, and respect for local culture (Benawa & Wardhani, 2024; Nasir & Rijal, 2021). These initiatives align with the 2020–2024 Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), which embeds national commitment, tolerance, anti-radicalism, and cultural accommodation as its four guiding principles (Qoumas et al., 2024).

Beyond policy and education, the Ministry actively promotes interfaith dialogue and collaboration through community engagement. The Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School in Bandung exemplifies how religious moderation can be internalized through routine practices and partnerships with interfaith communities (Yusuf et al., 2023). Similarly, universities and faith-based organizations have become key partners in extending moderation programs to broader audiences (Benawa & Wardhani, 2024; Itmam & Aouich, 2024). Nonetheless, scholars note that challenges persist in fully embedding these values into society, particularly regarding tensions between moderation policy and freedom of belief (Cholil, 2022). Sustained and adaptive approaches remain necessary to ensure that moderation evolves as an inclusive and participatory framework across Indonesia (Qoumas et al., 2024).

Education plays a crucial role in advancing religious moderation as a foundation for interfaith harmony by shaping cognitive, ethical, and relational capacities among learners. Through the integration of religious and civic education, schools and higher education institutions cultivate tolerance, pluralism,

and democratic values by emphasizing cultural appreciation, human rights, and freedom of religion or belief (FoRB)(Ghosh, 2025; Ince, 2012; Junaidi et al., 2025; Rieffer-Flanagan, 2025; Sihombing & Maigahoaku, 2025). Empirical studies demonstrate that religious moderation strengthens interfaith dialogue by reducing prejudice, fostering empathy, and promoting shared ethical norms across religious boundaries (Ali Gilani et al., 2024; Moreau, 2025; Takdir, 2025). As a result, education becomes not merely a transmission of religious knowledge but a strategic arena for preventing conflict and enhancing social cohesion in plural societies (Irawan & Nasrun, 2025; Rusmana et al., 2025).

In the Indonesian context, the integration of moderation principles into Civic Education and Islamic Religious Education illustrates how educational systems operationalize interfaith harmony in practice. Programs such as moderation teams, student assemblies, community service, and interfaith learning initiatives encourage students to internalize values of tolerance, anti-violence, and cultural accommodation (Athoillah et al., 2024; Mahmud & Umiarso, 2025). This approach aligns with comparative findings showing that Indonesia explicitly embeds religious moderation within religious education, while Malaysia adopts a broader curricular strategy emphasizing multiculturalism and civic pluralism, highlighting how sociocultural contexts shape educational implementation (Bahri et al., 2025). These educational strategies reinforce community engagement and collaborative interfaith practices, which are widely recognized as key mechanisms for sustaining religious harmony (Nanuru et al., 2025; Untung et al., 2025).

Historically, the values promoted through contemporary religious moderation policies are deeply rooted in Indonesia's religious and cultural traditions. Philological and hermeneutical studies of *Serat Carub Kandha* reveal early narratives of interreligious respect, cultural accommodation, and nonviolence during the formative periods of Islam in coastal Java, serving as collective memory and historical evidence of moderation practices (Iswanto & Saefullah, 2021). Similarly, intellectual-historical analyses of Sufi traditions demonstrate that teachings within *Al-Muntakhabāt* by KH. Ahmad Asrori Al-Ishaqi emphasize *wasatīyyah* (moderation), *tawāzun* (balance), and *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), challenging assumptions that mystical religious groups are inherently exclusive or intolerant (Muhtar, 2021). These findings underscore that religious moderation is not a recent policy invention but a long-standing ethical orientation embedded in Indonesia's religious heritage.

At the institutional level, pesantren and Islamic higher education institutions continue to play a central role in translating moderation values into daily educational practice. Field-based studies in Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang show that moderation is enacted through pedagogical models emphasizing justice, equality, deliberation, reform, and civic responsibility, implemented via formal classes and *halaqah* traditions (Husain & Dwi Wahyuni, 2021). Quantitative evidence from higher education further confirms that moderation among students

is strongly shaped by relational attributes such as empathy, openness, cooperation, and acceptance of difference, rather than doctrinal knowledge alone (Qomusuddin et al., 2025). These findings reinforce the argument that religious moderation functions as an interpersonal and social disposition cultivated through sustained educational interaction.

In response to contemporary challenges, religious and civic education have increasingly expanded to address digital spaces where intolerance, radical narratives, and misinformation proliferate. Studies indicate that digital literacy and online ethics education are essential for strengthening students' resilience against radicalization and hate speech, particularly among youth who actively engage in online religious discourse (Athoillah et al., 2024; Hasan & Juhannis, 2024; Nurhayati et al., 2025; Tiara et al., 2025). Integrating digital citizenship into religious moderation education aligns with broader global scholarship that views moderation as a response not only to offline conflict but also to emerging forms of digital extremism (Schwadel, 2015; Zhu, 2025). This development situates religious moderation within global scientific debates on education, governance, and peacebuilding.

From an interfaith and global perspective, religious moderation contributes to conflict prevention, community engagement, and ethical global governance by integrating theological and moral principles into social and diplomatic practices (Gunawan et al., 2023; Zhu, 2025). International initiatives such as the Abu Dhabi Document further reinforce the relevance of moderation as a shared ethical framework, with studies demonstrating its compatibility with Islamic sources and its applicability as a model for sustaining long-term interreligious harmony in Indonesia and beyond (Daffa, 2023). Thus, religious moderation emerges as both a local practice and a globally relevant paradigm for plural coexistence.

Practically, these findings suggest that policymakers and educators should strengthen teacher and leadership training in multicultural and interreligious pedagogy, ensuring that moderation values are translated into inclusive classroom practices and institutional cultures. Establishing interfaith learning forums in schools, pesantren, and universities can further promote dialogue, empathy, and mutual respect among students from diverse backgrounds (Athoillah et al., 2024). Moreover, community-based digital literacy initiatives are essential for empowering youth to counter intolerance and misinformation in online environments. Through the alignment of religious and civic education, Indonesia not only reinforces its national commitment to peace and pluralism but also offers a valuable contribution to global efforts in fostering interfaith harmony, social cohesion, and sustainable coexistence.

## CONCLUSION

This study answers the three research questions by showing that scholarship on religious moderation has expanded significantly since 2016, with Indonesia serving as the primary hub of knowledge production. The thematic structure of the field has shifted from policy and security narratives toward education, digital citizenship, and community-based interfaith engagement. Bibliometric mapping further demonstrates that religious moderation is increasingly conceptualized as a relational and lived social practice that supports interfaith harmony rather than a purely normative or state-driven construct.

Methodologically, this review is limited by its exclusive reliance on Scopus-indexed publications and a single keyword search strategy, which may overlook relevant studies using alternative terms such as pluralism or interfaith dialogue. Future research should broaden database coverage, include regional and vernacular sources, and adopt comparative or longitudinal designs to capture variations across cultural and geopolitical contexts. Further inquiry is also needed to understand how religious moderation is operationalized by educators, community leaders, and digital actors in everyday interfaith interactions.

Overall, this study positions religious moderation as a multidisciplinary framework that contributes meaningfully to interfaith studies, civic education, and social cohesion research. By mapping its intellectual evolution and global trajectories, the study underscores the importance of strengthening cross-regional collaboration and theory-driven inquiry to advance religious moderation as a shared foundation for sustaining pluralism and peaceful coexistence.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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