



A Bibliometric Analysis of Policy-Driven Religious Moderation Education Research in Indonesia: Trends, Evolution, and Research Landscape

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Abstract: This study systematically maps the intellectual landscape of religious moderation education in Indonesia by analyzing publication growth, identifying key influential actors, and tracing thematic evolution in order to provide a strategic theoretical framework for inclusive Islamic education policy. A bibliometric approach was employed, analyzing metadata from 149 Scopus-indexed articles published between 2015 and 2025. The results indicate that the discourse has reached a stage of “policy-driven maturity,” characterized by an exponential increase in publications after 2020, largely in response to national policy mandates. Thematic analysis reveals a core dualism between the “Education Implementation” and “Policy Response” clusters, illustrating how government directives are translated into pedagogical strategies. However, the findings also highlight a pronounced “silo effect” in institutional collaboration, primarily driven by localized and competitively allocated research funding schemes (e.g., BOPTN and Litapdimas), which limit cross-institutional synergy. This study concludes that research on religious moderation in Indonesia is systematically shaped by government policy and contributes significantly to the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education). Nevertheless, stronger cross-institutional collaboration is essential to sustain and further develop inclusive educational frameworks.

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Introduction

Islamic Education in Southeast Asia has faced significant challenges over the last decade, particularly concerning intolerance, radicalism, and social polarization. Schools and madrasas have become crucial arenas for shaping the religious attitudes of the younger generation (Fauzan, 2025; Hidayat & Lismawati, 2024; Muhtifah et al., 2021). Amidst globalization and digitalization, religious moderation education has emerged as a vital effort to instill a balanced attitude: adhering firmly to beliefs while respecting differences (Ichsan et al., 2024). Its implementation through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has proven essential for building tolerance and a moderate religious commitment in madrasa environments (Harun & Usman, 2022; Lismawati et al., 2023). In Indonesia, religious moderation has become a national policy agenda, actively promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in madrasa and Islamic higher education curricula (Muhsin et al., 2024), and is directly aligned with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) (Anwar et al., 2024; Muzayanah & Ghony, 2025).

Recent academic scholarship on religious moderation education has bifurcated into several primary thematic streams. The first stream focuses on pedagogical interventions and character building, emphasizing the integration of moderation values through interactive,



contextual, and gamified learning approaches rather than conventional methods (Abas et al., 2025; Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024; Bahri et al., 2025). The second stream highlights the professionalization of educators and academic identity formation, exploring how teachers and school management proactively foster a moderate institutional environment (Saepudin et al., 2023; Subandi & Amirunnaufal, 2023). A complementary third stream investigates the intersection of Islamic Religious Education with broader cultural dynamics, examining how local cultural contexts navigate and shape moderation policies (Mukhibat et al., 2024). While these qualitative and localized studies offer profound insights, a critical gap remains for a comprehensive bibliometric evaluation linking fragmented pedagogical implementations with overarching national policy frameworks.

Despite continuous publication growth, most existing studies remain normative or qualitative, with only a few employing bibliometric approaches to map trends, key actors, and methodologies in this field (Hussin et al., 2024; Nirwana, 2024; Pratama et al., 2025). This gap raises fundamental questions: how can the development of this field be fully understood if its knowledge map is not clearly drawn? The present study addresses this gap with the primary objective of presenting a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of scholarly publications on religious moderation education (2015-2025). Specifically, it aims to: (1) analyze the growth trajectory of scientific publications; (2) identify key contributing actors; and (3) reveal the thematic evolution and knowledge structure of the field. The findings are expected to contribute a strategic theoretical framework for inclusive Islamic education policy.

Research Method

This research employed a bibliometric approach to quantitatively map the knowledge structure, key actors, and development trajectory of scholarly publications on religious moderation education (2015-2025). Data were sourced from the Scopus database, using the search string TITLE-ABS-KEY ("religious moderation" AND education), conducted on November 10, 2025, which yielded 167 initial documents.

Data selection followed a modified PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure transparency and reproducibility. Inclusion was restricted to: (1) journal articles only (DOCTYPE: "ar"), and (2) English-language publications. Beyond these formal restrictions, a content screening stage was applied: the authors manually reviewed titles, abstracts, and keywords to ensure substantive relevance. Articles addressing religious moderation from purely theological, political, or legal perspectives without clear pedagogical or educational implications were excluded. This process yielded a final corpus of 149 qualified articles. This meticulous process is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

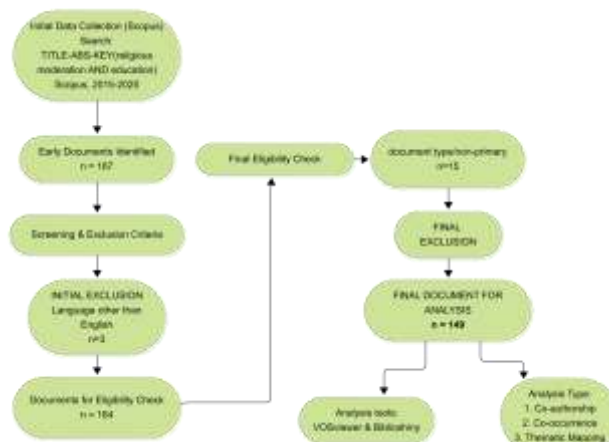


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart of Data Selection

The refined bibliometric data were analyzed using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20) for co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence network visualization, and the Bibliometrix R-package (version 4.1.0) via the Biblioshiny interface for performance metrics, publication growth analysis, and source impact. To ensure network accuracy, a manual thesaurus was applied in VOSviewer, merging semantically equivalent terms into unified keywords for instance, 'religious moderation,' 'islamic moderation,' and 'moderasi beragama' were standardized as a single entry.

Results and Discussion

Publication Trends and Key Actors

Analysis of 149 Scopus articles (2015-2025) reveals a clear phase of 'policy-driven maturity.' Publications on religious moderation education were relatively stagnant prior to 2020 but surged exponentially thereafter, peaking in recent years (Figure 2). This growth directly mirrors the national mandates issued by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs integrating religious moderation into the national education curriculum-confirming that publication growth was policy-driven, not merely organic academic interest.

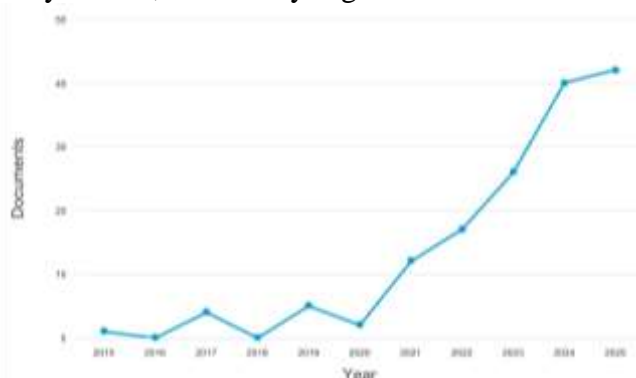


Figure 2. Documents by Year

Author productivity shows a broad, distributed contribution base with no dominant 'superstars.' The most productive author (Hanafi, Y.) contributed 6 documents, followed by Yani, M.T. (5) and Hazin, M. and Saefi, M. (4 each), while most top-ten authors contributed 2-3 documents (Table 1). This distribution reflects methodological diversity but also signals fragmented research silos lacking a unifying theoretical leader a structural gap that impedes the consolidation of a national grand theory in this policy-driven field.



Table 1. Top 10 Most Productive Authors

Author	Documents
Hanafi, Y.	6
Yani, MT	5
Hazin, M.	4
Saefi, M	4
Diyana, TN	3
Astuti, A.	2
Burhanuddin, N.	2
Faizin, N.	2
Faqihuddin, A.	2
Febriani, SR	2

Institutional analysis confirms strong centralization within Indonesian higher education particularly State Islamic Universities (UIN). UIN Sunan Gunung Djati (9 documents), Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (8), and Universitas Negeri Malang (8) lead productivity (Figure 3), while the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN, 5 documents) signals structural government involvement in driving the research agenda. However, extreme concentration on domestic affiliations underscores the need for expanded international collaboration.

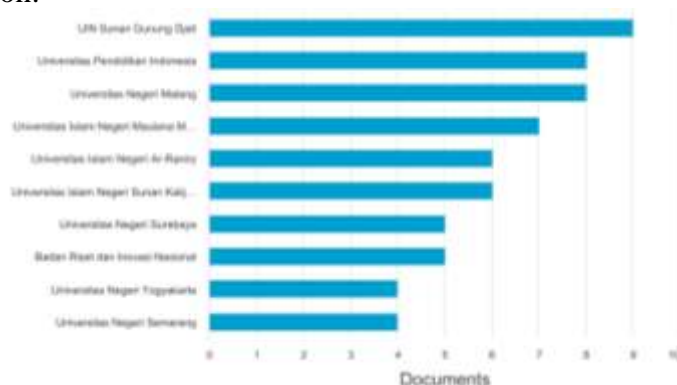


Figure 3. Documents by Affiliation

Indonesia contributes 119 of 149 documents far surpassing Malaysia and the United States (11 each) confirming its status as the primary global hub for religious moderation research (Figure 4). While this affirms domestic policy relevance, it simultaneously raises concerns about contextual bias and the generalizability of findings beyond the Indonesian socio-cultural context.

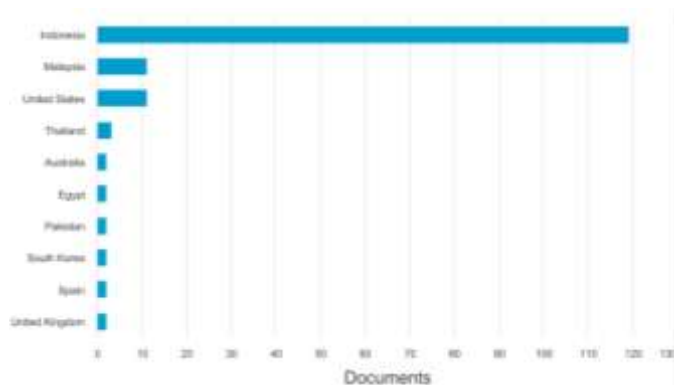


Figure 4. Documents by Country Or Territory



Dominant Journals and Collaboration Patterns

Publication outlets are dominated by domestic Islamic education journals, with Jurnal Pendidikan Islam (12 documents) and Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (7 documents) leading. This reflects a deliberate publishing strategy targeting local policymakers and practitioners for rapid translational impact. Simultaneously, the presence of HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies (8 documents) and Cogent Education (4 documents) demonstrates efforts to integrate local findings into global theoretical debates a healthy dualism between domestic policy utility and international academic visibility (Figure 5).

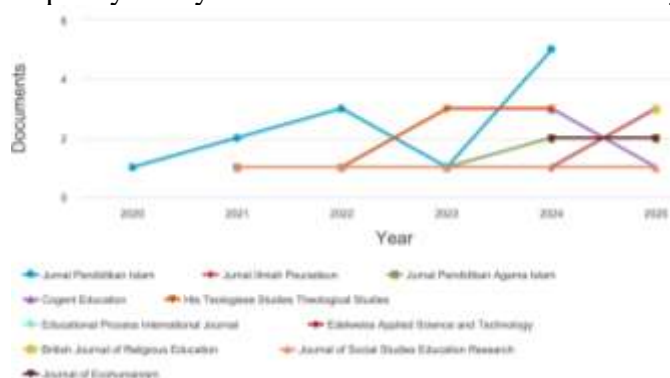


Figure 5. Documents by Source

The Author Collaboration Network (Figure 6) reveals significant institutional fragmentation. Collaboration is predominantly confined to small, intra-institutional clusters, producing the characteristic 'silo effect.' A critical underlying cause of this fragmentation is Indonesia's research funding architecture: competitive, institutionally allocated grants such as BOPTN (Bantuan Operasional Perguruan Tinggi Negeri) and Litapdimas (Penelitian, Publikasi Ilmiah, dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat) inherently incentivize localized, single-institution research teams over cross-institutional collaboration. This structural funding logic directly produces the silo patterns observed in the network map. While broker nodes (highly connected individual authors) play a vital bridging function, their connections remain limited making the strengthening of these brokers essential for theoretical consolidation.

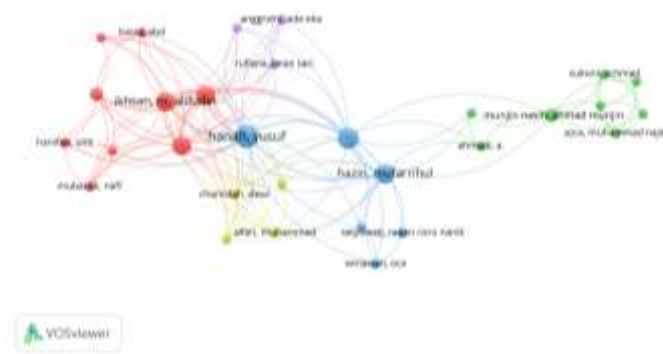


Figure 6. Author Collaboration Network

The Country Collaboration Network (Figure 7) reinforces Indonesia's hub status, with particularly strong ties to Malaysia. Involvement from Western nations and Australia, though modest in volume, confirms the field's relevance to universal issues of multiculturalism and deradicalization, and provides essential mechanisms for cross-cultural validation.



Figure 7. Country Collaboration Network

Main Themes and Thematic Interconnectedness

Keyword frequency analysis (Table 2) maps the thematic architecture of the field. 'Religious Moderation' dominates with 63 occurrences, followed by 'Islamic Education' (17) and 'Radicalism' (16) confirming the dualistic policy orientation: promoting moderation while responding to radicalism. Supporting contextual terms such as 'Higher Education' (13), 'Pesantren' (7), and 'Tolerance' (9) confirm that research is operationalized primarily within institutional contexts.

Table 2. Keyword Occurrences

WORDS	OCCURRENCES
Religious Moderation	63
Islamic Education	17
Radicalism	16
Religion	15
Education	14
Higher Education	13
Moderation	12
Religious Education	10
Tolerance	9
Pesantren	7

The Thematic Map (Figure 8) divides the body of knowledge into functional quadrants. 'Religious Moderation,' 'Islamic Education,' and 'Curriculum' occupy the Motor Themes quadrant (high density, high centrality), establishing them as the core pillars of the field and confirming that research is structurally directed toward policy intervention through the educational channel. 'Radicalism' and 'Anti-Corruption' in the Niche Themes quadrant indicate mature but specialized policy applications.

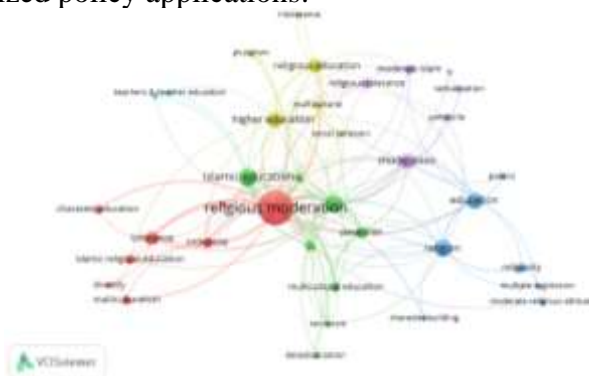


Figure 8. Keyword Thematic Map



The Three-Field Plot (Figure 9) further confirms the integrated functional network between UIN institutions, government bodies (BRIN), and productive authors—all collectively directing their output toward the core policy agenda.

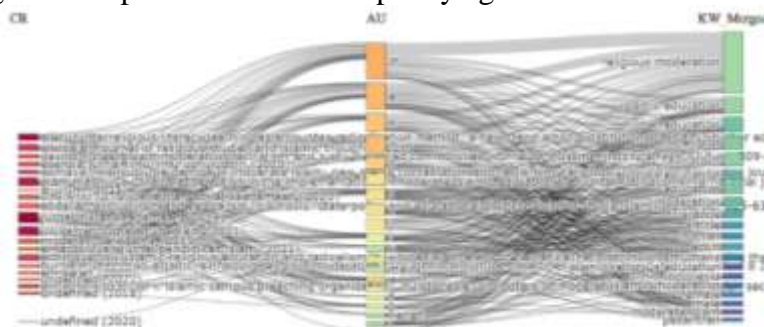


Figure 9. Three Field Plot

Contribution to Radicalism Prevention and SDGs

Funding sponsor analysis (Figure 10) provides the strongest empirical evidence of policy-driven maturity. The Ministry of Religious Affairs leads as the primary funder, supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology confirming that academic knowledge supply is regulated by the state to serve policy implementation goals rather than basic research. Notably, U.S. agencies (NIH, NIMH) also appear as funders, signaling a universal thematic intersection around the psychological and social dimensions of radicalism.

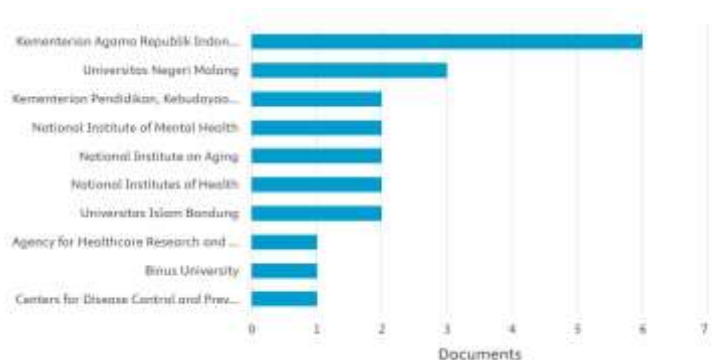


Figure 10. Funding Sponsors

The Thematic Map (Figure 11) further reveals a critical future research gap: the field must shift from descriptive conceptual work toward longitudinal, quantitative impact analyses measuring the effectiveness of moderation programs on long-term behavioral change.

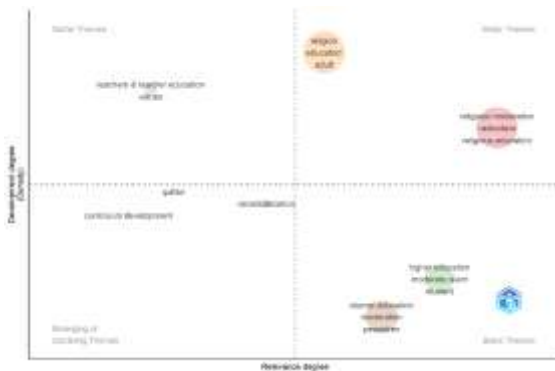


Figure 11. Thematic Map of Research Gaps



The findings from this bibliometric analysis provide robust empirical support for the thesis of 'policy-driven maturity.' The exponential publication surge post-2020 peaking at 42 documents in 2025 correlates directly with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' intensified policy implementation programs, confirming that knowledge production in this field is institutionally orchestrated rather than organically emergent. This validates Indonesia's characterization as a 'policy lab' where translational impact is the primary research orientation.

Comparative perspectives from other national contexts illuminate the distinctiveness of this pattern. In Malaysia, bibliometric analyses of Islamic religious school research (Hussin et al., 2024) also show government institutional dominance in funding and publication concentration in domestic journals. This suggests that 'government-driven' research ecosystems may be a shared characteristic of Southeast Asian Islamic education scholarship, potentially attributable to historically centralized state management of religious affairs in the region. However, the Indonesian case appears more pronounced in its structural policy-knowledge linkage, driven by explicit national mandates rather than diffuse institutional traditions.

The Turkish context offers a useful contrast. Research on religious education in Turkey has historically been shaped by the state-religion nexus of the Diyanet (Directorate of Religious Affairs), yet Turkish religious education scholarship has more actively engaged with comparative European frameworks and transnational theological debates, producing greater thematic diversity and broader international co-authorship networks. This suggests that the 'government dominance' pattern, while present in Turkey, operates within a more internationally integrated academic ecosystem a distinction that Indonesian scholarship has yet to fully achieve. The Malaysian context, closer in structure to Indonesia's, similarly exhibits institutional concentration, yet Malaysian researchers demonstrate comparatively stronger integration with Middle Eastern and British Commonwealth scholarly networks.

The identified 'silo effect' in author collaboration networks represents the most significant structural vulnerability of the Indonesian religious moderation research ecosystem. As analyzed above, this pattern is causally linked to Indonesia's competitive, institutionally allocated research funding mechanisms particularly BOPTN and Litapdimas which structurally reward single-institution projects over collaborative cross-institutional research. This differs from, for example, the Malaysian Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS), which actively incentivizes inter-university consortia. Addressing this structural barrier requires policy-level intervention: funding agencies should redesign grant schemes to require or reward cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary collaboration as an eligibility condition, rather than treating it as merely desirable.

The practical implications of these findings are significant for multiple stakeholders. For policymakers at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education, the post-2020 publication surge confirms successful policy mobilization; future policy should now shift emphasis toward funding impact evaluation research measuring actual behavioral and attitudinal outcomes of moderation programs rather than continued implementation studies. For future researchers, the dominance of 'Policy Response' and 'Education Implementation' clusters in the thematic map reveals a significant opportunity to explore under-represented areas, including the integration of religious moderation with digital literacy, global citizenship education, and comparative cross-cultural frameworks. For educational practitioners, the high volume of normative policy research must be translated into practical,



classroom-based teaching modules that operationalize moderation values in daily student practice.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis successfully mapped the knowledge structure and developmental trajectory of religious moderation education research in Indonesia (2015-2025) across 149 Scopus-indexed articles. Three critical conclusions emerge. First, the research discourse has achieved 'policy-driven maturity,' evidenced by exponential post-2020 publication growth and the dominance of the Ministry of Religious Affairs as the primary funding sponsor confirming that knowledge production is systematically directed by the state toward national policy implementation goals. Second, a structural dichotomy exists between strong thematic coherence with 'Religious Moderation,' 'Islamic Education,' and 'Curriculum' as Motor Themes and significant network fragmentation, characterized by research silos rooted in competitively allocated institutional funding (BOPTN, Litapdimas) that limit cross-institutional collaboration. Third, the body of knowledge makes a functional contribution to global development agendas, supporting SDG 4 (Quality Education) through its curriculum focus and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) through its engagement with radicalism and anti-corruption themes.

Recommendation

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed. For policymakers (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education), funding schemes such as BOPTN and Litapdimas should be restructured to incentivize cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary research consortia, directly addressing the silo effect identified in the collaboration network. Additionally, policy priorities should shift toward commissioning longitudinal, quantitative impact studies measuring the long-term behavioral and attitudinal efficacy of religious moderation programs, rather than continuing to fund predominantly descriptive implementation studies.

For future researchers, given the current landscape's dominance by 'Policy Response' and 'Education Implementation' clusters, significant opportunities exist to explore under-represented themes particularly the integration of religious moderation with digital literacy and global citizenship education and to conduct cross-cultural comparative studies testing the generalizability of the Indonesian moderation model in Southeast Asian, Middle Eastern, and global contexts.

For educational practitioners, the high volume of policy-oriented scholarship must be translated into practical, classroom-ready teaching modules that operationalize moderation values in daily student learning, ensuring that SDG 4 outcomes are achieved not only at the curriculum design level but in lived educational practice.

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