
STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the strategies of public universities to strengthen religious moderation on campuses to foster religious tolerance and nationalism among campus communities. Qualitative methods were used to obtain data for analysis. The subject of the study was Universitas Negeri Malang (UM), a large state university in East Java that offers various religious moderation programs, including Griya Moderasi Beragama dan Bela Negara (GMBBN, House of Religious Moderation and State Defense). The study was conducted from September 2024 to February 2025 using observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification. The research revealed nine strategies to strengthen religious moderation in campus, namely: establishing institutions of religious moderation, inserting religious moderation values into lectures, conducting research and community service on religious moderation, religious mentoring, establishing and guiding religious student activity units, scientific studies on religious moderation, non-academic activities on religious moderation, dissemination of media and content of religious moderation, and places of worship to promote religious moderation.

Keywords

Religious Moderation, Strategy, Strengthening, University.



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multicultural country with diverse cultures, languages, and religions. On the one hand, this diversity is a source of wealth and heritage for the Indonesian people. However, on the other hand, these cultural, linguistic, and religious differences are prone to becoming a source of problems and conflicts (Rasmi et al., 2014). Moreover, religious differences not only cause conflict but also exacerbate non-religious conflicts more destructively (Grim, 2012). There are at least two factors that cause religious differences to be more destructive: religion is exclusive, and a symbol of a stronger identity than language, and each religion teaches a different worldview (Montalvo & Reynal-Querol, 2019).

In the university scope, findings about radical movements and ideologies have shocked many parties. In March 2016, more than one thousand students from 242 universities declared their support for the “caliphate” system at IPB University. They are members of the Campus Da'wah Institutions, an organization affiliated with *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (Mudlofir et al., 2021). The public was also shocked by the arrest of three alumni of an Indonesian university by Counterterrorism Special Detachment 88, who allegedly assembled four bombs to detonate at various places. The claim that universities are centers and seeds of radicalism became more convincing after *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT) released its research results in 2018 that seven well-known public universities were exposed to radical ideology (Sanders, 2019).

To manage Indonesia's multicultural society and respond to the threat of religious conflict and radicalism, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs establishes religious moderation policy in 2016. This policy was implemented more widely in 2019 and is included in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan. Religious moderation was further strengthened with the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023 on strengthening religious moderation, and Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation Number 3 of 2024 on the procedures for coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the implementation of strengthening religious moderation.

In Islam, moderation is *wasath* atau *wasathiyah*, which is equivalent to *tawassuth* (in the middle), *i'tidal* (just), and *tawazun* (balanced). Islam *wasathiyah* is *justly-balanced* Islam, which shows Islam as a religion that features balance, justice, and the middle path, and avoids extreme, radical, and excessive *behavior* in religious life. This concept is in line with al-Qur'an (*al-Baqarah*, 2: 143), which mention *muslim* as an *ummatan wasathan*, the chosen community that always does justice and

balance (Badan Litbang dan Diklat, 2021). It means that religious moderation is a part of Islamic teaching, and it needs to be implemented in Islam education.

Religious moderation is defined by the Ministry of Religion as a way of thinking, attitude, and behavior that always takes a middle ground, acts fairly, and is not extreme in religion, balancing the practice of one's own religion with respect for followers of other religions. Religious moderation is an essential key to religious harmony and tolerance among multicultural society such as Indonesia. There are four indicators of religious moderation: 1) commitment to nationality; 2) tolerance; 3) anti-violence; and 4) accommodating local culture (Badan Litbang dan Diklat, 2021). Religious moderation indeed is not only phenomena in Indonesia. It also appears in other countries where Islam as majority religion. Educators in Malaysia implement religious moderation in their schools (Zulkarnain et al., 2025).

The Ministry of Religion implements some strategies to strengthen religious moderation in the education sector. The ministry compiles guidance books, textbooks, and reference books of a religious nature. The books include comics and fun learning activities. However, at the implementation level, these books are criticized as less contextual and impractical beyond classrooms (Chotimah et al., 2025). Another strategy is the establishment of the House of Religious Moderation and National Defense in public universities to promote religious moderation. In 2022, the Ministry of Religion established GMBBN in nine public universities as a pilot project (Rofiqi et al., 2023). These strategies differ to Malaysia government, which focuses to integrate religious moderation values across the general school curriculum. The difference is caused by historical, political, and sociocultural factors between the two countries (Bahri et al., 2025).

In the context of higher education, the government's effort to succeed the religious moderation program is evident from the seminar-workshop on strengthening religious moderation held by the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Research and Development Agency in July 2024. The event was attended by the leaders of 145 general and religious universities, and was aimed at building an ecosystem of religious moderation in higher education (Kementerian Agama, 2024).

In terms of the evaluation of mainstreaming religious education in public universities, it is important to portray the response and policies of Indonesian public universities in implementing religious moderation. Universitas Negeri Malang (well known as UM) will be the appropriate locus of research for several reasons. Based on the initial data of interviews, observations, and documentation, it is found that UM implements religious moderation through many sectors, various

programs, and institutions. The indicator is UM owns GMBBN and Student Movement for Religious Moderation and National Défense or PMMBBN since 2022. UM also establishes some units for strengthening religious moderation, including the Pancasila Laboratory and the Laboratory of Religious Education, with their various programs on religious moderation and nationalism. Moreover, the UM's Al-Hikmah mosque become centre of religious moderation.

To research religious moderation implementation at public universities like UM is indeed appropriate since religious radicalism mainly exists in and spreads from public universities, as confirmed by BNPT in 2018 (Rofiqi et al., 2023). Besides, UM, as a public university, should support government policy to maintain harmony and the existence of Indonesia. By knowing the policies of a public university on religious moderation, the government will be able to determine suitable "treatment or policy" for the universities to meet government policy.

Research on religious moderation is relatively new and less discussed in scientific literature, but it has recently increased in the number of publications (Hasan & Juhannis, 2024). The topic of religious moderation strategies in public universities has been studied by many researchers. In the aspect of management of the Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) course, (Ahmad Baedowi et al., 2025) reveals that Universitas Indonesia implements five ways to strengthen religious moderation and nationalism through teaching of PAI, which are: the university's policy, curriculum design, method choice, supportive programs, and collaboration. In teaching model, (Hanafi et al., 2025; Yulianti & Sultoni, 2024) study the use of constructivism model and problem-based learning through social activities in PAI to improve religious moderation in two public universities. In addition, (Nasih & Hamid, 2023) find that social media, such as the LINE official account, is useful to counter Islamic radicalism on campus. Whereas, (Yani et al., 2023) show that curriculum content of PAI course from seven public universities are potential to prevent radicalism and improve student nationality. The study by (Nasih et al., 2024) in three public universities, and by (Nasrudin et al., 2024) in two public universities, find the effectivity of Islamic mentoring to strengthen religious moderation.

All the research on religious moderation shows that many strategies have been implemented in strengthening religious moderation in public universities. However, there has been no comprehensive study on strategies of a public university in increasing religious moderation. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap, which is to reveal the strategies of public universities (UM) in strengthening religious moderation. This research is significant both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the research finding will provide various strategies to

strengthen religious moderation in a non-religion university, which is now less discussed systematically. Additionally, the research result offers many options for university leaders to maintain religious moderation on campuses.

METHOD

The research was conducted between September 2024 and February 2025. The selected research location was Malang State University (UM) with its unique characteristics. UM has long been known for its institution of strengthening Pancasila ideology, namely the Pancasila Laboratory. UM also owns a religious mentoring program, which involves thousands of students.

The research subjects consist of campus leaders, lecturers, teaching staff, and students, particularly student organization administrators. Data was collected using observation, interviews, and documentation methods. The subjects interviewed were university leaders, lecturers, and students to obtain data on the strategies used by campus leaders to strengthen religious moderation. Meanwhile, the observation targets were activities on campus to strengthen religious moderation. The documents collected were documents and website pages on religious moderation activities, including documents of campus policy, research and community service, student activity, activity report, lesson plan, and the university's website, units, and student activity organization.

The data obtained was analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification (Huberman & Miles, 2002; Miles et al., 2014). These four stages occur repeatedly and interactively between one stage and another. When data is obtained, it is then reduced, displayed, and compared to other data to get conclusion. However, the conclusion will be verified with new data of reduction or a display step to get more valid data. Therefore, there is continuous interaction between the researcher and the data throughout the analysis stages (Miles et al., 2014). The following is a visualization of the data analysis stages in Figure 1.

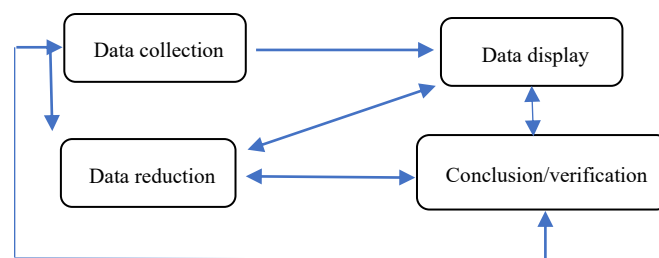


Figure 1. Interactive Qualitative Data Analysis

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results of interviews, observations, and documentation at the research site reveal nine strategies that were implemented by UM leaders to strengthen religious moderation on campus. These strategies consist establishing institutions/units to strengthen religious moderation, incorporating religious moderation values into university course, conducting research and community service on religious moderation, providing religious mentoring to strengthen religious moderation, establishment and guidance religious student activity units, conducting scientific activities on religious moderation, offering non-academic activities to strengthen religious moderation, dissemination of media and content on religious moderation, and providing houses of worship to promote religious moderation. The following is a brief explanation of the research results.

Table 1. Strategies to strengthen Religious Moderation in State University of Malang

No	Strategies	Unit/ Organization	Activities	Aim	Objects
1	Establishing institutions/units to strengthen religious moderation	University leaders	establish the Pancasila Lab, Religious Education Lab, GMBBN, PMMBBN, Forum for Religious Harmony, Interfaith Student Forum	provide units or organizations for acting as religious moderation	Students, lecturers, and staffs
2	Incorporating the values of religious moderation into university coursework,	The Center of University Courses and the lecturer of university courses	train lecturers, design and implement university courses for strengthening religious moderation	Implement the strengthening of religious moderation through learning activities	Students
3	Conducting research and community service on religious moderation,	Unit of research and community services, and lecturers of university courses	provide a scheme, fund, and do research and community service on religious moderation	develop concept, method, strategy, and practice of religious moderation	Students, lecturers, staff, schools, and members of society
4	Providing religious mentoring to strengthen religious moderation,	The Center of University Courses and Religious Education Lab	plan, design, and do religious mentoring to strengthen religious moderation	Instill religious moderation through religious mentoring	Students
5	Establishment and guidance of	Student Affairs Unit and	guide and control the religious	make sure all students' religious	Students

	religious student activity units,	Religious Education Lab	activities of students to fit with the nationality and religious moderation values	activities support religious moderation	
6	Conducting scientific activities on religious moderation,	Religious Education Lab, Pancasila Lab, GMBBN, and Student Affairs Unit	hold a seminar, a talk show, studium generale, a competition, discussion, and FGD on religious moderation or nationalism	strengthen religious moderation logically and academically	Students, lecturers, staffs, and members of society
7	Arranging non-academic activities to strengthen religious moderation,	Religious Education Lab, Pancasila Lab, GMBBN, and Student Affairs Unit, PMMBBN	arrange student orientation, camp, competition, empirical study, ceremony of love for religion and country, end-of-year prayers, and create a tolerance song	strengthen religious moderation through social and cultural activities	Students, lecturers, staffs, and society members
8	Dissemination of media and content on religious moderation,	Religious Education Lab, Pancasila Lab	create and disseminate videos, posters, books, and bulletins of religious moderation	strengthen religious moderation through mass media and social media	Students, lecturers, staffs, and members of society
9	Arranging houses of worship to promote religious moderation	Religious Education Laboratory	design and do programs and activities of the mosque as an instrument to promote religious moderation	promote religious moderation through religious activities	Students, lecturers, staffs, and members of society

Source: the data from the interview, observation, and documentation

The Establishment of Organizations to Strengthen Religious Moderation

The strengthening of religious moderation at UM is carried out through various sectors and institutions. However, several units were specifically established to strengthen religious moderation. The first is Laboratorium Pancasila (Lapasila) or Pancasila Laboratory. This unit is established to conduct research, development, and cultivation of the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia Republic. The programs include seminars, focus group discussions, training, competitions, seminar, discussions, and camps (<https://www.instagram.com/lapasilaum/?hl=en>).

Laboratorium Pendidikan Agama (LPA) or Religious Education Laboratory is the next unit established to strengthen religious moderation. This unit aims to manage, develop, and implement religious education, religious studies, worship activities, religious harmony, and character education (<https://lpa.um.ac.id/visi-misi-dan-tujuan/>). According to the LPA head, this unit has many activities, such as seminars, worship services, ceremonies, discussions, empirical studies, and the production of videos and bulletins.

Other units are the GMBBN and PMMBBN, which were established at the end of 2022 as a collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The main tasks of these units are to strengthen religious moderation and to protect students from radical ideologies and religious extremists. Their programs are advocacy against radicalism, community development, religious moderation school, video competitions, and religious moderation seminars (interview with the GMBBN Coordinator).

The Religious Harmony Forum is the next unit of religious moderation. According to the forum leader, this informal forum consists of religion and faith leaders of UM. The forum's activities are discussing religious and belief issues and mutually reinforcing tolerance and respect for others, and is actively organizing annual multicultural seminars.

The last organization to strengthen religious moderation is the Interfaith Student Forum. According to the head of LPA, this forum is an association of all religious student organizations and students who practice other beliefs at UM. The forum is aimed at fostering close relationships and harmony among UM students through interfaith discussions, multicultural seminars, and empirical studies in Pancasila villages.

The Insertion of the Religious Moderation Values in lectures.

UM also strengthens religious moderation through teaching-learning, particularly University Courses (*Mata Kuliah Universitas, MKU*). According to the head of MKU Center, four MKUs serve as an instrument of strengthening religious moderation: Religion Education, Pancasila Education, Civic Education, and Indonesian Language. These four courses are referred to as Basic Courses for Character Development. To maintain religious moderation and protect new students from radicalism, the courses are offered in semesters I, II, or III.

Based on the course plan document, it was found that the four MKU courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and ability to behave as religious citizens who love their country, nation, and Indonesian culture based on the Pancasila spirit. MKU courses are taught using a project-based learning model and case method, and complemented with textbooks to control the quality of

learning. For PAI course, the textbook has been integrated with religious moderation. MKU lecturers also use their research findings in improving student religious moderation, such as civic intelligence, and a spiritual and emotional intelligence approach.

Research and Community Service on Religious Moderation

Research and community service on religious moderation is generally carried out by MKU lecturers. Lecturers of Pancasila Education, Civic Education, and especially Islam Education often study themes on religious moderation. Research and community service activities are generally funded by the ministry, the university, and some independently, both on and off campus.

Some research titles on religious moderation over past five years include: strengthening moderation based on problem-based learning in Islamic religious education learning (Yulianti & Sultoni, 2024), internalization of religious moderation values in PAI teaching at public universities (Hanafi et al., 2022), Formulation of Curriculum Moderation on Religious Mentoring (Nasih et al., 2024), and Strengthening Religious Moderation through PAI Based on Civic Intelligence and the Values Clarification Technique (Thoriquttyas et al., 2020).

Whereas community services on religious moderation are carried out through the following activities: study of social media content to strengthen the literacy of moderate Islamic preaching among teachers and students in Islamic boarding schools (Nasih et al., 2024), the internalization of nationalist religious character values to prevent radical transnationalism in Indonesia and Germany (Anam et al., 2022) implementation of the Aswaja learning model to shape Muslims with a religious-nationalist character (Ikhsan et al., 2021).

Religious Mentoring to Strengthen Religious Moderation

The next strategy is through Islamic religious mentoring, known as *Tafaqquh Fii Diinil Islam* (TDI). While at other universities, Islamic mentoring often becomes an instrument of spreading radical ideology (Nasih et al., 2024), the opposite occurs at UM. Islamic mentoring is implemented to strengthen religious moderation. The methods are the guidance of PAI lecturer coordinator to the TDI committee, selection of TDI speakers, selection of mentors, design of TDI curriculum, and selection of activity types (Nasih et al., 2024).

According to PAI lecturer coordinator, TDI activities are held by senior students who are selected for some criterium including non-radical attitude. Anti-radicalism is also one of the criteria for recruiting TDI mentors. Additionally, TDI speakers were also chosen for their tolerant attitude. The activities of TDI are designed to avoid the infiltration of radical ideologies (Nasih et al., 2024).

Scientific Activities Related to Religious Moderation

UM offers many academic activities to enhance religious moderation, including seminars. There are three types of seminars: multicultural, religious moderation, and religious seminars. The multicultural seminar is intended to promote religious harmony and trust among the UM community. This yearly seminar presents religious leaders as speakers from Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous beliefs. Similar to this seminar, there is a Multicultural *talk show*, which in 2021 was organized in collaboration with the Malang Religious Communication Forum (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zx534MDHRBI>).

The seminar on religious moderation in collaboration with the Malang Interfaith Women's Community. The seminar presented speakers of national facilitators for Religious Moderation and religious leaders, and was attended by students and people of six religions (<https://lpa.um.ac.id/152/>). Meanwhile, religious seminars are seminars organized by each religious group at UM. The religious seminars include Islam seminars, Christian seminars, Catholic seminars, Hindu seminars, and Buddhist seminars. UM also holds a religious *talk show*. The activities, which began in 2024, take on various topics to enhance the values of religious moderation (interview with head of LPA).

Other academic activities on religious moderation are the Interfaith Student Discussion. This activity is held every semester by the interfaith student forum. The speakers and participants are representatives from each religious student organization and UM students. The discussion topics include contemporary issues related to the youth, such as fasting, life after death, love, and marriage (interview with the interfaith discussion coordinator).

Non-academic Activities to Strengthen Religious Moderation

UM has been offering religious moderation programs since the new student orientation, which at UM is called Introduction to Campus Life for New Students or PKKMB. During these four-day activities, every morning, students sang the Indonesian national anthem. New students also join in the development of national and civic life, national defense program, religious and spiritual guidance, and student character development (PKKMB schedule of 2024).

The empirical study in Pancasila villages is an interesting program of religious moderation at UM. This activity involves around twenty students from each religious student organization, along with the advisors, to learn about religious tolerance and harmony from the community. They interview religious leaders and community members, and observe places of worship. The Pancasila

villages to visit were Balun and Sekaran (interview with the head of LPA).

Artistic activities are also used to strengthen religious moderation at UM by creating and promoting songs to improve religious harmony. The song titled "*Berpadu Jadi Indah*" (United We Are Beautiful) encourages people to respect each other despite their differences in religion and ethnicity (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zx534MDHRBI>).

The Pancasila Camp by the Pancasila Laboratory aims to instill the values of Pancasila in students. The Pancasila Camp lasts for three days, consisting of various activities to strengthen nationalism. After joining the Pancasila Camp, participants will become Pancasila cadres of the Pancasila Laboratory and will learn national values to be implemented later in their social and national life (interview with head of Lapasila).

Other non-academic activities on religious moderation at UM students are the Ceremony of Love for Religion and Country. The head of LPA explained that this ceremony is held to shape tolerant, religious, and nationalist students. Thousands of students participate in a flag ceremony, which includes singing Indonesia Raya, pledging allegiance to Islam and Indonesia, and reading a jihad resolution. Following the ceremony, students attend a public lecture on Islam and nationalism.

The year-end reflection and prayer are other activities to improve religious moderation. This activity is carried out by each religious community of UM. In 2022, the activity was carried out together by all religious communities in a national reflection, and was attended by UM staff and religious leaders of Malang Raya (<https://um.ac.id/berita/refleksi-kebangsaan-akhir-tahun-2022-um-perkuat-moderasi-beragama/>).

Establishment and Guidance of Religious Student Organizations

UM also strengthens religious moderation through the establishment of Religious Student Activity Units (*Unit Kegiatan Mahasiswa, UKM*) for each religious community. This policy is important to recognize the existence of students with their own religion. In 2025, there were six religious UKM of Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Each of these religious UKMs is encouraged to know one another through an exchange program.

All those religious UKM are guided by the advisors. According to an advisor of the religious UKM, the guidance includes choosing programs and speakers. They will reject programs that indicate radicalism and will change radical speakers to tolerant speakers. The UKM advisors also ask that every UKM activity begin with the "Indonesia Raya" song.

Distribution of Content and Media of Religious Moderation

Digital media is used by UM to strengthen religious moderation. UM published a religious moderation book, "An Overview of Religions in Indonesia", which is intended to reduce misunderstandings among religion followers. Ar-Raudhah is a bulletin to propose harmony and tolerance. This online bulletin contains articles written by Islamic lecturers and scholars (<https://lpa.um.ac.id/367-2/>).

The next is a video group entitled '*Hikmah Ramadhan*', which promotes friendly Islam through seven-minute lectures. To ensure the videos promote inclusive Islam, the speakers and themes are carefully selected, and the videos are edited before being uploaded to Al-Hikmah Mosque's YouTube channel. The channel also offers a variety of Islamic content of religious moderation, including videos lectures of *Mukhtarul Ahadits*, *Tafsir Jalalain*, Tarawih lectures, and Friday sermons.

The Houses of Worship to Promote Religious Moderation.

The campus mosque of UM "Al-Hikmah" is used as a center of moderate Islam. The initial step is to select mosque managers with a moderate attitude. The managers then develop programs and activities. Through these mosque activities, a model of friendly and compassionate Islam is promoted to the UM community.

According to the Al-Hikmah management, the programs of the mosque include studies of the book *Mukhtarul Ahadits* and *Tafsir Jalalain*, Al-Hikmah Diniyah Madrasah, Tarawih lectures, Friday sermons, and commemoration of important Islamic days. All the preachers and topics are selected to promote friendly and compassionate Islam.

Discussion

The nine strategies to strengthen religious moderation reveal the systematic and structured efforts of UM in creating a harmonious religious life and nationalism on campus. The strategies show that UM promotes religious moderation values through various methods, programs, and contexts. This is called the hidden curriculum method, which is mentioned as an effective strategy for its contextual and indirect ways (Ardiansyah & Erihadiana, 2022). Those strategies also demonstrate UM's concern and support for state policy, which is Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023 on the involvement of state institutions in strengthening religious moderation. University support to religious moderation is also given by ten non-religious universities in West Java by providing vision, facilities, policy, and programs of religious moderation (Wahidin et al., 2023).

These nine strategies can be categorized into four groups, namely: institutional (Pancasila Lab., Religious Education Lab., etc.), Tri Dharma of the university (teaching, research, community service), programs/activities (academic, non-academic), and religious (programs of worship house). These religious moderations, various and massive programs, can be a solution to the lack of understanding of university students in East Java of religious moderation (Ardiansyah et al., 2024). All these strategies are also in line with the thought of leaders of Islamic public universities on strengthening religious moderation, namely: creating regulation of mainstreaming religious moderation, arranging campuses as centers of seeding and promoting humanity, religious harmony, and religious moderation, developing religious literacy and interfaith education in campuses, and using digital technology to spread content, media, seminars, study on religious moderation (Babun Suharto, 2019).

In the first category, institutional, the UM strategy of establishing six religious moderation units is a strategic way since these units are the centers and implementers of religious moderation programs. Additionally, these units allow programs of religious moderation to be focused, measurable, and systematic (Lascaux, 2023). Meanwhile, in a financial context, these units facilitate the process of budgeting and legal accountability.

Strategies to establish institutions to strengthen religious moderation have also been implemented by other universities, both public and private campuses. At *Universitas Negeri Surabaya* (Unesa), the strengthening of religious moderation is mainly carried out by the Sub-Directorate of Ideology, Religious Moderation, and National Defense, GMBBN, and PMMBBN of Unesa (Ali et al., 2024). Meanwhile, *Universitas Islam Malang* (Unisma) implements religious moderation through the Institute for Islamic Studies and Aswaja, GMBBN, and PMMBBN of Unisma (Ali et al., 2024). At *Universitas Brawijaya* (UB), activities of religious moderation are held by GMBBN of UB and the Technical Implementation Unit for Student Personality Development (<https://uotpkm.ub.ac.id/>). Institutionally, compared to Unesa, Unisma, and UB, UM establishes more institutions to implement religious moderation, which allows UM to do more and various programs.

In the second category, UM strengthens religious moderation through Tri Dharma of higher education, which is highly strategic because it not only is implemented consistently, but also needs fewer additional costs, as it is integrated with routine campus activities. The strategy meets with theory, which suggests that *Tri Dharma* is a way for higher education institutions to realize the objectives of higher education (Amalia, 2024). In this perspective, the strengthening of religious

moderation via Tri Dharma of university to improve tolerance is in line with objectives of higher education institutions, which is ... to produce intellectuals, scientists, and/or professionals who are cultured and creative, tolerant, democratic, and have strong character (Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012 Tentang Pendidikan Tinggi, 2012).

In the teaching-learning aspect, the design of university courses at UM to improve religious moderation using case method and PjBL is a good policy, since the curriculum and teaching using PBL designed for religious moderation can improve tolerance, non-violence attitude, and nationalism (Mukhibat et al., 2024). In this context, UM and other public universities should provide training on religious moderation for lecturers because such training has been proven to improve lecturer tolerance (Yedi Purwanto et al., 2024). In addition, UM has composed PAI textbook for improving religious moderation, similar to PAI textbook of Universitas Bengkulu (Mishbahuddin, 2024). This effort is important to contextualize religious moderation with university culture to avoid superficial implementation (Chotimah et al., 2025).

Moreover, in the research aspect, many lecturers have studied religious moderation, including deradicalization in higher education by Unesa lecturers (Yani & Hanafi, 2022), religious moderation through mentoring activities in UPI (Firmansyah et al., 2023), and religious moderation on Instagram by lecturers of UNJ (Hadiyanto et al., 2025). In community service, Unesa offers the Pancasila village development program (Faidah, 2024), and UNJ holds religious moderation training for high school teachers and for *da'i* (<https://fis.unj.ac.id/boie/?p=2330>).

Meanwhile, the third category is strengthening religious moderation through academic and non-academic activities. Seminars on religious moderation are generally held by Islam universities in Indonesia. Meanwhile, in non-religion universities, such seminars are often held by universities in Java, for example, Airlangga University (<https://unair.ac.id/acara/seminar-moderasi-beragama/>). However, apart from UM, few public universities hold religious seminars, since this type of seminar is generally held by religious-based universities.

While academic programs like seminars are often used in improving religious moderation, non-academic programs are rarely implemented in universities, even though the non-academic programs, such as interfaith dialogue, interviews with religious leaders of different religion and observation of Pancasila villages, improve religious moderation (Ali et al., 2021). Another effective method is the group counseling model, which significantly improves students' nationalism, tolerance, and understanding of religious moderation (Syahbuddin et al., 2023). Apart from UM,

limited universities that use non-academic programs are Unesa, with its discussions, PKKMB, empirical observations, competitions, and camps (Faidah, 2024).

The last category, UM strengthens religious moderation through religious programs, mainly in Al-Hikmah mosque. This strategy is crucial for its effectivity for using religious texts to promote religious moderation, improve tolerance, and moderate attitudes (Afwadzi et al., 2024). Additionally, religious activities are one of the key successes in creating religious harmony and tolerance for shaping religious perspectives, insights, and behavior (Mariah et al., 2025). However, a few public universities implement this strategy, since many religious mentoring activities in public university mosques are controlled by radical groups (Mudlofir et al., 2021; Zada, 2002). A few public universities to strengthen religious moderation through religious programs are UPI, Universitas Trunojoyo, Politeknik Negeri Bandung, and Universitas Tanjungpura (Nasih et al., 2024).

Lastly, although all strategies for strengthening religious moderation implemented by UM seem comprehensive and effective in improving nationalism, tolerance, and non-radical attitudes of students, the implementation should pay attention to the negative impact. The programs of religious moderation decrease Muslim students' identity. It happens to students with a partial understanding of religious moderation in some non-religion universities in Palembang (Astuti & Ismail, 2023). It implies that programs of religious moderation in public universities should give a clear definition and explanation of religious moderation to their students, who commonly have a limited understanding of Islamic teaching.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study reveal nine strategies for strengthening religious moderation at Malang State University: establishing units for strengthening religious moderation, integrating the values of religious moderation into course learning, research and community service on religious moderation, religious mentoring to strengthen religious moderation, the establishment and guidance of religious student activity units, scientific activities on religious moderation, non-academic activities to strengthen religious moderation, the dissemination of media and content of religious moderation, and houses of worship to promote religious moderation. The nine strategies can be classified into four groups, which are institutional, the three pillars of higher education, scientific and non-scientific activities, and religious. Most of the strategies implemented at UM have been applied in other universities with varying degrees of intensity, except for establishing a

religious harmony forum and creating a song of religious tolerance. In addition, no public or religious university has implemented all of these strategies.

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