

Strengthening Students' Religious Nationalism through Religious Moderation Programs in Islamic Higher Education

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ABSTRACT. This study addresses a gap in research on religious moderation and nationalism, which has largely remained descriptive and has insufficiently examined how religious nationalism develops through educational processes or influences students' commitment to the nation. In particular, limited attention has been given to the interaction of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions within religious moderation programs in Islamic higher education. This research employs a qualitative case study approach conducted at an Islamic higher education institution. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with lecturers, program coordinators, and students, as well as participant observation of learning activities and campus programs related to religious moderation. Purposive sampling was used to select informants directly involved in the program. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation applied to ensure validity. The findings indicate that religious moderation programs significantly strengthen students' religious nationalism through a multidimensional process of value internalization, attitude transformation, and behavioral actualization. Students develop an integrative understanding of religion and nationalism that fosters inclusive, tolerant attitudes, active civic engagement, and participation in national and social activities. Religious nationalism also enhances ideological resilience against radicalism and reinforces commitment to national unity. This study contributes to the literature by offering an integrative framework that explains how cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions interact in shaping religious nationalism among students. Its novelty lies in conceptualizing religious nationalism as a multidimensional outcome of religious moderation programs. The findings further suggest that policymakers and higher education institutions should strengthen dialogical, contextual, and experiential learning strategies to promote social cohesion, civic responsibility, and resilience against extremist ideologies.

Keywords: *Religious Nationalism, Islamic College, Religious Moderation*

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INTRODUCTION

In the global era, the relationship between religion and the nation-state has become increasingly complex due to globalization, digitalization, and the rapid circulation of transnational ideologies (Abdullah et al., 2025; Kristiantoro, 2025; Rosodor & Putra, 2025; Saim & El-Muhammady, 2025; Triandafyllidou, 2025). While religion remains an important source of moral guidance and social cohesion, it has also become a vehicle for identity politics, exclusivism, and ideological contestation in many societies (Adimayuda et al., 2025; Anhar et al., 2026; Hawa et al.,

2025; Sajir, 2023). The growing influence of digital media has accelerated the dissemination of both moderate and radical religious narratives, creating new challenges for social harmony and national integration (Annazali & Wahyudi, 2025; Aprilianto et al., 2025; Erawadi & Setiadi, 2024; Jamal et al., 2025; Roqib et al., 2025). This condition calls for new approaches that are capable of integrating religious values with national principles in a harmonious manner, thereby creating a balance between religious identity and civic commitment.

In Indonesia, a multicultural and multi-religious nation, maintaining national unity requires continuous efforts to balance religious commitment with civic responsibility (Masuwd et al., 2025; Rozanita et al., 2026; Sechandini et al., 2023; Sirojuddin et al., 2025). Recent studies have reported the emergence of exclusive religious attitudes, intolerance toward diversity, and susceptibility to radical narratives among a segment of university students (Aimaganbetova et al., 2023; Fuad & Masuwd, 2024). Social media ecosystems and peer-group interactions further contribute to the spread of ideological polarization among youth (Hatim et al., 2025). These developments are particularly significant because university students are expected to become future leaders and agents of social transformation. Consequently, Islamic higher education institutions are increasingly challenged to cultivate students who are both religiously committed and nationally oriented.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of religious moderation in promoting tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and social cohesion within plural societies (Berger, 2018; Febriansyah et al., 2026; Yağdı, 2025). Religious moderation has been widely recognized as an educational strategy for preventing radicalism and fostering inclusive religious attitudes among students. Other studies have examined nationalism as a civic value that strengthens citizens' commitment to national identity, democratic participation, and social solidarity (Aslamiyah et al., 2026; Helmy et al., 2021; Ichsan et al., 2024; Ma`arif et al., 2024, 2025; Nugroho et al., 2025). Research has also explored the relationship between religion and nationalism, suggesting that religious values can reinforce national commitment when interpreted within inclusive and contextual frameworks. However, existing studies have predominantly focused on descriptive analyses of religious moderation policies, students' perceptions of nationalism, or the implementation of moderation programs in educational institutions (Hasan & Juhannis, 2024; Sahin, 2018). As a result, the dynamic process through which religious moderation contributes to the formation of religious nationalism remains insufficiently understood.

Despite the growing body of literature on religious moderation and nationalism, several important gaps remain. First, most studies treat religious moderation and nationalism as separate constructs rather than examining their integration within educational processes. Second, existing research largely focuses on outcomes and perceptions while paying limited attention to the mechanisms through which religious nationalism is developed among students. Third, few studies simultaneously analyze the interaction of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in shaping students' religious nationalism and national commitment.

This study argues that religious nationalism is not merely an ideological orientation but a multidimensional construct that emerges through the interaction of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior fostered by religious moderation programs. Understanding these interrelated dimensions is essential for explaining how educational interventions contribute to students' commitment to national unity, social cohesion, and resilience against radical ideologies. Therefore, an integrative perspective is needed to bridge the theoretical and empirical gap in existing scholarship. Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the development of students' religious nationalism through religious moderation programs in Islamic higher education institutions. Specifically, it seeks to examine how cognitive understanding, affective attitudes, and behavioral practices interact in shaping religious nationalism and strengthening students' national commitment.

Furthermore, this study aims to explore the implications of religious nationalism for ideological resilience, civic engagement, social inclusiveness, and commitment to national unity. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by proposing an integrative framework that links religious moderation, religious nationalism, and national commitment through cognitive,

affective, and behavioral dimensions. Practically, the findings provide policy recommendations for higher education institutions and policymakers in designing effective, dialogical, and sustainable religious moderation programs that strengthen civic responsibility and social cohesion in diverse societies.

METHOD

This type of research used by researchers is field research. That is to use the research object as a source of data or information. The research approach chosen is a qualitative data approach, namely data that is described in sentences, separated by category to obtain conclusions. In qualitative research, researchers go to the field to conduct interviews, documentary studies and observations. In qualitative research, researchers are expected to be able to blend in with respondents and understand what they want and don't want. In terms of study approach, this study uses historical, educational, sociological and phenomenological approaches (Moustakas, 1994).

This research was conducted at several Islamic universities in Indonesia, namely the State Islamic University of Palembang, the State Islamic University of Bengkulu, and the State Islamic University of Yogyakarta. These locations were chosen because they have systematically implemented religious moderation programs, both through their curriculum, co-curricular activities, and campus culture. The locations were selected purposively, considering representative institutional characteristics, such as the diversity of student backgrounds, institutional commitment to religious moderation, and the sustainability of the programs.

The study was conducted over a period of eight months, from January to August 2025. Data collection involved semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 15 informants, consisting of four Islamic Religious Education lecturers, three religious moderation program coordinators, two institutional leaders, and six students actively participating in religious moderation activities. Each interview lasted approximately 45–90 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or through online platforms, depending on participants' availability. In total, 15 primary interviews were conducted, supplemented by participant observations and document analysis to enhance data richness.

In analyzing this research, data analysis procedures based on the (Hashimov, 2015) interactive model were used, which includes the following three main stages: 1) Data Reduction, where the researcher selects, focuses, simplifies, and transforms raw data obtained from in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. 2) Data Display, where the reduced data is then presented in an organized form for ease of understanding and further analysis. Data presentation is achieved through matrices, thematic tables, relationship charts between concepts, and systematic descriptive narratives. 3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification, where the researcher draws tentative conclusions based on the patterns and themes identified. These conclusions are then continuously verified through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checking with key informants. These three stages occur interactively and cyclically, allowing the researcher to continuously reflect on and refine the analysis until in-depth and credible findings are obtained.

To facilitate systematic data management and coding, qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo 14 was employed. The software assisted in organizing interview transcripts, generating coding structures, and identifying thematic relationships across data sources. Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved, meaning that no substantially new themes, categories, or insights emerged from subsequent interviews. Saturation was observed after the thirteenth interview; however, two additional interviews were conducted to confirm the consistency and robustness of the identified themes. The credibility and trustworthiness of the findings were enhanced through source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking with selected participants, and the maintenance of an audit trail documenting all stages of the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Development of Religious Nationalism Soul Values in Realizing Student Nationality Commitment

The results of this study are described in depth based on findings from interviews and field observations, with an emphasis on the process of formation, transformation, and actualization of students' religious nationalism values through a religious moderation program at an Islamic university.

Interviews with Islamic Religious Education lecturers revealed that the religious moderation program was designed to systematically integrate Islamic values with national values. The lecturers emphasized that the concept of *hubbul wathan minal iman* (love of the homeland is part of faith) serves as a normative foundation for building student awareness: "*We guide our students to understand that loyalty to the nation and state does not conflict with Islamic teachings; in fact, it is part of practicing religious values themselves*" (Hilwan, 2025)

Meanwhile, student expressed a shift in perspective after participating in the program. They no longer viewed nationalism as a secular concept, but rather as an integral part of religiosity: "*I began to understand that being religious doesn't mean moving away from national values. In fact, the two reinforce each other.*" (Dian, 2025)

Classroom observations showed that the process of internalizing values was carried out through dialogical and contextual learning methods. Lecturers utilized case studies, current issues, and reflective approaches to raise students' awareness. The interactions were not one-way, but rather involved students' active participation in constructing their own understanding. Students appeared able to connect religious principles with national realities, such as the importance of maintaining unity in a pluralistic society (Obsevation, 2025).

Based on these findings, the researcher argue that internalizing the values of religious nationalism cannot be achieved simply through knowledge transfer but must be achieved through a transformative pedagogical approach. Dialogic processes that provide space for reflection have proven effective in developing students' critical awareness. Thus, internalization of values becomes more meaningful because it stems from students' independently constructed understanding.

Furthermore, regarding the transformation of inclusive and tolerant attitudes, the student interviewed acknowledged a significant shift in attitudes, particularly regarding acceptance of differences. They became more open to diverse religious views and social backgrounds: "*I used to tend to feel that my group was the most correct, but now I'm better able to appreciate differences without losing my faith.*" (Surya, 2025) The lecturer also confirmed this change as a result of the religious moderation approach, which emphasizes the values of *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *i'tidal* (justice): "*We see students becoming more capable of dialogue without conflict, even on sensitive issues.*" (Arya, 2025).

In class discussions, seminars, and student forums, there was a visible improvement in the quality of social interactions. Students not only expressed their opinions but also listened to and respected the views of others. There were no dominant or exclusive attitudes that could potentially trigger conflict. Furthermore, in cross-organizational activities, students demonstrated an openness to collaboration regardless of ideological differences or group backgrounds.



Figure 1: Religious moderation training activities at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2025

Researcher believe this attitudinal transformation is an important indicator of the success of the religious moderation program. The shift from exclusive to inclusive attitudes indicates a paradigm shift in students' thinking. This confirms that religious moderation not only impacts cognitive aspects, but also on the formation of adaptive and harmonious social character in the context of a plural society.

Regarding the actualization of religious nationalism, students reported that the values learned from the religious moderation program were manifested in various concrete activities: "*We not only learned theory, but also participated in social activities such as community service, which instilled the values of tolerance and unity.*" (Sari, 2025)

Several student also mentioned their involvement in anti-radicalism campaigns and the promotion of religious moderation on campus and in the community. Furthermore, Researchers also observed that students were active in community service activities, social service, and national day commemorations. In these activities, students demonstrated mutual cooperation, social awareness, and a spirit of nationalism. Furthermore, in daily interactions on campus, students demonstrated behavior that reflected the values of tolerance and respect for differences.

According to researcher, behavioral actualization is the most concrete stage in the development of religious nationalism. Internalized values and transformed attitudes find concrete expression in social actions. This demonstrates that the religious moderation program successfully bridges the theoretical and practical aspects, ensuring that the values taught do not stop at the discourse level.

Strengthening national commitment in higher education, students stated that the religious moderation program strengthened their commitment to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia: "*I am increasingly convinced that maintaining the integrity of the nation is part of my religious responsibility.*" (Komala, 2025). Furthermore, lecturers also emphasized that students are now more critical of narratives of radicalism and extremism that contradict national values: "*They are not easily influenced by ideologies that seek to replace the foundations of the state.*" (Mindani, 2025).

In various discussion forums, students demonstrate a firm stance in supporting the values of Pancasila and diversity. They are able to present rational arguments based on moderate religious values in rejecting intolerant ideologies. Students are also active in activities that strengthen national identity, such as national day ceremonies and national discussions.

Researcher argue that strengthening national commitment is the end result of the process of developing religious nationalism. When students are able to harmoniously integrate religious and national identities, they will develop individuals who are not only religious but also possess strong

loyalty to the nation. This is a crucial asset in maintaining national integrity amidst the challenges of globalization and radicalism.

Regarding the supporting factors for the implementation of the religious moderation program, informants cited several factors contributing to the program's success, including a dialogical approach, exemplary lecturer, and the integration of moderation values into campus culture: "Students learn not only from the material, but also from the lecturers' attitudes, which reflect moderation in their daily lives." (Mulyadi, 2025).

The campus environment demonstrates an inclusive, open, and conducive atmosphere for the development of moderation values. The availability of discussion spaces, cross-cultural activities, and campus policies that support diversity are important factors in the program's success (Observation, 2025).



Figure 2: *Religious Moderation Curriculum Workshop Activities at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2025*

Researcher assess that the success of the religious moderation program is largely determined by a supportive educational ecosystem. Lecturers' exemplary behavior and an inclusive campus culture are key factors in strengthening the internalization of values. Without the support of a conducive environment, even a well-designed program will struggle to achieve optimal results.

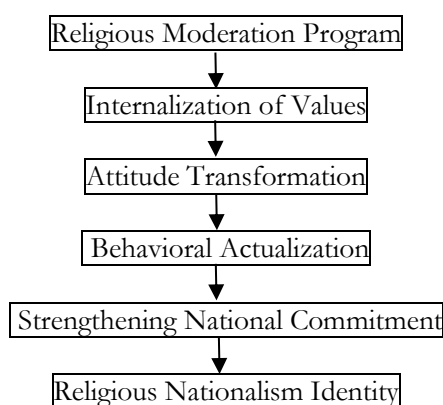


Figure 3: *Process of Developing Religious Nationalism*

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the development of students' religious nationalist values occurs through a continuous and interconnected process: internalization of values, attitudinal transformation, behavioral actualization, and strengthening of national commitment. Researchers assert that the success of the religious moderation program lies in its ability to simultaneously integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. With a dialogic,

reflective, and contextual approach, this program is capable of developing students who are religious, tolerant, and possess a strong national commitment.

Table 1 Development of Religious Nationalism Values among Students

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Evidence from Interviews/Observations	Interpretation
Internalization of Religious Nationalism Values	Integration of Islamic and national values	“Love of the homeland is part of faith” (Hilwan, 2025)	Students perceive nationalism as compatible with Islamic teachings.
	Dialogical learning process	Classroom discussions, case studies, reflective learning	Internalization occurs through critical reflection rather than indoctrination.
Transformation of Attitudes	Increased tolerance	“I am better able to appreciate differences” (Surya, 2025)	Religious moderation promotes inclusive attitudes.
	Openness to diversity	Cross-organizational collaboration and dialogue	Students become more receptive to different perspectives.
Behavioral Actualization	Social participation	Community service, social campaigns, anti-radicalism activities	Values are translated into concrete social actions.
Strengthening National Commitment	Promotion of moderation	Student involvement in moderation campaigns	Students act as agents of moderation.
	Commitment to NKRI	“Maintaining national integrity is my religious responsibility” (Komala, 2025)	Religious nationalism reinforces national loyalty.
Supporting Factors	Resistance to radicalism	Critical responses to extremist narratives	Students develop ideological resilience.
	Role models and campus culture	Lecturer exemplarity and inclusive environment	Institutional ecosystem strengthens value internalization.

Source: Field Data Analysis (2025)

Implications of the Soul Values of Religious Nationalism in Realizing National Commitment

This section outlines the implications of developing students' religious nationalist values through a religious moderation program at an Islamic university. Findings are presented based on in-depth interviews and field observations, with an emphasis on the tangible impact on students' national commitment.

Regarding the implications for strengthening ideological national awareness, lecturers and program administrators stated that religious moderation significantly contributed to building students' ideological awareness of the nation's foundations. Students not only understood Pancasila normatively but were also able to relate it to Islamic teachings: “*Students began to see that the values of Pancasila align with the principles of Islam, which is rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for all the universe).*” (Anita, 2025). Student also expressed this increased ideological awareness: “*I have come to understand more deeply that being a good citizen is part of my religious responsibility.*” (Rega, 2025).

In class discussions and national forums, students were able to elaborate on the relationship between religious values and state ideology argumentatively. They no longer positioned the two as opposing entities, but rather as mutually reinforcing aspects. Therefore, researchers believe this implication demonstrates the program's success in building integrative ideological awareness. Students not only possessed textual understanding but were also able to internalize the values of state ideology within a religious framework (Observation, 2025). This is crucial as a bulwark against the penetration of transnational ideologies that could potentially erode national commitment.

Regarding the implications for strengthening moderate and tolerant attitudes, student reported that the values of religious moderation had a direct impact on their social attitudes, particularly when dealing with differences: *"I am more accepting of differences and less easily blame others for differing views."* (Anita, 2025). The lecturer also emphasized that students have become wiser in addressing sensitive issues, such as differences in religious schools of thought or perspectives: *"They prioritize dialogue over conflict."* (Meti, 2025).

In social interactions on campus, students demonstrate a high level of tolerance. This is evident in their discussions, collaboration in groups, and participation in cross-cultural activities and organizations. Thus, this implication confirms that religious nationalism developed through religious moderation is not exclusive, but rather inclusive and adaptive. Moderation and tolerance are important foundations for building social cohesion in a pluralistic society.

Regarding the implications for resilience against radicalism and extremism, informants stated that students who participated in the religious moderation program had greater resilience against the influence of radicalism: *"Now I am more critical of religious content on social media, which tends to be provocative."* (Amirudin, 2025) Lecturers also observed an improvement in students' critical religious literacy skills: *"They don't easily accept information without verification and tend to seek out credible sources."* (Meti, 2025)

Researcher found that in discussions related to radicalism, students were able to identify distorted narratives and provide rational arguments to reject them. They were also active in spreading messages of moderation through social media and campus activities. Therefore, this has strategic implications in the context of maintaining national stability. Students with strong religious nationalism will become agents of countering radicalism in their social environment (Observation, 2025). This indicates that religious moderation programs have a real contribution to strengthening the ideological resilience of the younger generation.

Meanwhile, regarding the implications for active participation in national life, students expressed that they were encouraged to be more active in activities related to national life, both on and off campus: *"We are more motivated to participate in social activities, national discussions, and community service."* (Sutarto, 2025) Lecturers also stated that students demonstrated increased participation in collective activities oriented toward the public interest. Furthermore, researchers observed student involvement in various activities, such as community service, national seminars, and community service programs. In these activities, students demonstrated a strong spirit of mutual cooperation and social awareness.



Figure 4: Religious moderation strengthening activities for lecturers and students at UIN Yogyakarta, 2025

Researcher argue that these implications demonstrate that religious nationalism is not limited to awareness but also encourages active participation in social life. Students are not merely objects of education but also subjects contributing to community development.

Regarding the implications of the religious moderation program for the holistic character formation of students, lecturers stated that the religious moderation program contributes to shaping student character that balances religiosity and nationalism: "*Students are not only intellectually intelligent, but also possess a strong national character.*" (Sipuan, 2025) Students also experience changes in their thinking and behavior, becoming more mature and responsible. Thus, in daily campus life, students demonstrate behavior that reflects the values of discipline, responsibility, and concern for the social environment. They are also able to maintain a balance between religious and national identities.

Researcher assess that this implication exemplifies the ideal goal of Islamic higher education, namely to produce graduates who are not only academically competent but also possess moral integrity and a commitment to nationality. Religious nationalism serves as the foundation for developing a holistic and competitive student character.

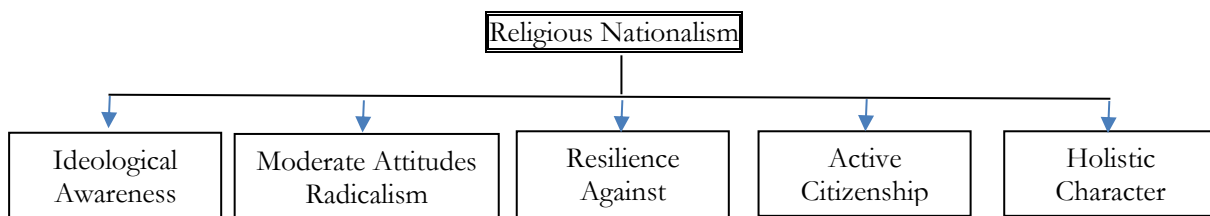


Figure 5: Implications Model of Religious Nationalism

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the values of religious nationalism developed through the religious moderation program have broad and profound implications for students' national commitment. These implications include strengthening ideological awareness, developing moderate attitudes, increasing resilience against radicalism, active participation in national life, and developing a holistic character. The researchers emphasized that this success is inseparable from an integrative approach that harmoniously combines religious and national values. Therefore, the religious moderation program at Islamic universities plays a strategic role in shaping a young generation that is religious, nationalistic, and capable of maintaining national unity amidst global dynamics.

Table 2 Implications of Religious Nationalism for Students' National Commitment

Implication Dimension	Empirical Findings	Impact
Ideological Awareness	Students connect Pancasila values with Islamic teachings	Stronger acceptance of national ideology
Moderate and Tolerant Attitudes	Increased respect for differences and dialogue	Enhanced social cohesion
Resilience Against Radicalism	Critical evaluation of extremist narratives	Greater ideological resilience
Active Citizenship	Participation in social service and national activities	Increased civic engagement
Holistic Character Formation	Integration of religiosity and nationalism	Development of responsible citizens

Source: Field Data Analysis (2025)

Discussion

Development of Religious Nationalism Soul Values in Realizing Student Nationality Commitment

Research findings indicate that the internalization of religious nationalism values does not occur linearly, but rather through a dialectical process between religious values and national realities. Students do not simply accept doctrines but undergo a process of critical reflection involving personal experiences and social interactions.

A social constructivist perspective, this process emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through the negotiation of meaning within the social sphere (Shay, 2008). However, the findings of this study expand on this theory by demonstrating the existence of a normative-contextual dialectical dimension, where students actively reconcile religious texts (normative) with national realities (contextual). Furthermore, when linked to the theory of value internalization, this process does not stop at the stage of knowing, but progresses to the stages of feeling and becoming (Wu et al., 2025). Students not only understand religious nationalism as a concept but also incorporate it into their self-identity.

This dialectical process demonstrates that religious moderation functions as a mediating system that bridges potential conflicts between religious and national identities. Thus, value internalization is not indoctrinative, but rather transformative.

The shift in student attitudes from exclusivism to inclusivism not only indicates a shift in social behavior but also reflects a reconstruction of the religious paradigm. Within the framework of Attitude Change Theory, this shift can be explained using the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) approach (Petty et al., 2017; Shahab et al., 2021; Srivastava & Saini, 2022), in which students process information through the central route, namely through rational argumentation and in-depth reflection (Makhene, 2017). This is evident in the students' ability to critically elaborate on religious and national issues.

However, the findings of this study also reveal a deeper dimension, namely a shift from theological exclusivism to contextual inclusivism. Students did not lose their theological beliefs but were able to articulate them within a broader social framework. Linked to Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory (Asimaki & Koustourakis, 2014), this change indicates that the religious moderation program successfully formed a new habitus in students, namely a more open, tolerant, and adaptive mindset and behavior toward plurality. This attitudinal transformation is not only individual but also collective. The campus environment, as a field, plays a role in shaping the moderate habitus through repeated social interactions. Thus, religious moderation becomes a culture, not just a program.

The actualization of religious nationalism values in students' actual behavior indicates that the educational process has reached the practical stage. Students not only understand and accept the values but also implement them in their social lives. From the perspective of Albert Bandura's social learning theory, this can be explained through the processes of modeling and reinforcement (Akers & Jennings, 2015; Bandura, 1977). However, the findings of this study indicate that student behavior is not merely the result of imitation but also a reflection of critical consciousness.

In relation to Paulo Freire's thinking, students have reached the stage of conscientization, namely a critical awareness of social reality that drives them to act transformationally (Lawton, 2022). Involvement in social activities, community service, and religious moderation campaigns are practical forms of this awareness. The actualization of this behavior demonstrates that religious nationalism does not stop at the symbolic level but becomes a practical force capable of driving social change. Students act as agents of transformation, bringing the values of moderation into the public sphere.

The strengthening of students' national commitment results from the integration of religious and national identities. From the perspective of Henri Tajfel's social identity theory, individuals tend to categorize themselves into certain social categories (Cherif, 2026; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). However, this study shows that students do not experience identity conflict, but are instead able to

build an integrative identity. Furthermore, when linked to identity integration theory (Syed & McLean, 2016), students demonstrate the ability to harmonize two potentially conflicting identities into a mutually reinforcing whole. This identity integration is key to building a strong national commitment. Students no longer view nationalism as a threat to religiosity, but as an expression of religious values themselves. Thus, religious nationalism becomes the moral basis for maintaining national unity.

The successful development of religious nationalism is greatly influenced by an inclusive and conducive campus environment. From the perspective of Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of education, individual development is influenced by various environmental systems, from the microsystem (classroom), to the mesosystem (interactions between environments), to the macrosystem (cultural values and ideology) (Leyla, 2024). Religious moderation programs operate not only at the individual level but also at the systemic level, through the integration of the curriculum, academic culture, and institutional policies (Aliyah et al., 2025; Muis, 2026). This demonstrates that the development of religious nationalism is an ecological process involving complex interactions between individuals and the environment. Without the support of a conducive ecosystem, the internalization of values will struggle to reach optimal levels.

Based on the analysis of the findings and theoretical interpretation, this study has several novel contributions. *First*, the dialectical model of religious nationalism offers a new concept in the form of a dialectical model of religious nationalism, namely the process of integrating religious and national values through a dialogue between normative and contextual dimensions. This model goes beyond the normative approach that has tended to be doctrinal in nature.

Second, multidimensional integration (cognitive-affective-practical), where religious nationalism develops through the integration of three main dimensions (cognitive/understanding, affective/attitude, and practical/behavior). This research confirms that the success of a religious moderation program is determined by the ability to integrate these three dimensions simultaneously. *Third*, the concept of integrative religious-national identity, where this research introduces the concept of integrative religious-national identity, a form of identity capable of harmonizing religious and national values without conflict. This concept is an important contribution to the study of Islamic education and national studies.

Fourth, religious moderation as a social habitus, where religious moderation is not only an educational program but has also developed into a social habitus within the campus environment. This broadens the understanding of religious moderation as a living culture practiced collectively. *Fifth*, religious nationalism as a basis for ideological resilience, where religious nationalism can function as a basis for ideological resilience for students in the face of radicalism and transnational ideologies. This is a strategic contribution in the context of strengthening education-based national resilience. This discussion demonstrates that the development of religious nationalist values is a complex process involving interactions between the individual, the environment, and the value system. Through a religious moderation approach, Islamic higher education institutions are able to develop students who are not only religious but also possess a strong national commitment. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its ability to integrate various theoretical perspectives to explain the phenomenon of religious nationalism more comprehensively, while also offering a new conceptual model relevant to the development of Islamic education in the contemporary era.

Implications of the Soul Values of Religious Nationalism in Realizing National Commitment

Research findings indicate that the values of religious nationalism have strong implications for increasing students' ideological awareness, helping them understand and accept the state's foundations as part of their religious practice. From the perspective of value integration theory, this phenomenon demonstrates the process of unifying religious and national values into a unified system of meaning (Schwartz, 1996). Students no longer view the two as separate domains, but as a mutually reinforcing set of values.

Furthermore, when linked to the theory of Karl Mannheim's ideology, students' ideological awareness has shifted from partial to reflective awareness (Tamdgidi, 2020). They not only accept the state ideology normatively but are able to critique and reinterpret it within a religious context. This implication suggests that religious nationalism functions as an epistemological bridge, bridging the potential dichotomy between religion and the state (Öztürk et al., 2025). Thus, the resulting national commitment is substantive, not merely symbolic.

The values of religious nationalism have been shown to foster moderate, tolerant, and inclusive attitudes in students in addressing social diversity. From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory, this moderate attitude is the result of internalizing values that then become a permanent disposition within students (Asimaki & Koustourakis, 2014). Religious moderation is no longer just discourse, but a deeply rooted mindset and pattern of action. When linked to social ethics theory, attitudes of tolerance and inclusivity reflect public ethics based on the principles of justice, respect for differences, and social responsibility (Walia, 2022). Students are able to place religious values within a broader social ethical framework. Thus, this implication confirms that religious nationalism produces ethical citizenship, a form of citizenship based not only on law but also on moral awareness and social ethics (Poruthiyil, 2020). This is particularly important in the context of a pluralistic society.

Research findings indicate that students exhibit greater resilience to the influence of radicalism and extremism after participating in a religious moderation program. From the perspective of social resilience theory, the value of religious nationalism functions as a protective mechanism that strengthens individuals' abilities to face ideological threats (Lösel et al., 2020). Students are not only able to reject radical ideologies but also develop adaptive skills in dealing with social dynamics. When linked to critical literacy theory, students demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and filter religious information, particularly in the digital age (Lapp & Fisher, 2011; Pötzsch, 2021). This implication suggests that religious nationalism is not only preventative but also transformative. Students are not merely objects protected from radicalism but also active subjects in constructing narratives of moderation in the public sphere.

The values of religious nationalism encourage students to actively participate in various social and national activities (Anto et al., 2023). From the perspective of active citizenship theory, this participation reflects individual involvement in public life as a form of social responsibility (Newman & Tonkens, 2011). Students not only develop a sense of nationality but also demonstrate concrete actions in community life. Furthermore, when linked to the theory of social praxis, student participation is a form of integration between reflection and action (K. Walker et al., 2019). The values understood are not limited to the conceptual level but are manifested in concrete social actions. This implication suggests that religious nationalism can foster the transformation from passive to active citizenship (Simonsen & Bonikowski, 2020). Students act as agents of social change, contributing to national development.

Research findings indicate that the values of religious nationalism contribute to shaping students' character, which balances religiosity and nationalism. From the perspective of integrative character education theory, character formation encompasses not only individual moral aspects but also social responsibility as citizens (D. I. Walker et al., 2015). Values such as patriotism, tolerance, justice, and responsibility become part of the internalized character. When linked to Abraham Maslow's humanistic theory, this character formation reflects a process of self-actualization, in which students are able to optimally develop their potential within a framework of humanitarian and national values (Shukla, 2026; Xiangkui, 2024). Thus, this implication confirms that religious nationalism plays a role in shaping complete human beings (*insan kamil*), who are not only intellectually superior but also possess moral integrity and social commitment.

Based on the research findings and theoretical interpretations, this study makes several significant novel contributions to the study of Islamic education and national studies: *First*, religious nationalism as a multilevel system of implications. This study finds that religious nationalism has implications at multiple levels simultaneously: the cognitive level (ideological awareness), the

affective level (moderate attitudes), the structural level (ideological resilience), and the practical level (national participation). This model demonstrates that religious nationalism operates as a holistic and multidimensional system (Ratnah et al., 2024; Rosela et al., 2025; Umar et al., 2024).

Second, the concept of "ethical-religious citizenship." This study introduces a new concept: ethical-religious citizenship, a form of citizenship that integrates ethical values, religiosity, and national commitment. This concept transcends conventional citizenship paradigms that tend to be legalistic. *Third*, religious nationalism as a mechanism for ideological resilience. Another novelty is the finding that religious nationalism functions as a mechanism for ideological resilience in the face of radicalism. This provides a new perspective that the approach to religious moderation is not only educational but also strategic in the context of social security.

Fourth, the transformation model from awareness to practice. This study also offers a new model of gradual transformation from awareness, attitude, resilience, participation, to character. This model demonstrates that the implications of religious nationalism are progressive and sustainable. *Fifth*, religious moderation as a value ecosystem. This study emphasizes that religious moderation is not merely a program but an ecosystem of values that shapes campus culture. This is an important contribution to the development of Islamic higher education policy.

This discussion demonstrates the broad and profound implications of the values of religious nationalism in shaping students' national commitment (Ahwan & Karfida, 2025; Aryasutha et al., 2025; Hakim & Salim, 2024; Ismawati, 2023; Munawaroh, 2025). Through the integration of various theoretical perspectives, it can be concluded that religious nationalism functions as: *First*, an integrative bridge between religion and state, *Second*, a foundation for social ethics in a pluralistic society, *Third*, a mechanism for resilience against radicalism, *Fourth*, a driver of national participation, and *Fifth*, a basis for holistic character formation.

Table 3 Novel Contributions of the Study

Novelty	Description	Contribution
Dialectical Model of Religious Nationalism	Integration of normative religious values and national realities	Extends value internalization theory
Multidimensional Integration Model	Cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions interact simultaneously	Provides a holistic framework
Integrative Religious-National Identity	Harmonization of religious and national identities	Addresses identity conflict debates
Religious Moderation as Social Habitus	Moderation becomes part of campus culture	Extends habitus theory
Religious Nationalism as Ideological Resilience	Nationalism functions as protection against radicalism	Contributes to security and education studies

Source: Authors' Conceptualization Based on Research Findings (2025)

Thus, the novelty of this research lies in its ability to formulate religious nationalism as a value system that is not only normative but also operational and transformative in the context of Islamic higher education. Thus, this research provides theoretical and practical contributions to strengthening national commitment through a religious moderation approach.

CONCLUSION

Religious moderation programs at Islamic universities play a significant role in strengthening students' religious nationalism. In terms of values development, students are able to internalize and integrate religious values with national values harmoniously through a dialogical, reflective, and contextual learning process. This results in the development of inclusive and tolerant attitudes, and an awareness of commitment as part of practicing religious teachings.

In terms of implementation, the values of religious nationalism have been proven to strengthen students' national commitment, reflected in increased ideological awareness, resistance

to radicalism, and active participation in social and national life. Thus, religious nationalism is not only a value construct but also a practical force in shaping students' religious and nationalist character.

Based on the findings of this study, several strategic recommendations can be proposed: *First*, Islamic universities need to integrate religious moderation programs sustainably into their curriculum and academic culture. *Second*, lecturers are expected to act as role models in internalizing the values of religious moderation and nationalism. *Third*, students need to be encouraged to actively participate in social and national activities as a form of value actualization. *Fourth*, further research is recommended to examine the development of religious nationalism in a broader digital and cross-cultural context.

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