FALSE ADVERTISING PRACTICE IN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY BILLBOARD? AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

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Abstract-This study examines the practice of false advertising in residential property advertisements in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas. Developers use advertisements presenting information on distance and travel time to attract potential buyers. This research aims to detect whether the information presented in these advertisements matches the actual conditions on the ground. This research provides the first empirical evidence of inaccurate ads and false advertising practices in the property business in Jakarta and Tangerang Regency. Data was collected from 41 physical advertisement samples spread across the study area. The analysis results show that the advertised distance and travel time are shorter and faster than actual measurements using Google Maps. Statistical tests using paired t-tests indicate significant differences between the advertised information and the exact conditions. The paired t-test is significant at a 1% level of significance. Regulators must address the existence of false advertising in property business. Providing inaccurate or doubtful information can harm the long-term reputation of the developers themselves. Future research can address a cause-effect model to understand the consumer behavior behind their purchase decisions. Because property assets can act as investment assets, the behavioral intention and rational expectation about future property prices are also worth investigating.

Keywords: False Advertising; Business Ethics; Billboard Ads; Residential Property; Property Management

1. INTRODUCTION
1.1 Research Background

Southeast Asia's economy is projected to grow by 4.6% in 2024, surpassing the previous year's 4.0% growth rate (Cushman & Wakefield, 2024). This expansion will stimulate demand for residential and commercial properties, particularly in urban centers. Another research also pointed out that the residential real estate sector is anticipated to reach a value of US$23.31 trillion by 2024, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.85% from 2024 to 2029. This growth is fueled by increasing urbanization and a rising middle class seeking modern living spaces (Statista, 2024). This positive outlook has also been enjoyed by the Indonesian property market lately.

The property business is one of the critical sectors of Indonesia's economy. According to the Bank Indonesia (2024), the Residential Property Price Index at the end of 2023 increased by 1.74%, and sales growth reached 3.27%. The demand for residential products continues to grow post-COVID-19, undoubtedly supported by good financing sources from developer companies. As the urban area grows, the demand for residential properties within the developed regions remains solid. Within the last ten years, Tangerang Regency has transformed into a satellite city to support the Greater Jakarta area. The trend also accounts for sustainability practices among the developers (Razali et al., 2017).

Property sector regulations in Indonesia still allow the purchase of houses when they are still in the concept or design stage. For upper-class developer companies, marketing teams can still market concepts and sell products before construction begins. If the market response during the initial launch is good, developers can secure sufficient funding for construction projects, especially for national-level developers. It will help the availability of working capital and ensure the project's funds are adequate to complete the construction.

Considering this, advertisements play a crucial role in the success of the initial launch and the sale of houses by developers. Marketing strategy and management play a critical part in attracting potential property buyers. However, the researchers' attention is caught by the terminology of false advertising in this article. According to Rhodes & Wilson (2018), this terminology means that the information presented by advertisers is inaccurate or that the condition of the product or service sold does not match reality. Many advertised billboards mention the distance and time required to commute for residential products in Tangerang Regency. This advertisement sparked a question in this article whether the advertised information is accurate.

Developers can leverage online advertising to enhance sales, especially in markets with lower housing prices and incomes (Zhang et al., 2023). The trend promotes sustainability practices in residential properties (Brookfield et al., 2022; Razali et al., 2017). However, there is a gap in that middle-low developers in Jakarta and the Tangerang area prefer to promote their distance and commuting time rather than the sustainability of their building. These developer advertisements generally contain information about the distance or travel time from the billboard location or specific spot. Some developers who have developed larger areas tend to advertise unique themes related to selling property products. Therefore, the market for middle-low property is under development compared to property advertisements research suggests.

Despite several research studies pointing to sustainability practices and promoting the message through advertisements, this differs for middle-low developers in Jakarta and the Tangerang area. The residential property in the greater Jakarta area remains salient with the need for commuting time and distance. This research is very interested in proving whether the advertised distances and times match the reality on the ground. Considering business ethics, the information presented in advertisements should reflect the facts of the sold property. Therefore, it is hoped that no false advertising practices will be found among property developers in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas. The novelty of this research is the first attempt to detect false advertising practices in property product advertisements.

1.2 Literature Review
1.2.1 False Advertising

False advertising refers to the condition where the information presented in advertisements is inaccurate or even exaggerates the product's actual performance (Rhodes & Wilson, 2018). False advertising can influence consumer behavior, ultimately affecting purchasing decisions (Nuseir, 2018; Rhodes & Wilson, 2018). False advertising is not suitable for business in the long term. It can erode customer trust and loyalty (Nuseir, 2018). Companies must adhere to business ethics and maintain long-term customer loyalty by providing advertisements that accurately reflect the features and facts of the products being marketed.

Advertisements play a vital role in the sale of property products in Indonesia. Regulations allow developers to sell houses before the start of construction, making information such as distance and travel time one of the critical details prospective home buyers seek. One of the leading developers in Indonesia even spends up to 1.5 trillion rupiah on advertising rupiah (Ramli & Djumena, 2023). A report by Cushman & Wakefield (2019) highlights that

Tangerang remains the most active submarket for landed residential properties in the Greater Jakarta area, both in terms of supply and demand. The area recorded an average monthly take-up of 41.5 units per estate, indicating robust market activity. The high demand for residential properties in the supporting cities around Jakarta has led many developers to compete in selling homes through giant billboard advertisements.

Marketing in the property market provides information about the houses being built. Some critical information for consumers includes the location factors and the supporting facilities at the housing location. This statement is supported by the property market in Istanbul, Turkey, where developers market product features, locations, and amenities (Çinar, 2014). The location factor and the surrounding community of the developed residential product also play an essential role in the affordability of property prices, regardless of the area's luxury (Ratchatakulpat & Marchant, 2009). The similarity between these studies and the property market in Indonesia is that location, facilities, and the community living in the development area are important factors for consumers before purchasing a property product. A slightly different factor is that property buyers in Indonesia also use houses as an investment, expecting their value to continue to increase in the long term. Therefore, the luxury of the surrounding environment is also an essential factor for high-end market property buyers in Indonesia.

1.2.2 Digital Marketing and Property Market

Digital marketing strategies have been used since 2005, although the results could have been more optimal in the property market in Shen Zhen, China (Ford et al., 2005). A similar situation was found in the secondary property market in New Zealand (Mcdonagh, 2006). Digitalizing marketing has entered a new phase, with the development of short videos (reels) and virtual reality (VR) becoming a new trend post-COVID-19. Property product marketing with VR has proven to be quite effective in increasing the purchase opportunities for potential buyers (Xiong et al., 2024). The support of current digital technology should minimize false advertising and provide concrete evidence with multimedia access through videos or virtual reality.

The property market is quite complex, considering the roles of developer companies, the government, and banking institutions. Buyers could face liquidity issues when purchasing home assets without good regulatory and funding support. The effectiveness of regulations in Kazakhstan still needs to be improved, considering consumers' low purchasing power (Auyezkhanuly et al., 2019). The demand for property in Indonesia is diverse, consisting of several market segments, from public and middle-class housing to high-end housing. Middle-class buyers prioritize proximity to amenities (in this case, hospitals), which often correlates with shorter travel times (Gu et al., 2024). Generally, the need for middle-class housing is very sensitive to information about distance and travel time, considering that the buyers are most likely professionals who will take out a mortgage.

False advertising challenges occur in Australia's secondary property market (Kupke et al., 2014). Bait pricing attracts buyers, but the final transaction price differs from what is advertised. The local government can address this with appropriate regulations (Kupke et al., 2014). Compared to the property market in Indonesia, considering the vast land and property offerings by direct developers (referred to as the primary market), the urgency of the research lies in investigating false advertising by property developers in Indonesia. Researchers detect a research gap in the different property transaction patterns between Australia and Indonesia. Buyers in Indonesia still have many options to buy from developers due to the many new urban areas being opened as satellite cities to support Jakarta. Therefore, this study aims to detect false advertising practices in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas.

The novelty of this research is the investigation of false advertising in the primary market (sales by developer companies) in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas. No scientific study has addressed property companies' advertising practices related to distance and travel time from the advertisement or billboard location. Considering business ethics theory, there should be no differences in information about distance and travel time from developers' advertisements in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas. Therefore, to detect false advertising in the primary property market in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas, the research hypotheses tested are:

H1: The actual travel distance measured with Google Maps is longer than the advertised travel distance in promotional media.

H2: The actual travel time measured with Google Maps during office hours (07:00 – 08:00) is longer than the advertised travel time in promotional media.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
2.1 Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach to find empirical findings on whether there is a difference between promotional materials and actual ones. It observes physical billboards and property advertisements in the Jakarta and Tangerang regions to collect information on distance and commuting times. These areas were chosen because new satellite cities in Tangerang are developing and supporting the city of Jakarta. Research teams photograph residential property ads on billboards and banners. The data collection period is from May to June 2024. Here are the following steps conducted by the team during the data collection:

1. In May 2024, the research teams used motorcycles to drive within the Tangerang Regency.
2. The route starts from Gading Serpong, Bumi Serpong Damai (BSD), Pamulang, Raya Serpong Street, and ends in Gading Serpong.
3. During the trip, the research team photographed a billboard or banner advertising property products along the road. Before the process, the geotagging feature was on to ensure the image files had GPS coordinates.
4. In June 2024, the research teams used a car to drive along the Jakarta-Merak toll road.
5. During the trip, the research team photographed a billboard along the Jakarta-Merak toll road and saved the GPS coordinates of the image.
6. The collected pictures of billboards or banners are then filtered based on the information. Only the relevant information is taken as a sample in this paper. The authors only select the billboards or banners with information on travel distance and commuting time advertised by the developers.
7. Collected images were saved and checked. The research team recorded the distance (in meters) and commuting time (in minutes) from the image in Microsoft Excel. Some images might have both distance and commuting time.
8. The total information collected from the observation is 41 on distance and commuting time.

This paper compares the actual information with the advertised distance and commuting time. We used Google Maps, a reliable source of information, to measure the actual distance and time, considering convenience and the number of users. Based on Google's internal

research, 57% of Gen Z used Google Maps as their navigation tool (Suara.com, 2021). During the process of photographing the ads, the feature of geolocation is used to map the location of the billboards or banners. From the geolocation data, the author can map the area in Google Maps and measure the distance or time to commute based on Google's estimation. The actual distance and commuting time are calculated based on the assumption that the destination is reachable by cars and office entry in the morning time (from 07:00 to 08:00). It is vital to measure the time in the morning, as the targeted buyers of these residential properties need to commute to the nearby KRL station or office in Jakarta. The pinpoint is KRL station because many of the residents in this region need to commute to Jakarta using the commuter line, and many advertisement materials promote their property distance that is close to nearby KRL station.

The author measured the discrepancy between the advertised information and the actual commuting distance or time in Google Maps. The distance is calculated in meters, while the commuting time is measured in minutes. Because the scale of measurement is the ratio, the author applied a paired t-test (dependent t-test) to test the hypothesis of whether the actual value of distance and commuting information is more extensive than what is advertised.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
3.1 Descriptive Result

In this research, the author collects 41 samples from the advertised billboard that contain distance and commuting time information of the respective residential properties. The samples are collected in the Jakarta and Tangerang Regency areas. Twenty-one samples advertised distance information, while 20 advertised the residential property commuting time to a specific commuting location. The summary of the sample size based on the information size can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Sample Size based on Information Type

Information	Sample Size
Distance	21
Time	20
Total	41

Sources: Author's Work

The research team traveled to Tangerang Regency and several Jakarta roads connected with the satellite city. During the trip, the team collects the advertised billboard or banner in various sizes. Figure 1 is an example of an advertised residential property on Tangerang Regency's main road. The author calculates the discrepancy between the advertised information and the actual distance and commuting time using Google Maps.
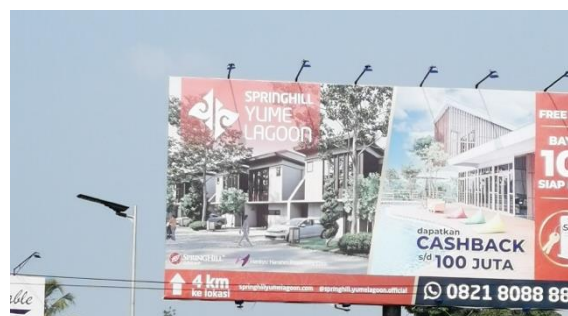
Figure 1. Advertised Billboard in Tangerang Regency
[GPS Location: -6.322, 106.641]

The advertisement collected is not limited to giant billboards. The team also collects medium-sized banners that can be found on the road. The banners must advertise at least a distance or time to commute in their ads. Figures 2 and 3 describe pictures of medium and small-sized banners.

Figure 2. Medium Size Advertised Banner
[GPS Location: -6.320, 106.642]

Figure 3. Small Size Advertised Banner
[GPS Location: -6.345, 106.666]

Based on the recapitulation of 41 samples, the researchers summarized the descriptive statistics of the distances and travel times in Table 2 below. Generally, developers' advertisements provide information on travel distances within a radius of 2.2 km. The average advertised travel time is 6.85 minutes. The standard deviation of the data is relatively high, with values of 2.3 km for distance and 7.04 minutes for travel time.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistic Result

Information	Average	Std Dev	Max	Min
Distance	2,199.05	2,282.21	7,000	50
Time	6.85	7.04	35	50

Sources: Author's Work

Based on the research team's findings, many billboards and banners were found along Jalan Raya Cisauk towards Suradita. Many small—and medium-scale developers are growing in this area. The region is supported by direct access to major developers, such as Bumi Serpong

Damai (BSD) by Sinarmas Land. Additionally, access to the commuter rail (KRL) station connects these residential areas to Jakarta.

In 2012, property prices in the Tangerang Regency area were relatively affordable. Entertainment centers like AEON Mall in BSD and direct toll access to Jakarta were unavailable then. The price of a 36/60-sized house was still around Rp 150,000,000. After the BSD Business District developed into an entertainment and economic center, the price for properties of that size increased to Rp 500,000,000.

The trend for residential property demand in this area continues to grow. The opening of new areas has transformed this region into an independent satellite city with various facilities for the middle class working in Jakarta. The commuter line (KRL) access is an essential support for the middle class working in Jakarta. Development is not limited to residential house projects but includes high-rise housing (apartments) attached to KRL station access. So far, the areas around Cisauk Station and Rawa Buntu Station have been developed into high-rise residential buildings connected to KRL stations to facilitate residents' mobility.

3.2 Hypothesis Testing Result

This study hypothesizes that the actual distance and travel time information based on Google Maps is greater than the advertised information. The specific statistical hypotheses to be tested are:

H_{01}:   Actual distance <= advertised distance
H_{a1}:   Actual distance > advertised distance

H_{02}:   Actual travel time (during office hours 07:00 – 08:00) <= advertised travel time
H_{a2}:   Actual travel time (during office hours 07:00 – 08:00) > advertised travel time

To test these hypotheses, the researchers used the paired t-test (dependent t-test), considering that this study uses a ratio scale for measurement. The distance measurement scale is stated in meters, while the time measurement scale is stated in minutes.

Based on the comparison between the advertised distance information and the actual distance on Google Maps, a difference in the mean values of the two groups was found. Information from Google Maps shows that the actual travel distance exceeds the advertised information. On average, the actual travel distance is 3.4 km, while the advertised distance is 2.2 km. The variation in the values of both the advertised and actual groups is also relatively high, reaching 7.87 km for the exact condition and 5.21 km for the advertised condition. Details of this information are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean, Variance of Advertised and Actual Distance

Distance	Mean	Variance
Advertised	2,199.05	5,208,468.05
Actual	3,432.86	7,868,321.43

Sources: Author's Work

A difference in the mean values was found based on comparing actual travel time information with the advertised time. The mean actual travel time tends to be longer than the advertised time. On average, the actual travel time is 13.2 minutes, while the advertised time

is 6.85 minutes. The variation in actual travel time is much higher than in advertised time. The variance of actual travel time is 108.27 minutes, while the variance of advertised time is 49.50 minutes. Details of these findings can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Mean, Variance of Advertised and Actual Commuting Time

Commuting Time	Mean	Variance
Advertised	6.85	49.50
Actual	13.20	108.27

Sources: Author's Work

Based on comparing the mean values, the actual information for both distance and time is significantly greater than the advertised information. The findings in Tables 3 and 4 show that residential property advertisements tend to provide information that suggests shorter distances and faster times compared to the reality on the ground.
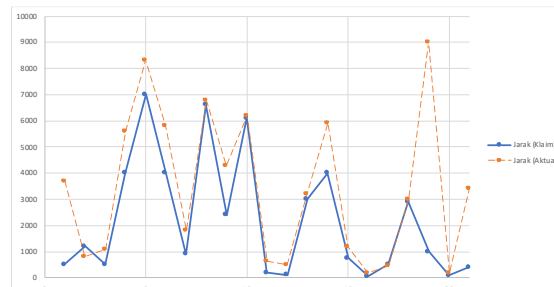

Figure 4. Comparison between Actual and Advertised Distances
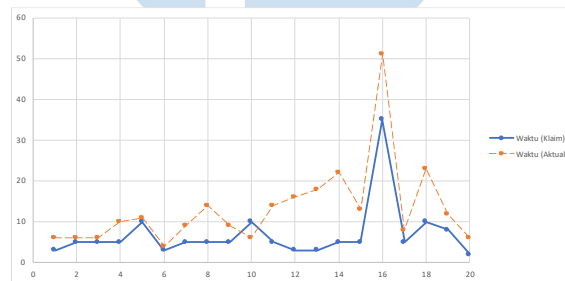*Sources: Author's Work*

Figure 5. Comparison between Actual and Advertised Waktu Commuting Time
Sources: Author's Work

Figures 4 and 5 show the data visualization processed in the hypothesis testing. The groups with dashed lines represent the actual distance and time data, and the data with solid lines represent the distance and time information published in promotional media. Figures 4 and 5 consistently show that the distance and time are higher than the information provided in promotional media.

The next step is to perform the paired t-test to prove the research hypothesis. The results of the hypothesis testing are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Paired T-Test Result

Information	Distance	Time
T test	3.06*	4.84*
P-Value	0.0030	0.0005
Critical T	1.72	1.72
(One-Tailed Test / 5%)		
Conclusion	Reject H_0	Reject H_0

* level of significant 1%

Sources: Author's Work

The statistical test results provide sufficient evidence to reject H0. The statistical test used a one-tailed test with a 5% significance level. Based on these findings, this study concludes that developers advertising in the sample tend to provide information smaller than the actual distance and travel time. This empirical evidence is even strong enough at the 1% significance level. Further discussion and analysis will be elaborated in the next section.

3.3. Discussion and Analysis

Based on empirical findings, it is evident that developers advertising through billboards or banners that provide information related to distance and travel time tend to understate the actual distance and travel time from the property location. The motivation for developers to present shorter and faster travel times during office hours (07:00 – 08:00) could be driven by marketing teams trying to attract instant interest from potential buyers. Providing such information is expected to arouse curiosity and interest from prospective buyers.

Prospective buyers tend to think according to System 1, which is more heuristic and less analytical. In system 1, people tend to decide spontaneously based on their heuristic and snap judgment. System 1 thinking operates quickly and is prone to biased decision-making (Kahneman, 2013). Marketers can exploit this gap to capture potential buyers' attention. What buyers believe depends significantly on how the information is presented, which can ultimately influence individual decisions (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974, 1981).

From a business ethics perspective, such practices can be considered inappropriate. Brand advertising context provides a cue of its respective quality (Sharma & Romero, 2022). At the same time, consumers' perceptions are very prone to frame and persuasion (Verma & Nayak, 2024). Sometimes, consumers can agree with the advertised quality, even if the quality is different (Gokcekus, 2024). Maintaining good business ethics in practice is imperative due to the robust nature of advertising and its cue. In the long run, false advertisements can create distrust and harm the business's reputation (Tong et al., 2023). Crisis communication can strengthen the firm's position (Jang et al., 2018).

Developers in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas used false advertising practices in their marketing strategies. This practice can reduce consumers' purchase intentions in online transactions (Ahmed & Othman, 2024). Nuseir (2018) suggests that false advertising practices can lead to declining consumer trust in a company. However, the distrust effect does not occur instantly in the case of residential property products due to the different nature of online business. Property buyers can reevaluate their property not solely based on commuting time but also the surrounding amenities and consumer-focused town management (Sanderson & Read, 2020). The distrust can be delayed and forgivable within specific contexts.

First, purchasing property is not impulsive, given the high transaction value. Additionally, applying for a mortgage (KPR) requires cognitive evaluation and in-depth discussion with family members (Levy & Frethey-Bentham, 2010). Discrepancies in distance and travel time information compared to advertised might be tolerated considering the dynamic

development of urban areas and price affordability. This opens opportunities for further investigation into whether buyers who purchase property with false advertising are aware of the inaccurate information or tend to forgive the misleading information.

Secondly, potential buyers who accept false advertising may purchase the property not because of the advertised distance and travel time factors. This considers the resale value of the property asset, which can increase along with the development of the residential area's surroundings. Prospective buyers might consider the resale value and tend to forgive the false advertising. This also presents an exciting development that could be investigated in future research.

The potential harm of false advertising practices and the bad long-term reputation of developers are not solely dependent on the ads. High-end developers will focus on building residential properties and incorporating services into their business (J. Li & Monkkonen, 2014). In the case of Tangerang Regency, high-end developers have integrated town management into their residential business services. During recent developments, several sustainability aspects have also been integrated into their products (Sidig et al., 2024). Property investment return can be a crucial factor in determining the buyer's behavior on the later development of the town (H. Li et al., 2023). This paper finds that most of the practices can be found in the middle-low developers within 5 km of the latest satellite town in Tangerang Regency, which might be motivated to lure the middle-income segments.

The marketing strategy for residential property products is entering a new phase. The development of digital technology has led marketing teams to shift towards interactive promotional media. Marketing with VR opens new opportunities to help potential residential property buyers experience a visualization of the products being sold (Xiong et al., 2024). Particularly in a soft market condition (where there are more sellers than buyers), product features are a vital marketing mix in driving purchase interest beli (Alias et al., 2018). Developer companies must also be cautious of clickbait phenomena in digital advertisements (Zeng et al., 2021). This practice should be avoided to enhance the company's long-term credibility.

4. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATION
4.1 Conclusion
Advertising plays a vital role in the property business in Indonesia. Advertisements help developers introduce residential property products to potential buyers. This study found false advertising practices regarding information about distance and travel time during office hours. False advertising practices should be avoided as they do not align with business ethics, even though they can attract potential buyers to learn more about the product. The advertised distances and times tend to be smaller than the actual conditions.

False advertising practices are very likely to exist. From the managerial perspective, this practice is very effective in attracting potential buyers to visit the advertised products despite the accuracy of the information. It helps marketers promote their residential areas and lure potential buyers to consider making down payments after visiting the site. Small-medium developers near national-scale developers enjoy the rapid growth of surrounding facilities and often use this marketing strategy to increase the chance of success in their projects. However, this empirical evidence also opens a new venue to explore the impact of false advertising practices on residential property buyers. Do the buyers forgive and ignore the inaccurate information, or are they entirely unaware of the actual commuting time? These questions need further investigation in future research.

The challenge in the digital era is that many online ads are clickbait. While digital media can enhance potential customers' visual experience regarding VR products, marketing teams must be careful to provide factual rather than information that merely appeals to potential buyers. This study can be expanded by increasing the sample size to include residential property advertisements on digital media such as Instagram.

Additionally, this study has limitations regarding the time observation unit, which is limited to office hours. Future research can expand the time unit to include more complex periods such as evening rush hours, non-peak hours during the day, or nighttime. This development can address the limitations of this study and provide a better understanding of the rationality of marketing teams in creating quicker travel time information.

4.2 Limitation

This research focuses only on empirical evidence of a discrepancy between the advertised property and the actual distance and commuting time. Explanatory power is needed to understand the causal effect between observed variables. This finding can be improved by extending the observed period between office entry, lunchtime, and after-office hour commuting time. Does the discrepancy tend to be lower during regular (or non-busy commuting) time? Or is the inaccuracy due to the crowd of urban areas in Tangerang Regency? By extending the observed time, it could improve the robustness of the test in future research. Several extensions, such as using different advertising media, such as Instagram or another digital platform, might be possible. Extending to digital platforms can provide robust empirical evidence about whether misleading advertising is applied broadly. Exploring AI experience and comparing it with the actual perception after purchasing the property is also worth pursuing whether the buyers are satisfied with the products, the surrounding amenities, or the high property value over time. Is the technological advancement relevant to creating future expectations for residential property consumers?

Consumer trust, brand equity, and information discrepancy offer future venues for the next project. Researchers can develop a causal model to understand consumer buying of residential property. The complexity of understanding property assets must be observed from two perspectives. The first perspective is marketing and strategic management, used to understand the effective marketing campaign to win prospectus buyers during the launching period. The second perspective is about investment behavior that focuses on buyers' motivation and rational expectations when they buy property assets. This limitation could be addressed in future research about residential property management research.

4.3 Acknowledgment

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