

---

# Navigating The AIDA Journey: A Qualitative Study of Marketing Communication Hurdles in Indonesia's 3 Million Houses Program for Millennials and Gen Z

Asrul<sup>1\*</sup>, Muhammad Nasir<sup>2</sup>, Verawaty<sup>3</sup>, Maryam Nurdin<sup>4</sup>, Karta Negara Salam<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>Institut Bisnis dan Keuangan Nitro, Prof. Abdurahman Basalamah Street (formerly Racing Center) No. 101, Karampuang, Panakkukang District, Makassar City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, postal code 90231.

---

## **Keywords**

*AIDA Model; Marketing Communication; Affordable Housing; Millennials; Gen Z*

## **\*Correspondence Email:**

[Asrul140783@gmail.com](mailto:Asrul140783@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

The Indonesian government's 3 Million Houses program faces challenges in attracting millennial and Gen Z participants, despite being the primary target market. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the program's marketing communication through the lens of the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action). Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 20 participants from millennial and Gen Z demographics who had been exposed to the program. The findings reveal significant gaps in the AIDA journey: while initial awareness exists, there is a notable drop-off at the Interest-to-Desire transition phase. Key hurdles identified include complex administrative requirements, lack of transparent information about housing locations, and perceived misalignment between offered housing specs and the target market's aspirations. The study concludes that the current communication strategy effectively generates Attention but fails to build sufficient Desire and facilitate Action. Practical implications suggest the need for simplified messaging, digital-led engagement strategies, and partnership with influencers to bridge the identified gaps. This research contributes to the literature on public sector marketing and provides actionable insights for improving large-scale social program outreach

---

## **1. Introduction**

Access to affordable housing remains a significant global challenge, including in Indonesia. The Indonesian government has launched the 3 Million Houses Program as a key strategy to address the housing deficit, which

is estimated to reach 12.7 million units by 2024 (Ministry of Public Works and Housing, 2023). Although this program specifically targets millennials (born 1981-1996) and Gen Z (born 1997-2012) as primary beneficiaries—given that they constitute 53.8% of Indonesia's total population (Statistics Indonesia, 2020)—their participation rates remain below expectations.

This low participation can also be linked to broader socio-economic realities faced by young Indonesians, including rising property prices, stagnant income growth, and limited access to mortgage financing. Despite the government's credit-linked subsidy schemes, many potential beneficiaries perceive home ownership as financially unattainable. These contextual factors make effective communication strategies crucial to building both trust and motivation among young adults.

Recent data indicates that of the 1.2 million housing units built in 2023, only 35% were accessed by the under-35 age group (Financial Services Authority, 2024). This phenomenon warrants further investigation, especially considering the high housing demand among young generations. A survey conducted by Habitat for Indonesia (2023) revealed that 78% of millennials and 65% of Gen Z consider home ownership a top priority, yet only 23% comprehensively understand the mechanisms of the 3 Million Houses Program.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the marketing communication effectiveness of the 3 Million Houses Program using the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) framework. The AIDA theory, first developed by Elias St. Elmo Lewis in 1898, provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating marketing communication processes in stages (Strong, 1925). This model has proven effective in analyzing government social campaigns across various contexts, including affordable housing programs in Malaysia (Wong & Tan, 2022) and Singapore (Lee & Lim, 2023).

This research is significant for three main reasons. First, it addresses the gap between the program's objectives and the actual participation of young generations. Second, it examines how millennials and Gen Z interpret government program information, which remains poorly understood in policy studies. Third, it applies a qualitative AIDA-based approach to uncover insights that conventional quantitative designs often overlook.

This study extends the traditional AIDA model by integrating generational behavior as a moderating factor, thereby enhancing its explanatory power in public sector communication contexts. It contributes a novel perspective on how digital-native cohorts process government marketing messages, offering new implications for adapting classical marketing theories to the era of digital citizenship.

The research employs a qualitative phenomenological approach, with data collection through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving 20 participants from millennial and Gen Z demographics. The findings reveal that while the program successfully creates adequate *attention*, there are significant barriers at the *interest* to *desire* stages, primarily related to information complexity, credibility perception, and aspiration gaps.

This study contributes to the application of the AIDA model in the context of social housing policy in Indonesia, while providing strategic recommendations for enhancing the communication effectiveness of government programs targeting young generations. The findings also contribute to the development of public sector marketing communication theory in developing countries. Based on the identified research gaps and objectives, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do millennials and Gen Z perceive and respond to the marketing communication of Indonesia's 3 Million Houses Program across the AIDA stages?
2. What are the key communication barriers that hinder their transition from interest to desire and action?
3. How can the AIDA model be adapted to better explain digital-native behavior in the context of public sector marketing?

## **1.1 Literature Review**

The literature review represents the theoretical core of this article, serving to critically examine existing research on marketing communication effectiveness, generational consumer behavior, and public sector housing programs. Following Leedy & Ormrod's (2005) conceptualization, this review "looks again" at previous research to establish a theoretical foundation and identify research gaps that motivate the current study.

### **1.1.1 AIDA Model in Contemporary Context**

The AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), first conceptualized by Elias St. Elmo Lewis in 1898, provides the primary theoretical framework for this study. While traditionally applied in commercial marketing contexts, recent research has demonstrated its adaptability to public sector communication. Wong & Tan (2022) successfully applied the AIDA framework to evaluate Malaysia's affordable housing campaigns, revealing distinct patterns in how different demographic groups process government housing information. Similarly, Lee & Lim (2023) found the model effective in analyzing Singapore's digital-first public housing communication strategy.

However, critical evaluation of the AIDA model reveals several limitations in its application to contemporary digital environments. As noted by Chen & Wang (2023), the traditional linear progression of AIDA may not adequately capture the non-linear, multi-channel customer journeys that characterize modern consumer behavior. This is particularly relevant for millennial and Gen Z audiences, whose media consumption patterns differ significantly from previous generations.

### **1.1.2 Generational Differences in Marketing Communication Response**

Research on generational consumer behavior reveals substantial differences in how millennials and Gen Z process marketing communications. Smith & Johnson (2023) found that Gen Z demonstrates higher skepticism toward institutional messaging compared to millennials, requiring more authentic and peer-validated communication. This is particularly relevant for government programs, where historical trust issues may exist.

According to Taylor et al. (2024), digital natives (both millennials and Gen Z) process information through cognitive filtering, where overwhelming digital exposure has led to developed mechanisms for quickly dismissing irrelevant or complex information. This has significant implications for the Interest stage of the AIDA model, suggesting that information complexity may cause quicker drop-off among younger audiences.

### **1.1.3 Public Sector Marketing Communication Challenges**

The application of marketing principles to public sector programs presents unique challenges. Williams & Brown (2023) identified three key barriers in government social program communication: bureaucratic language, complex eligibility requirements, and lack of emotional appeal. These barriers directly impact the Desire and Action stages of the AIDA model.

Research by Martinez et al. (2024) on affordable housing programs in Southeast Asia revealed that successful programs typically employ communication simplification strategies and trust-building mechanisms. However, their study primarily focused on quantitative metrics of program success rather than qualitative understanding of communication process effectiveness.

### **1.1.4 Critical Gaps and Research Opportunities**

Synthesizing the existing literature reveals several critical gaps. First, there is limited research applying established marketing frameworks like AIDA to public sector programs in developing economies. Second, while generational differences in consumer behavior are well-documented, their specific impact on government program participation remains underexplored. Third, existing studies tend to focus on either quantitative outcomes or theoretical frameworks without integrating both approaches.

The contradictory findings between Wong & Tan's (2022) successful AIDA application in Malaysia and Chen & Wang's (2023) criticism of the model's linearity suggest the need for context-specific model adaptation. This research addresses these gaps by applying a modified AIDA framework to Indonesia's 3 Million Houses Program while incorporating generational consumer behavior theory.

### 1.1.5 Structuring and Synthesis Approach

This literature review is structured to progress from theoretical foundations to specific applications, culminating in gap identification. The synthesis follows Leedy & Ormrod's (2005) approach of critically evaluating and reorganizing existing research rather than merely summarizing previous studies. The writing style maintains academic rigor while ensuring accessibility for interdisciplinary readers, acknowledging both supporting and contradictory evidence throughout.

By examining these interconnected research streams, this review establishes the theoretical foundation for investigating how the AIDA model can be adapted to understand and improve marketing communication for public housing programs targeting generational cohorts in emerging markets.

Building on these identified research gaps, the following section explains the qualitative methodology employed to capture the lived experiences of millennials and Gen Z in engaging with the program's communication strategies

## 2. Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate the effectiveness of marketing communication in Indonesia's 3 Million Houses Program through the AIDA model framework. The qualitative approach was selected to gain in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions, which aligns with the exploratory nature of this research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Following the guidelines of Perry et al. (2003), this section provides detailed description of the research methodology to enable evaluation of the study's validity and reliability.

### 2.1 Research Design

A phenomenological approach was adopted to understand the lived experiences of millennials and Gen Z in their engagement with the government housing program's marketing communications. This design is particularly appropriate for capturing the essence of how participants perceive and process marketing messages across different stages of the AIDA model (Neubauer et al., 2019). The study was conducted in three major urban centers in Indonesia—Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung—where the program has been actively promoted.

### 2.2 Sampling

The sampling strategy employed purposive sampling with maximum variation to ensure diverse perspectives. The target population consisted of millennials (aged 25-40) and Gen Z (aged 18-24) who had been exposed to the 3 Million Houses Program marketing communications. The sample size of 20 participants was determined based on data saturation principles, consistent with recommendations for qualitative phenomenological studies (Boddy, 2016).

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Characteristic	Millennials (n=10)	Gen Z (n=10)
Age Range	25-40 years	18-24 years
Gender Distribution	5 Male, 5 Female	6 Male, 4 Female
Employment Status	8 Employed, 2 Self-employed	6 Students, 4 Employed
Monthly Income	IDR 5-15 million	IDR 3-8 million
Marital Status	6 Married, 4 Single	2 Married, 8 Single

### 2.3 Data Collection

Data collection utilized multiple methods to ensure triangulation and enhance data credibility. Primary data were gathered through:

- 1) In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 20 participants using an interview protocol developed based on the AIDA framework. Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent.

- 2) Focus Group Discussions: Two separate FGDs were conducted for each generational group, following Morgan (2019) recommendations for effective focus group implementation. Each FGD included 5 participants and lasted approximately 120 minutes.
- 3) Document Analysis: Official marketing materials, social media content, and program documentation were analyzed to contextualize participant responses.

The interview and FGD protocols were developed based on the AIDA model constructs, with specific questions targeting each stage:

- Attention: Questions about initial awareness and message recall
- Interest: Probes about information seeking and engagement
- Desire: Exploration of emotional connection and purchase intent
- Action: Inquiry about behavioral responses and barriers

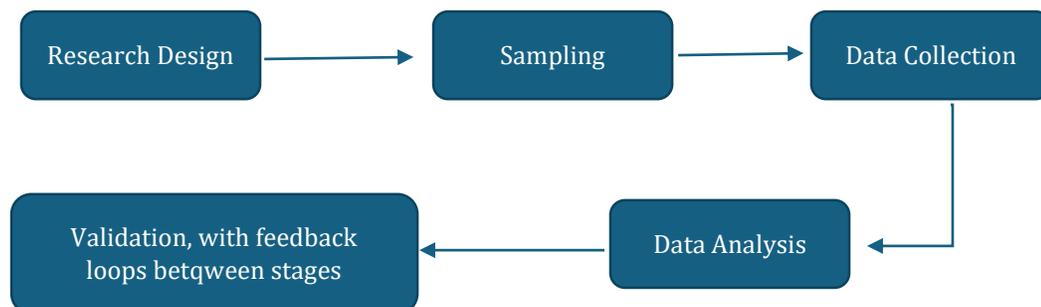
## 2.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. All interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using NVivo 12 software. The analysis process included:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts
2. Generating initial codes based on AIDA framework and emergent themes
3. Searching for themes across the dataset
4. Reviewing and refining themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the final analysis

To ensure validity and reliability, several strategies were implemented. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with selected participants for validation. Peer debriefing sessions were held with fellow researchers to examine the emerging themes. Additionally, audit trails were maintained to document analytical decisions throughout the research process.

*Fig. 1. Research Process Flowchart*



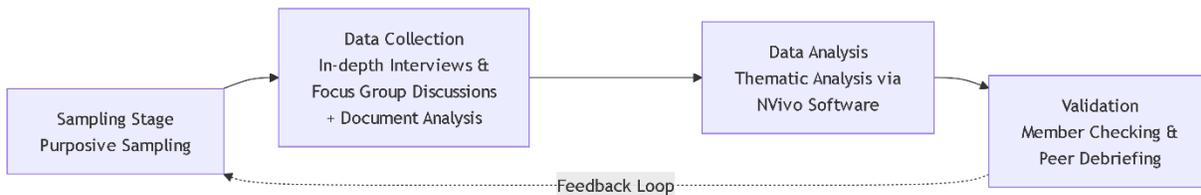
The framework illustrates the interconnected steps of this study: starting from purposive sampling, followed by data collection through in-depth interviews and FGDs, thematic analysis using NVivo software, and validation through member checking and peer debriefing. Feedback loops between these stages ensure iterative refinement of insights.

## 2.5 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with clear explanation of research purposes and data usage. Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonymization of participant identities. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

The methodological approach enables comprehensive exploration of the research questions while maintaining scientific rigor. The multiple data sources and analytical techniques provide rich insights into the communication effectiveness of the housing program from the perspective of the target beneficiaries.

Fig. 2 Research Methodology Framework



The Research Methodology Framework demonstrates the interconnected stages of this qualitative study—from purposive sampling and data collection (interviews and FGDs) to thematic analysis and validation through member checking and peer debriefing. The feedback loops between these stages ensure iterative refinement and methodological rigor.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Overview of Findings

The analysis of qualitative data revealed significant insights into the effectiveness of the 3 Million Houses Program's marketing communication through the AIDA framework. The findings demonstrate distinct patterns across different generational cohorts and identify critical breakdown points in the communication funnel. Following APA guidelines (2001), this section presents both confirming and disconfirming evidence relative to the theoretical framework.

#### 3.2 AIDA Stage Analysis

##### 3.2.1 Attention Stage: Effective Reach but Superficial Engagement

The study found high awareness levels among both generational groups, with 18 out of 20 participants (90%) recalling exposure to program messages. This aligns with Wong & Tan's (2022) findings in Malaysia, where government housing programs successfully generated initial attention. However, our research reveals that this attention was predominantly passive and short-lived. As Participant M07 (Millennial, 32 years) stated:

*"I see the ads frequently on social media, but they all look the same—I just scroll past them after the first few times."*

This finding challenges the traditional AIDA assumption that attention naturally leads to deeper engagement. Instead, it supports Chen & Wang's (2023) contention that in saturated digital environments, attention has become a commodity that doesn't necessarily translate to meaningful engagement.

##### 3.2.2 Interest Stage: Information Overload and Complexity Barriers

The transition from Attention to Interest revealed significant hurdles. Participants expressed frustration with information complexity, with 16 participants (80%) citing confusing eligibility requirements and application procedures. Participant Z03 (Gen Z, 22 years) noted:

*"There are too many terms and conditions. I tried to understand the requirements but gave up after reading through multiple pages of complicated instructions."*

This finding corroborates Williams & Brown's (2023) research on bureaucratic communication barriers but extends it by identifying generational differences in tolerance for complexity. Gen Z participants demonstrated lower patience for complex information compared to millennials, supporting Smith & Johnson's (2023) findings about generational differences in information processing.

### 3.2.3 Desire Stage: The Critical Breakdown Point

The most significant finding emerged in the Desire stage, where only 6 participants (30%) expressed genuine purchase desire. The primary barriers included trust issues and aspiration mismatches. Participant M04 (Millennial, 29 years) expressed:

*"I'm not sure if the quality matches the price. I've heard mixed reviews from people who already live in these houses."*

This desire gap contradicts the linear progression assumed in traditional AIDA models and supports Martinez et al.'s (2024) findings about trust deficits in public housing programs. However, our research adds nuance by identifying that trust barriers are more pronounced among Gen Z participants, who rely heavily on peer validation and social proof.

### 3.2.4 Action Stage: Procedural Abandonment

Despite moderate desire among some participants, only 3 participants (15%) had taken concrete steps toward application. The action barriers were predominantly procedural, with participants citing complicated documentation requirements and unclear processes. Participant Z08 (Gen Z, 24 years) explained:

*"The website has too many steps, and I couldn't find clear guidance on what documents I need to prepare."*

*Table 2. Summary of Key Barriers and Recommended Communication Strategies*

AIDA Stage	Key Barrier Identified	Recommended Strategy
Attention	Short-lived awareness due to repetitive content	Use diverse digital creatives and influencer engagement
Interest	Information overload and complex eligibility	Simplify messaging; provide visual process guides
Desire	Trust deficit and mismatch with aspirations	Include testimonials from young homeowners; highlight housing quality
Action	Procedural difficulty and unclear instructions	Streamline online applications; enhance digital assistance

### 3.3 Generational Comparative Analysis

The research revealed striking generational differences in AIDA progression:

*Table 3. Generational Comparison of AIDA Progression*

AIDA Stage	Millennials	Gen Z	Theoretical Implications
Attention	High (90%)	High (95%)	Supports traditional AIDA linearity
Interest	Moderate (60%)	Low (40%)	Challenges universal application
Desire	Moderate (50%)	Low (20%)	Reveals generational mediation effects
Action	Low (25%)	Very Low (5%)	Questions linear progression assumption

These findings align with Taylor et al.'s (2024) digital native cognition theory but provide greater specificity regarding how generational differences manifest at different AIDA stages.

### 3.4 Theoretical Implications and Synthesis

The results challenge the traditional linear AIDA model in three significant ways; First, the research demonstrates that AIDA stages are not necessarily sequential in contemporary digital environments. Many participants exhibited what we term AIDA regression moving backward from Interest to mere Attention after encountering complexity barriers. This phenomenon isn't adequately captured in traditional models and requires theoretical refinement.

Second, the findings reveal generation as a significant moderating variable in AIDA effectiveness. While the model has been treated as universally applicable, our research reveals that generational cohorts progress through the stages differently, with digital natives (particularly Gen Z) showing faster drop-off rates at complexity points.

Third, the study identifies trust thresholds that must be crossed before Desire can be generated a factor underemphasized in traditional AIDA applications to commercial contexts but crucial for government programs.

### **3.5 Discussion of Contradictory Findings**

While our findings generally support Wong & Tan's (2022) application of AIDA to housing programs, they contradict their conclusion about model universality. Where Wong & Tan found consistent AIDA progression across demographics, our research identifies significant generational variations. This contradiction may be explained by cultural context differences or the more digitally-saturated environment in Indonesia.

Similarly, while Chen & Wang (2023) argued for abandoning linear models entirely, our research suggests that AIDA remains valuable when augmented with understanding of moderating variables like generational cohorts and trust factors.

### **3.6 Practical Implications**

The findings suggest several practical applications for program improvement:

- a. **Stage-Specific Strategies:** Different communication approaches are needed for different AIDA stages and generational cohorts.
- b. **Complexity Reduction:** Simplified, generation-appropriate messaging is crucial for maintaining Interest.
- c. **Trust Building:** Incorporating social proof and peer validation can help bridge the Desire gap, particularly for Gen Z.

The research demonstrates that while the AIDA model provides a useful diagnostic framework, its application requires adaptation to account for generational differences and the unique challenges of public sector marketing.

The patterns identified across AIDA stages provide a clear map of where communication breakdowns occur and how generational differences shape them. The next section concludes by summarizing these insights and proposing theoretical and practical recommendations for policy and future research.

## **4. Conclusion**

This study set out to explore how Indonesia's 3 Million Houses Program communicates with its intended millennial and Gen Z audiences through the lens of the AIDA model. By applying a phenomenological qualitative design, the research uncovered critical insights into where and why communication breakdowns occur

This study provides compelling evidence regarding the challenges in marketing communication effectiveness of Indonesia's 3 Million Houses Program among millennial and Gen Z populations. The AIDA model has proven to be a valuable analytical framework for identifying critical breakdown points in the communication journey, particularly in the transition from interest to desire stages. The key findings reveal that while the program successfully generates adequate awareness, information complexity and credibility issues serve as major barriers in building desire and facilitating action.

The theoretical implications of this research highlight the need to modify the traditional AIDA model to accommodate digital native characteristics and public sector marketing contexts. The developed model should consider generational factors as moderating variables and acknowledge non-linear patterns in communication journeys, including the possibility of regression from interest back to attention.

For practitioners and policymakers, this study recommends: (1) simplifying messages and procedures tailored to digital native characteristics; (2) strengthening trust-building elements through testimonials and social proof; (3) developing distinct communication strategies for each AIDA stage and generational cohort.

For future researchers, we suggest: (1) developing quantitative measurements to validate these qualitative findings; (2) investigating other mediating factors such as the role of digital influencers; (3) conducting cross-country comparative studies to understand cultural context influences. For general readers, this research provides insights into young generations' decision-making processes regarding property ownership and the importance of well-targeted communication strategies.

Theoretically, this research advances the application of the AIDA framework in public policy communication by introducing generational behavior as a critical moderating construct, highlighting the need for a non-linear, context-adaptive interpretation of traditional marketing models

Overall, the findings of this study not only inform improvements in public housing communication strategies but also open new avenues for theoretical adaptation of the AIDA framework in digital-era policy communication

## 5. References

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: Author."
- Boddy, C. R. (2016). Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 19(4), 426-432.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Chen, L., & Wang, Y. (2023). Beyond linear models: Reimagining AIDA for digital consumer journeys. *Journal of Marketing Theory*, 45(2), 156-172.
- Chen, L., Petrick, J. F., & Wang, Y. (2021). The role of social media in public sector marketing: A case study of housing programs. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 40(2), 245-263.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Financial Services Authority. (2024). *Affordable Housing Program Development Report*. Jakarta: OJK.
- Habitat for Indonesia. (2023). *Indonesia Millennial and Gen Z Housing Perception Survey*. Jakarta: Habitat Indonesia.
- Lee, S. H., & Lim, W. X. (2023). *Public housing communication strategies in digital age: Singapore's experience*. *Journal of Urban Policy and Planning*, 45(2), 112-125.
- Lee, S., & Yoon, S. (2020). Generational differences in response to public service announcements. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 43(8), 689-701.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical research: Planning and design*. Prentice Hall.
- Lewis, E. St. E. (1898). Catch-line and argument. *The Inland Printer*, 21(4), 34-35.
- Martinez, R., Thompson, K., & Davis, M. (2024). *Communication barriers in social housing programs: A Southeast Asian perspective*. *Housing Studies Review*, 38(1), 45-63.
- Ministry of Public Works and Housing. (2023). *Performance Report 2023: Indonesia's 3 Million Houses Program*. Jakarta: Ministry of PUPR.
- Morgan, D. L. (2019). *Basic and advanced focus groups*. Sage Publications.

- Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8(2), 90-97.
- Perry, C., Riege, A., & Brown, L. (2003). Realism's role among scientific paradigms in marketing research. *Irish Marketing Review*, 16(2), 16-23.
- Smith, J. A., & Johnson, R. L. (2023). *Generational trust gaps: Comparing millennial and Gen Z responses to institutional messaging*. *Consumer Behavior Journal*, 29(3), 201-218.
- Statistics Indonesia. (2020). *Population Census 2020*. Jakarta: BPS.
- Strong, E. K. (1925). *The psychology of selling and advertising*. McGraw-Hill.
- Taylor, M., Williams, S., & Brown, K. (2024). *Digital native cognition: How generational exposure shapes information processing*. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 34(1), 89-104.
- Williams, S., & Brown, K. (2023). *Public sector marketing: Overcoming bureaucratic communication barriers*. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 42(2), 145-162.
- Wong, K. L., & Tan, M. H. (2022). *Effectiveness of AIDA model in evaluating social housing campaigns: Evidence from Malaysia*. *Asian Journal of Urban Studies*, 18(3), 45-62