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Competency Requirement for Effective Property Management in Malaysia

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Abstract: A knowledgeable and skilled property manager will add value to the assets and increase customer satisfaction. Weaknesses in this aspect will affect the efficiency of a property manager in managing complex issues in real estate. This study focuses on competency requirements for effective property management in Malaysia. The objectives are to determine competency requirements for property manager in Malaysia and to analyse the relationship between competency requirements with practices of property management. The quantitative method was used through the questionnaire with 81 sheets distributed to the property manager. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used for analysing the data. Skills segment and duties and responsibility were analysed with improved knowledge and skills, and the needs for essential skills variables. The result shows that strong communication skills and tenant control are the most important skills for a property manager. On the other hand, paying maintenance costs and collecting rent and property fees are the highest duties and responsibilities of the property manager. Based on the correlation analysis between competency requirement and practice, it was found that tenant control has the highest correlation with saved money variables in the essential skills segment.

Keywords: Property management, competency, requirement

1. Introduction

Property management in Malaysia is a profession regulated under the Valuer, Appraisers, and Estate Agent Act 1981. The Board of Valuer, Appraisers, and Estate Agents is responsible to ensure that the real estate professionals abide by the rules and guidelines as well as for strengthening professional integrity and ethics. Hence, to achieve this, a formulation of the competency framework for the property management team will be very valuable and beneficial to the industry and the stakeholders. The competency standards will enhance the industry's overall professionalism and competitiveness by developing and setting the competency requirements for each level of property management services required by the building and property industry. A property manager needs knowledge and skills in numerous things to keep up the property. Knowledge and skills are portrayed as individual capabilities. Individuals think information and ability are equal, yet both are unique (Boulet, 2015).

A property manager is someone hired to oversee the everyday tasks of a land venture for a landowner. They assume a necessary job in the accomplishment of the speculation in light of the fact that have authority over most parts of the property and its tenants. With that control comes a lot of duty. They are then likewise expected to manage the assortment of leases from the tenants which incorporates implementing penalties for late rental installments. Overseeing tenants is a particularly significant obligation of a property manager (Bate, 2020). The property manager must utilize this financial plan reasonably and keep a detailed record of all property-related issues. This incorporates keeping precise arrangements of assessments, fix and support costs, lease assortment, protection expenses, and rent understandings (Bate, 2020).

Communication is the most significant skill that should have in this field. Since property supervisors fill in as a contact between the property owner and the property tenants, strategic planning skills are both fundamental and valuable when at work. Other than that, strategic planning skills help property managers efficiently operate properties and preserve the property's estimation. In addition, the various duties of a property manager require a manager's authoritative skills (Ojekalu, et al., 2019). Arif and Yusof (2008), defined property management as the tries to control property enthusiasm having regard to the short and long term goals of the domain proprietor and especially to the reason for which the interest is held: to arrange lettings and to start lease audits and rent renewals, to direct physical support and authorization of rent agreements, to the awareness of the need of redesigning and combining interest where conceivable, to perceive open doors for the advancement of potential and to satisfy the proprietor's legitimate and social obligations to the network.

1.1 Competency Issues

The management of various kinds of the property offered climb to the issue of property the board. As a result of the popularity of properties, most buildings are not given pleasing facilities and where they are passed on, the properties are not all around kept up or kept up, the extraordinary issues are inefficient and unfit assistance transport where facilities and property the executives are begun. Administration conveyance and execution assessment are made arrangements for making the satisfaction of clients or customers of the administration. The building makes an undeniable impact. If the building is a lot of keeping up and presents an uncommon look, rapidly the observer amasses the inclination that the movement of the structure is satisfactory. Then again, if the buildings aren't a lot of kept up and not all-around organized, it establishes a helpless connection (Dzulkifli, 2017).

Various objections against incompetent property managers are depicted in internet-based life. The service they convey doesn't generally legitimize the aggregate sum of expert expenses they charged. Poor maintenance may likewise be because of insufficient upkeep subsidies allocated for specific buildings or property. This is principally credited to the manager neglecting to build up a tough management and maintenance plan that can predict the expenses for future upkeep and fix works. Property management interfaces the property as a specialized framework to its tenants and shapes the vitality utilization of the building just as different parts of its exhibition. Where tenants' desires differ from the setting a property's frameworks produce, grumblings may emerge (Dzulkifli, 2017).

Property management in Malaysia is viewed as incompetent. The unresponsiveness of property managers in clearing their capacities causes the condition of the property not attractive. Not exclusively would the occupants experience the ill effects of poor upkeep or poor maintenance, yet the value of the properties would likewise along these lines be ineffectively influenced after some time. Unfortunately, the greater part of the building discovered was not successfully managed. Occupants complained through social media and the issues were consistently about incompetent property management, for example, lift breakdown, trash not gathered and bug control services not done by plan, vandalism, misuse of the sinking fund, just as questions among tenants. Therefore, the factor that led to incompetent property managers should be distinguished for the properties to be continuously overseen for their qualities to be safeguarded and upgraded by having a competent property management group (Ta, 2009).

Property management includes the multidiscipline of science and social errand. The errand incorporates gathering and evaluating rental, contractual worker determination, and building maintenance inside an organization. Be that as it may, the profession in property management has changed following inventive movement in property investment. This has brought about numerous individuals' thoughts concerning who is property management has a place because numerous professions from other fields likewise engaged with this industry, for example, a legal counselor, designer, engineer, and even the typical agent. In addition, the individual who is responsible to do the property management task is the individual who has particular education and training in the property management field as stated by (Pan and Kung, 2019).

In general, property management includes tenants' placement, maintenance and repairs, and the ongoing administration of real property. The property managers should handle the tenants' placement from the beginning until the end. Maintenance and repairs may occur before occupancy or during the occupancy as the need arises. Maintenance is ongoing care of the buildings and the property such as yard work, cleaning common areas, painting, and others (Ta, 2009).

2. Competency Requirement for Property Management

The term "property management" was made in the UK in 1860 (Pan and Kung, 2019). The development of property management in European and American nations has quicker progress in comparison with Asian nations. The term "property" first utilized in the Asian district was by Hong Kong and was interpreted from the English word "property" (Wang, 2010). Property management and maintenance refer to all the efforts applied to improve the utility quality and operational productivity of the building itself, its facilities, capacities, and its guidelines, through operational methods, for example, arranging, association, authority, control, service skills, and regulatory coordination aptitudes. Management refers to the guideline of the building with the goal that the building works as effectively and securely as could reasonably be expected. Maintenance refers to keeping the structure building running smoothly. The management staff must perform both management and maintenance is to keep up the

regular region and basic facilities in the mutual regions of the property, guaranteeing that all usefulness is ordinary and, in this way, expanding the property's value (Razali et al, 2016; Shiu et al. 2019).

There are studies on desires for property management employers of graduates in New Zealand. Their exploration findings indicated that graduates lack practical skills and knowledge. They additionally remarked that the areas for which graduates exhibit insufficient knowledge are in building development and property development. Then again, their research showed that the participating managers applauded graduates' analytical, PC, and communication skills. This research inferred that, as a component of the educational program assessment, projects should turn out to be increasingly mindful of partner concerns and needs, and fuse enhancements to prepare the graduates to become work-prepared. Proposed changes to the educational program incorporate expanding the improvement of graduates down to practical skills using sandwich programs, work understanding, contextual analyses, and on-site training (Poon & Brownlow, 2014).

The meaning of competency varies from various analysts and the greater part of researchers express that the competency included with knowledge, skills, capacities, property just as different attributes, for example, inspiration, characteristics, individual characteristics, and self-idea that reflect general acting in playing out an extraordinary job performance. Subsequently, the competencies in this study are referred to as individual general activities which represent the knowledge, skills, capacity, and different qualities (KSAOs) to do an incredible occupation execution (Jaafar & Salleh 2017). Competency assumes a significant role in any organization across the country. The advantages of competencies incorporate recruiting the right individuals through cash making, steady, sensible, and open procedure, orchestrating and keeping up the opportune individuals in the correct employments, assessing execution against an all-around characterized set of practices, skills, and knowledge, holding the ideal individuals by correctly creating them, and connecting ability to hierarchical execution reward the ideal individuals appropriately through assessable skills connected to individual authoritative execution, and dispassionately oversee workforce and progression arranging. Competency's structure is defined as the successful execution in explicit employments, work gatherings, associations, occupations, or enterprises and is the establishment for enrolment and recruiting, preparing and improvement, and performance management. The industry-wide structure catches the wide standard abilities and capabilities regular to an entire industry as opposed to only an industry segment or occupation. A few studies have secured the competencies structure which incorporates both the public sector and private sector (Baharum, et al. (2016).

In finding successful property management, the property manager is required to have the specialized knowledge and expert mastery to guarantee that the building can function as planned. On the other hand, with few studies on property manager competencies in managing the green building, there is no guideline organized on this issue as a source of perspective to them. There is no benchmark for a property manager to gauge their skills in dealing with the green building in light of the fact that past research just spotlights on the property professional competencies in overseeing traditional buildings (Jaafar & Salleh 2017). The property manager consistently focuses on the execution and interpretation of proprietor policies. In property management, the property manager assumes their job in coordinating the potential results from any elective action proposition. The property manager additionally is the expert person who keeps up a building for a charge. They keep up a property to deal with or secure the capital to support the building proprietor. The advantages include augmenting salary, satisfactory protection inclusion, lessening burdens, and keeping up a high capital appreciation (Jaafar & Salleh 2017).

Human capital resources are separated into two hard and soft skills. Hard skills are in any case referred to as specialized skills or core knowledge while soft skills are viewed as intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Hard skills refer to the knowledge area of a specific field of study in an industry where a company's activities can be arranged. In real estate, this refers to various areas of training where an expertly qualified estate surveyor is required to show mastery. A portion of these incorporate property valuation, property management, real estate agency, building upkeep, real estate finance, and project management, among others. Essential knowledge in these areas is fundamentally obtained in tertiary organizations and developed through practical experience in practice. Besides that, soft skills are referred to as non-specialized which is a place of accentuation on close-to-home conduct. The inclusion, on most occasions, relies upon the professional requirement. Soft skills incorporate communication, listening, imagination, time management, and business enterprise skills (Oladokun & Gbadegesin, 2017).

Real estate professionals including property managers are an essential resource to the property companies and the industry at large. Worker skills, knowledge, and capability or competence add to the organization and business execution. From the resources-based point of view, it is apparent that workers' core real estate knowledge and delicate skills are exceptional and would be a wellspring of the upper hand to real estate business organizations (Deakin 2017). While the idea of real estate core knowledge possessed by recently utilized staff is significantly a component of the educational program of training institutions, and maybe the idea of educational framework, the level of soft skills had been an element of numerous factors the greater part of which are outside academy institutions. Soft skills are not educated in universities or other higher academic institutions, however soft skills as non-scholarly skills are accepted to be useful in the workplace. It is in this way important to survey the performance of the real estate graduates both in the presentation of expert knowledge and soft skills (Oladokun & Gbadegesin, 2017).

Even though there is more public awareness in being competent for everyday managing activity in overseeing property by checking and pointing attention to the top administration, the adequacy and productivity of its usage are still low particularly in Malaysia. Frequent issues had noticeably happened at the execution stage, especially in multi-story

buildings. For example, reports from the media have additionally accentuated visit instances of poor maintenance management in public property, for instance, government buildings which have prompted crumpled roofs, empty, relinquished structures, and fire in buildings. From those reports, it very well may be observed there are hindrances and troubles looked at by awkward property management teams in viably executing property management practices. Property management and maintenance is a part of the building, however, the standard of the management service given by a large portion of the property manager is far from being true (Dzulkifli, 2017).

3. Methodology

Two main stages of methodology are highlighted in this paper. The first stage was data collection for the study and focus on achieving the first research objective - to determine competency requirements for property manager in Malaysia. The second stage focused on analysing the relationship between competency requirements with practices of property management in Malaysia. Overview of the research methodology in Table 1.

During stage one, the data were collected through a survey involving 81 property managers. Questionnaires were used to elicit information regarding their competency requirement for property managers. The questionnaires are divided into 3 parts, part A is details of the respondents, part B is question-related to objective 1 and part C is a question related to objective 2. Part B is to determine competency requirements. In the skills segment, five variables were tested namely strong communication skills, organization skills, knowledge-tenant laws, financial analysis, and tenant control. In duties and responsibility, five variables were tested namely collecting rent and property fees from tenants, paying property taxes, paying mortgages, paying insurance premiums, and tenant control.

Stage two focuses on analysing the relationship between competency requirements with practices of property management in Malaysia. Gathered data in part B were analysed together with the data in part C - the dependent variables of this study namely improved knowledge and skills, and the need for essential skills. Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship.

Table 1 - Research methodology overview

Table 1 - Research methodology overview							
Objectives	Method	Variables	Tools	Expected Outcomes			
To determine	Method:	Dependent variables (Practice)	Descriptive	Competency			
competency	-Quantitative	-Improve Knowledge & Skills	statistic	requirement for			
requirement for	-81 replied	 Offer professional training from the 		property			
property manager	questionnaires	get-go		management in			
in Malaysia	from 300 distributed	 Enhance cross-departmental collaboration 		Malaysia.			
To analyse the	email to the	 Emphasize soft skills 	Descriptive	Relationship between			
relationship	property	 Go to networking events 	statistic &	competency			
between	manager by	 Practical experience for one year 	correlation	requirements with			
competency	using Google	-Need for Essential skills	analysis.	practices of property			
requirements with	form (1 month	 Increased productivity 		management in			
practices of	data	 Improved innovation and creativity 		Malaysia			
property management in	collection)	 It saves money 					
Malaysia		 Increased profitability and stronger growth 					
		• Improved health and wellness in the workplace					
		Independent variables (Competency					
		requirement)					
		-Skills:					
		 Strong communication skills 					
		Organization skills					
		• Knowledge-tenant laws					
		• Financial analysis					
		• Tenant control					
		-Duties & Responsibility					
		 Collecting rent and property fees 					
		from tenants.					
		 Paying property taxes 					
		 Paying mortgages 					
		 Paying Insurance premium 					
-		 Paying maintenance costs 					

4. Findings

A total of 81 useable questionnaires were collected. In this study, there are a total of 40 (49.4%) female respondents and 41 (50.6%) male respondents. The percentage shows that the male respondents are much higher than the female respondents. The majority of the respondents are Bachelor's Degree holders, with 82.7% or 67 Bachelor's Degree holders participating in this study. This is followed by Master's Degree respondents, with 4 respondents representing 4.9% in this study. Diploma holders are ranked third with 7 respondents 8.6%. The minority of the respondents have a very low education level or very high education level state as others which is 3 respondents representing 3.7% and Ph.D. holders thereby representing 0 respondents. The majority of the respondents are Property Management Executives, with 44.4% or 36 are participating in this study. This is followed by Property Manager Respondents, with 24 respondents representing 29.6% in this study. Assistant Property Managers is ranked third with 12 respondents 14.8%. The minority respondents are from HR Department with 7 respondents representing 8.6% and others such as admin and clerk are ranked last with 2 respondents representing 2.5%. There are 43.2% which is 35 of the respondents who have been working in the property management sector for 5 years and above. This was followed by 22 respondents who have been working for 2 years representing 27.2%, and for 3 years experiences 16% representing 13 respondents, 4 years experience (9.9%) with 8 respondents, and the remaining 3.7% which is 3 respondents have 1-year working experience in the property management sector. The majority of the respondents are Property Manager Sector, with 95.1% or 77 respondents participating in this study. This is followed by building operations or engineering firm respondents, with 3 respondents representing 3.7% in this study. Property owners are ranked third with 1 respondent 1.2%. The real estate investment trust is 0 respondents. The majority of the respondents are having below 20 projects, with 38.3% or 31 respondents participating in this study. This is followed by 20–30 projects respondents, with 28 respondents representing 34.6% in this study. More than 30 projects are ranked third with 22 respondents 27.2%.

4.1 Competency Requirement for Property Manager

The first question in part B for objective one is 'rank property manager most important skills to least important skill'. There are five choice answers for this question which are strong communication skills, organizational skills, and knowledge of relevant landlord-tenant laws, financial analysis, and tenant's control (refer Fig. 1). All the respondents are from the property management field. The respondents clearly understand the question and rank the answer with their opinion. Researchers state that rank five is the most important skill and rank one is the least important skill. For strong communication skills, there are 80 respondents ranked five, and only one respondent ranked one. For organizational skills 11 respondents ranked 5, 46 respondents ranked 4, 23 respondents ranked 3 and only one respondent ranked 2. Being a good property manager requires a great deal of organization. If they want to make sure property owners and residents are satisfied at all times, as well as ensure that the property under care is always in good condition. To perform these tasks effectively requires a great deal of organization. Moreover, for knowledge of relevant landlord-tenant laws 24 respondents ranked 5, 46 respondents ranked 4, and 11 respondents ranked 3.

Financial analysis recorded 16 respondents ranked at 5, 56 respondents ranked 4, 8 respondents ranked 3 and only 1 respondent ranked 2. Besides that, for tenants' control, 76 respondents ranked 5 and 5 respondents ranked 4. The property management company also reduces the amount of time a landlord must spend making repairs, chasing down tenants for late rent payments, and enforcing the terms of a lease. When analysing all the answers, in strong communication skills most of the respondents ranked 5, for organizational skills most of them ranked 4, for knowledge of relevant landlord-tenant law most of the respondents ranked 4, for financial analysis most of them ranked 4 and lastly for tenants' control most of them ranked 5. Overall strong communication has high respondents with ranked 5, the tenants control also have high respondents with ranked 5 but compared to strong communication skills number of respondents less for tenants' control.

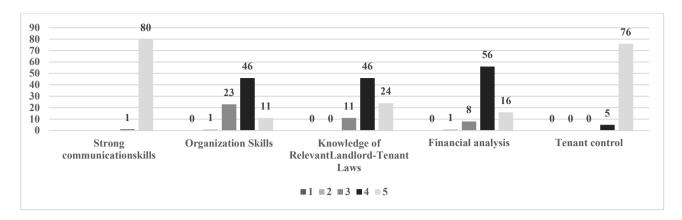


Fig. 1 - Ranking result of property manager skills (least to most important)

For question two in part B which is 'rank property manager duties and responsibilities from most important duties to least important duties' there are five answers (refer Fig. 2). First is collecting rent and property fees from tenants 76 respondents ranked 5, 3 respondents ranked 4, 1 respondent ranked 3, and 1 respondent ranked 2. An equally important role of a property manager is collecting rent and communicating any rent increases to tenants. A property manager will also deal with late payments, unpaid rent, and the process of evicting a tenant due to non-payment of rent. The second answer is paying property taxes 5 respondents ranked 5, 17 respondents ranked 4, 51 respondents ranked 3, 6 respondents ranked 2 and 2 respondents ranked 1. For the third answer 52 respondents ranked 5, 26 respondents ranked 4, 2 respondents ranked 3 and only 1 respondent ranked 1. The fourth answer is paying insurance premium 4 respondents ranked 5, 15 respondents ranked 4, 39 respondents ranked 3, 14 respondents ranked 2 and 9 respondents ranked 1. The fifth answer paying maintenance costs 75 respondents ranked 5, 5 respondents ranked 4, and 1 respondent ranked 3. Ignoring or not paying sufficient attention to the maintenance factor of a building will result in a building that will be expensive to own since more than 50 percent of the costs of ownership are attributable to maintenance. Furthermore, due to poor maintenance policies, buildings in Malaysia are performing below users' expectations (Lateef, 2009).

Overall collecting rent and property fees from tenants have high respondents with ranked 5, the paying maintenance costs also have high respondents with ranked 5 but compared to collecting rent and property fees from tenant's number of respondents less for paying maintenance costs. It can be concluded that collecting rent and property fees from tenants is the most important duty.

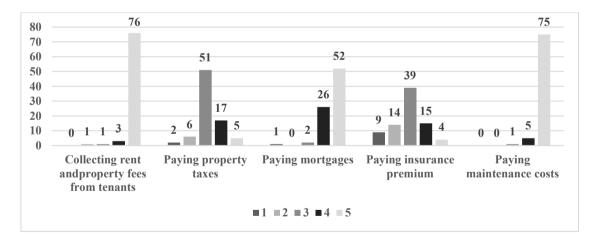


Fig. 2 - Duties and responsibilities of property manager (least to most important)

4.2 Relationship between Competency Requirements with Practices of Property Manager

The first question in part C of the questionnaire is 'what is the best way to improve knowledge and skills toward property managers?'. The first way is 'Offer professional training from the get-go' (refer to Fig. 3). Property management training comes in many forms allowing candidates to pick the one best suited to his or her situation. With the need for property managers expected to continue its robust growth, certification and training will help managers stand out from the crowd. 39 respondents ranked 5 for the first answer, 10 respondents ranked 4, 23 respondents ranked 3, 9 respondents ranked 2. The second variable is enhanced cross-departmental collaboration 2 respondents ranked 5, 22 respondents ranked 4, 44 respondents ranked 3, and 13 respondents ranked 2. The third variable is emphasizing soft skills 5

respondents ranked it 5, 46 respondents ranked 4, and 30 respondents ranked 3. The fourth variable is going to networking events 8 respondents ranked 5, 15 respondents ranked 4, 34 respondents ranked 3, 18 respondents ranked 2 and 6 respondents ranked 1. The final variable is the practical experience for 1 year 77 respondents ranked it 5, 2 respondents ranked it 4 and 2 respondents rank it 3. Overall practical experience for 1 year have high respondents with ranked 5. The result shows that practical experience for 1 year is the best way to improve knowledge and skills for property managers.

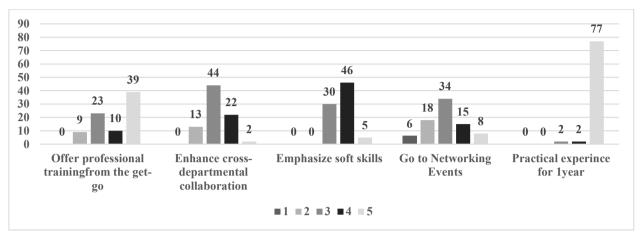


Fig. 3 - Best way improve knowledge and skills toward property manager (least to most important)

The second question relates to the essential skills of property managers (refer to Fig. 4). The first reason is increased productivity and 78 respondents ranked it 5 and 3 respondents ranked it 4. Whenever had a professional property manager tasks or managing a building become easy and can increase productivity. The second reason is improved innovation and creativity only 1 respondent ranked it as 5, 15 respondents rank it as 4, 42 respondents ranked it as 3, 21 respondents ranked it as 2 and, 2 respondents rank it as 1. The third reason is it saves money 75 respondents ranked it as 5, 3 respondents ranked it as 4, and 3 respondents ranked it as 3. Having a skilled property manager can save money because energy utilisation will be less at the same time, they know how to solve a problem without spending too much cost. The fourth reason is increased profitability and stronger growth 22 respondents ranked 5, 39 respondents ranked it as 4, 18 respondents ranked it as 3 and 2 respondents ranked it as 2. The fifth reason is improved health and wellness in the workplace 22 respondents ranked it as 5, 43 respondents ranked it as 4, 15 respondents ranked it as 3, and 1 respondent ranked it as 2. Overall increased productivity has high respondents with ranked 5, it saves money also have high respondents with ranked 5 but compared to increased productivity number of respondents less for it saves money. It can be concluded that increased productivity is the most reasonable answer to the question-answer.

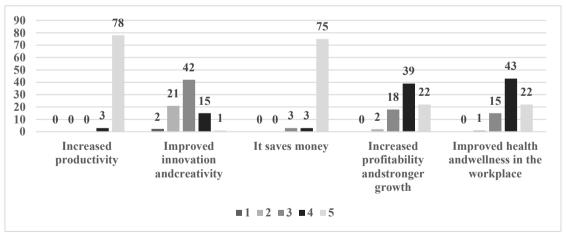


Fig. 4 - Reasons for having a skilled property manager (least to most important)

Table 2 shows the relationship based on the correlation analysis between practice and competency requirements. Offer professional training from the get-go has a relationship with the independent variable which is organizational skills compared to other independent variables. The Pearson correlation for this variable is 0.248 and the p-value is 0.025. The independent variable paying insurance premium has a relationship with four dependent variables which enhances cross-departmental collaboration, emphasizes soft skills, goes to networking events, and improves innovation and creativity. The correlation for paying insurance is 0.497, 0.262, 0.535 and 0.474. The p-value for paying insurance is 0.000, 0.018, 0.000, and 0.000. Two dependents have a relationship with tenants' control and the correlation for both

is 0.691 and 0.795. The p-value for both is the same which is 0.000. For collecting rental fees have a relationship with increased productivity and the correlation is 0.710 and the p-value is 0.000. Paying property tax to have a relationship with increased profitability and stronger growth and the correlation is 0.129 and the p-value is 0.092. For organizational skills have a relationship with improved health and wellness in the workplace and the correlation is 0.338 and the p-value is 0.002.

Table 2 - Relationship between practice and competency requirement

Practice	Competency requirement	Pearson Correlation	P- Value
Offer professional training from the get-go	Organizational skills	0.248	0.025
Enhance cross-departmental collaboration	Paying Insurance	0.497	0.000
Emphasize soft skills	Paying Insurance	0.262	0.018
Go to networking events	Paying Insurance	0.535	0.000
Practical experience for one year	Tenants Control	0.691	0.000
Increased productivity	Collecting rental fees	0.710	0.000
Improved innovation and creativity	Paying Insurance	0.474	0.000
It saves money	Tenants Control	0.795	0.000
Increased profitability and stronger growth	Paying Property Tax	0.129	0.092
Improved health and wellness in the workplace	Organizational Skills	0.338	0.002

5. Summary

The research aim is to analyses competency requirements for effective property management. In addition, this study highlights the best approach towards improving the property management profession. This study has connected the competency requirement with building a professional property manager in the discussion. The first objective of this study has to determine the competency requirement for property management in Malaysia and analyse the relationship between competency requirements with its practices. All the variables have a relationship but the researcher can take one variable to complete the test. The researcher completes the correlation analysis with the state that the dependent variable which is it saves money has a strong relationship with tenant control (independent variable) because the correlation value is most near to 1 compared to other variables. From the data analysis, it can be clearly said that for objective one strong communication skills is the most important competency requirement for property management. For objective two practical experience for one year have a relationship with practices of property management companies. The result researcher get from this research is with strong communication skills and practical experience for 1year a property management company can build an effective property manager.

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