

FACTORS THAT LEAD TO INCOMPETENCIES AMONG
PROPERTY MANAGER IN MALAYSIA

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DEDICATION

*“Specially dedicated to my dearest mom and siblings,
thanks for the endless encouragement and valuable support given.....”*

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In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All the praises and thanks be to Allah.

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ABSTRACT

Property management is a very complex and challenging profession and the team consists of various backgrounds to ensure it can cater to the needs and requirements of each property. Therefore, competency of the property manager should be highlighted whereas may contribute to the success of the property management organisation and need to be efficiently managed. Property management is an ongoing process with continual monitoring and review to ensure that the objectives are being achieved. Property management and operation associates the building, its performance and end-users. When there is a mismatch between users' expectations and operations processes, complaints can arise. Thus, based on literature review, this study discusses on the factors and parameters in which will lead to incompetent property manager and to rank identified competencies absent according to the level of criticality. This study adopted questionnaire survey for collection of data. 217 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents of the master project and 115 were returned. The findings show that the main four (4) factors which are 'Attitude', 'Knowledge', 'Skill' and 'Passion' as well as their parameters or attributes are very important which may affect the competency of any property manager in delivering the services accordingly. It is recommended to study each of the competencies absent that has been identified in this master project with its effectiveness and also to collect data by using stratified sampling instead of convenience sampling to ensure the long-run success of property management industry in Malaysia.

ABSTRAK

Pengurusan hartanah adalah kerjaya yang kompleks dan mencabar serta pasukannya terdiri daripada pelbagai latar belakang bagi memastikan ia dapat menyediakan kehendak dan keperluan setiap hartanah. Oleh itu, pengurus hartanah yang cecap harus ditekankan dimana dapat menyumbang kepada kejayaan sesebuah organisasi pengurusan hartanah dan perlu diuruskan secara berkesan. Pengurusan hartanah ialah suatu proses yang berterusan dengan pantuan dan ulasan untuk memastikan objektif-objektif tercapai. Pengurusan dan operasi hartanah berkait dengan bangunan, pencapaian serta pengguna akhir. Apabila berlaku ketidakseragaman antara jangkaan pengguna dan proses operasi, aduan akan berlaku dan meningkat. Maka, berdasarkan kajian lapangan, kertas ini membincangkan faktor-faktor dan parameter yang boleh membawa kepada ketidakcekan pengurus hartanah serta untuk menentukan ketidakcekan yang telah dikenalpasti berdasarkan tahap kritikal. Kajian ini telah menjalankan pengagihan borang soal selidik untuk pengumpulan data. Sebanyak 217 borang soal selidik telah diedarkan dan hanya 115 sahaja yang dikembalikan. Penemuan menunjukkan empat (4) faktor utama iaitu 'Personaliti', 'Ilmu Pengetahuan', 'Kemahiran' dan 'Minat' serta komponen-komponen yang lain sangat memberi impak kepada kecekapan pengurus hartanah dalam menjalankan perkhidmatan yang sewajarnya. Setiap komponen ketidakcekan telah dikenal pasti dan amat digalakkan untuk dikaji dengan lebih terperinci beserta keberkesanannya. Disamping itu, ia perlu mengumpul data menggunakan kaedah sampel bukan kebarangkalian atau *stratified sampling* untuk memastikan kejayaan jangka masa panjang dalam industri pengurusan hartanah di Malaysia.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOVAEA	-	The Board of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents Malaysia
BIFM	-	British Institute of Facilities Management
COB	-	Commissioner of Buildings
FM	-	Facilities Management
IFMA	-	International Facility Management
JMB	-	Joint Management Body
JMC	-	Joint Management Committee
MC	-	Management Corporation
MIPPM	-	Malaysian Institute of Professional Property Manager
PM	-	Property Manager
SMA	-	Strata Management Act 757

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the structure of this master project. It gives an overview of the research background to the study and problem statement. It then defines the research questions and objectives rationally flowing out from the problem statement. Thereafter, justification of scope of study, significant, research methodology adopted are discussed as well as the organisation of this chapter. Generally, property management covers an extensive range of exercises such as building/property management, maintenance management, facilities management, asset management, human resource management, risk and financial management, value management, and space management and so forth. It is very demanding and challenging profession which involved proper planned direction that include forming goals, guidelines and procedures, framework and strategic accomplishment to achieve specific objectives in property management.

1.2 Background of Study

Management of various types of building gave rise to the issue of property management (Linariza, & Ashok, 2003). As a result of the high demand of properties, most buildings are not provided with satisfactory facilities and where they are delivered, the properties are not well maintained, the intense issues are inefficient and ineffective service delivery where facilities and property management are commenced. Service delivery and performance measurement is aimed at creating the satisfaction of

clients or users of the services. The building creates a visible impact. If the building is well-maintained and presents a great look, immediately the observer gathers an impression that the operation of the building is good. Conversely, if the building is not well-maintained and not well-planned, it creates a poor impression (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992). Besides this visible impact, it also has same correlation with the efficiency of property or building management.

Moreover, numerous complaints against incompetent property managers portrayed in the social media. The services they deliver do not always justify the total amount of professional fees they charged. Poor maintenance may also be due to inadequate maintenance funds apportioned for certain building/property. This is mainly attributed to the managers failing to establish a durable management and maintenance plan that can foresee the costs for future maintenance and repair works (Tiun, 2009). Property management links the property as a technical system to its occupants and shape the energy consumption of the building as well as other aspects of its performance (Aune et al., 2009). Where occupant expectations vary from the setting a property's systems produce, complaints may arise. These complaints are a form of feedback to the property managers. They suggest where more or better management may be needed, whether in changing technical aspects of the system or prompting occupant expectations (Goins & Moezzi, 2011). Dealing with complaints and the possibility of complaints is essential to the work of building or property managers.

Property management system was introduced in the public sector in order to improve service delivery, rectify previous disparities, organizational structure and attitudes. However, managers who doesn't have certain competencies such as good knowledge, attitude and skills will tend to demonstrate low level of motivation and negative approach towards the employees (Van Der Waldt, 2004). Employees' perceptions of the property management are influenced by the lack of knowledge on policies and processes. Certain conditions are important for creating good management, including managers need to have the knowledge, skills and understanding of the role, tasks and purpose of the services they deliver (Leadership

& Management, 2008). In fact, there is study or research to improve the property management performance in Malaysia by developing the property management competency framework. According to Ahmad Baharum et al. (2016), competency plays a particularly important role in any organization nationwide in order to ensure the management of the property and facilities is continual and persistent. It had been deliberated and focused by some of the academic research works as shown in Table 1.1 which is related to this master project.

NO.	AUTHOR (S)	SCOPE OF STUDY
1.	Zarita et al. (2009)	Assessment of Property Management Service Quality of Purpose Built Office Buildings
2.	Christos and Labib (2011)	Competencies in Maintenance Management
3.	Mariah Awang et al. (2012)	Facility Management Competencies in Technical Institutions
4.	Suwaibatul Islamiah Abdullah Sani et al. (2012)	Determinant Factors in Development of Maintenance Culture in Managing Public Asset and Facilities
5.	Muhammad Iskandar Hamzah et al. (2012)	Examining the Predictive Power of Leadership Competency Dimensionality in Higher Educational Institutions
6.	Mariah Awang et al. (2014)	Requisite Facilities Management Competencies for Sustainable Development at Higher Education Institutions
7.	Ahmad Baharum, Z., et. al. (2016)	Competency Framework for the Property Management Industry

Table 1.1: Scope of study conducted by researchers and academicians

1.3 Statement of Problem

Completed buildings will remain for years and property management is the foundation of the property industry. A poorly-managed and maintained buildings will deteriorate rapidly, destroying all the efforts put into the design and construction of the property. To ensure the progressiveness in property management industry, requirement of competency and foresee that organizations of the future will be built around people as indicated by Mitrani et al. (1992). They add that there will be less importance on professions as the building blocks of an organization; instead increased attention will be focused on employee competence. If we are using people as the building blocks of an organization, then competence or what they bring to the job becomes crucial. The competency approach to selection and assessment is based on categorizing, identifying, and evaluating individual variances for particular work-related constructs that are relevant to successful work performance (Bartram, 2004). Cummings & Worley (2001) similarly state that organizational changes frequently demand new knowledge, skills, attitude and passion from employees. They claim that in several occasions, changes could not be applied unless employees gained new competencies. They also recommend that change managers are required whereby multiple learning opportunities can be provided.

Furthermore, property management in Malaysia is considered to be incompetent. The failure of property managers in clearing their functions properly cause the property to fall into disorder condition. Not only would the occupants suffer from poor maintenance, the values of the properties would also subsequently be poorly affected over time (Tiun, 2009). Sadly, most of the buildings found were not effectively managed. Occupants complained through social media and the issues were always about incompetent property management such as lifts breakdown, rubbish not collected and pest control services not done according to schedule, vandalism, misused of sinking funds; as well as disputes among occupant (Lias, 1998). Therefore, factors that lead to incompetent property manager needs to be identified for the properties to be gradually managed in order for their values to be preserved and enhanced by having competent property management team.

The formation of various and more stratified developments has caused in the demand of professional property management. Property management involves multi discipline of science and social task (Andrew, 2005). The task includes collecting and assessing of rental, contractor selection and building maintenance within organization. However, profession in property management has transformed in line with innovative progression in property investment. This has resulted many people deliberated as to who is actually property management is belong to because many profession from other field also involved in this industry such as lawyer, architect, engineer and even the normal businessman. Moreover, the person who is accountable to carry out property management task is the person who has specialize education and training in property management field as simplified by (Abdul Rahman, 2008). Many property owners have no experience and knowledge in managing their property.

The owners are also practising outsourcing as a means of disengaging from essential process to those that are not critical to the core business. Therefore, they choose for outsourcing the property management undertakings to a managing agent or property manager. In short, all the issues raised were centred on the three (3) aspects in providing effective property managements, specifically on people, maintenance and financial. Nevertheless, factors that make our property manager is incompetent is still unclear. There are studies on the competency framework but no study has been done on the competencies absent among property manager in property or facilities management industry. For example, research by Ahmad Baharum, (2016) which aims to develop the property management competency framework that is applicable to the property management service delivery in Malaysia. However, it is still lacking in terms of the factor or root cause that leads to the incompetent property manager. Hence, this has caused continuous criticisms among the stakeholders in regards to the quality and the management team that managed the building (Ahmad Baharum, 2016).

Although there is more public awareness in being competent for day-to-day operation in managing property which monitored and pointed out by top management, the effectiveness and efficiency of its implementation is still low especially in

Malaysia. Frequent problems had visibly occurred at the implementation stage particularly in multi-storey buildings. For instance, reports from the media have also emphasized frequent cases of poor maintenance management in public property such as government buildings which have led to collapsed ceilings, vacant, abandoned buildings and fire in buildings (Syamilah, 2005). From those reports, it can be obviously seen that there are barriers and difficulties faced by incompetent property management team in effectively implementing property management practices. Property management and maintenance is part of the building but the level of management services provided by most of the property managers is debatable.

Most are incompetent, unprofessional, lacking in experience, profit-orientated and not knowledgeable in managing buildings. Subsequently, competencies absent among property managers should be classified to have a consistent and well-managed property which conveys an image of capital preservation and good governance that ultimately increases property value as well as that of the surrounding area. Competencies often serve as the basis for skill standards that specify the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success in the workplace as well as potential measurement criteria for assessing competency attainment for the property management industry (Dave, 1975). Accordingly, a competent property manager should deliver services that will produce more customer satisfaction as well as enjoy better capital appreciation growth in the long term.

The significance of these problems with incompetent behaviour is reflected in the increasing number of criticism and complaints. If this problem can't be resolved, it will definitely lead and manage the building incompetent way. Study needs to be done to identify the factors that lead to incompetent property manager and what factors to be tackled because it's important to determine the most critical factor in improving property management industry in Malaysia. Besides, if the property is badly managed by incompetent property manager then values will be affected. In summary, the issues that are addressed in this master project consist of;

- i) Factors that lead to incompetent property manager need to be clearly identified and understood.
- ii) The most substantial factor which contributes to incompetent property manager in the property management industry must to be classified.

1.4 Research Questions

From the problems that have been discussed, it can be said that competency is a matter of utmost importance and challenges at present. This master project attempts to answer the following questions:

Q1 – What are the factors that lead to incompetent property manager?

The answer to this question is needed to clearly identify the factors that lead to incompetent property manager is through literature review.

Q2 – What is the critical factor which affect the competency of Property Managers in the property management industry in Malaysia?

The answer to this question will provide the most substantial factor which contributes to incompetent property manager in the property management industry by ranking its criticality.

1.5 Research Objectives

To solve the problems of the study that has been discussed before, then this master project intends to:

- i) To identify the factors that lead to incompetent property manager in Malaysia industry

- ii) To rank the factors according to the level of criticality in the property management industry in Malaysia

1.6 Scope of Research

This research consists of two (2) groups of respondent populations namely property management expert; and the property managers from property management company in Malaysia. These two groups of populations have been selected based on the findings in the literatures that recognised the role they play in the property management assessment and processes specifically refer to Chapter 3 for further details. Their opinion on the competency as a property manager in property management industry that has been identified in this research is the backbone to the achievement of the research objectives. The geographical coverage of this research is confined to property managers located within Kuala Lumpur and Selangor due to high supply of high-rise buildings and stratified developments.

1.7 Significance of Research

This master project contributes to:

- i) A key value of effective and competent property management is risk avoidance.
- ii) Competent property management will reduce costs for stakeholders whereby can assist in building a solid balance sheet and improve profit.
- iii) Competent property management provides understanding into quality, quantity and value of assets which will enable better judgements on procurement, precise depreciation and securing the building, occupants and data management.

The knowledge base, attitude, technical skills and passion are required of today's property management professional have changed significantly. The competency requirements for a professional property manager include advanced technical knowledge, a good grasp of business operations and a working knowledge of the real estate business environment. A good attitude tendencies towards organized management and the ability to integrate different concepts, apply sustainability principles and to be cost effective are essential elements of a successful professional property manager. In response to these challenges, this master project has focused on classifying the professional competencies expected of the various personnel in a property management team. The outcome of this master project is the capacity to rank the factors according to the level of criticality in the property management industry in Malaysia.

1.8 Research Methodology

Figure 1.4 shows the methodology flow chart of this research. The first phase in the research methodology aims to identify the factors that lead to incompetent property manager from the literatures. Then, the factors and parameters were surveyed and analysed in the Malaysian context specifically for property management. The significant or substantial factors of incompetent property manager were identified in Phase 2 by using importance index. Detailed discussion on the research methodology is presented in Chapter 3.

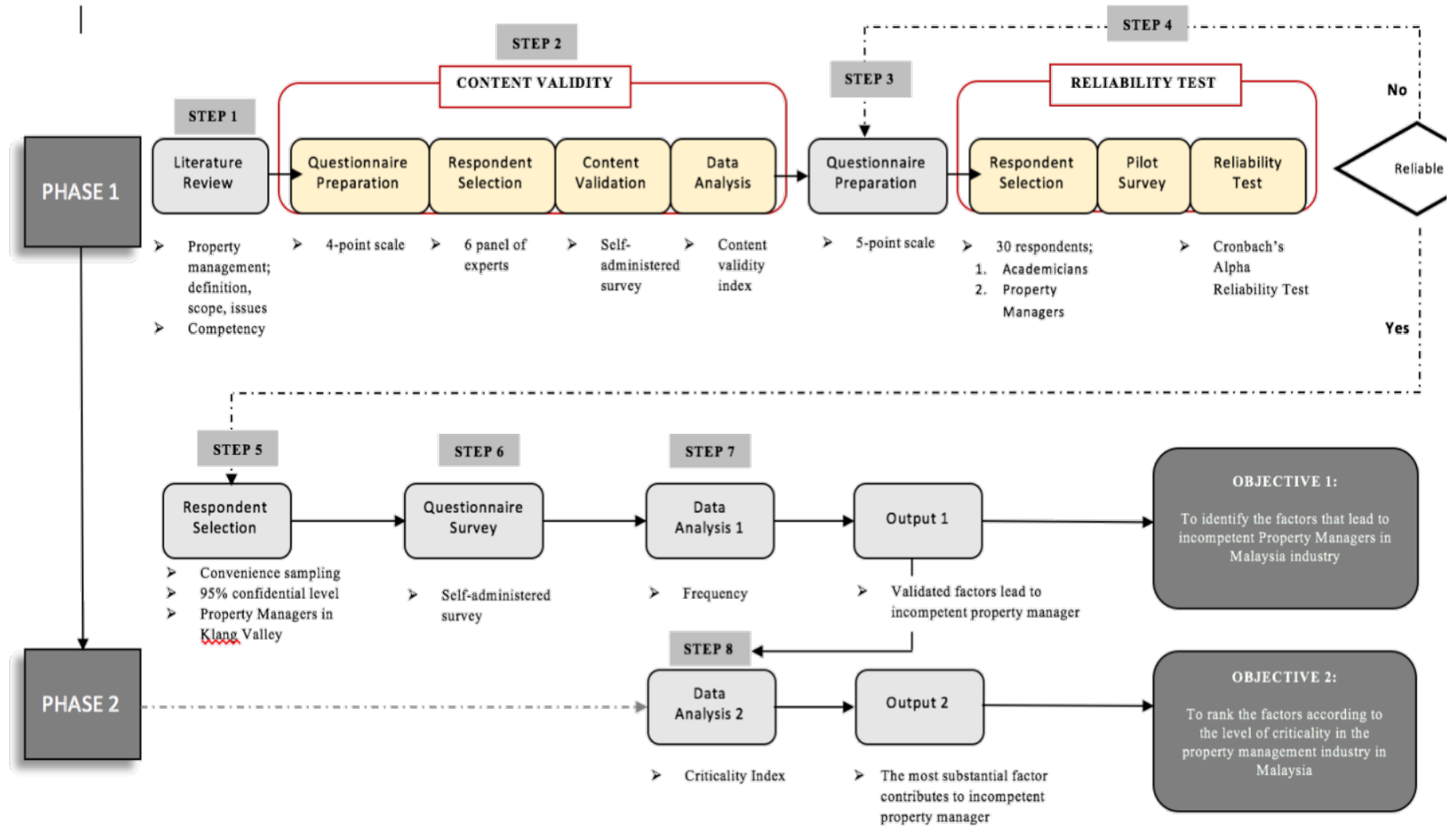


Figure 1.1: Research Methodology Diagram

1.9 Organisation of Chapters

The organisation of chapters in this master project is as follows:

Chapter 1 (Introduction): Chapter 1 discusses the background information of the master project including the statement of problem, research objectives, research scope, the significance of the master project, and a brief discussion on the research methodology.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review): Chapter 2 initially discusses the factors and relation between competency and property/facilities management in general. It reviews the history, studies and benefit of property management competency. This chapter also provides the concept and definition of property management; and the importance of competency in property management and discusses the property management competency in Malaysia in detail.

Chapter 3 (Research Methodology): Chapter 4 focuses the methodology employed in this master project. The chapter discusses about the questionnaire design developed from the factors and parameters of incompetent property manager established in Chapter 2. This chapter subsequently deliberates the selection of respondents, data collection works and analysis methods employed.

Chapter 4 (Data Analysis): Chapter 4 explains the analysis undertaken for achieving the first and second objectives of this master project. The ultimate principles in determining critical factors for incompetent property managers in Malaysia industry are discussed in the final part of this chapter.

Chapter 5 (Results and Discussion): This chapter discusses the results obtained and the extent to which the result fulfils the objectives of this research.

Chapter 6 (Conclusion and Recommendation): Chapter 6 concludes the findings and the overall master project works that have been commenced. The contribution and implication of the findings towards the property management industry in Klang Valley area particularly are discussed. The limitations and possible improvement for further actions will also be highlighted. The chapter ends with the recommendations for advance research.

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