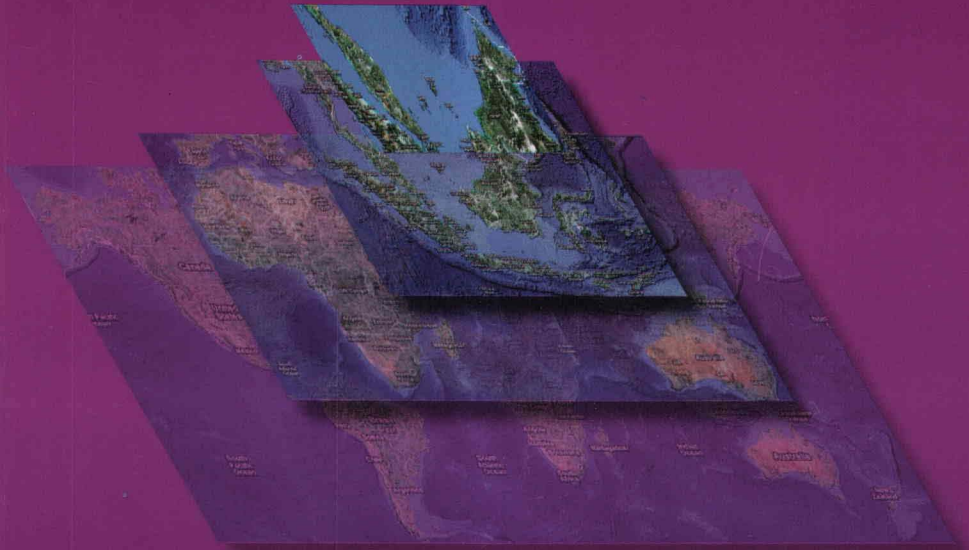


# **EXAMINING CONTEMPORARY MALAYSIA: Critical Knowledge From Research**



Volume 2    Jilid 2

**RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE & INTELLECT APPLICATION SERIES  
SIRI ILMU PENYELIDIKAN & APLIKASI INTELEK**

UfoRIA



UiTM

**EXAMINING CONTEMPORARY  
MALAYSIA:  
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# Foreword

This UfoRIA Research Knowledge and Intellect Application series has been evaluated and edited by a panel of expert and professional reviewers from within and outside the UiTM system. Most of the articles/papers in this special series has been presented at the 'Kontemporari' seminar series both at the state and national levels. A few articles/papers have even been presented and shared at regional and international seminar and conferences.

The articles/papers selected for this second volume discusses contemporary and also critical issues that need to be carefully examined and further researched by the academic community in Malaysia. This cycle of research effort and knowledge dissemination is a never-ending journey as we strive to make knowledge and learning more that just academic culture.

It is hoped that this Research Knowledge and Intellect Application series would continue the knowledge acculturation initiative that was started in 2002 when UfoRIA was born. This is the second out of two books, one in Malay and this particular volume in English, edited and published by the Unit for Research and Intellect Application (UfoRIA) with the support of the Campus Director of UiTM Seri Iskandar, Perak, Malaysia.

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# Property manager's knowledge and skills: a brief literature review towards achieving excellence

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## ABSTRACT

The development in landed properties has increased the demand for Property Managers. The introduction of newer and modern building technology has changed the roles and functions of property managers. In order to develop and ensure good property management practices, property management in different countries is subjected to local rules and regulations. In Malaysia, property managers are required to register with The Board of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents. However, complaints take place in the mass media, mainly on major areas such as technical knowledge, skills, attitude and abilities of the property managers. This triggers the need to identify and develop competency framework for property managers which is persistently referred as Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Others (KSAOs). This paper outlines the critical knowledge, skills, abilities and other areas which are required by the property managers based on current literature. Views from related professions involving property management are also taken into consideration in identifying the KSAOs for the property managers. We are optimistic this paper will add to new knowledge on the topic of competency and property management. It is hopeful that property managers will boast a concerted effort in developing good property management practices by means of a competency-based management programme.

**Keywords:** Property Management, Competencies, Knowledge, Skills and Ability



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The property management profession has developed for over half a century, but little attention has been devoted to its definition and origin. This is probably because its definition is too insignificant to most people. They relate property management to security, cleaning, and maintenance of property (Cheng, 1998). Scarret (1983) defined property management in a more strategic way, emphasizing the goals that property management can achieve. He stated “property management seeks to control property interests having regard to the short and long term objectives of the estate owner and particularly for the purpose to which the interest is held”. Property management is a direction and supervision of an interest in landed property with an aim of securing the optimum return; this return need not always be in the form of financial but may be in terms of social benefit, status, prestige, political power, some other goal or group goals (Thorncroft, 1965). Gurjit Singh (1991b) defined property management as an activity that covers a wide range of other related activities such as property management, facilities management, project management, property portfolio management, human resource management, investment management and the like. Zailan (2001) wrapped up the discussion saying that property management involved in determination of goal, objective and policies and implementing strategies in archiving these three elements. According to her the most important in property management is the physical asset management including maintenance, organization management which includes space organization or consumer requirement, financial management which includes valuation, buying and selling of property and tenancies management.

In Malaysia there are three factors that contribute to the development of property management. Firstly, the increase of population will directly increase the demand for new buildings and property managers of various types of property. Secondly, the increase of investment in landed properties will also increase the demand for professional property managers. Lastly, the public has accept the facts that knowledge and skill are critical in establishing good property management practice, contribute to the increase in the demand for professional property managers (Gurjit, 1991a).

The Malaysian Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents Act 1982, defined property management as the management and control of any land, building and

any interest therein, excluding the management of property-based businesses, on behalf of the owner for a fee and includes but not limited to the following responsibilities:

- a) Monitoring outgoings for the property and making out of the income from the property;
- b) Preparing budgets and maintaining the financial records for the property;
- c) Enforcing the terms of lease and other agreements pertaining to the property;
- d) Advising on sale and purchase decisions;
- e) Advising on insurance matters;
- f) Advising on the opportunities for realization of development or investment potential; and
- g) Advising on the necessity for upgrading the property or for the merging of interest.

The diverse definitions are not in conflict with each other but it can lead to misapprehension by the public and practitioners in understanding property management. In Malaysia there are debates going on between the registered and the non-registered property manager on the right in managing properties.

## 2.0 PROPERTY MANAGER

Thorncroft (1965) believed that property manager is the person that always concentrate on the implementing and interpretation of owner policies while practicing property management is giving advice on the possible outcomes from any alternative action proposed. Jenkin (1972) added that property manager is the person who leads a team which provides, supervises and controls the property management activities to archive the landlord goals and objectives. While Shankel (1980), defined property manager as the expert who manages property for a fee. They manage property to maximize the benefit from holding property. The benefits can maximize income, insurance coverage, reduce taxes and maintaining high capital appreciation.

In Malaysia, Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents Act (Act 242) 1981 Amended 1984 (Act A598) and Rules of 1983 (Amended 1986) regulate the

work of the professional property manager. Only those property managers registered with The Board of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agent Malaysia, are allowed to practice property management. Property Manager is defined as the persons, a firm or a company who, on behalf of the owner of any land, building and interest therein, manages and controls such land, building and interest to maintain or increase the investment in or physical worth of such property.

### 3.0 COMPETENCY

Posner verified that there are three components of competency. These are Knowledge (the capability of a person to upgrade their knowledge continuously in order to improve their self performance effectively), Skills (ability to use in practice the knowledge and skill in implementing the work efficiently to achieve the organization objectives), and Attributes (personal attributes and behaviours which are inherent in individual) (Posner, 1987).

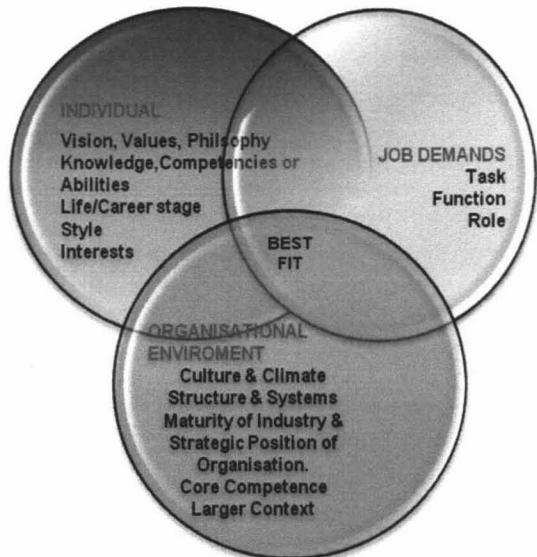
McClelland believed that competencies cannot be tested or identified traditionally. He suggested that it can be identified by Behavioural Event Interviews and not tested the knowledge as in the method of Psychometrics. Posner's and McClelland's agreed with Scott B Parry on "Competency is a cluster of related knowledge, attitude and skills that affects a major part of one's job (i.e. one or more key roles or responsibilities); that correlates with performance on the job; that can be measured against well-accepted standards and that can be improved via training and development" (Posner, 1987, McClelland, 1973, Parry, 1998b). McClelland and McBer (1973)(Posner, 1987, McClelland, 1973, Parry, 1998a) identified "competence"(a concept that had been popularised by White(1953) two decades earlier) as a better way of predicting job triumph on the basic that assessment tools that were used in research and academia were appropriate predictors of job success and biased against minorities, women and unprivileged individual (McClelland, 1973). According to a survey conducted by Rutherford on the importance of the responsibility of a hotel chief engineer in 1987; showed the respond that relations, organization, leadership and training are more important than technical knowledge (Rutherford, 1987). In 1997, Mc Lagen reviewed the concept of competence and defined six main types of competencies; task competencies, result competencies, output competencies, knowledge, skills

and attitude competencies and super performer differentiators. Thirteen years after Mc Lagen's (1980) articles, Spencer and Spencer (1993) acknowledged very similar uses for competency models: assessment and job-job person matching for recruiting, placement, retention and promotion; succession planning; development and career patching. In addition, the following uses were identified as applications of the competency model:

- o Performance management
- o Competency-based pay
- o Integrated human resources management information system
- o Competency-based workforce planning

Boyatzis (2008) defined competency as a capability or ability. It is a set of related but different sets of behaviour organized around an underlying construct which can be called "intent". The behaviours are alternate manifestation of the intent, as appropriate in various situation or times (Boyatzis, 2008). He also confirmed that performance theory is the basis of the concept of competency. Maximum performance is believed to occur when the person's capability or talent is consistent with the need of the job demand and organizational environment as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Theory of action and job performance: best fit (max performance, Stimulation and comitment) = area of maximun overlap or intergration**



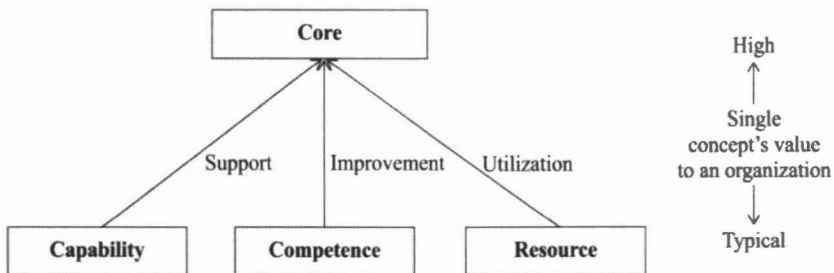
Boyatzis summarised that, the research published over the last 30 years shows us that, outstanding leaders, managers, advanced professionals and people in key jobs appear to require three clusters of behavioral habits as threshold abilities and three clusters of competencies as distinguishing outstanding performance. The threshold cluster of competencies are:

- Expertise and experience is a threshold level of competency;
- Knowledge (i.e declarative, procedural, functional, and metacognitive) is a threshold competency; and
- An assortment of basic cognitive competencies, such as memory and deductive reasoning as threshold competencies.

Competencies are a behavioral approach to emotional, social and cognitive intelligence (Boyatzis, 2008).

Ljungquist (2007), recognised the complex concept in specifying competencies theoretically, empirically and to apply in practice. Javidan (1989) introduced “competencies hierarchy”. The competencies are categorised as cumulative competencies and qualitative competencies. The hierarchy starts with resources at the bottom, capabilities, which build on resources, and then competencies, which build on both resources and capabilities. Core competencies reside on the highest level, they are of the greatest value to organizations, but are the most difficult to achieve. Ljungquist opposed the competencies hierarchy of Javidan (1998), he commented it could not be verified, accordingly and concluded that the associated concepts all reside at the same hierarchy level. It is simplified in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Outlined core competence model: Associated concepts linked to the core competence concept**



**Table 1. The brief development of competency theory**

<b>FIRST STAGE - Individual competencies</b>	
<b>Precursor of Competencies</b>	<b>John Flanagan (1954)</b>
He invented Critical Interview Technique which was used to probe skills. Flange did not use the word competency.	
<b>Father of Competencies</b>	<b>David Mc Clelland (1973)</b>
He was a professor in Harvard, Social psychologist. He concentrated on search on attitudes and habits outstanding and distinguished employees. The aim of his research was to elaborate better recruitment/selection method that psychometric/intelligent test. Mc Clelland invented Behavioural Event Interview base on Flanagan work. He shaped a statement "Do not test intelligence, test a competence!"	
<b>Managerial competencies</b>	<b>Richard Boyatzis (1982)</b>
He conducted research on managerial effectiveness in USA. He identified effectively/distinguished excellent manager by using competencies.	
<b>SECOND STAGE - Managing competencies in organisation</b>	
<b>Managing competencies</b>	<b>Patricia Mc Lagan (1980)</b>
Competency model - as a decision/management tool. Which firstly is describing requirements or standards for work and it can be a center for all H.R processes such as selection, appraisals etc.	
<b>Competencies Model</b>	<b>Lyle &amp; Signe Spencer (1993)</b>
They elaborate the methodology of building competencies model within organisation. The basis of building the competency model is by selecting high values in relation to organisation.	
<b>THIRD STAGE -Organizational competencies / core competency</b>	
<b>Father of core competency</b>	<b>Prahalad I Hamel (1990)</b>
Core competencies are common knowledge that exists within organisation. It coordinates production and innovation abilities. Core competencies when enforce will result in wide range of client market. It will end up with outstanding contribution to client benefit at the end of supply chain. Core competencies are difficult to imitate or copy.	
<b>Competencies - organization capabilities</b>	<b>Dave Ulrich (1997)</b>
Organisation capabilities are common skills, abilities and expert knowledge that exist within organisation. Competency models are tools to built competitive advantage. Ability of an organization to establish internal structures and processes that influences its members to create organization-specific competencies and thus enable the organization to adapt to changing customer and strategic needs.	

## Core Competency

Selznick (1957) recognised the internal factor to a business, i.e. personnel and its previous experiences were influential in determining the success of the organisation's competitiveness. He called this Strengths Weakness Opportunities and Threats analysis (SWOT), which assisted business to identify "their distinctive competence". This was further developed in the late 1960s by Ansoff (1965) who introduced the concept of benchmarking. He suggested that managers develop lists, called "grids of competence", of the organisation's competitive strengths and recourses against competitor in the given market. Then the direction of management started to change to focus more on the external factors facing a business, i.e. the marketplace and techniques portfolio management, which led to the outsourcing of capabilities that were required. This thought remained until the emergence of Resource Base View theory (RBV). It was an alternative way of looking at business, based on resources, capabilities and competencies of the organisation. Core competence as a concept has evolved through the RBV (Petts, 1997). Mc Lagen (1980) developed the concept of "competency models" and defined them as "decision tools which described the key capabilities required to perform a job". These tools were defined as a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes or intellectual strategies. ***"At their best, competency models can be more reliable than job description (which talk about job not skill and knowledge specification), more succinct and valid than skill list, and more consistently on target than "gut feel".***

Prahalad and Hamel, introduced core competency in the early 1990s and is defined as "the collective learning in the organization, especially how to coordinate diverse production skills and integrate multiple streams of technologies" (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990). Later, the definition was expanded to include "a bundle of skills and technology that enable a company to provide benefit to customers" (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994). Three criteria that distinguish between a core competence and a competence are as follows:

- a) A core competence must contribute significantly to customer benefit from a product.
- b) A core competence should be competitively unique, and as such, must be difficult for competitors to imitate.

- c) A core competence should provide potential access to a wide variety of markets.

Caudron (1998b) categorised core competencies into five main categories. **Initiative:** (to succeed in team-based, empowered work environments, employees must be able to identify what needs to be done-and do it). **Ability to learn:** (If employees demonstrate the ability-and willingness-to learn, they are also more likely to be able to think critically, solve problems, and aid decision-making). **Communication:** (All employees' need the ability to articulate their thought, listen to others, pass along information, and negotiate conflict). **Collaborate:** (Employees have to be comfortable with other points of view in order to brain storm, innovate, and solve problem with others). **Adaptability:** (Because of the rapid pace of change in business, an inflexible employee is almost certainly an unproductive one (Caudron, 1998a). Then Robert M, affirmed that Core Competencies can be categorised into four different levels of leadership. Several competencies are the same across these levels; however specific behaviour within these competencies differs across the management level (Brown, 2005).

Carol and McCrackin (1998) as quoted by Ozcelik and Ferman (2006b) argued that competencies are generally organised into three categories. First the **core competency**, which first proposed by Prahalad and Hamel (1990), refers to the elements of behaviour that are important for all employees to possess, for example "results/quality orientation." It is much better to institutionalise these competencies within the organisation because employees are transient. The second category is **leadership/managerial** competencies. It involves competencies that relate to leading an organisation and people to achieve an organisation's objectives that relate to managing, supervising and developing people. Some examples include visionary leadership, strategic thinking and developing people. The third category is **functional (job specific) competencies**, those that are required to be performed in a particular job role or profession.



**Table 2. Level of Core competencies according to Robert M. Brown Jr, (2005)**

Level	Core Competency
Executive	Self-awareness, ethics and values, vision and mission, strategic thinking, external environment, power and influence, collaboration and team building.
Senior Leader	Self-awareness, ethics and values, vision and mission, strategic thinking, external environment, power and influence, collaboration, team building and strategic planning.
Manager	Ethics and values, interpersonal relationships, team building, collaboration, managing conflict, developing direct reports, problem solving and decision making, knowledge of criminal justice, program planning, performance assessment and strategic thinking.
Supervisor	Ethics and values, interpersonal relationships, team building, collaboration, managing conflict, developing direct reports, problem solving and decision making, knowledge of criminal justice, oral and written communication, motivating others and change management.

#### 4.0 PROPERTY MANAGER'S COMPETENCIES

Pheng and Lee (1993) conducted a survey of 350 Property Managers in Singapore and concluded that the critical competencies for property managers are; good knowledge on land title, good communication skill, ability to built rapport with council members, cooperative council members and council members should be committed and active.

Tas and his team research on property management trainees of a hotel has chosen the skill of public relation, professional ethics, and diplomacy as well as oral and written relation as the required competency for the success of a management (Tas et al., 1996). Johnson (1996a) discovered in his research involving 486 property managers, that to become a successful property manager, skill and knowledge are very crucial. *Skills* ( Interpersonal, supervisory, oral communication, leasing/sales, accounting, computer) and *Knowledge* (financial management, marketing, maintenance, landlord/tenant law). Johson and Goss, (1996b), Scott B Parry's (1998a) listed four groups of core competencies needed

by a property manager; *Administrative* (Time management and prioritizing, setting goals and standards, planning and scheduling work). *Communication* (Listening and organizing, giving clear information, getting unbiased information). *Supervisory* (Training, coaching and delegating, appraising people and performance, disciplining and counselling). *Cognitive* (Identifying and solving problems, making decisions, weighting risks, thinking clearly and analytically). In 1996 Donnellan conducted a survey involving major retailers in the United States of America and established that communication skills and entertaining customers appear to be the most important factors to triumph in retail business. Later in 1998 his paper was awarded the best paper of the year 1998 by International Council of Shopping Complex (Donnellan, 1998). Buang (2007) suggested that the core competencies for Facilities Asset Manager which are much related to Property Manager consisted of core competencies and new competencies needed. The core competencies are, education, experience, specific body of knowledge, skills and other training while the new competencies needed are, business process knowledge, strategic thinking planning, strong analytical capabilities, relationship building skills, ability to negotiate, listening and communication skills, interdisciplinary team management and the need to establish user evaluation schedule for new and old asset facilities (Buang, 2007). The property manager competencies can be summarised in Table 2.

**Table 3. Property Manager's Competencies**

No.	Author	Profession	Competencies
1.	Pheng and Lee (1993)	Property Manager	1. Knowledge on land title 2. Communication skill 3. Ability to built rapport with council members 4. Cooperative council members and council members 5. Committed and active
2.	(Richard F. Tas, 1996)	Property Management Trainees (Hotel)	1. Public relation 2. Professional ethics 3. Diplomacy 4. Oral and written relation

No.	Author	Profession	Competencies
3.	Johnson (1996)	Property Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Skills</b> – Interpersonal, supervisory, oral communication, leasing/sales, accounting and computer</li> <li>2. <b>Knowledge</b> – financial management, marketing, maintenance and landlord/tenant law.</li> </ol>
4.	Donnellan (1996)	Major Retailer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication skills and</li> <li>2. Entertaining customer appear to be the most important factors to triumph in retail business</li> </ol>
5.	Scott B Parry (1998)	Property Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Administrative</b> – Time management and prioritizing, setting goals and standards, planning and scheduling work.</li> <li>2. <b>Communication</b> – Listening and organizing, giving clear information, getting unbiased information.</li> <li>3. <b>Supervisory</b> – Training, coaching and delegating, appraising people and performance, disciplining and counselling.</li> <li>4. <b>Cognitive</b> – Identifying and solving problems, making decisions, weighting risks, thinking clearly and analytically</li> </ol>
6.	Ketelhohn (1998)	General Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Essential competencies, plain competencies, core competencies, spillover competencies, protective competencies, parasitic competencies, and so on are similar to key success factor (KSFs) and it only buzz words that is used to emphasize the severity of the matter discussed.</li> </ol>

No.	Author	Profession	Competencies
7.	Kay and Moncarz, 2004	Hospitality Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Knowledge in financial management plays a significant role in managers' advancement and careers in the lodging industry</li> <li>2. Hospitality management requisites have changed over time, with increasing importance placed on competencies such as financial management and marketing</li> <li>3. Knowledge in financial management can drive professional success to a greater degree as managers advance to higher ranks of responsibility.</li> <li>4. Differences exist between executive opinion on KSAs considered important and actual competencies distinguishing senior-level executives from their subordinate middle-level managers.</li> </ol>
8.	Buang (2007)	Facilities Asset Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Core competencies are, education, experience, specific body of knowledge, skills and other trainings while the</li> <li>2. New competencies needed are, business process knowledge, strategic thinking planning, strong analytical capabilities, relationship building skills, ability to negotiate, listening and communication skills, interdisciplinary team management and the need to establish user evaluation schedule for new and old asset facilities</li> </ol>
8.	Maziah (2007)	Facilities Asset Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basic competency Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and</li> <li>2. Others FM core competency- Business, risk management and cost reduction</li> </ol>

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

As a final point, core competencies or success factors can be summarised into four main categories such as knowledge, skills, ability and others (KSAOs). These are accepted by most scholars in the related field. (Ketelhohn, 1998a, Kay and Moncarz, 2004b, Maziah, 2007, Buang, 2007) The KSAOs can be summarised as tabulated in Table 3.

**Table 4. KSAOs for Property Manager**

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities	Others
Asset Management Business process Financial management Information Technology Land title Landlord tenant law Maintenance Marketing Principal and practice of management Strategic thinking Technical	Accounting Administrative Budgeting and capital investment Change management Communication Computer Coordinating personnel Inter Personal Leasing/sales Market analysis Negotiation Problem solving Strategic management Team management	Ability to learn Adaptability Analytical capabilities Collaborate Conceptual Cooperative and appreciative Develop short and long term plans Effectively manage projects Establish priorities to meet deadlines Initiative Leadership Oral communication Think out of the box	Committed and active Competitive Differentiating competencies Emotional stability Ethics Evaluate user respond Integrity Moral Necessary competencies Positive self image Self confidence Specific body of knowledge Versatility

The three main domains are concentrated on the general business process, risk management and cost reduction in property management. These are necessary to secure capital investments by the owner. Before we wrap up our findings we noted that from a study done by the Malaysian Managers, core competencies are identified as communication, managerial and job knowledge. While findings from the earlier literature show that the core competencies among American Manager are writing skills, computer skills and industry understanding (Junaidah, 2008).

This clearly proved that core competencies for different professions vary from each other and the places of practice also contribute to the differences of core competency. However to validate the KSAOs for successful property managers is also analogous to core competencies. To determine the KSAOs (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities & Others) peculiarly for Malaysian Property Managers, future research is needed. Decisively KSAOs for property managers are subject to the types of property, the landlord goal, location, level of management in property management and other factors yet to be discovered.

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