**Summative Assessment of Big Data Analytics**

Word count: 2861

Task 1: Rental “demand” investigation

1. Discrete Variables: These include bedrooms, cats\_allowed, dogs\_allowed, smoking\_allowed, wheelchair\_access, electric\_vehicle\_charge, and comes\_furnished. These are primarily binary (0 or 1) except for bedrooms, which is a count.

Assumptions:

The dataset assumes variables indicating demand, either directly or indirectly, and categorizes bedrooms and smoking\_allowed as discrete factors affecting demand. Rent, type, and property size (sqfeet) are significant in determining demand.

Pre-processing undertaken to make the data fit for purpose

The data pre-processing steps for the datasets housing\_train.csv and housing\_test.csv involved several cleaning and encoding operations to prepare them for analysis. Initially, columns incompatible with Weka [1] , such as url, region\_url, and description, were removed. In the demand column of housing\_train.csv, URL links were deleted, and variations of the value 'no' were standardized. Additionally, the demand column was encoded to represent 'yes' as 1 and 'no' as 0. After cleaning, the files were converted into ARFF format [2] using ArffViewer for further processing.

Subsequently, Correlation Based Feature Selection (CBFS) [3] was applied to both the training and testing datasets, as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. This process involved computing the Pearson correlation [4] for each attribute against the output variable, selecting only those attributes with a moderate-to-high positive or negative correlation. This selection technique, which utilizes the CorrelationAttributeEval [5] method and a Ranker search method in Weka, aims to improve the predictive accuracy by focusing on the most relevant features.

Feature Importance Analysis:

• Bedrooms: This feature has the most significant impact on predicting property demand, with a correlation of approximately both -0.42 in both training the testing dataset. This suggests that the number of bedrooms is a critical factor in determining low demand for properties.

• Other Features: Other discrete variables such as cats\_allowed, dogs\_allowed, smoking\_allowed, wheelchair\_access, electric\_vehicle\_charge, and comes\_furnished have much lower importance scores, indicating a relatively minor role in predicting property demand within this dataset.

Justification for Techniques and Approach

Correlation Based Feature Selection (CBFS) was used for its efficacy in spotting linear links between independent variables and a target. This approach is ideal for datasets with discrete variables and a binary outcome, aiding in pinpointing direct influencers without assuming complex or non-linear interactions. It's in line with literature that advises CBFS for initial feature selection in such analytical contexts.

Critical Evaluation

Effectiveness:

The approach was effective in pinpointing the most influential discrete variable (bedrooms) in predicting property demand. This aligns with intuitive understanding and previous research [6], which often highlights the significance of property size and type in rental decisions.

Limitations:

The analysis focused on linear relationships, possibly missing complex variable interactions affecting demand dynamics [7], like the impact of pets and furnishing on certain market segments. It suggests that the minor significance of variables beyond bedrooms doesn't imply unimportance but highlights the need for advanced analytical methods [8], such as machine learning, to reveal hidden patterns.

Learnings:

The exploration emphasized correlational analysis for initial feature selection, yet necessitated advanced techniques for comprehensive demand predictor understanding. It showcased data preprocessing and encoding's vital role in dataset preparation, crucial for categorical data, to accurately represent underlying phenomena.

1. Simple Linear Regression analysis [9] on preprocessed datasets revealed very low positive correlations between rent and demand, indicating minimal linear relationships. Specifically, training and testing datasets showed Pearson correlation coefficients of 0.0001 (Figure 3) and 0.1791 (Figure 4), respectively. Further analysis was conducted for the variable 'type' after converting nominal values to binary (Figure 5), and for other variables against demand across training and testing datasets (Figure 6 – Figure 24). The comprehensive Pearson correlation coefficients for each variable with demand were consolidated in Table 1, elucidating the extent of linear relationships between various factors and demand within the dataset.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Pearson correlation for training dataset | Pearson correlation for testing dataset |
| rent | 0.0001 | 0.1791 |
| type\_apartment | 0.2676 | 0.2222 |
| type\_house | -0.3311 | -0.2487 |
| type\_manufactured | 0.0047 | 0.0124 |
| type\_townhouse | -0.0203 | 0.015 |
| type\_condo | -0.0237 | 0.001 |
| type\_ duplex | 0.0095 | -0.0172 |
| type\_ flat | 0.0043 | 0.0038 |
| type\_ cottage/cabin | 0.0097 | N.A. |
| type\_ in-law | 0.0047 | N.A. |
| type\_ loft | 0.006 | 0.0072 |
| type\_land | 0.0009 | N.A. |

Table 1: Pearson correlation for each variable with demand

In analyzing a dataset with mixed categorical and numerical variables, such as property type, demand, and rent, the study applied one-hot encoding for property type and binary encoding for demand to enable correlation analysis. This preprocessing aligns with established methods in the field [11]. The findings indicated a minor positive correlation between apartments and demand, a slight negative correlation for houses, and negligible correlation between rent prices and demand. These results suggest that property type is a stronger indicator of demand than rent levels.

Justification for Selection of Techniques

The approach to analyze the correlation between property demand and characteristics such as rent and type was driven by the nature of the data and the objectives of the investigation. Correlation analysis is a widely accepted statistical method for identifying the strength and direction of linear relationships between variables [12]. It is particularly useful in exploratory data analysis to understand potential predictors for a model or to identify trends within the data.

Evaluation of Approach and Techniques

Effectiveness:

One-hot Encoding [13]: Effective for transforming categorical data into a numerical format suitable for correlation analysis, allowing us to include property type in our analysis.

Correlation Analysis [14]: Useful for identifying potential linear relationships between variables at a high level.

Ineffectiveness:

Overlooking Non-linear Relationships: The chosen method focuses on linear relationships, potentially missing non-linear dynamics between variables and demand [15].

Simplicity of Demand Encoding: Treating demand as binary oversimplifies the complexity of demand, possibly overlooking variations in demand levels [16] .

Reflections:

The simplicity of the approach allowed for a straightforward analysis but may have limited the depth of insights. For example, machine learning models like decision trees or regression models could provide more nuanced understandings of how different property characteristics interact to influence demand. Additionally, considering demand as a continuous variable, if data permits, could offer a more granular view of how rent and property types affect demand levels.

1. In the study, Excel [17] and Weka were used to preprocess and analyze the datasets, focusing on "demand" and "sqfeet" attributes. Clustering analysis [18] on the training dataset identified optimal sqfeet ranges, with a mean of 970.9358 and standard deviation (SD) of 786.6424 for sqfeet, and a mean of 0.9998 and SD of 0.0021 for demand (Figure 25). The calculated optimal range for sqfeet was between 577.6146 and 1364.257, derived from subtracting and adding half of the SD to the mean, respectively. This range was applied to clean the data in Excel, filtering sqfeet values outside this range and selecting records with demand=1. A simple linear regression indicated a significant linear relationship between cleaned sqfeet and demand, evidenced by a correlation coefficient of 0.2606 (Figure 26). Further analysis revealed two clusters with distinct means and SDs for sqfeet and corresponding demand values, suggesting different optimal sqfeet ranges for generating high demand.

The testing dataset underwent a similar process, where the upper bound for the optimal sqfeet range was extended to 1651.958, based on cluster analysis (Figure 28). Cleaning the testing dataset and further cluster analysis (Figure 29) confirmed the linear relationship between sqfeet and demand within this new range, with the same correlation coefficient of 0.2606. The findings suggest that property size, represented by sqfeet, has an optimal range that significantly influences demand.

Assumptions Made:

Demand for properties is quantifiable and directly correlates with specific attributes, primarily "sqfeet".

The data is normally distributed [19], allowing for the application of mean and standard deviation in identifying optimal ranges .

A linear relationship exists between "sqfeet" and "demand", making linear regression a suitable analysis technique [19].

Justification for Techniques

Clustering Analysis was chosen for its effectiveness in identifying patterns and groupings in datasets without predefined categories [20], making it ideal for exploring the relationship between "sqfeet" and "demand".

Simple Linear Regression was selected due to its suitability in modeling the linear relationship between two continuous variables, supported by previous studies suggesting a linear relationship between property attributes and demand [21].

Critical Evaluation:

The approach effectively identified a significant relationship between "sqfeet" and "demand", with the clustering and linear regression analyses providing a robust framework for analysis [22]. However, the reliance on linear regression and normal distribution assumptions may not capture non-linear relationships or the influence of outlier data points [23].

The process highlighted the importance of data preprocessing and the selection of appropriate analysis techniques tailored to the nature of the data and the investigation's goals. Future investigations could benefit from incorporating more sophisticated models, such as multiple regression or machine learning algorithms, to account for multiple variables affecting demand [24].

Task 2: Storing data and possible solutions

Part 1: Design a relational database

1. Initial Data Structure and Normalization Process

The dataset initially comprises various fields including id, url, region, rent, and more. The normalization process begins by ensuring the dataset adheres to the First Normal Form (1NF), where id is selected as the primary key for its unique identification capability, essential for data integrity and efficient retrieval. The dataset inherently meets 1NF requirements as it presents atomic values, lacks repeating groups, and each row is uniquely identifiable [25].

Transitioning to Second Normal Form (2NF) requires the database to be in 1NF and mandates that all non-key attributes are fully functional and dependent on the primary key. This stage often involves splitting the database into multiple tables (Listings, Regions, Amenities, Options, Demand) to eliminate partial dependencies and ensure all non-key attributes directly depend on the primary key [26].

• Listings: (id, url, rent, type, sqfeet, bedrooms, bathrooms, description)

• Regions: (region, state, region\_url, latitude, long)

• Amenities: (id, cats\_allowed, dogs\_allowed, smoking\_allowed, wheelchair\_access, electric\_vehicle\_charge, comes\_furnished)

• Options: (id, laundry\_options, parking\_options)

• Demand: (id, demand)

Achieving Third Normal Form (3NF) necessitates the database being in 2NF and having no transitive dependencies, where no non-key attribute depends on another non-key attribute. Adjustments ensure each attribute in every table directly depends on the primary key, refining the database structure to avoid anomalies during data operations [27].

• Listings: Primary Key (id), Foreign Keys (region), and attributes (url, rent, type, sqfeet, bedrooms, bathrooms, description).

• Regions: Primary Key (region), attributes (state, region\_url, latitude, long).

• Amenities: Primary Key (id), attributes (cats\_allowed, dogs\_allowed, smoking\_allowed, wheelchair\_access, electric\_vehicle\_charge, comes\_furnished)

• Options: Primary Key (id), attributes for laundry\_options and parking\_options.

• Demand: Primary Key (id), attribute (demand).

Final Design and ER Diagram Components

The final database design reflects a careful consideration of attribute grouping based on logical relationships and dependencies, with the primary aim of enhancing data integrity, reducing redundancy, and facilitating efficient data management. Key components and relationships are illustrated in the ER diagram, including:

* Listings with a primary key (id) and attributes related to the listing itself.
* Regions categorized geographically with attributes including state and coordinates, reflecting a one-to-many relationship with Listings.
* Amenities and Options tables, each linked to Listings by a primary key, ensuring attributes like laundry\_options and parking\_options are normalized to eliminate redundancy.
* Demand table, directly related to Listings, capturing the demand attribute.

This structured approach, guided by the principles of normalization, ensures a robust database design capable of supporting accurate and efficient data operations. By focusing on the selection of primary keys and the logical grouping of attributes, the design achieves a balance between data integrity and operational efficiency, providing a solid foundation for data management and retrieval within the relational database structure [28].

Lucidchart [29] was used to create a UML standard ER diagram (Figure 31)

**b. Sample SQL Statements**

Please see the appendix for the sample SQL [30] for the database. DuckDB [31] was chosen to be the database. DuckDB and pandas [32] python [33] package were used on Jupyter notebook [34] to build the database. Output of the sample SQL can be seen in the screenshot of the Jupyter notebook (Figures 41 – 44). Jupyter notebook was converted to html to include in the submission of the summative assessment.

Part 2: Consider scaling

For addressing the needs of a housing manager dealing with significant data volumes across international offices, a distributed system architecture that utilizes Hadoop [35] ecosystem technologies is proposed as a comprehensive solution. The Hadoop ecosystem is especially well-suited for processing and analyzing large datasets within a distributed computing environment, making it an ideal option for a global rental landscape that demands quick data processing and high responsiveness.

Scalable Solution Using Hadoop

Hadoop Distributed File System (HDFS): Forms the basis of the Hadoop ecosystem, offering a reliable and scalable storage solution capable of managing data from tens of megabytes to petabytes over multiple computers. It divides large files into blocks and distributes them throughout the cluster to ensure high availability and fault tolerance [36].

Apache Hadoop YARN: Acts as a resource manager, dynamically allocating system resources to various applications within the Hadoop ecosystem to optimize cluster utilization [37].

Apache HBase: A NoSQL distributed database running atop HDFS, suitable for real-time read/write access to large datasets, such as those generated by international rental listings [38].

Apache Hive: Enables querying and managing large datasets in distributed storage via SQL-like commands, ideal for analytical queries and reports on collected data [39].

Apache Spark: A cluster-computing framework that surpasses traditional MapReduce jobs in speed, apt for real-time analytics and rapid data processing tasks [40].

Apache Kafka: A distributed streaming platform that complements Hadoop for real-time data processing and messaging, capable of handling large data volumes from various sources [41].

Justification for Using Hadoop Ecosystem

Scalability and Fault Tolerance: With components like HDFS and YARN, the Hadoop ecosystem offers excellent scalability and fault tolerance, distributing data across many servers to handle growing data volumes and replicating data blocks across nodes to enhance resilience against failures [42].

Cost-Effectiveness: Hadoop operates on commodity hardware, providing an economical solution for storing and processing large datasets, crucial for international expansion [43].

Flexibility and Real-Time Processing: The ecosystem's ability to process various data types and integrate tools for real-time analytics (Apache Spark) and data ingestion (Apache Kafka) makes it highly suitable for the dynamic global rental market [44].

Example Use Case

An application of the Hadoop ecosystem could involve monitoring and analyzing rental trends across regions to identify high-demand areas. Data from international listings would be ingested into HDFS, analyzed in real-time using Spark, and stored in HBase for quick access. Kafka would stream data changes [45], triggering alerts or actions based on Spark's analysis, enabling rapid market response and effective resource allocation across international offices.

Comparison Against Other Technologies

Cloud-Based Solutions: While cloud platforms like AWS or Google Cloud Platform offer managed services that can simplify global data infrastructure management, they may become costly with increasing data and compute needs. These platforms provide scalability and global reach but may lack the control and cost-effectiveness of a self-managed Hadoop cluster for large-scale data processing [46].

Traditional RDBMS: These systems, designed for structured data, often fail to scale efficiently for the volume and variety of data encountered in a global rental market. They lack the scalability and fault tolerance of Hadoop and can become prohibitively expensive to scale for petabyte-level data handling [47].

NoSQL Databases: Although databases like Cassandra or MongoDB offer scalability and flexibility for unstructured data, they don't provide an integrated ecosystem for comprehensive data processing, analytics, and real-time processing like Hadoop, when combined with Spark and Hive, does [48].

Task 3: Considering web-based application

Given the context of developing a public-facing application to promote a housing manager's business and the intention to capture personal details of potential clients, here are the three most salient privacy issues to consider, informed by the details provided in Task 1 and Task 2:

1. Data Security and Privacy Compliance

Issue: The collection of personal details online raises significant concerns regarding data security and compliance with privacy regulations [49] (e.g., GDPR in the EU [50], CCPA in California [51]). Without proper safeguards, sensitive information could be vulnerable to breaches, leading to legal repercussions and loss of trust.

Strategies:

Encryption: Implement robust encryption protocols for data at rest and in transit to protect personal information [52].

Compliance Audits: Regularly audit practices to ensure adherence to all relevant privacy laws and regulations [53].

Data Minimization: Collect only the information necessary for the provided services, reducing the potential impact of a data breach [54].

2. Consent and Transparency

Issue: Potential clients must be fully informed about how their data will be used, including data analysis and storage intentions. Lack of transparency and consent could lead to privacy violations and erode client trust [55].

Strategies:

Clear Privacy Policy: Develop a clear and accessible privacy policy detailing data use, storage, and sharing practices [56].

Consent Mechanism: Implement an explicit consent mechanism for users to agree to the collection and use of their data [57].

User Control: Provide users with tools to view, modify, and delete their personal information, enhancing transparency and control [58].

3. Long-term Data Storage and Accessibility

Issue: The move towards permanent data storage, as indicated in Task 2's use of distributed systems like Hadoop, increases the risk of data becoming outdated, inaccurately reflecting client preferences, or being accessed without authorization over time [59].

Strategies:

Data Retention Policy: Establish and communicate a clear data retention policy that defines how long data will be stored and the criteria for its deletion [60].

Regular Data Review: Periodically review stored data for accuracy and relevance, deleting or updating information as necessary [61].

Access Controls: Implement strict access controls and authentication mechanisms to ensure only authorized personnel can access sensitive data [62].

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Appendices

(Due to the limit of pages, marker can enlarge the document to see the details)

Figures and code in jupyter notebook/html are attached in the submission file

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| A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 1: Correlation Based Feature Selection on training dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generatedFigure 2: Correlation Based Feature Selection on testing dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 3: Simple Linear Regression with rent and demand on the training dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 4: Simple Linear Regression with rent and demand on the testing dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generatedFigure 14: Simple Linear Regression with type\_in-law and demand on the training datasetFigure 15: Simple Linear Regression with type\_loft and demand on the training dataset A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 16: Simple Linear Regression with type\_land and demand on the training dataset  Figure 17: Simple Linear Regression with type\_apartment and demand on the testing dataset | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 5: preprocessing of “nominal to binary” was performed on the type variable.  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 6: Simple Linear Regression with type\_apartment and demand on the training dataset    Figure 7: Simple Linear Regression with type\_house and demand on the training dataset    Figure 8: Simple Linear Regression with type\_manufactured and demand on the training dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 9: Simple Linear Regression with type\_townhouse and demand on the training dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated Figure 18: Simple Linear Regression with type\_house and demand on the testing dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 19: Simple Linear Regression with type\_manufactured and demand on the testing dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 20: Simple Linear Regression with type\_townhouse and demand on the testing dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 21: Simple Linear Regression with type\_condo and demand on the testing dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 22: Simple Linear Regression with type\_duplex and demand on the testing dataset | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 10: Simple Linear Regression with type\_condo and demand on the training dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 11: Simple Linear Regression with type\_duplex and demand on the training dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 12: Simple Linear Regression with type\_flat and demand on the training dataset    Figure 13: Simple Linear Regression with type\_cottage/cabin and demand on the training dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 23: Simple Linear Regression with type\_flat and demand on the testing dataset  Figure 24: Simple Linear Regression with type\_loft and demand on the testing dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 25: Clustering with sqlfeet and demand on the training dataset  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 26: Simple Linear Regression with sqlfeet\_cleaned and demand on the training dataset | | |
| A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 27: Further clustering with sqlfeet and demand on the selected cleaned training dataset | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated Figure 28: Clustering with sqlfeet and demand on the testing dataset | | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generatedFigure 29: Further clustering with sqlfeet and demand on the selected cleaned testing dataset |

A diagram of a company

Description automatically generatedA screenshot of a computer

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Figure 30: Simple Linear Regression with sqlfeet\_cleaned and demand on the testing dataset

Figure 31: UML standard ER diagram of the database

Sample SQL statement

1. Inserting a New Line of Data

Assuming the tables have been created according to the ER diagram, here's how you would insert a new listing, along with its amenities, options, and demand information. Note that this is a simplified example and assumes all necessary foreign keys and relationships have been properly set up.

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| -- Insert into Regions  INSERT INTO Regions (region, state, region\_url, latitude, long) VALUES ('San Francisco', 'CA', 'https://sfbay.craigslist.org',  37.7749, -122.4194); | -- Insert into Listings  INSERT INTO Listings (id, url, region, rent, sqfeet, bedrooms, bathrooms, description)  VALUES (123456789, 'https://sfbay.craigslist.org/apa/d/san-francisco-spacious-one-bedroom/123456789.html',  'San Francisco', 950, 700, 1, 1,  'Spacious one-bedroom apartment in the heart of the city. Close to public transportation and parks.'  ); |
| -- Insert into Amenities  INSERT INTO Amenities (id, cats\_allowed, dogs\_allowed, smoking\_allowed, wheelchair\_access, electric\_vehicle\_charge, comes\_furnished)  VALUES (123456789, 1, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0);  -- Insert into Options  INSERT INTO Options (id, laundry\_options, parking\_options)  VALUES (123456789, 'on-site', 'street parking'); | -- Insert into Demand  INSERT INTO Demand (id, demand) VALUES (123456789, 'yes'); |

ii. Extracting Description for Specific Properties

To extract the distinct descriptions of properties meeting certain criteria, you would join the relevant tables and apply the conditions:

SELECT distinct(L.description) FROM listings L JOIN amenities A ON L.id = A.id JOIN regions R ON L.region = R.region

WHERE L.rent <= 1000 AND A.cats\_allowed = 1 AND A.dogs\_allowed = 1 AND R.state = 'ca';

This query joins the Listings, Amenities, and Regions tables to filter listings with rent equal to or less than $1000, that allow both cats and dogs, and are located in California (ca).

iii. Extracting Average Rental Value for Each State

To compare the average rental values by state, use the GROUP BY clause:

SELECT R.state, AVG(L.rent) AS average\_rent FROM listings L JOIN regions R ON L.region = R.region

GROUP BY R.state ORDER BY average\_rent DESC;

This query calculates the average rent for listings in each state, grouping the results by state and ordering them by the average rent in descending order to easily compare.

These SQL examples demonstrate basic interactions with a normalized database structure. The specific SQL syntax might require adjustments based on your actual database schema, including table names, column types, and constraints.

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| A screenshot of a computer program  Description automatically generated  Figure 32: reading and combining datasets | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 35: listings table | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 38: regions table |
| A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 33: data cleaning and type casting of id column | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 36: amenities table | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 39: demand table |
| A screenshot of a computer code  Description automatically generatedFigure 34: Define the DataFrame for each entity based on the ERD | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 37: options table |  |

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| A screenshot of a computer code  Description automatically generated A screenshot of a computer code  Description automatically generated  Figure 40: Create tables in duckDB database | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 41: inserting a New Line of Data 1 (For data insertion operations like (INSERT INTO statements), DuckDB doesn't return a result set that can be directly displayed as a pandas DataFrame because these operations do not produce output rows but instead modify the database state.)  A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 42: inserting a New Line of Data 2 (For data insertion operations like (INSERT INTO statements), DuckDB doesn't return a result set that can be directly displayed as a pandas DataFrame because these operations do not produce output rows but instead modify the database state.) | | |
| A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 43: output of sample sql statement to extract Description for Specific Properties | | | A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generated  Figure 44: output of sample sql statement to extract Average Rental Value for Each State |