

**TITLE: Graduate Employability Skills for the Hospitality Industry in Singapore: A comparison between onset and recovery stages of COVID-19**

**ABSTRACT (250 words max):**

**Background** - Singapore holds status as a mecca ‘tourism and hospitality’ hub. Yet, its tertiary education for Tourism and Hospitality has not followed the growth patterns of the industry. The Skills Futures Framework of the Singapore Tourism Board presents government’s predictions of a dire need for qualified staff and intentions to resource the industry through five tracks that lead to 69 different in-demand roles.

**Purpose** – This paper seeks to identify the employability skills evident for some of the in-demand roles. It examines if there has been a shift in the employability skills since the onset of COVID-19.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Data was collected in March-November 2020 and November-December 2021, from websites advertising jobs for the Hospitality Industry. Job descriptions for a range of positions were gathered, focusing on junior to senior management roles. NVivo 12 Plus was used to collate and analyse the data.

**Findings** – Inductive thematic analysis protocols indicated that there is a shift in the top five skills for the roles between the onset and recovery stages of COVID-19. Most prominent is an emerging focus on teamwork; sales and marketing; customer service and guest experience, business acumen, and communication.

**Implications** – While similar skills continue to be sought for supervisory-managerial roles in the Hospitality Industry since the onset of COVID-19, there is a greater focus on skills that will help organisations to pivot and build their teams and brands so as to enhance customer service and revenue.

**Research limitations/implications** – The research is limited by its focus on Singapore. Future research can extend the research by examining job roles in other countries.

**KEYWORDS (max 6):** employability skills; Singapore; hospitality industry; thematic analysis; in-demand roles; job descriptions