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An Examination of Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications and Employability Skills Sought by Georgia Employers

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Abstract
This study was designed to investigate response ratings for the value of computer skills, the value of Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications, which participant and/or business qualities impact the desire for given computer skills and Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications, and the employability skills employers desire. Data were analyzed using Descriptive statistics, Regression, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and t-tests. Respondents were Metro Atlanta employers. Most were ages 35-44, hold a Bachelor's Degree, and some form of technical certification. They represented organizations that employee 1,000+ employees, within 16-30 miles from Atlanta, in the Business Management and Administration cluster. Spreadsheet skills were valued most positively, while desktop publishing was least valuable. Excel MOS certifications were valued most positively, whereas SharePoint and OneNote MOS certifications were less favorable. Excel MOS certifications would likely influence participants to hire a candidate, however, OneNote and SharePoint certifications would not. Age, industry, and number of miles were predictors of the value placed on computers skills taught in high school business courses. There was a significant main effect on the type of computer skill and the value placed on the computer skill. Age, industry, number of employees, and number of miles from Atlanta were significant predictors for the value that employer's place on MOS certifications. There was a significant main effect on the type of MOS certification and the value placed on the certification. Lastly, age, industry, and the numbers of miles from Atlanta were significant predictors in the likelihood that employers would be influenced to hire a candidate who holds MOS certifications. There was a significant main effect on the type of MOS certification and the likelihood that participants would influenced. Ethics produced the highest mean score for importance of given employability skills, while presentation skills produced the lowest. Paired-sample t-test were conducted to examine differences between the importance of given employability skills and the demonstration of the skills by new hires. There were significant differences in the importance of and demonstration of each of the following skills: teamwork, analytical, computer, ability to work under pressure, organizing, presentation, leadership, and time management.

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There are several employability skills that are of value to employers, but the following five are among the most important. It's important when applying for jobs to convey aptitude in as many of these areas as possible. Communication. Employers want job candidates who can use common programs like Microsoft Office, especially Word and Excel. Perhaps most important is the ability to learn and adapt to new or changing technologies quickly and efficiently. The right keywords can let employers know that you have the employability skills they are seeking, and they often can increase the likelihood of your application being noticed when applying electronically. Many employers' online application programs use algorithms that search for the proper keywords.