

## ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Competitive employment and autism spectrum disorder: Employers perspectives

STUDENT: Wanietta C. Stuckey

DEGREE: Doctor of Education

COLLEGE: Special Education

DATE: May 2016

PAGES: 123

Competitive employment for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is important because this group is described as the most employable, yet least employed. Historically, females have been more likely to hire/work with individuals with disabilities than males but the gap between the sexes has been closing. A survey focusing on work qualities was sent to business executives across the United States. Survey topics were familiarity with ASD and qualities thought to be important for employees. Despite the fact that female business executives reported being more familiar with ASD than males, few differences about their views regarding people with ASD emerged. Female business executives reported that believed individuals with ASD held the work characteristic of “focus,” or the ability to sustain attention. In contrast, males were split on this characteristic. Future directions in research and employment programs for individuals with ASD were discussed.