

# Emergenetics in the work place



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## Introduction

Emergenetics is a modern psychometric assessment tool based on the brain. It is used to highlight how an individual thinks and behaves (Browning, 2005). This tool provides an understanding of how people live, work, communicate and interact with one another. There are several emergenetics profiles generated for various purposes. Some are meant to test the leadership skills of individuals or the type of behaviour of different people at work. This paper seeks to highlight the history and background of emergenetics, as well as the benefits of this tool for relationships at the workplace.

## The History and Background of Emergenetics

Emergenetics is based on research that indicates that individuals have inborn traits that make them act and think in a certain way (Williams, & Browning, 2010). However, these traits are modified and shaped as people interact with their surroundings. Personal experiences and genetics combine to form a commonly recognized pattern of personality traits.

There are seven sets of attributes as described by Emergenetics, and each of these has a unique colour code. Of these, four ways describe ways of thinking, and three describe ways of behaving (Williams, & Browning, 2010). The four ways of thinking are analytical preferences (represented by blue), structural preferences (represented by green), social preferences (represented by red) and conceptual preferences (represented by yellow). The behavioural attributes are all represented by the purple. These are

expressiveness behaviour, assertiveness behaviour and flexibility behaviour (Williams, & Browning, 2010).

### Development of the Emergenetics Profile

When developing the Emergenetics profile instrument, a number of factors were considered. The first factor is the underlying theory, which proposes that an individual has a combination of genetic tendencies (Hunter, 2010). These are tendencies that make one think and act in a certain way, and to act and think in a way that has been modified through socialization. This is from recent research that behaviour and way of thinking is influenced by genetics, which is referred to as nature, as well as the environment, which is referred to as nurture.

Another important factor to consider when creating the profile is reliability. Every test developer is concerned about having a question that reliably measures the construct it is supposed to measure. In a test that is well designed, scores from one part of the test should correlate with scores from another part of the test, which is a demonstration of reliability. In the Emergenetics profile test, the statistical procedures used include item by item reliability, split-half reliability and a test/re-test reliability (Hunter, 2010).

The item to item reliability is an internal measure to show how well each item correlates to the total score for that item. The split-half reliability is a measure of relationship between scores in different parts of the test (Hunter, 2010). The test/re-test reliability is a measure of how consistently an individual constructs their profile from one time to another.

The other factor that was considered is validity, and this refers to how well the test measures what it is supposed to measure. In the same way that there are many types of reliability, there are many types of validity. One is face validity, which refers to whether the individual taking the test considers it to be credible (Hunter, 2010). Having irrelevant questions in the test can make the person taking the test question its validity. If this happens, the person taking the test may provide unreliable answers. Questions on the Emergenetics Profile were written to be relevant to daily events and behaviours.

There is content validity, which refers to the adequacy of the Emergenetics tool to measure the behaviour it is designed to measure (Hunter, 2010). For instance, in a typing test, there is a relationship between a specific skill and what the test measures. This, however, is heavily dependent on feedback from people who have used the test. Many people that have taken the Emergenetics test agree that it accurately measures ways of thinking and behaviour.

There is the criterion validity, which is a measure of correlation of a person's scores in different areas of the test (Hunter, 2010). Quoting an example that was used earlier, a high score in a typing test could be used as a criterion to determine the general performance of that child or individual. However, since the Emergenetics Profile Instrument was not developed to measure performance in specific tasks or jobs, no information on criterion validity is available.

The last type of validity that was considered is construct validity. A construct is defined as a deeply rooted mental characteristic. From this definition, construct validity refers to whether the Emergenetics tool measures the four ways of thinking preferences and three ways of behaviour (Hunter, 2010). This type of validity is determined using measures similar to those used to determine the reliability of the test.

### How Emergenetics can be used to Enhance Healthy Workplace Relationships

As was mentioned earlier, Emergenetics is a scientific tool that is used to help understand human behaviour and their way of thinking, which makes them approach work and life differently (Browning, 2005). This tool consists of an analysis of left-brain/right-brain, determining how people tend to behave, and this is what defines personality.

When applied at the work place, the Emergenetics Profile will provide a true picture of everyone working in a given organization. The tool makes it easier to identify how every individual at the workplace thinks, behaves, and communicates, as well as their preferences (Browning, 2005). Other personal analysis tools provide suggestions on how an individual can change to meet the needs of the organization, but this tool takes a different approach. It appreciates that every individual is unique and helps them stand out through their genetics by creating a profile that shows personal and professional implications (Browning, 2005). The tool focuses more on the strengths of an individual, meant to build on personal energy and passion. Once an individual identifies their strengths, they can then find ways to make these work for them at the workplace.

When applied at the workplace, this tool works by exposing cognitive preferences of an individual, by highlighting their distinct, brain-based strengths (Browning, 2005). With such an understanding, people can build better working relationships especially when working as a team on something. The tool also works by tapping into an individual's uniqueness, distinctive work and learning preferences. The tool helps individuals to discover their innate strengths, shaping ways of how people should go about their work because it highlights where their strengths lie (Browning, 2005).

The Emergenetics Profile provides a blueprint for managers at the workplace to engage everyone through methods and strategies that encourage appreciation and collaboration. While taking this approach, it becomes easier to identify people who have leadership skills. When such people are identified in good time, their strengths are assessed fully and skills are developed in a relatively short amount of time (Browning, 2005). These strategies work together to energize individuals to perform even better at the workplace.

When the Emergenetics tool is applied, as described above, the organization is better positioned to meet its strategic objectives and goals. Further, people working in such an organization can communicate effectively with the leaders or managers and with each other (Browning, 2005). The organization also enjoys high retention of employees because it can assign responsibilities and duties in accordance with the strengths of an individual. When the management of an organization understands how employees behave and think, they can develop a cohesive organizational culture based

on the Emergenetics insight, through an informed perspective based on personal experiences (Browning, 2005).

### Benefits of Emergenetics in terms of Relationships at the Workplace

Emergenetics is an efficient tool because it integrates everything in an organization. It contributes to goal setting, trust building, communication enhancement and team initiatives (O'Connell, 2012b). It makes an impact on everyone in the organization, because it provides a basis for everyone to shine in their unique way. Anyone who takes the Emergenetics test becomes more aware of themselves, their colleagues, and their leaders, managers, and supervisors. This kind of awareness is a basic requirement for fostering good working relationships. When such a person is working in a team environment, they are more effective and more creative in their strong areas.

Emergenetics serves as a foundational element upon which an organization can facilitate its dynamics to build a talent-rich organization (O'Connell, 2012b). This happens because it helps people identify their strengths and ways to make the best use of them. It also improves communication and productivity at the workplace. Since the tool appreciates the uniqueness of each employee, employees can apply unique approaches to complete their duties and responsibilities, and the result of this will be high competencies.

### Case Study: Emergenetics at ACSA

Emergenetics is a tool that the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) uses on a daily basis as a foundation for common language and perspective,

which has helped the organization to become more cohesive and successful in its provision of services (O’Connell, 2012b). The ACSA, Charlottesville, Virginia, now enjoys better communication among its employees, and between employees and management (O’Connell, 2012a). This is one of the tools that the organization has invested in. All of its employees are trained on the basics of Emergenetics, giving them the opportunity to explore the tool at a personal level, and then at an organizational level (O’Connell, 2012b).

The tool is used in team building across departments in the organization. This has enhanced productivity in the organization because the tool aligns the strengths of each team to team and organizational goal. The organization also uses the tool to foster good relationships at the workplace, since all employees are aware of their personalities and strengths (O’Connell, 2012b). Being self-aware, employees are more open to understanding their colleagues and leaders, and this fosters good relationships between them. Emergenetics has also provided a lens for all employees in the organization to appreciate the uniqueness of their roles in the teams they work in, and to the organization as a whole.

## Conclusion

Emergenetics is a powerful tool that can be applied to every organization to improve work-relationships between employees and their leaders, as well as among employees. Its usefulness starts with the kind of awareness that the tool brings to the workplace. The tool also leads to a form of satisfaction and motivation, because every employee feels that they are appreciated for what



they can do. Emergenetics also works well to maintain effective communication within the work place.

## References

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