

The internal logic of thought  
Psychology  
Biology  
Time

The Theory of MindTime explained

Part 1  
Lite version

The MindTime Foundation

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# Preface

You don't have to read all 78 pages of this MindTime Science Report in order to understand the relevance of this revolutionary framework, although you'll find the evidence to support the key takeaways if you do.

Since the Theory of MindTime was first proposed by John Furey in 1996, its high face validity, seeming simplicity and obviousness, and practical applicability have been recognized by countless professionals in psychology, education, organizational development, marketing, and many other domains. Although cited 133 times in peer-reviewed and published articles, the theory remains relatively unknown. This is largely due to the commitment of the MindTime organization to favor innovation, discovery, and scientific validation over mass adoption and financial success.

Part 1 of this Science Report has been written for the 'lay' reader (Present and Future thinking, to use our own terminology) and Part 2 is for the scientific reader (Past thinking). In Part 1 you'll find a summary of our data while in Part 2 you will find tables and charts that provide the actual results collected in the research studies presented herein.

## **Here are the key takeaways from Part 1 & Part 2:**

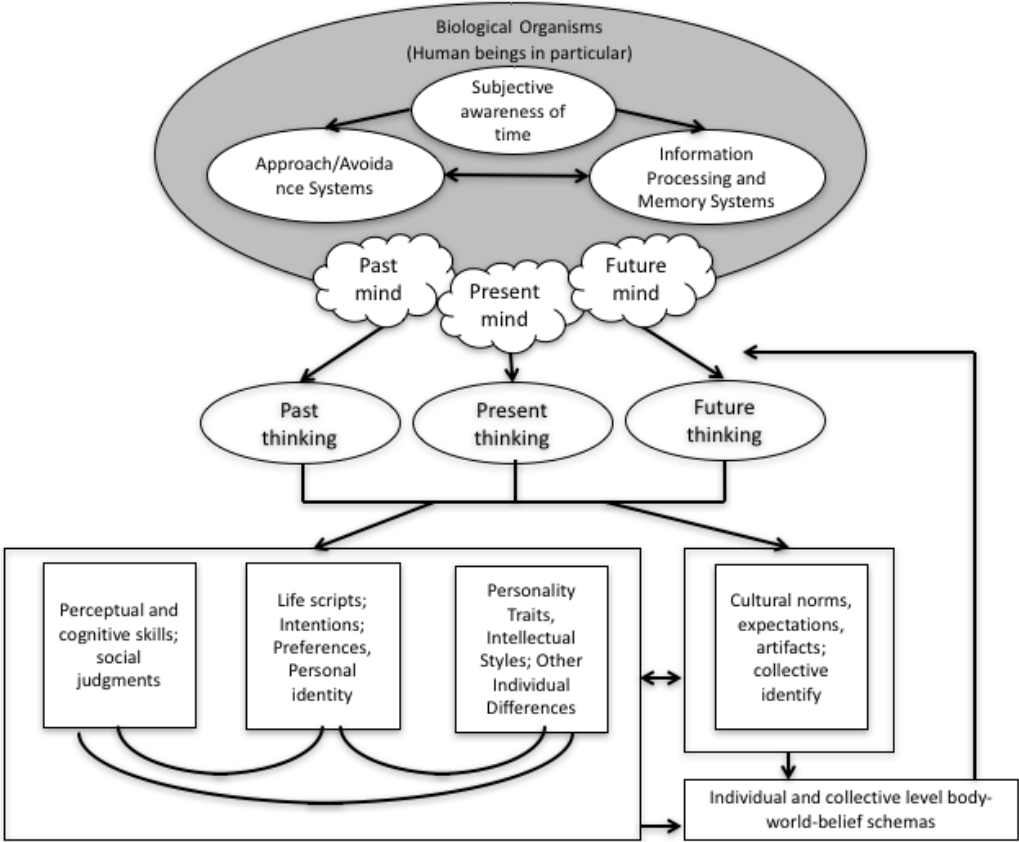
1. The combination of Past, Present, and Future thinking explained a substantial percentage of variance in the OCEAN constructs, well-being, temporal focus, and time-related work habits.
2. Unlike the dominant approach to understanding individual differences in behavioral science and psychology, which is a trait-based approach, MindTime is built on a deep understanding of three codependent and interdependent perceptual filters that universally drive survival priorities.
3. Unlike trait-based psychology, MindTime explains WHY people behave the way they do. It presents the biology of psychology, as these thinking perspectives are meant to maximize current and future biological, reproductive, and psychological survival.
4. MindTime has practical utility and relevance across a broad scope of human inquiry. It is far more than a world-class segmentation schema. It is a roadmap to understand and predict sentiment, intent, and opinions in polling, social and political studies, behavioral research, targeting of content, online behaviors in analytics, motivations, needs, decision-making styles, speed of adoption of new ideas and products, and a great deal more.
5. MindTime can be summed up in two words—predictive insights. This points to the exceptional level of variance explained by MindTime in people's behaviors and choices and the natural richness of the framework. If you want to know why people are making certain choices or behaving the way they are, using MindTime profile data combined with standard demographics may give the strongest signal out there.

# MindTime Overview

## The Interplay of Time and Cognition: An Exploration of the Theory of MindTime

### Introduction

Understanding the intricacies of human cognition and behavior is a cornerstone of behavioral sciences. The Theory of MindTime presents a compelling framework that posits human consciousness and behavior are fundamentally shaped by three distinct but interrelated cognitive perspectives: Past Thinking, Present Thinking, and Future Thinking. These perspectives offer a unique lens through which we can examine how individuals perceive and process temporal experiences, ultimately influencing their cognitive, motivational, and behavioral patterns. This report delves into the core tenets of the Theory of MindTime, explores its predictive capabilities, and highlights its practical applications in both behavioral sciences and marketing.



*An integrated model of human psychology and individual differences.*

## Core Concepts of the Theory of MindTime

The Theory of MindTime asserts that three temporal perspectives universally shape human cognition, each providing a different approach to processing information and experiences:

- **Past Thinking:** Consists of reflecting on and analyzing past experiences and information stored in memory. It is associated with understanding why events occurred and learning from them to avoid future risks. Individuals with a dominant Past Thinking perspective tend to be analytical, cautious, and reflective. They excel in developing conceptual schemas and ensuring personal and social continuity by evaluating and learning from past experiences. This perspective plays a crucial role in forming a coherent narrative of one's life and maintaining a stable identity over time.
- **Present Thinking:** Focuses on understanding, organizing, and controlling the current environment. It involves implementing structures, plans, and processes to maintain stability and achieve immediate goals. Present Thinkers are typically detail-oriented, organized, and practical, excelling in tasks that require focus on the here and now. This cognitive style helps individuals stay grounded, manage ongoing tasks efficiently, and respond to changes effectively. It emphasizes practical problem-solving and operational efficiency, ensuring that day-to-day activities are handled with precision and care.
- **Future Thinking:** Involves projections forward in time to envision potential outcomes and opportunities. This perspective drives innovation, creativity, and change. Individuals with a strong Future Thinking tendency are visionary, optimistic, and often willing to take risks. They are motivated by the possibilities of what could be, rather than being constrained by current realities or past experiences. Future Thinkers are essential for driving progress, problem-solving, and embracing new opportunities, as they are continually looking at the world afresh.

These cognitive perspectives mediate between neurological pathways associated with normalization, approach and avoidance motivations, and memory systems, influencing individual differences in personality and behavior. Moreover, the Theory of MindTime extends to collective behavior, suggesting that groups and cultures develop shared cognitive patterns based on these temporal perspectives. The degree of congruence between individuals' thinking perspectives and their environments influences social interactions, cultural developments, and the resonance between individuals and societal constructs.

# Summary of Research Studies

Two studies were recently conducted to examine the construct and predictive validity of the MindTime Profile Inventory.

- In the first study, the OCEAN constructs (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion (i.e., Introversion, reverse coded), Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (i.e., emotional stability, reverse coded) were measured.
  - Data were collected from 721 participants.
- In the second study, well-being (Resilience and Optimism), temporal focus (Past, Present, and Future), and time-related work habits (Polychronicity, Pacing [Deadline Pacing; Steady Pacing, and U-Shaped Pacing]) were measured.
  - Data were collected from 413 participants.
- Regression analyses were computed on all variables, controlling for the influence of Sex, Age, Education, and Geographic location.

## Overview of Findings

### 1. OCEAN Constructs

- Past, Present, and Future thinking, *in combination*, explained statistically significant variance among all of the personality variables in a manner consistent with the theory (See Table 1).
  - First, Past, Present, and Future thinking each had unique and specific relationships with the OCEAN Constructs, indicating that the different OCEAN constructs are themselves influenced by and indicators of the three different thinking perspectives.
    - Future thinking was the dominant thinking perspective related positively with and influenced Openness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness.
    - Past thinking was the dominant thinking pattern that influenced Introversion.
    - Present thinking was the dominant thinking pattern that influenced Conscientiousness.
  - Second, and more important and consistent with the theory, Past, Present, and Future thinking influenced all five personality constructs, but in different ways.
    - Past thinking, in addition to its primary influence on Introversion, also related positively with Openness and Conscientiousness.
    - Present thinking, in addition to its primary influence on Conscientiousness, also related positively with Extraversion and Agreeableness.
    - Future thinking, in addition to its primary influence on Openness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness, also correlated negatively with Neuroticism.

- Most importantly, there were multiple statistically significant two-way and three-way interactions among the three thinking perspectives on each of the personality constructs, indicating the validity of taking a profile approach when examining trait-based personality measures.

## 2. Well-being constructs (Resilience and Optimism)

- Similar to the OCEAN constructs, Past, Present, and Future thinking, *in combination*, explained statistically significant variance among both of the well-being constructs (See Table 1).
  - Present and Future thinking had a similar positive influence on both Resilience and Optimism, whereas Past thinking had a negative influence on the well-being variables.

## 3. Temporal Focus

- Past, Present, and Future thinking, *in combination*, explained statistically significant variance among the temporal focus variables in a manner consistent with theory (See Table 1).
  - Past thinking had the strongest positive relationship with Past Temporal Focus
  - All three thinking perspectives related positively with Present Temporal Focus
  - All three thinking perspectives related positively with Future Temporal Focus
- These results are consistent with the theory of MindTime. Although Past thinkers tend to focus on the contents of their personal past, all three thinking perspectives are oriented toward both the present and the future. According to the theory, this is because these perspectives are meant to maximize current and future biological, reproductive, and psychological survival.

## 4. Time-related work habits

- Past, Present, and Future thinking, *in combination*, explained statistically significant variance among the time-related work habit variables in a manner consistent with theory (See Table 1).
  - **Polychronicity:** Future thinking had a positive influence and Past thinking had a negative influence on Polychronicity, indicating that as a person's Future thinking increased, their tendency to prefer multi-tasking also increased, whereas as Past thinking increased, their tendency to focus on one task at a time increased. Present thinking had a slight negative (but not statistically significant) influence on Polychronicity.

- **Pacing**
  - Present thinking related positively with *Steady Pacing*, indicating that individuals with high scores on Present thinking tended to prefer to work steadily on tasks.
  - Past thinking related positively with both *Deadline Pacing* and *U-Shaped Pacing*, indicating that individuals with high scores on Past thinking tended to work most diligently at the beginning and the end of a task with a deadline.
  - Future thinking, like Past thinking, also related positively with *U-Shaped Pacing*, indicating that individuals with high scores on Future thinking tended to work most diligently when a deadline approached.
- Consistent with all previous findings, all three thinking perspectives influenced the Pacing variables.

## Conclusions Drawn from Research Studies

First, ample evidence was found supporting the construct and predictive validity of the MindTime Profile Inventory.

Second, the results of the two studies provided extensive support for the theoretical propositions of the theory of MindTime.

The Theory of MindTime offers a comprehensive and actionable framework for understanding human cognition and behavior. By integrating MindTime thinking styles with traditional personality models like OCEAN, we can gain deeper insights into individual and collective behaviors. This integration has significant implications for both behavioral sciences and marketing, providing a robust foundation for developing tailored interventions and strategies that resonate with diverse cognitive styles. As we continue to explore and validate these concepts, MindTime has the potential to transform our approach to psychological profiling, consumer behavior prediction, and targeted marketing.

The depth and richness of the Theory of MindTime lie in its ability to connect temporal cognitive styles with a wide array of personality traits, well-being constructs, and time-related behaviors. It provides insights into other models such as the Diffusion of Innovations theory and further enhances their applicability, making it a powerful tool for both understanding and influencing human behavior in various contexts.



# Implications and Conclusions

The integration of MindTime thinking styles into persona building largely replaces the need for OCEAN (and other) trait-based profiles. MindTime also has the added advantage of extending the value of the framework beyond persona building into creative brief development, creative/messaging testing, online web analytics insights, and customer support functions across all touchpoints.

- **Personality-Driven Consumer Insights:** Thinking styles significantly influence consumer behavior, decision-making, and brand perceptions. By integrating MindTime thinking styles with demographic and other customer data, marketers can better predict and influence consumer behavior.
- **Targeted Communications:** Marketers can develop campaigns tailored to the specific temporal orientations of their audience described by three vectors. These three vectors not only identify people's preferences but also what they might resist and avoid. For example, Future thinkers are likely to respond better to messages emphasizing innovation and novel benefits, Present thinkers tend to prefer practical, detail-oriented information, and Past thinkers are likely to need a lot of proof and evidence of success before adopting anything. Equally important, a low score in Future thinking (resistance) predicts avoidance or resistance to change and innovative approaches. A low score in Present thinking predicts that existing plans and schema are more unlikely to be adhered to. Finally, a low score in Past thinking predicts blindness to previous experiences and knowledge which might promote risk avoidance.
- **Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation:** Understanding the predominant thinking style of a target audience allows for more effective strategic planning and resource allocation, honing marketing efforts to better resonate with the audience's temporal preference.
- **Improved Engagement:** The predictive power of MindTime thinking styles can lead to higher engagement rates by aligning marketing strategies with the inherent cognitive processes of consumers.
- **Improved Conversion:** This deeper and more nuanced understanding of people's needs and motivations leads to more effective call-to-action messaging and methods. As we all know, words truly matter as do the steps provided to a given thinker to make them into a customer.
- **Retention:** A customer in the hand is worth a lot more than two in the market. How brands and marketers engage customers in their relationship will dictate a lot about how loyal a customer will be. Understanding the deeper aspects of a customer's worldview - their thinking style - can have a dramatic and positive effect on retaining people's loyalty over time.

# Appendix

Even though we have described the cognitive, personality, and behavioral characteristics that follow largely from each mind perspective, the three mind perspectives do not operate in isolation from one another. Consequently, all measurable individual difference characteristics and personality traits involve the *combined* influence of all three mind perspectives.

***Cognitive, personality, and behavioral manifestations of Past mind, Present mind, and Future thinking <sup>a</sup>***

	Past Thinking	Present Thinking	Future Thinking
<b>Cognitive tendencies <sup>b</sup></b>	Classification of objects into both broad and specific categories conceptual schemas	Classification of objects into specific categories and conceptual schemas	Classification of objects into broad categories and conceptual schemas
	Formation of both super-ordinate and subordinate goals	Formation of subordinate and contextualized goals	Formation of super-ordinate and idealistic goals.
	Strong performance on both analytic and creative tasks	Strong performance on analytical tasks	Strong performance on creative tasks.
	Risk-averse and slow decision making	Realistic and practical decision-making	Overly optimistic and impulsive decision-making
	Persuaded best by messages that are informative and authoritative	Persuaded best by messages that involve highly specific low-level arguments and features of objects.	Persuaded best by messages that highlight positive features of objects
	Delays gratification of outcomes depending on the situation	Generally delays gratification of outcomes in all situations	Generally hedonistic
	Prone to making fundamental attribution errors (attributing the behavior of others to their personal characteristics)	Likely to give weight to situational constraints when making attributions of others' behaviors.	Prone to making fundamental attribution errors (attributing the behavior of others to their personal characteristics)
	Perceives others as less familiar and less similar to themselves	Generally perceives others as more familiar and more similar to themselves.	Generally perceives others as less familiar and less similar to themselves.

<b>Taxonomy-based personality traits</b> <sup>c</sup>	Anxiety <sup>1</sup> Neuroticism <sup>2,3</sup> Negative activation <sup>4</sup> Negative emotionality <sup>5</sup> Avoidance temperament <sup>6</sup>	Conscientiousness <sup>2</sup> Agreeableness <sup>2</sup> Psychoticism <sup>3</sup>	Extraversion <sup>2,3</sup> Openness <sup>2</sup> Impulsivity <sup>1</sup> Positive activation <sup>4</sup> Positive emotionality <sup>5</sup> Approach temperament <sup>6</sup>
<b>Intellectual style constructs</b> <sup>d</sup>	Deep thinking <sup>7</sup> Abstract sequential thinking <sup>8</sup> Convergent thinking <sup>9</sup> Divergent thinking <sup>9</sup> Reflective thinking <sup>10</sup> Analytic thinking <sup>11</sup> Integrative thinking <sup>11</sup> Judicial thinking <sup>12</sup> Hierarchical thinking <sup>12</sup> Monarchic thinking <sup>12</sup> Global thinking <sup>12</sup> Local thinking <sup>12</sup> Internal thinking <sup>12</sup> Liberal thinking <sup>12</sup> Field independent <sup>13</sup>	Achieving thinking <sup>7</sup> Concrete sequential thinking <sup>8</sup> Abstract random thinking <sup>8</sup> Convergent thinking <sup>9</sup> Executive thinking <sup>12</sup> Hierarchical thinking <sup>12</sup> Monarchic thinking <sup>12</sup> Local thinking <sup>12</sup> Conservative thinking <sup>12</sup> Adaptive thinking <sup>14</sup>	Surface thinking <sup>7</sup> Concrete random thinking <sup>8</sup> Divergent thinking <sup>9</sup> Impulsive thinking <sup>4</sup> Holistic thinking <sup>11</sup> Integrative thinking <sup>11</sup> Legislative thinking <sup>12</sup> Hierarchical thinking <sup>12</sup> Oligarchic thinking <sup>12</sup> Anarchic thinking <sup>12</sup> Global thinking <sup>12</sup> External thinking <sup>12</sup> Liberal thinking <sup>12</sup> Field dependent <sup>13</sup> Innovative thinking <sup>14</sup> Lateral thinking <sup>15</sup> Futures thinking <sup>16</sup>

<b>General Descriptors</b>	Accurate	Action-oriented	Active
	Analytical	Agreeable	Adventurous
	Appropriate	Balanced	Charismatic
	Authentic	Compliant	Chaotic
	Cautious	Connected	Compelling
	Contemplative	Consistent	Conceptual
	Curious	Deliberate	Creative
	Cynical	Dependable	Dynamic
	Deliberative	Detailed	Energetic
	Discerning	Determined	Erratic
	Factual	Disciplined	Exciting
	Fair-minded	Dogmatic	Flexible
	Ideological	Doer	Fun
	Incisive	Efficient	Generative
	Independent	Inflexible	Gregarious
	Informed	Goal-oriented	Hopeful
	Inquisitive	Methodical	Idealistic
	Introspective	Ordered	Imaginative
	Judgmental	Organized	Impulsive
	Judicious	Practical	Innovative
	Logical	Pragmatic	Ingenious
	Obsessive	Predicable	Inspirational
	Pessimistic	Realistic	Inventive
	Principled	Reliable	Intuitive
	Prudent	Resilient	Motivational
	Reflective	Resourceful	Non-conformist
	Reasonable	Responsible	Optimistic
	Rational	Results-oriented	Persuasive
	Reliable	Stable	Resilient
	Risk-averse	Structured	Social
	Skeptical	Steady	Spontaneous
	Studious	Task-oriented	Unreliable
Stoic	Unadventurous	Visionary	
Solitary			

**Cognitive, social, and behavioral manifestations**

<i>Approach to relationships</i>	Cautious	Realistic	Impulsive
<i>Approach to tasks</i>	Focuses on accuracy, often at the expense of meeting deadlines	Methodical and timely; task-oriented	Likes to multitask; bores easily; requires a deadline to finish tasks
<i>Believes in</i>	Truth	Stability	Possibility
<i>Decision making</i>	Slow and analytical; based on having the best	Expedient and pragmatic, makes	Quick, intuitive, and spontaneous; based on the best

	information available	decisions by what fits best with existing plans	opportunity at the time
<i>Driven to</i>	Validate	Organize and Execute	Imagine
<i>Drives</i>	Understanding	Order	Change
<i>Friendships</i>	Few, but deep friendships	Oriented toward social and community groups	Many acquaintances
<i>Guided by</i>	Truth and reason	Norms and expectations	Intuition and hope
<i>Known for</i>	Being Informed	Being dependable	Being creative
<i>Leadership style</i>	Ideological <sup>17</sup>	Pragmatic <sup>17</sup>	Charismatic <sup>17</sup>
<i>Learns best by</i>	Research; reading; observation; studying	Reading instructions; following a manual; doing; following planned curriculum	Experimentation; trial and error; social interaction
<i>Likes to ask</i>	Why?	How?	What if?
<i>Lives</i>	Cautiously	Pragmatically	Spontaneously
<i>Controls through</i>	Information	Agendas	Persuasion
<i>Mental energy</i>	Slow and reflective	Focused and deliberate	Quick and dynamic
<i>Oriented toward</i>	Understanding the meaning of things	Controlling outcomes	Driving change and forward motion
<i>Oriented toward</i>	Risk avoidance and sense-making	Maintaining equilibrium and forcing conformity with the prevailing status quo	Possibility and the generation of alternative realities
<i>Preferred working environment</i>	Quiet and studious	Organized and functional	Social, flexible and dynamic
<i>Respects</i>	Evolution	Order	Anarchy
<i>Seeks</i>	Evidence	Control	Opportunity
<i>Self-efficacy derived from</i>	Being the expert	Meeting goals; effective actions	Having ideas accepted, adopted, and implemented
<i>Self-esteem derived from</i>	Having ideas validated	Having effectiveness of actions recognized	Having ideas celebrated

<i>Stressor</i>	Making the wrong decision	Loss of control	Structure; a lack of flexibility; loss of hope
<i>Thinks best through</i>	Contemplation	Doing	Brainstorming
<i>Values</i>	Accuracy Authenticity Data Evidence Fairness History Knowledge Relevance Security Truth	Control Continuity Harmony Planning Order Process Stability Status quo	Change Creativity Flexibility Ideas Imagination Innovation Spontaneity
<i>Works best with</i>	Information	Things People	Ideas

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<sup>a</sup> Even though we have described the cognitive, personality, and behavioral characteristics that follow largely from each mind perspective, the three mind perspectives do not operate in isolation from one another. Consequently, all measurable individual difference characteristics and personality traits involve the *combined* influence of all three mind perspectives.

<sup>b</sup> Supported by laboratory research involving manipulations of temporal, physical, and social distance.

<sup>c</sup> This list is not comprehensive and only includes the more popular personality taxonomies with five or fewer traits.

<sup>d</sup> Intellectual style constructs listed are those based on previously published taxonomies.

<sup>1</sup>Gray's (1970) behavioral inhibition/activation model; <sup>2</sup>Costa and McCrae's (1992a, 1992b) five factor model; <sup>3</sup>Eysenck's (1981) three factor model<sup>4</sup>; Watson et al.'s (1999) positive/negative activation; <sup>5</sup>Tellegen's positive/negative emotionality; <sup>6</sup>Elliot and Thrash's (2008) approach/avoidance temperament; <sup>7</sup>Biggs (1978) learning approach; <sup>8</sup>Gregorc's (1979) mind styles; <sup>9</sup>Guilford's (1967) structure of intellect; <sup>10</sup>Kagan, Rosman, Day, Albert, and Phillips' (1964) conceptual tempo; <sup>11</sup>Torrance, McCarthy, & Kolesinski's (1988) mode of thinking; <sup>12</sup>Sternberg's (1988) model of mental governance; <sup>13</sup>Witkin, Dyk, Faterson, Goodenough, & Karp's (1962) perceptual style; <sup>14</sup>Kirton's (1976) decision-making style; <sup>15</sup>De Bono's (1970) lateral thinking; <sup>16</sup>Hejazi's (2012) futures thinking; <sup>17</sup>Mumford's (2006) charismatic, ideological, pragmatic (CIP) leadership theory