

# Measuring Online Information Seeking for Theoretical Orientations from Google Search Queries

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## Theoretical Orientation Debate

- Long running debates about most preferred psychotherapies
- Over 200 theoretical orientations, including:
  - acceptance and commitment therapy
  - behavioral therapy
  - cognitive behavioral
  - cognitive therapy,
  - dialectical behavior
  - existential therapy
  - Gestalt therapy
  - humanistic therapy
  - motivational interviewing
  - psychoanalytic
  - psychodynamic

## Practitioner Therapy Preference

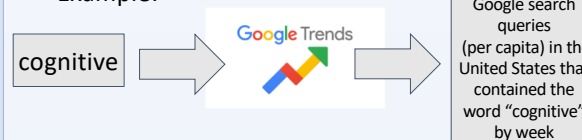
- APA survey on psychologist orientation preference (1960-2010; Norcross & Karpiak, 2012)
- Descending order: cognitive, eclectic/integration, psychodynamic, and behavioral, humanistic and Rogerian
- From 1960 - 2010, downward arc for psychodynamic and upward arc for cognitive orientation
- 2008 study of health service providers (Michalski et al., n.d.)
  - 39% - cognitive behavioral orientation, 16% - psychodynamic, 15% - integrative, and 4% - humanistic/existential
- Need to study therapy seeker preference

## Research Questions

- We analyze Google search queries to determine
  - What is the relative interest in different therapies?
  - How has interest changed over time?
- Primary findings:
  - Cognitive therapy most searched
  - Psychodynamic therapy increased over the interval; psychoanalytic decreased

## Data and Methods

- Tracked 12 popular theoretical orientations
- Google Trends (trends.google.com)
  - Aggregated search queries over time
  - Data accessed through trends Application Programming Interface (API)
  - Cannot limit population beyond geography
- Example:



Time period: January 1, 2004 - December 31, 2019

- Mean searches by therapy by year
- Mean searches by therapy by week of the year

## References

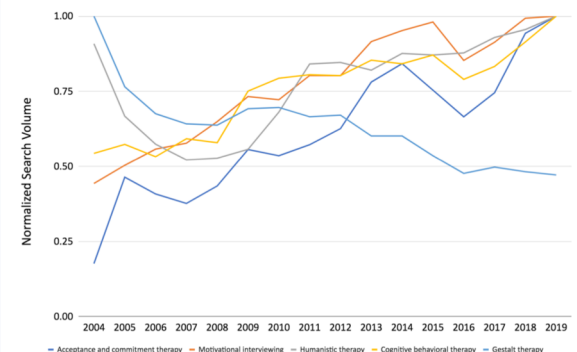
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## Results

Table. Therapies listed in order of most searched on Google between 2004 and 2019.

Therapy Name	Mean number of searches per 10 million searches in the United States.
Cognitive therapy	90.33
Behavioral therapy	74.43
Cognitive behavioral therapy	49.30
Psychodynamic	29.07
Motivational interviewing	20.93
Dialectical behavior therapy	13.30
Gestalt therapy	10.42
Psychodynamic therapy	6.44
Existential therapy	4.42
Humanistic therapy	4.40
Acceptance and commitment therapy	3.67

- Search preferences for cognitive, psychodynamic, then humanistic/existential therapies was similar to order preference for therapists (Norcross & Karpiak, 2012; Michalski et al., n.d.)



Caption: The normalized search volume for the 5 types of therapy that show the largest variance in number of searches over time.

- Cognitive-behavioral steadily increased and humanistic decreased, similar to therapist preference (1960-2010; Norcross & Karpiak, 2012)
- Searches for psychodynamic therapy increased, while psychoanalytic decreased; reflecting declines in psychoanalytic popularity (see Paris, 2017)