In recent years, researchers have been exploring the potential of using Google Trends data as a source of real-time information, as they might provide insight and improve predictive power of various variables in diverse fields such as finance, marketing and economics among others. This literature overview revolves around key studies whose main focus was the use of Google Trends data as a tool to predict inflation or other macro-level indicator. We review the employed methodologies, challenges faced, and the implications of these findings for future research.

The growing interest in the use of GT can be attributed to several factors.

1 Real time data: The data is available in real-time. Thus, it can function as a source source of up-to-date insights into consumer behavior, market sentiment, and other factors that influence economic indicators. The real-time nature of the data can be particularly helpful and valuable in dynamic and rapidly changing economic environments or during time periods when traditional sources of data may be lagging behind or outdated.

2 High frequency: GT provides high-frequency data, therefore short-term fluctuations and trends can be captured more accurately. This granularity can might help to improve accuracy and responsiveness of forecasting models.

3 Broad coverage: GT covers any topic for which search-related terms are searched with non-negligible intensity. As a result, variables for which traditional data are non-existent or hard to collect and quantify, GT can serve as an accesible alternative.

4 Behavioral insights: GT offers a unique perspective on consumer behaviour, reflecting collective concerns and interest of internet users. Although internet users cannot be considered as accurate and representative sample of whole population, GT might provide insight into sentiment, preferences and expectations, which are influenced and possibly can influence economic outcomes among others.

5 Cost effectiveness: GT is publicly available and free of charge. That makes it accessible and cost-effective source of information for researchers, policy-makers businesses and overal anyone with access to internet connection.

6 Easy integration: GT can complement already existing traditional economic indicators and other data sources in order to create more comprehensive and robust forecasting models. This complementation can help diminish limitations of each dataset in order to enhance overal predictive power.

7 Leading indicator potential: For some economic variables, GT can serve as a leading indicator, which allows for earlier detection of changes in trends or market conditions, since it can provide a representation of consumer expectations which consequently affect the real outcome. This might allow researchers and policy-makers to react more quickly, flexibly and effectively to emerging economic developments.

However, while the are significant advantages of GT, there are also challenges and limitations regarding the use of GT. We have already mentioned issues regarding representativeness of real population. Naturally, this is followed by concerns about reliability. In addition, GT can be susceptible to spurious correlations. Thus, careful consideration of conditions along with choice of appropriate methodological approach is necessary in order to ensure GT is applied effectively and without bias in terms of forecasting purposes.

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Preis et al. (2013) utilize GT in such way that they find patterns which can be interpreted as „early warning signs“. Results of their research align with the idea that significant declines in the financial market are preceded by periods of investor anxiety, as manifested in GT. We believe that this idea can be applied to inflation, as expectations about rising inflation can be conveyed in GT and may precede individual–related actions purposely lessening short-term impacts inflation for the individual, while they may spiral inflation upwards even further.