Tracking Exposure to Ads Amidst COVID-19: Development of a Public Google Ads Dataset

Reham Al Tamime, Ingmar Weber

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Abstract

Background: The spread of the COVID-19 has created a substantial impact on economies, governments, businesses, and most importantly, on people's health. In order to bring the spread of the COVID-19 under control, strict lockdowns measures have been implemented across the globe. These lockdown measures have prompted a spate of panic buying and increase in demand for hygiene products and other grocery items.

Objective: In this paper, we describe a panic buying Google Ads data set that we are making available to the research community via our COVID-19 GitHub repository.

Methods: We started this ongoing data collection on March 28, 2020, leveraging developer tools' network requests to retrieve Google Ads' data. We have identified a list of items related and unrelated to panic buying. Then, we have captured these items as targeting criteria under what people are actively researching or planning on Google Ads. Google Ads' data has been filtered by additional targeting criteria such as countries, gender, and parental status.

Results: Since the inception of our collection, we have actively maintained and updated our GitHub repository on a monthly basis. In total, we have published over 1,827 data points. This paper also presents basic statistics that reveals variations in Google Ads data across countries, gender, and parental status.

Conclusions: We hope that this Google Ads data set can contribute to study changes in behaviors and attitudes during the Coronavirus outbreak. Moreover, we hope that this data set can help in understanding public fear and panic during this unprecedented time.

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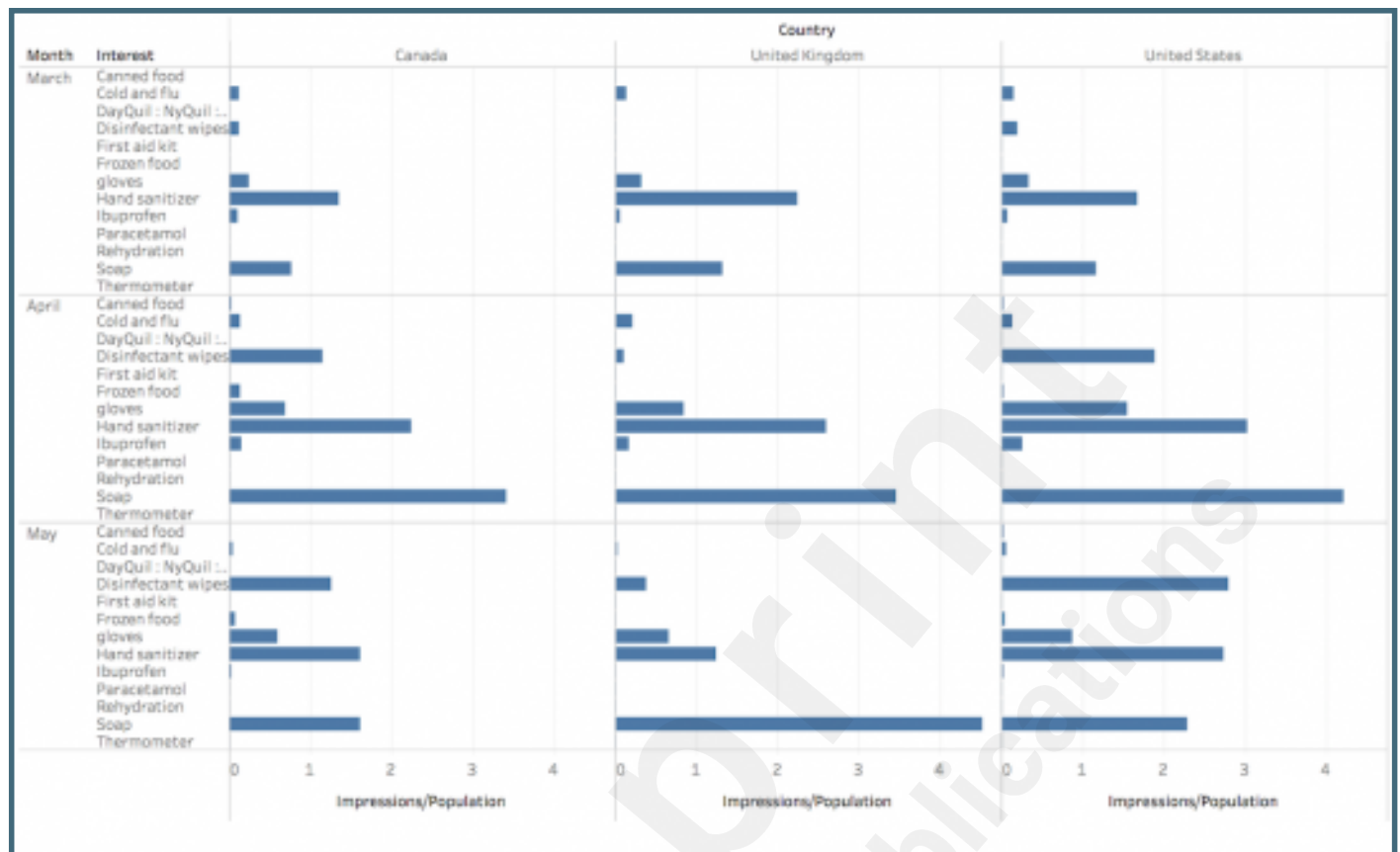
Figures

Google Ads (Display Network campaign).

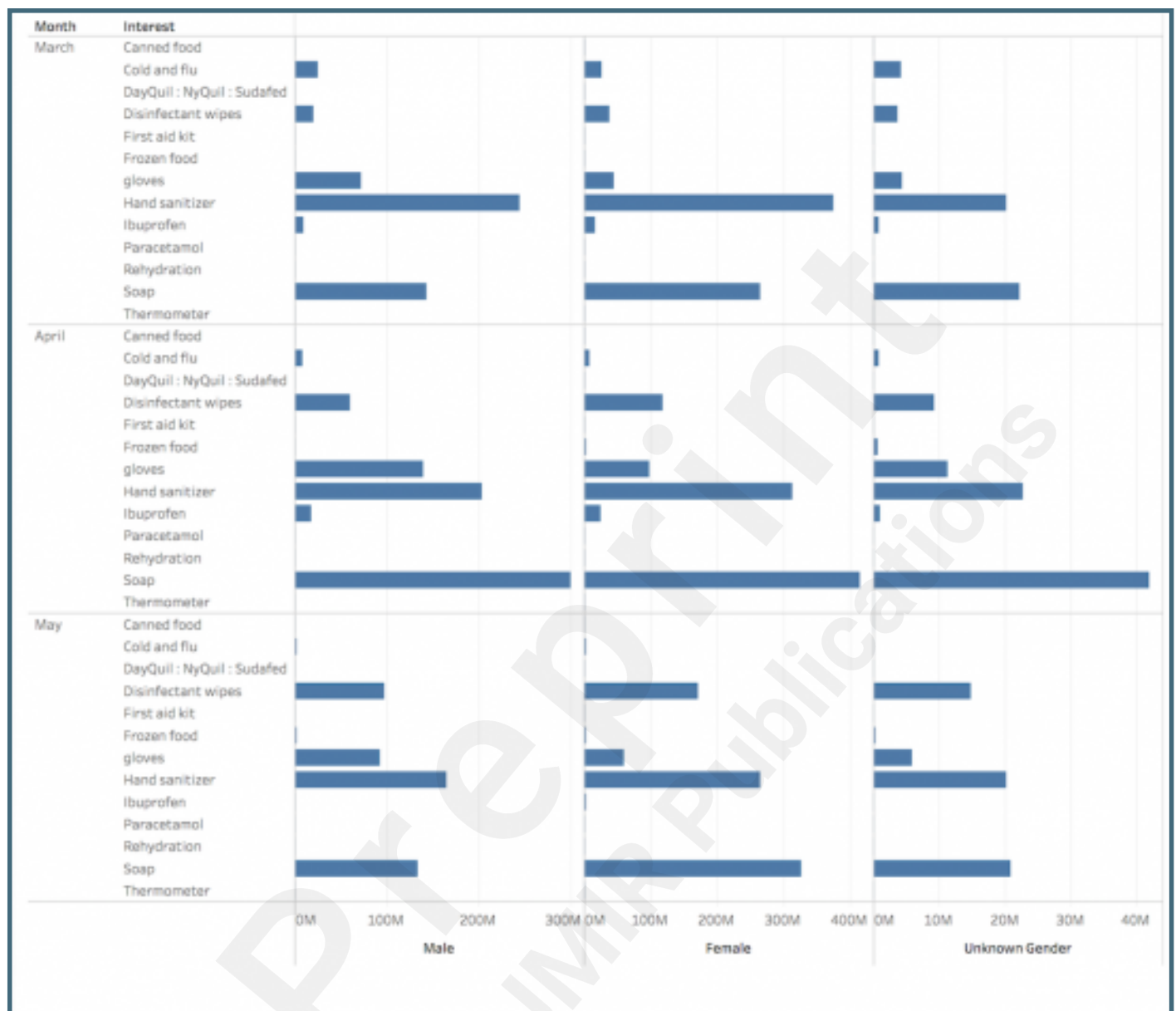Network requests after inspecting elements on the web page.
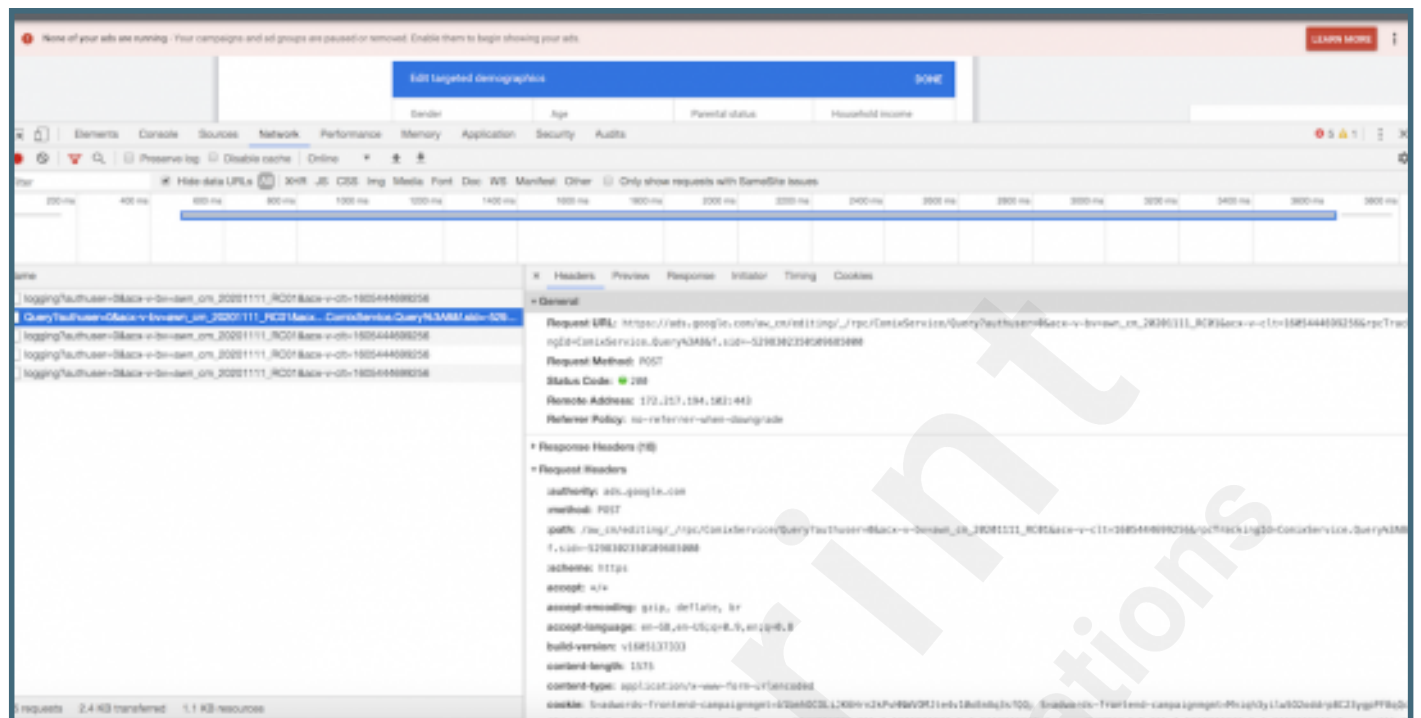
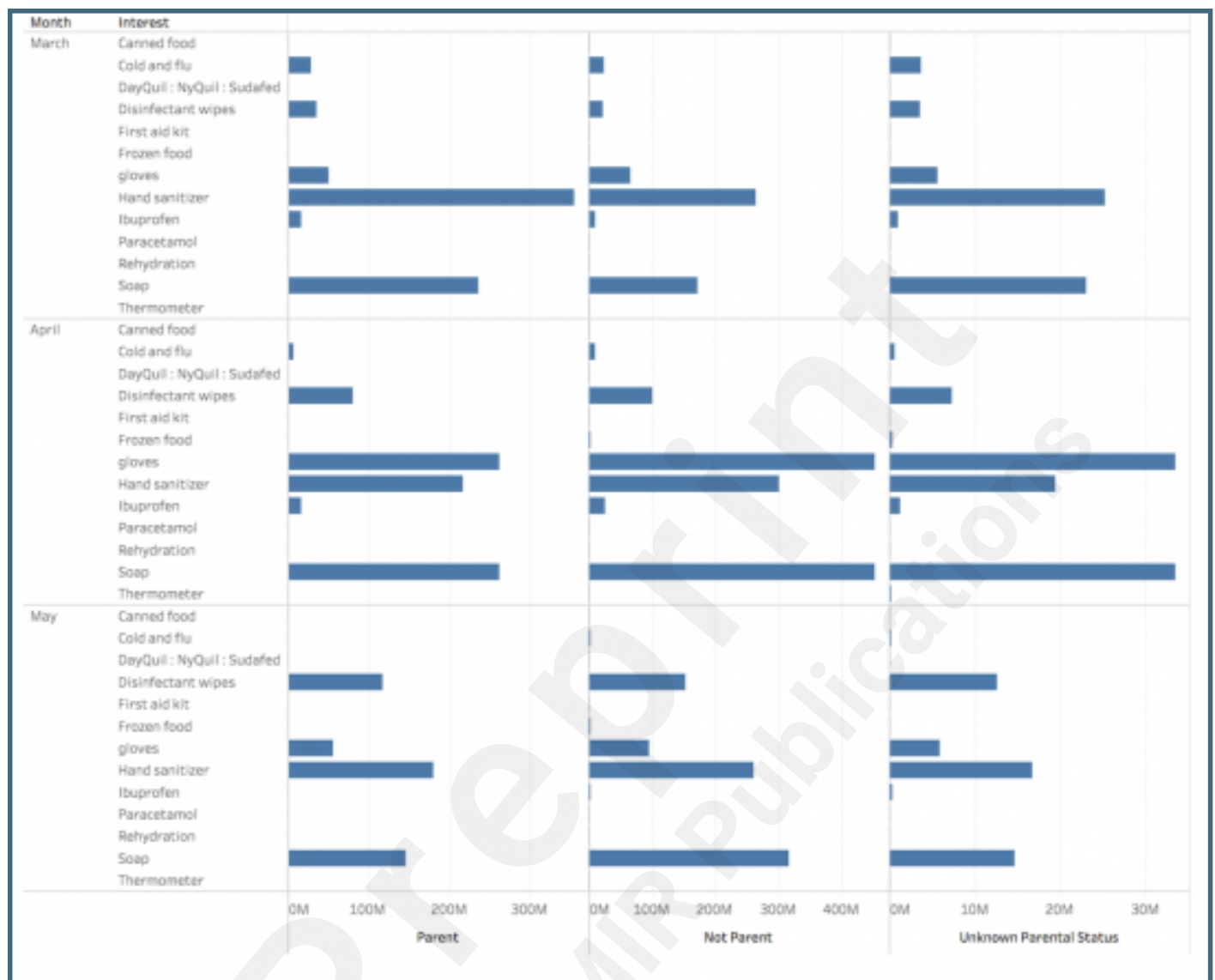Number of impressions over time and across different countries.
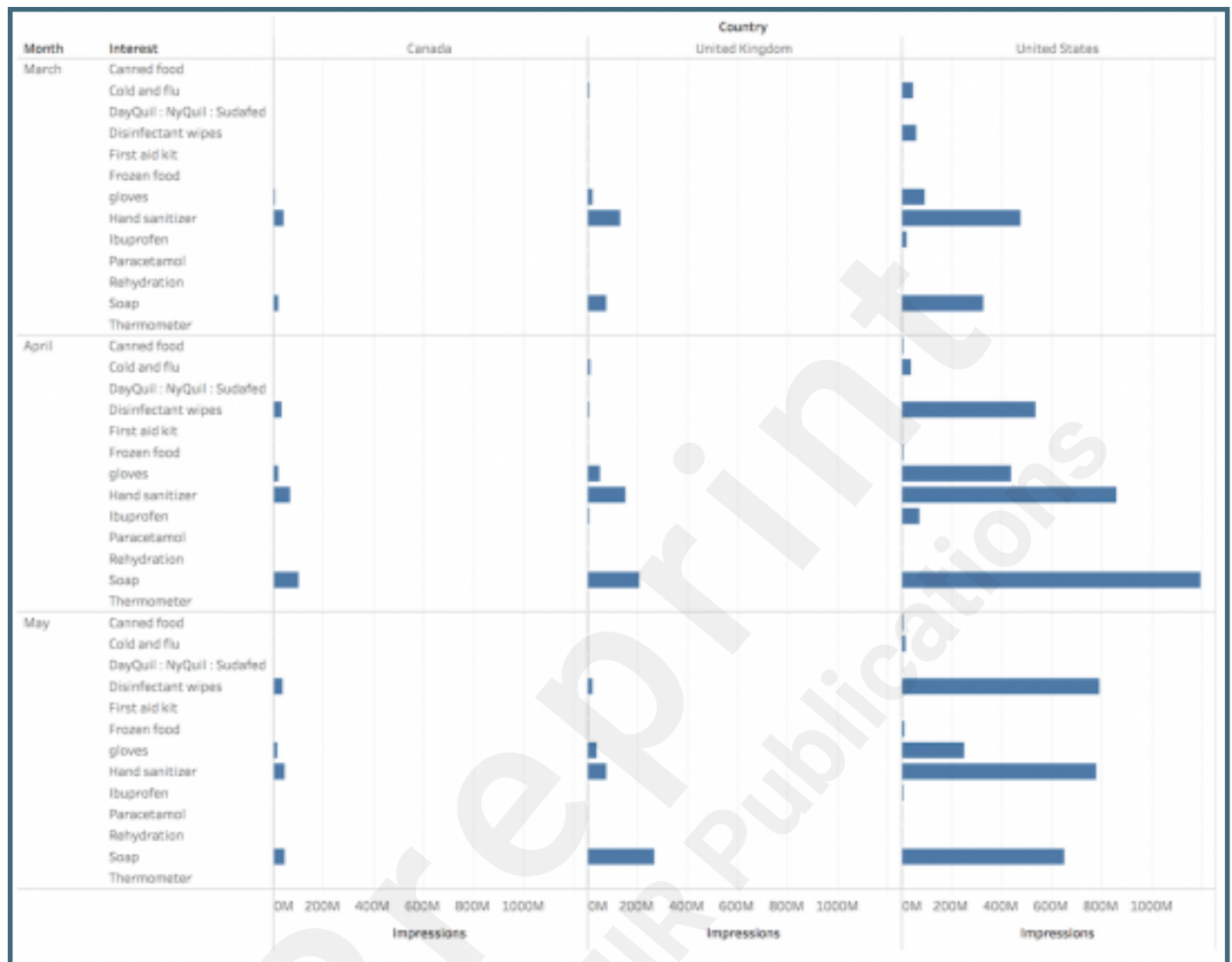
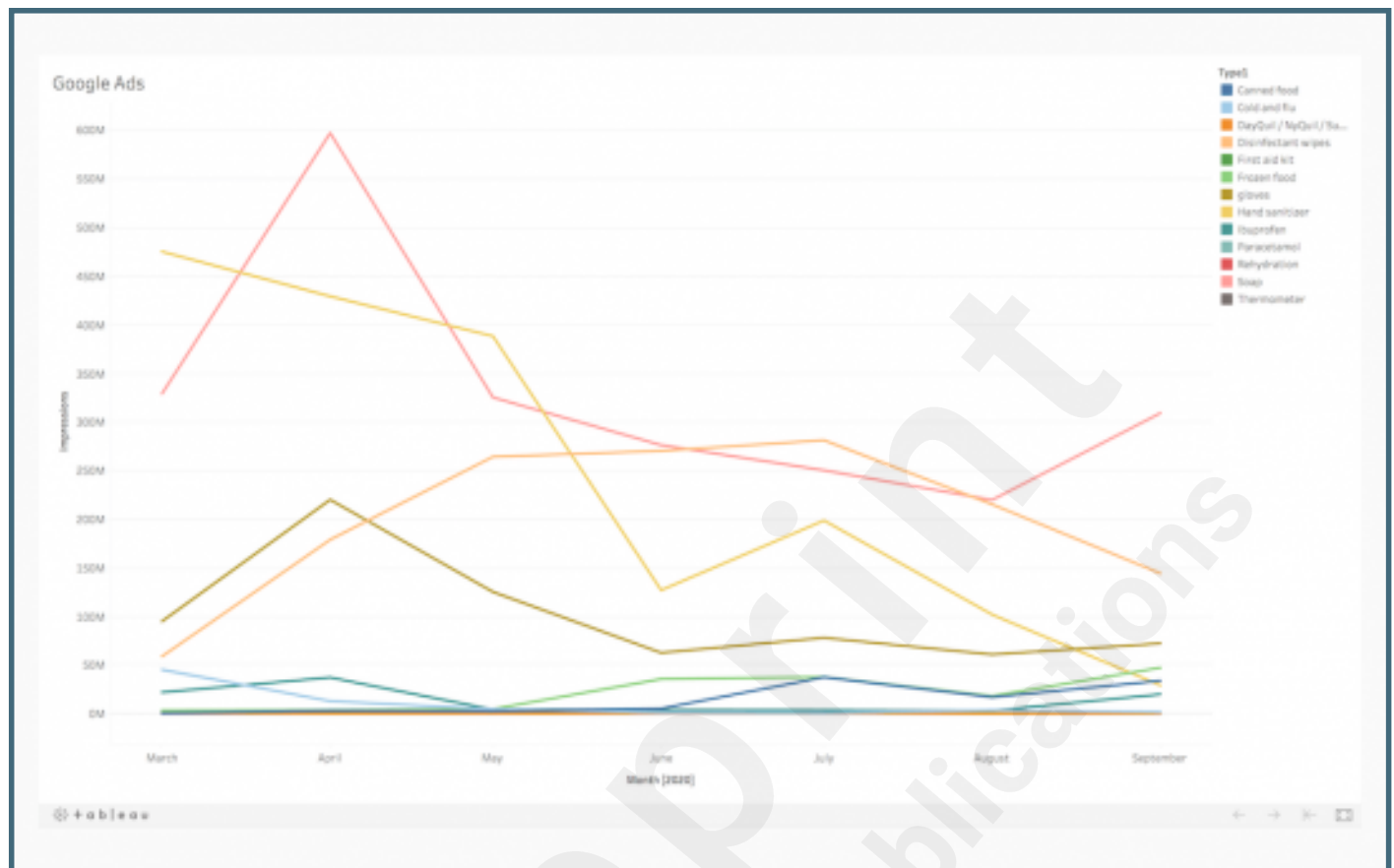Number of impressions relative to the English-speaking population.

Gender differences in panic buying's related impressions over time.

Parental status differences in panic buying's related impressions over time.

Patterns on Google Ads.

Patterns on Google Trends.