



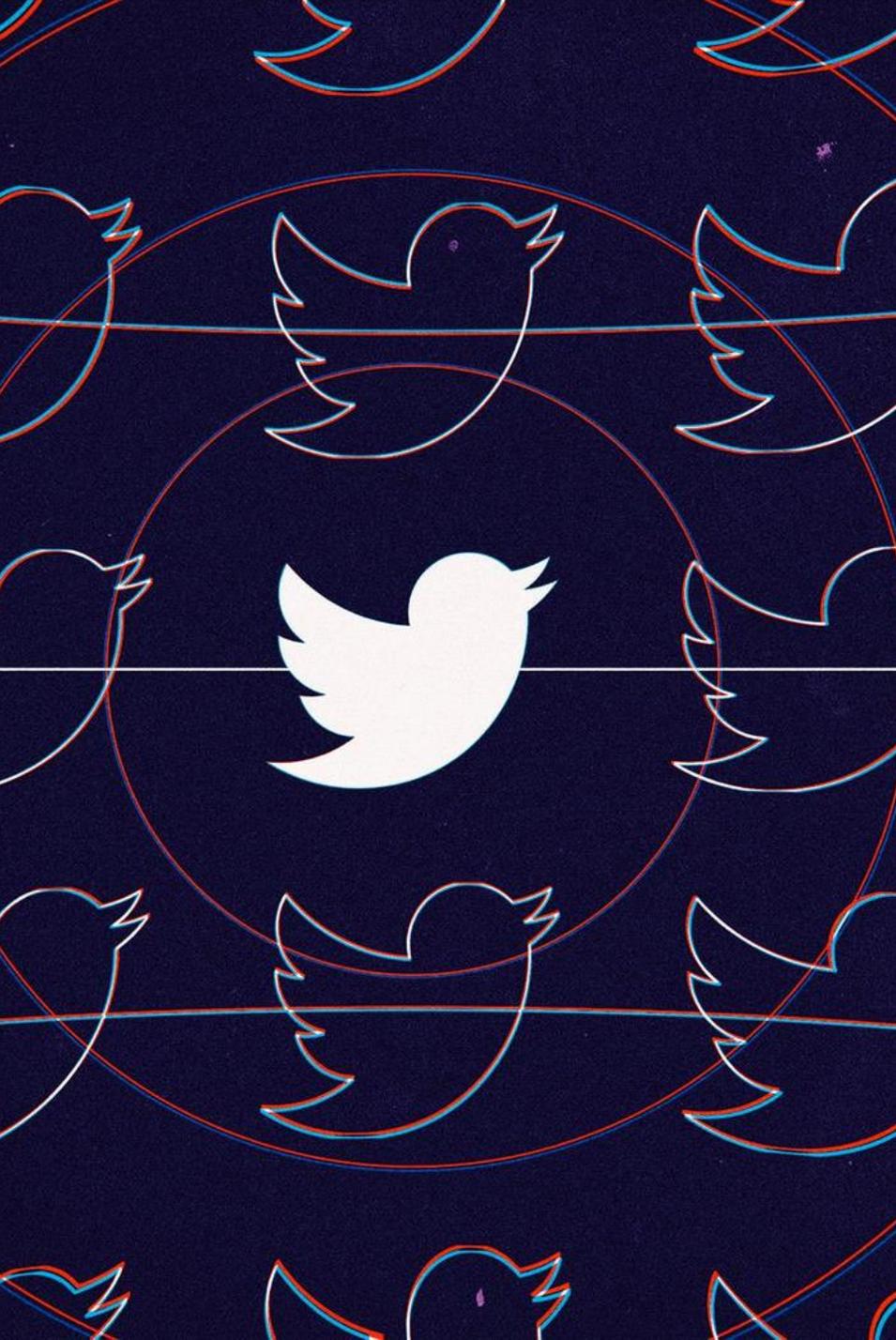
# CORONAVIRUS EXACERBATES XENOPHOBIA: CONSCIOUSNESS OF TWITTER POSTING DURING PANDEMIC

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# INTRODUCTION

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As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to wreak havoc across the globe by continuing relentless spread and infecting and killing tens of thousands, this outbreak simultaneously creates fear among people.

Moreover, the phenomenon has also resulted in xenophobia and racism.

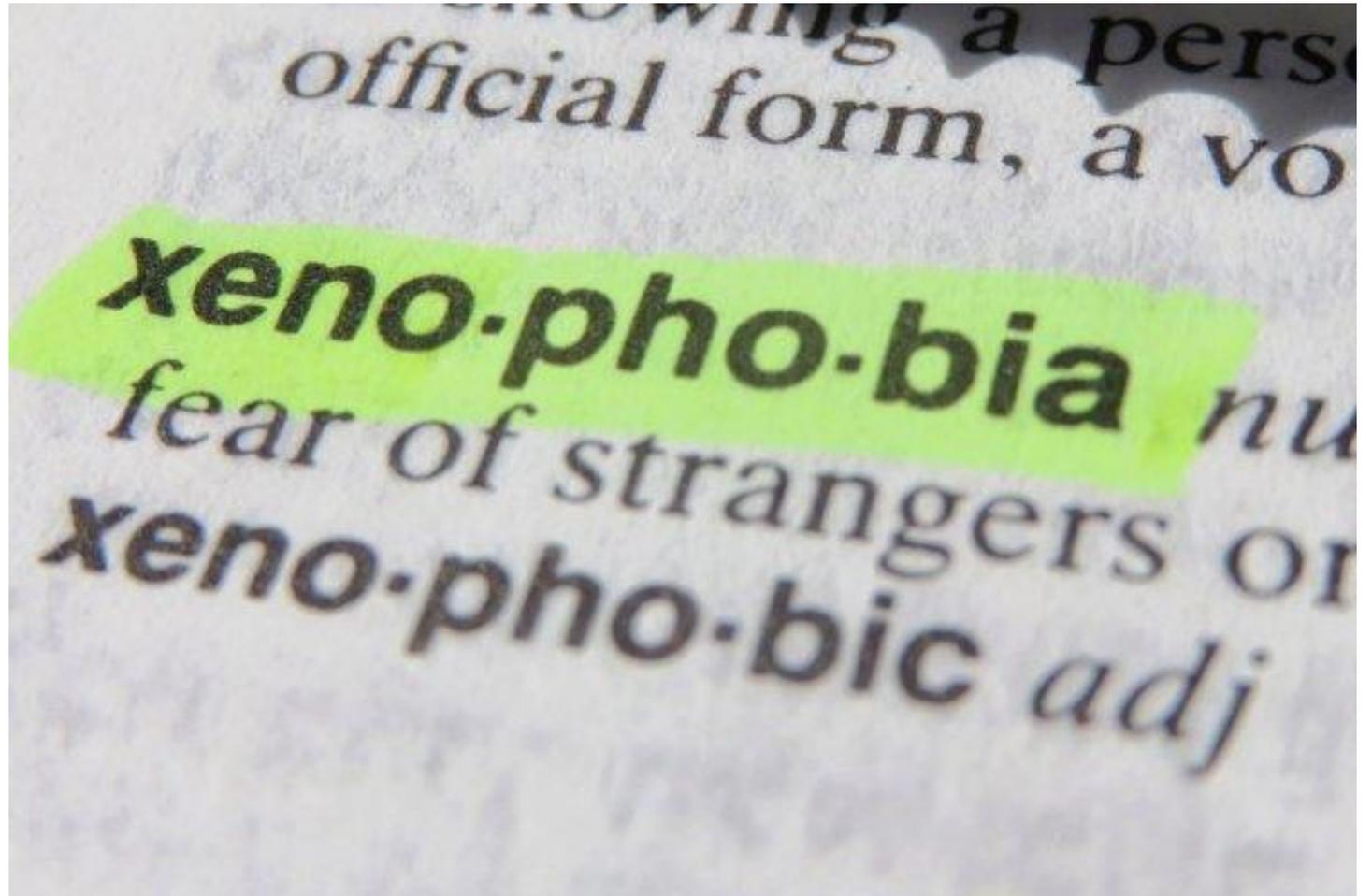
This pandemic has revealed social and political fractures in communities, with racialised and discriminatory responses to fear that affect marginalised group disproportionately (Haynes, 2020; Nature, 2020; Zheng, 2020)

# INTRODUCTION

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In a growing trend of xenophobia, Asian descent around the world has experienced more violent reactions, especially on social media. Reflected in the news feed from social media users (i.e. timelines for posted user-generated content), millions of people use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram platforms to provide public opinions, discussions and dissemination of race-related issues.

In Malaysia, it is discovered that a majority of the racially charged comments in social media were those anti-Islam/Malay sentiments, followed by remarks aimed at Chinese and Indians during the pandemic (Chin, 2020). Considering that the content posted in social media also represents their users' real-world interactions, there is an increased expectation that social media environments should often follow the norms of society. As such, social media sites are constantly being requested to provide users with the tools to report offensive and hateful content (Connelly, 2019).





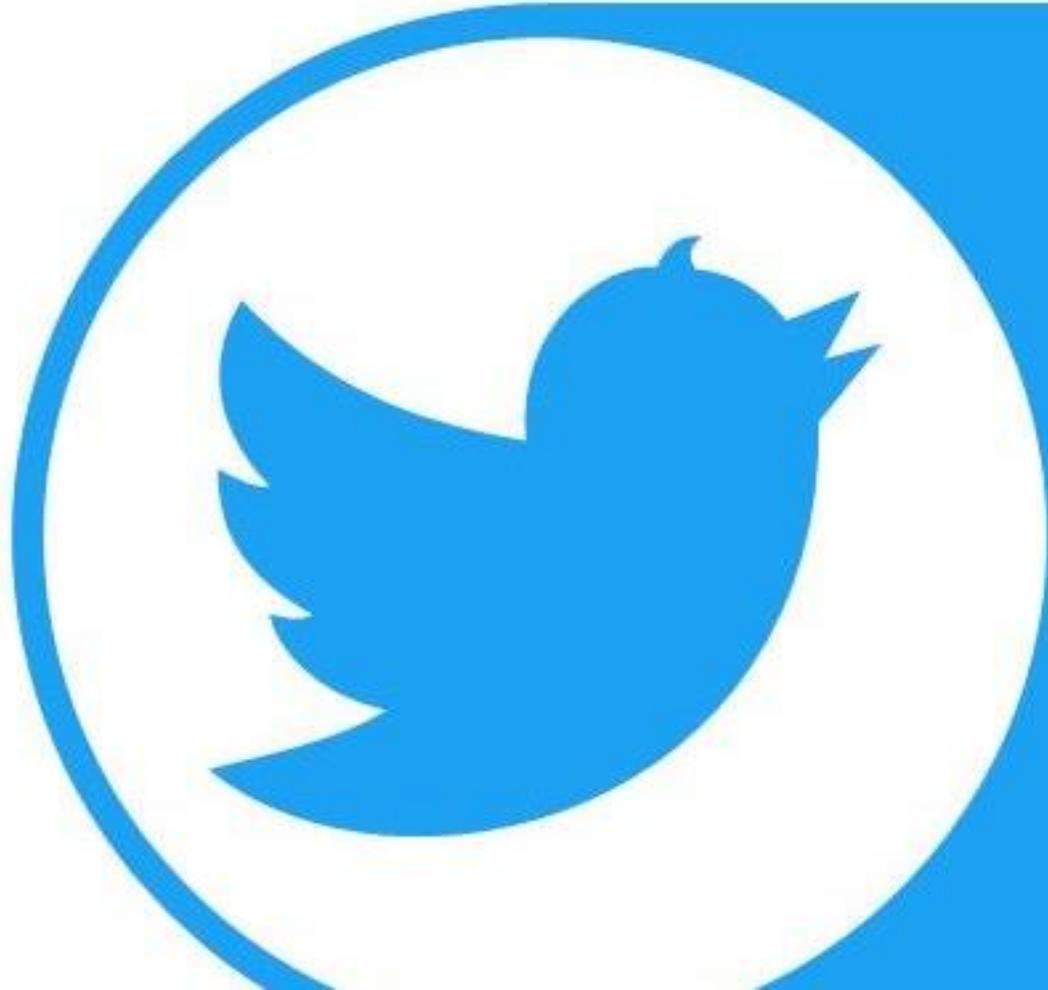
# Problem Statement

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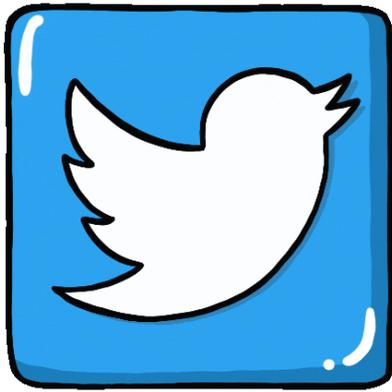
Despite wide-ranging social psychological research into hate, prejudice, and stereotyping (Wiggerfelt et al., 2015), there are still unexplored areas about power relations and otherness that contribute to hateful offending behaviour (Eliassi, 2015). In particular, little is known about the degree to which hateful online content is a possible risk factor that constructs negative attitudes and subsequent hateful acts (Synnott et al., 2017). In fact, the most common and prevalent form of hate speech on Twitter is the racist sentiment (Silva et al., 2016). Hence, this study addressed the xenophobia and racialisation issues by looking into Twitter users' consciousness during the Covid-19 outbreak, and at the same time, deconstructing the power relations embedded in the hashtag used.



# Research Objectives

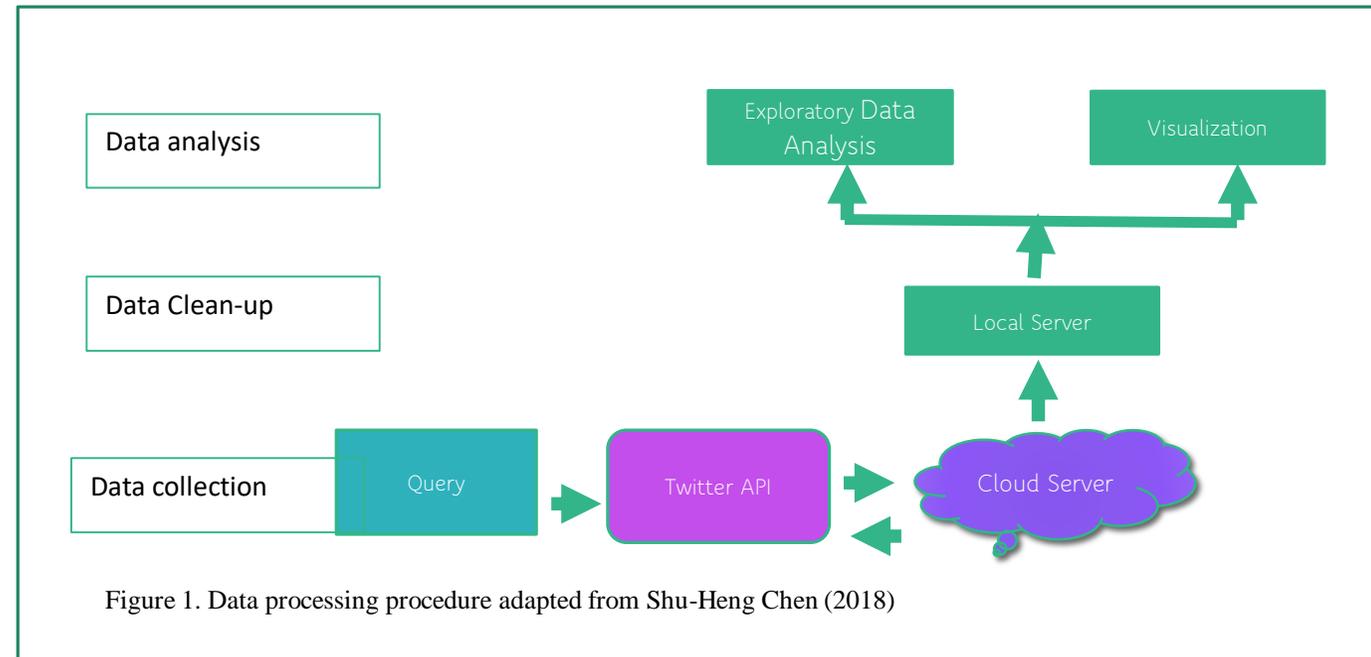


- The study addressed the issue by delving consciousness among Twitter users during the outbreak of COVID-19.
- To deconstruct the power relations embedded in the hashtag used among Twitter users during the outbreak of COVID-19.



# METHODOLOGY

- Twitter
- Random sampling technique to seek potential documents and public tweets on the Twitter platform based on the characteristics set about the objective of the study.
- The language Python was used in conjunction with the following external libraries to construct the programs used in this study: Tweepy, JSON Lint, and Matplotlib.

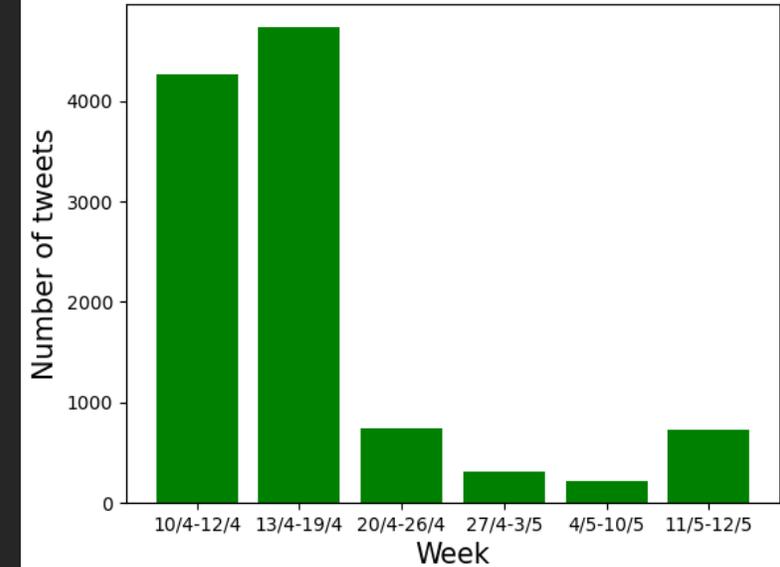


# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

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- This study conglomerates a dataset of 11,000 Twitter posts (tweets) over the past 10 April- 12 May 2020.
  - Show the early discussion and consciousness around the #cluster tabligh over the pandemic.
  - All the collected data were searched using keyword "cluster tabligh. This means that tweets containing this word posts with its hashtag (#clustertabligh) version have been retrieved.
  - Initially, we selected from 12 March until 12 May, however to due to the limitation data extraction from free API, the data were only available from 10 April-12 May.

# Tweet Trend and Consciousness

- presents some peaks in correspondence between 13 April until 19 April 2020.
- 18 April shows the highest tweets amongst all.
- Hence, we can argue that this day is the major Twitter user's activity. The increase frequency of tweets publishing can be attributed to numerous factors, for instance number of recovered patients being discharged on 18 April 2020.





# Tweet Trend and Consciousness

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- Twitter trains human consciousness with constant connectivity through instantaneous communication. This is where the users can post, share and retweet and act with other users instantly anywhere.
- Beyond the technological aspect using machine learning tools, the hashtag (#cluster tabligh) has an intrinsic philosophical weight, and that is one aspect of its value in this study and its inclusion.
- It revealed that tweets on this day (18 April) shows their consciousness of using #cluster tabligh. Equally, these Twitter's users are mindful of their surroundings. This is related with inner self and self-consciousness.
- When it comes to power relations in using #cluster tabligh, the twitter discussion, tweet and retweet played a key role in terms of power relations and knowledge production.



## Word Cloud

Employed Wordle's online text analysis tool to display commonly occurring words. were used to reflect the sentiments in the tweets.

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