



Giving Voice: Exploring the Identity and Personality Development of QT-BIPOC Undergraduate Students at UTM



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INTRODUCTION

- Emerging adulthood (ages 18-29) is a critical period for personality development, especially during the university years (Chung et al., 2014).
- Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous People of Color (QT-BIPOC) experience unique, contextual forms of prejudice and stigma that may not conform to “culturally shared stories that guide thoughts beliefs and behaviours” (Crenshaw, 1989; McLean & Syed, 2015; Narvaez et al., 2009)
- A lack of research on the QPOC experience obscures important variability (Arshad & Chung, 2022)

AIMS

- Conduct literature review on intersectionality, the Big Five, QT-BIPOC identity development, and the impact of social structures.
- Understand the lived experiences of QT-BIPOC undergraduates in terms of their identity and personality development.

METHOD

A team of QT-BIPOC undergraduates ($N = 6$), facilitated semi-structured focus group interviews ($N = 8$) to obtain rich qualitative data pertaining to the student experience at UTM. Sessions were held over Zoom and lasted 2 hours.

Part I. Prepared Prompts

- Social Structures & University Experiences
- Intersectionality of Race & Sexuality
- Personality Change & Stability
- Well-Being

Part II. Open Conversation

- “What recommendations do you have to improve the QT-BIPOC experience at UTM?”

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DATA ANALYSIS

Two coders analyzed a subset of the data ($N = 4$) using a qualitative coding software, NVivo. An inductive thematic analysis approach was used (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An intercoder reliability score of 0.81 was observed, indicating very good agreement between coders (Fleiss et al, 2003). Below, is a snapshot of themes and codes:

Bi-Cultural Identity Stress

Feelings of Internalized Homophobia

Increased Authenticity through Community Involvement

Increased Openness to QPOC Friendships

Sexual Identity Code-Switching

“I’m half Filipina and I’ve had this **constant struggle** in my life where I feel **too white** for the Asian community. But, then sometimes I feel like **too Asian** for the White community, especially with the fact that I do have lighter skin.”

“...as an international student, **expressing my sexuality is easier** without my parents here”

“...but I feel like there was still some parts of me that held like a **taboo**, or a belief that this isn't normal and this isn't what it should be. I'd hold very **heterosexual norms**, for example asking ‘who's the man’, ‘who is more masculine/feminine in the relationship’, ‘who wears the pants here?’ ”

“[UTM] has enabled me to be **more authentic in my expression of my sexual and racial identities**. Being in a place like UTM, it makes you reckon with your sense of **identity** and your **sense of self**. It makes you either rise up to the challenge or keep being scared...I embrace this freedom that UTM has given me from the way that I dress to the way that I talk...I feel **enabled to be myself** without any judgment”

“...being in university has kind of allowed me that **freedom to be who I want to be** and not who others expect me to be”

“... I’m almost like a **queer magnet...**”

“I feel almost like an **impostor** in the room because I can **seem very straight passing...**”

“In Orthodoxy, there's a sacrament of confession or repentance - I used to confess every month. But I **completely stopped when I got with my girlfriend** and I couldn't face it at all. I was so **sensitive** to any kind of descent about my relationship. I just I didn't want to hear it... I do believe in Orthodoxy completely. Am I able to come to terms with both parts of my life? For me, **only one can receive my attention at once.**”

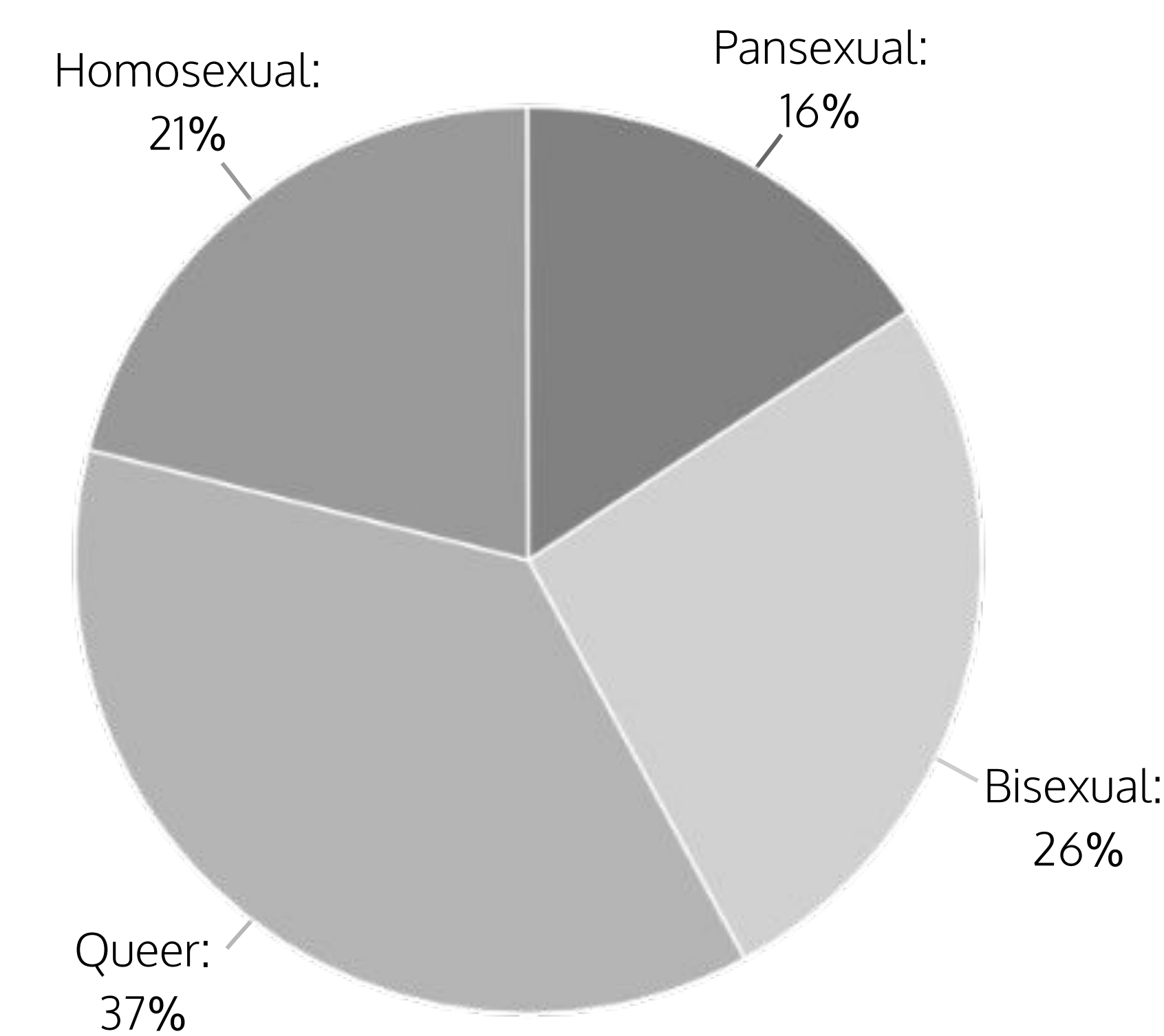
PARTICIPANTS

$N = 19$

- 21% First-Year
- 26% Second-Year
- 16% Third-Year
- 21% Fourth-Year
- 16% Fifth-Year



16% South Asian	8% European
24% East Asian	8% Caribbean
12% African	12% Southeast Asian
12% Afro-Caribbean	8% North American



CONCLUSION

- An increase in state authenticity was observed.
- QT-BIPOC relationships catalyze exploration.
- Participants navigate singular identity spaces and want more intentional, intersectional spaces.
- QT-BIPOC experiences with institutions affect how they grow, who they are, and how they feel.

THANK YOU

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