



Full Report Findings Discussion
May 2020

This Study

- We conducted five online SEEQ sessions among African American travelers about their experiences travelling in Virginia.
 - Primarily living in and around Charlottesville and Hampton Roads
- 40 participants
- March 25 – 27, 2020
 - Note: the state of Virginia had been under a “Stay-At-Home” order for ~10 days due to CoVID-19 pandemic.



This Report

- Reviews Key Findings from the 2020 Full Report
- A note...
 - In this study, we heard the themes that emerged from our work in 2019 reinforced.
 - However, now having collected nearly 80 stories in total, we are able to see sub-themes emerging.
 - The sub-themes ladder up to what we learned in 2019. We are choosing not to re-state the earlier themes, but to more fully explore them through a richer, more dimensional view.

2019 Themes

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- Travel is a necessity, not just a desire
- These are “Transformational Travelers”
- They desire a sense of Belonging
- Travel in Virginia is a balancing act for these consumers
- Like most groups, African-American travelers are not monolithic

Historical Sites

Direction for how Historical Sites need to talk about their history was reinforced in the March sessions

- Story that can be trusted
 - Is it the full story?
 - Whose story is it?
- Story-tellers who can be trusted
 - Who are they?
 - How much do they really know?
- Inclusive points of view
 - Stories told from different points of view
 - Stories told FROM people, not just about them
- Telling the truth
 - Sadness AND Joy
 - Pain AND Pride
 - Oppression AND Rising
- Difficult emotions and yet a necessary experience

2020 Sub-Themes

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- Diversity is critical to the sense of connection these “Transformational Travelers” seek.
- They don’t just evaluate places, they evaluate communities.
- Discovery is powerful, enabled by the reassurance of word of mouth.
 - There are gaps between the beliefs based on past experiences vs. how things are now.
- Implications for Travel & Tourism in Virginia

2020 vs 2019

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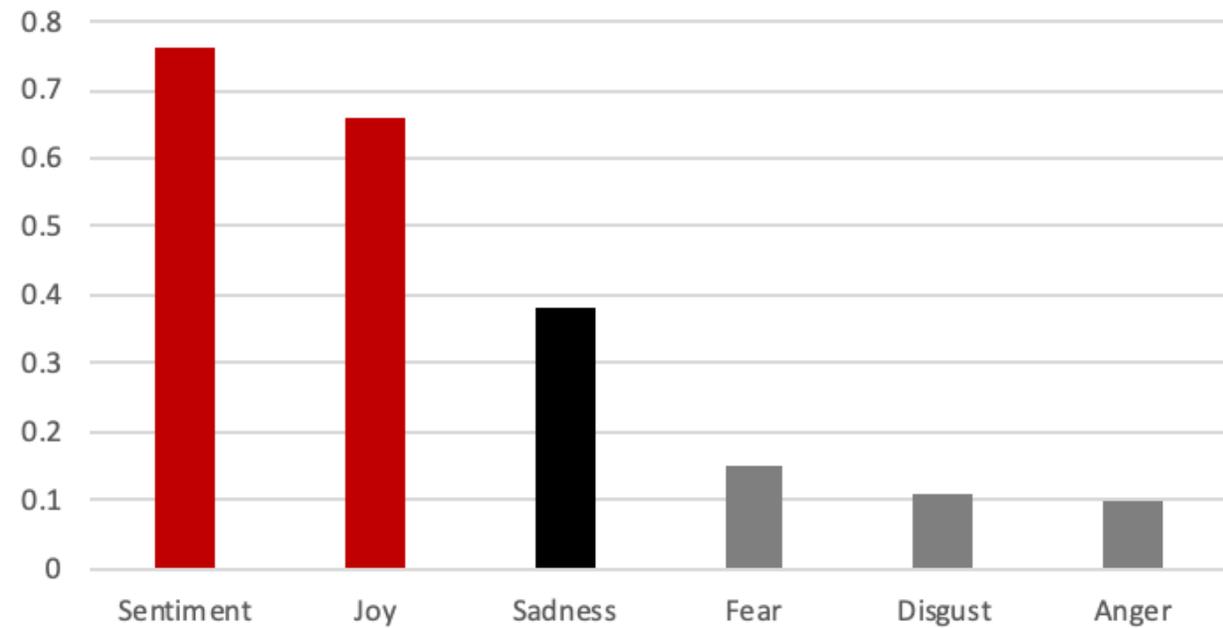
VIRGINIA
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- **Topline scores were consistent from year to year.**
- New significant emotional bundles emerged.
- For the most part, geographic differences fell away.
 - However, the total sample is now over-weighted to current VA residents.



Stories Were Generally Positive & Joyful

Sentiment & Emotions Expressed

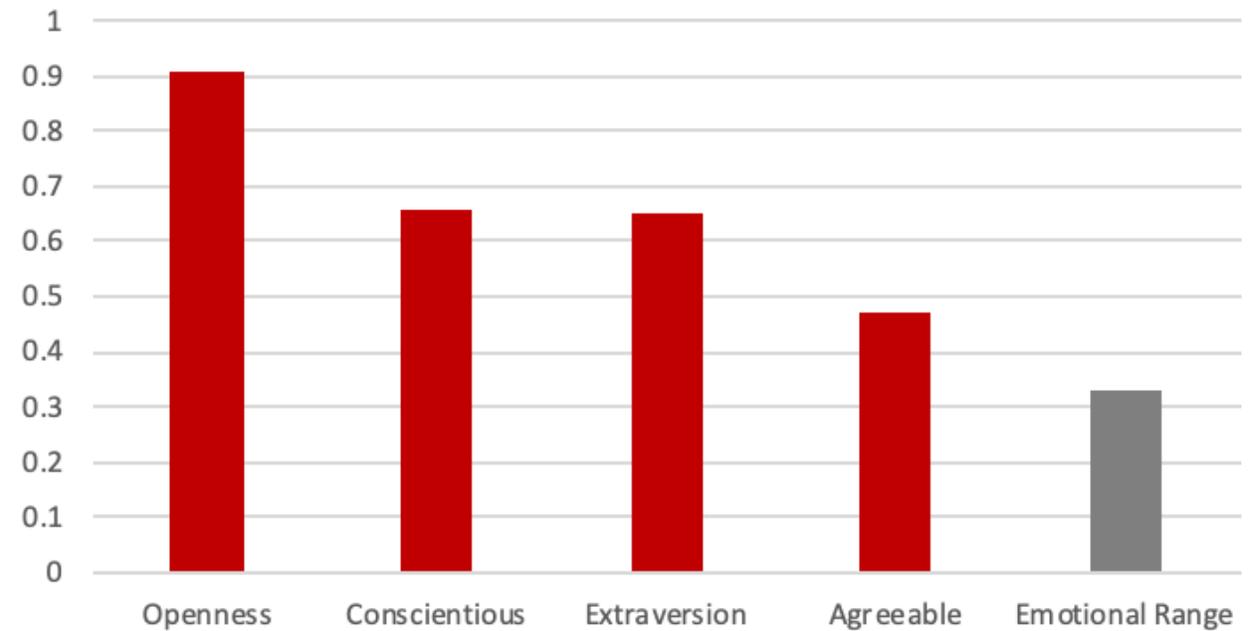


Key: ■ above average ■ notable ■ significantly below average



Open, Extroverted, Conscientious, Agreeable Personalities

Personality Traits Expressed

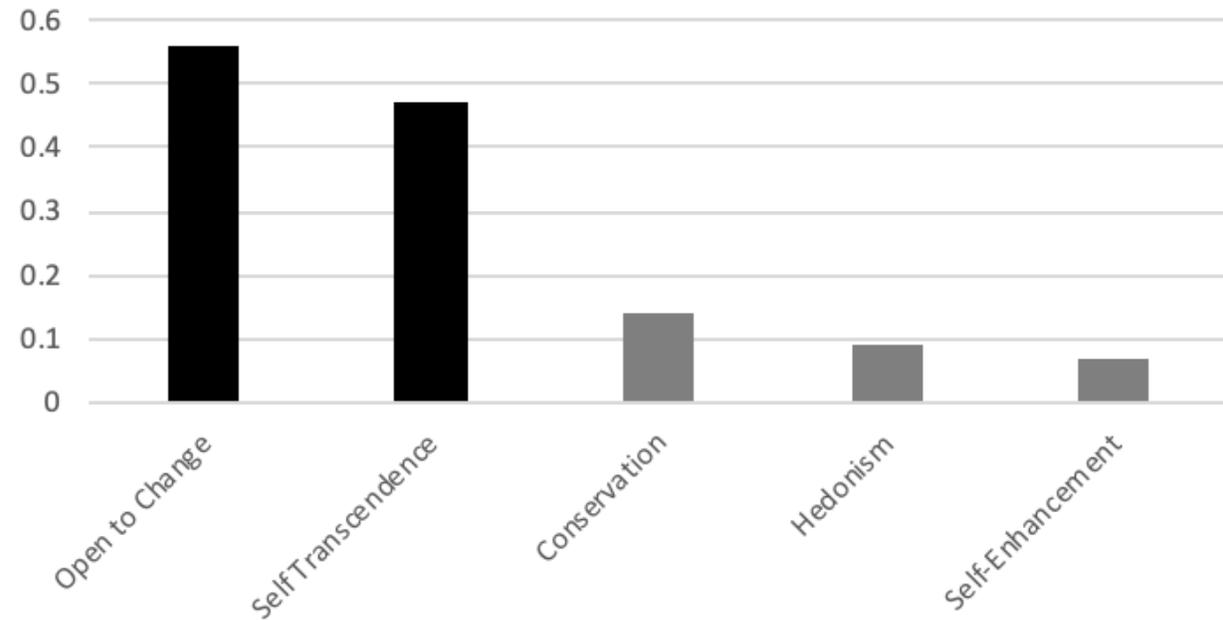


Key: ■ above average ■ notable ■ significantly below average

Value Being Open to Change and Self-Transcendence



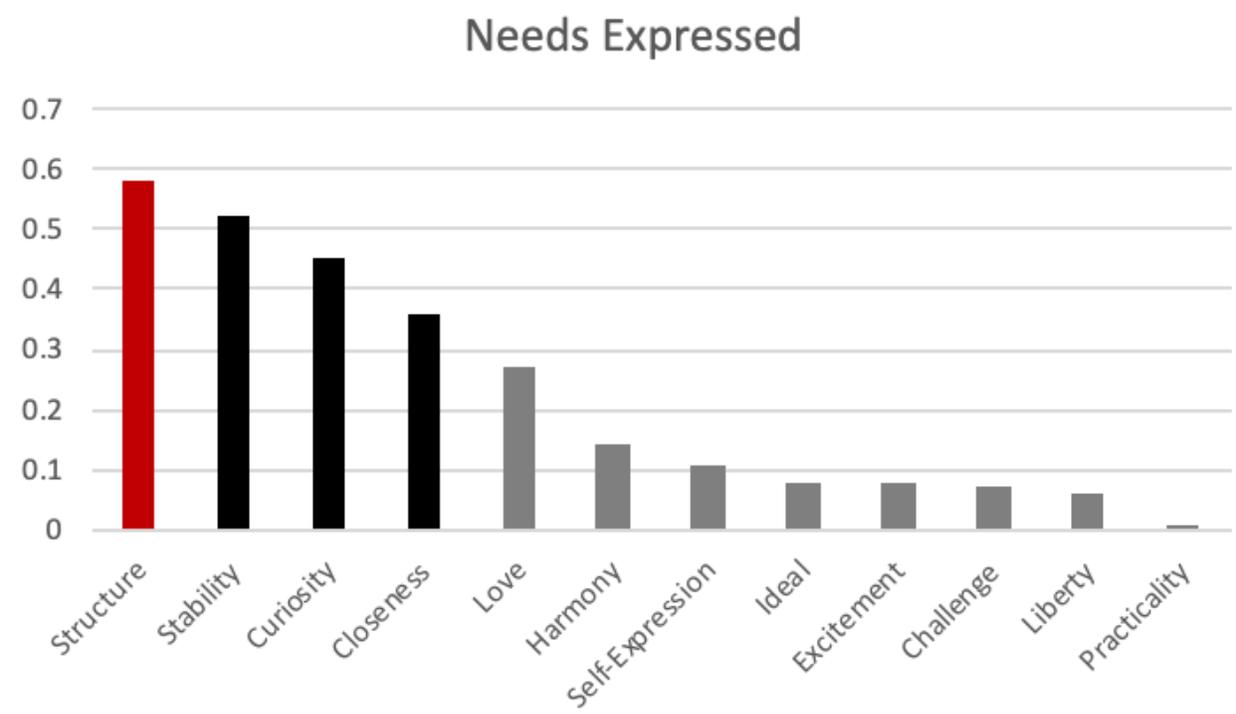
Values



Key: ■ above average ■ notable ■ significantly below average



Need Structure, Stability, Curiosity and Closeness



2020 vs 2019

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FRIENDLINESS	corr
Agreeableness	0.55
Anxiety	0.84
Immoderation	-0.85
Challenge	-0.92

When these travelers are expressing Friendliness, they are also likely to express Agreeableness and are also probably feeling Anxious. When soliciting their feedback, spend time to really understand them, as they may initially be polite simply because they are anxious.

An Emotional View of the AA Travel Experience

- Travel in Virginia for African American travelers is complex, diverse and at times, paradoxical

SELFCONSCIOUSNESS		VULNERABILITY		SELFDISCIPLINE		DEPRESSION	
	corr		corr		corr		corr
Orderliness	-0.67	Anger	0.13	Moderesty	0.47	Orderliness	-0.88
Selfefficacy	-0.75	Trust	-0.72	Cautiousness	0.52	Assertiveness	-0.75
ActivityLevel	-0.86	Anger	0.89	Anger	-0.76	Excitement	-0.85
Excitement	-0.92	Anxiety	0.78	Anxiety	-0.88	PerNeuroticism	0.74
		Immoderation	0.82	Emotionality	-0.70	Anger	0.79

FRIENDLINESS		ASSERTIVENESS		ANXIETY		CLOSENESS	
	corr		corr		corr		corr
Agreeableness	0.55	Friendliness	0.37	Joy	0.04	Anger	0.84
Anxiety	0.84	Depression	0.73	Trust	-0.68	Cooperation	0.37
Immoderation	-0.85	Immoderation	-0.45	SelfConsciousness	0.79	Ideal	0.68
Challenge	-0.92	SelfConsciousness	-0.86			S. Expression	0.67
						Excitement	0.76

These are a selection of the “Significant Emotional Bundles” that were revealed in the stories we collected. It shows a collection of personality traits, needs, values and emotions that are correlated to one another.

2020 vs 2019

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Diversity is Critical to Connection

Diversity of...

- Points of view
- People on site
- Experiences
- Contexts: Connecting the past, present and future

“Speaking about a site with little information on the lives of enslaved people: “I felt that this spoke to the lack of importance of the slave other than for the daily maintenance of the plantation.”

“We walked along the paths with families from a variety of backgrounds...It felt like releasing a breath I didn't know I was holding..”

“I realized that regardless of how bright or dark the history of a place may be, it is the interaction with it that allows for us to change the history those who come after us...and hopefully push us to have even deeper conversations and a greater understanding of humanity as a whole.”

Connection To...

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- Themselves, Friends and Family
- Culture
- The past in order to move through the present and into the future
 - There may also be an opportunity to meet their need for Structure by organizing and arranging history in a way that clearer connections to the present and future are made.

“I need a connection – personal reflection and understanding.”

“It is so nice to see a different culture within a culture.” – referring to black “nerd” culture

“I am looking for culture through food, drink and heritage...I want a contemporary contextualization”

“Give me knowledge I can apply today....Connect history to a contemporary context.”



**Belonging is tied to the
Community experience.**

**This experience
permeates all of the
experiences in that
Community and it is the
Community that is
evaluated.**

The Community Experience

- Expansive itineraries make the community matter.
- How diverse is the community?
 - Is it authentically diverse, or just putting on a show?
 - Are different people all enjoying the same types of things together?
 - Do I see others like me here?
 - Do I feel seen and wanted here?
- The fast track to the best of a community can often be found in its Art & Culture.

Diversity in a Community Reinforces Trust

ANXIETY	corr
Joy	0.04
Trust	-0.68
SelfConsciousness	0.79

VULNERABILITY	corr
Anger	0.13
Trust	-0.72
Anger	0.89
Anxiety	0.78
Immoderation	0.82

The Community Experience

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STORIES

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“There is a difference between being wanted here vs realizing this wasn’t meant for me, I just happen to be here.”

“As we walked into the market she was engulfed in the warmth of the people and the joy in the space. Her anxiety diminished and her appreciation for the culture increased. There we encountered a variety of people who represent different talents, races, languages and ages....”

“I love going there to just walk around and see the art on the buildings, the wonderful restaurants, the festivals the history and the way they take the history of yesterday and combine it with today.”

Three Different Communities

Participants in these sessions spoke frequently about their travel to three Virginia communities, sharing both positive and negative experiences.



Hampton Roads

An area with a challenging history, deep connections, diversity and a range of experiences. Hampton Roads is becoming a great place to visit.

Positive: Ft. Monroe, beaches, festivals, Busch Gardens

Negative: Williamsburg



Charlottesville

A segregated community, leaving AA travelers feeling like the “other” who doesn’t belong.

Positive: Current Monticello

Negative: Downtown Mall, Wineries, Family Events



Richmond

An area with a challenging history, diversity and a range of experiences. Richmond is becoming a great place to visit.

Positive: Museum of Black History & Culture, Slave Trail, Rumors of War, River, Carytown & Downtown

Negative: Confederate Statues

Three Different Communities

This is some of what we heard...



Hampton Roads

“Hidden treasures and rich history.”

“Rich and painful past with rich culture, food, beaches, science and space.”

“Ocean, water, lakes, African American museums and history that is taken seriously.”



Charlottesville

“In Charlottesville they assume I’m a single mom with lots of baby daddies.”

“When I moved from Atlanta, I went from black people everywhere doing all kinds of things to hardly any.”

“Charlottesville likes their veneer of being progressive.”



Richmond

“I found a sense of belonging in the Confederate Capital”

“Rumors of War made me proud”

“I saw young, black, professional greatness...black people are the soul of this city and they are investing in Richmond.”

“I felt free and natural there vs. having to have a double-consciousness.”

**Discovery is powerful,
enabled by the
reassurance of Word of
Mouth**



- The delight of “hidden gems”
- “People bridges” are critical to travel decisions
 - Provide reassurance of safety
 - Help create connection and belonging
 - Supports the joy of discovery

“I was amazed at how beautiful and historic this beach and beach community is. It sparked my interest in visiting places in VA that not too many people know about.”

“A new challenge I had to face. Do I hold on to the stories my co-workers and friends told me [that this area was dangerous and racist]? Or do I embrace the reality I was enjoying?”

Places are “Growing Up”

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- Past experiences set expectations.
 - One’s own experiences
 - Those of others
- That’s why word of mouth is so critical.
- We heard many examples of how things are changing in a good way.
 - Hampton Roads
 - Virginia Beach
 - Massanutten
 - Richmond

“The anxiety I had felt was not mine from my personal history. It was what I know from history. The juxtaposition always causes me to pause.”

“I found an amazing place with more natural beauty than most areas. I guess that Virginia, just like the little kid that moved from Philadelphia to Gloucester, had grown up.”

“My hope is that there can be a slight culture change so that I can consider the possibility of living here long term.”

Implications



Champion Diversity

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- Bring diverse people and experiences together.
- Places are evaluated by who is there, and a diverse audience is important.
- Visitors want a contemporary experience at a historical place. Consider bringing in music, art and food so it can blend with the history and make it a living place.
- This is an opportunity not just for destinations (hotels, restaurants, attractions and historic sites) but for the communities around them. How could travel destinations help bring this to the community?

Integrate Stories

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- Integrate multiple stories into the experience.
- Stories of enslaved people should not be separate from those of the white people.
- Include the stories of achievement and innovation and aspiration that were true for African Americans long ago.
- Include contemporary stories with the historical ones; bring the past into the present.

Invest in Community

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- The community around you is woven into how visitors will experience your location.
- Learn about the other gems in your area and find ways to share that with your visitors.
 - Restaurants
 - Shops
 - Art galleries & museums
- Partner with other great organizations; bring them into your spaces.
- Consider how your location can help make your community more diverse, vibrant and thriving.

Get the Word Out

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- Find ways to help people who have been to your location share their experience with others.
- If you are doing new things, talk about it.
- If your community had issues in the past, acknowledge that and show what has changed.
- Be a bold example of friendliness and welcome to everyone.
- Talk to your counterparts in other organizations and help them understand why a diverse, thriving and welcoming community is so important to the success of everyone.

Pre/Post COVID

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- Help support the community now. Find ways to reach out.
- Start working now on creating better experiences.
- Evaluate how access might impact the diversity of visitors that can come experience all you have to offer.
- Show & tell visitors what you are doing and that you are excited for them to come join you when we can travel again (invest in interesting ways to build awareness now).

Recommended Next Steps

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- We propose sharing these findings with sites around the Commonwealth sooner, rather than later, to take advantage of the re-planning that so many places now need to do.
- We suggest continuing the work, as planned, to host sessions in two more out-of-state markets in order to re-balance our overall sample so we can better understand how location may or may not impact values, needs and emotions.
- We are happy to work with you to incorporate these findings into the study commissioned by museums across the Commonwealth, as you have asked.