

A photograph of a smiling African American couple standing outdoors. The man is on the left, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and black pants. The woman is on the right, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and black pants. They are standing on a dirt path with grass, under the shade of a large tree with green leaves. The background is a blurred green field.

AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAVEL EXPERIENCES IN VIRGINIA

share
more
stories

VIRGINIA
IS FOR
LOVERS

NOVEMBER 2019
FULL REPORT

OVERVIEW

WHY THIS STUDY?

Virginia is for Lovers is one of the most iconic and recognizable travel brands in the world. Using that powerful brand equity, the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is charged with promoting the Commonwealth as a prominent travel destination by showcasing all there is to love in a Virginia vacation. The dollars spent by travelers fuel our economy, provide work opportunities for Virginians, and improve communities across the state. Simply put, tourism helps to make Virginia a great place to live, work and visit.

The organization has several areas of interest as they look to continue to deliver better year-over-year results. One opportunity area is among African American travelers from outside of the state. Specifically, VTC wants to understand how the history product resonates with these travelers.

There are several things VTC already understands: 1) African American travelers often visit Virginia while also visiting family; 2) among the uniquely ownable tourism products for Virginia are the historical sites in the state; 3) Virginia has had both historical and more recent friction within the state as it relates to race; 4) Virginia has locations, attractions and a place in history that are relevant to African American travelers.

The opportunity is to more deeply understand African American travelers so that VTC can help message more effectively and provide guidance to various locations around the state for increasing their relevance to this important group.

PARTICIPANTS

To gain deeper understanding of these travelers, Share More Stories (SMS) convened two SEEQ sessions in October 2019: one in Richmond, VA and one in Washington, D.C. In Richmond, VA we spoke with 18 residents of the greater metro area.

Participants were 50% men and 50% women ranging in ages from 20's to 60's. In Washington, D.C. we spoke with 16 residents of Northern Virginia, D.C. and Maryland. Participants were about 25% male and the rest were female, with a similar age distribution as the group in Richmond.

During each session, we asked participants to think about their most memorable trip in Virginia and write their story about it. As a part of their story, we asked them to tell us what they thought they had learned from their experiences. We made time for volunteers to share their stories with the group and we also spent time asking more specific questions about travel in Virginia, as well as the upcoming movie, "Harriet."

DATA, ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

During the sessions, we listened to and observed the participants. At the end of the sessions, they submitted their stories to us electronically. After the stories were collected, we processed them through SMS's data analytics platform. This platform uses natural language processing combined with AI to score the sentiment, emotions, needs, values and personality traits expressed in the stories. We then use additional analytics to find patterns of emotion as well as correlations that appear in the data.

This report is a combination of the data that were generated from the stories that were submitted, along with human observation and understanding of the stories and storytellers, themselves. Our iterative process allows us to combine both human and machine analysis to better understand why these participants travel, what they value, need and express through their experiences. This provides us with deep insights that point to impactful ways that VTC might increase the relevance of Virginia's places to African American travelers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

TRAVEL IS A NECESSITY, NOT JUST A DESIRE

Yes, these travelers look forward to travel with the anticipation that so many do. However, we heard a number of times that for many of these participants, it was much more than just a desire. Travel was viewed as necessary; necessary for health, well-being, connection and re-connection with heritage, culture, past and present.

TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVELERS

Because of the feeling that travel is a necessity, they are intentional and purposeful about it. The underlying value driving their travel was to connect with something bigger than themselves. As they travel, they are not trying to just "go back" to a place, a space or a time; but to "go through" as a part of moving forward stronger, more inspired and better connected.

DESIRE A SENSE OF BELONGING

Motivated by connecting to something bigger than themselves, these travelers expressed the needs of structure, stability, closeness, curiosity and love. We heard these participants talk a lot about wanting to feel welcome, accepted and safe. They are understandably very aware when they are the "only" and so are looking for signs to reassure them that it is alright for them to visit and that they won't be made to feel badly.

TRAVEL IN VIRGINIA IS A BALANCING ACT

These travelers have a lot to balance. They feel both safe in Virginia, yet also at risk, or made to feel uncomfortable by other (mostly white) residents. There are lots of fun things to do in Virginia, as well as historical places that also contain both the joy and sadness; the pain and pride; the oppression and strength of the African American experience. These travelers also talked about feeling the tug of what they wanted to do and where they felt it necessary to visit. Finally, they can feel both welcomed by family and friends and unwelcome by situational aspects within the environment.

AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAVELERS ARE NOT A MONOLITHIC GROUP

We noticed rather quickly that where a traveler lived impacted the sentiment, emotions, needs and values that were expressed. However, just considering where a traveler lived was incomplete. After clustering the stories based on the traits of the stories, we discovered three types of travelers: Frustrated Idealists, Confident Idealists and Harmonizers. After looking at what made each group unique, we have identified the unique ways each group might play a role in increasing the relevance and sharing the experience of travel in Virginia.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAVEL & TOURISM IN VIRGINIA

Ultimately, Virginia Tourism Corporation seeks to grow travel and its related spending in the state from other areas of the country. In support of this overall goal, an opportunity has been identified to attract more African American travelers to Virginia. There are two fundamental questions that need to be answered in order to move towards this goal:

- How do we make travel to Virginia more relevant to African American travelers, especially its unique historical sites?
- How do we talk about what Virginia has to offer to African American travelers?

RELEVANCE COMES THROUGH MEETING NEEDS

DELIVER A FEELING OF BELONGING

Ultimately what this study found is that the best description of both articulated and unarticulated needs is a sense of belonging. Out-of-state African American travelers want to know that when they visit the state, they will feel welcome, accepted and safe.

They also want to know that they are coming to a state where they can freely explore and express culture: both their own and that of others. This is where historical sites, done well,

create a significant advantage for Virginia, as history is a path back to the roots of culture as well as important context through which to see both today's cultural expressions and find inspiration for what could be in the future.

TALK ABOUT THE MIX OF PRODUCTS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN

We heard a number of times that these travelers do not travel for just one type of experience. They are looking to bring together a combination of experiences within a single trip. They want to have fun. They enjoy a range of fun activities, including visits to amusement parks, skiing, night life, boating and shopping as examples.

They are looking to relax. In many cases we heard that nature is a wonderful way to relax. Beaches, mountains, the countryside and parks were all shared. They also are looking for great food to enjoy. Certainly, they are also looking for other cultural experiences (music, festivals, art) including historical experiences.

African American travelers have a unique need for a respectful welcome from the Commonwealth and they also want to be just another traveler like anyone else. They have similar desires to explore and enjoy all that Virginia has to offer. Therefore, there is not a need to create things just for them, but rather use what Virginia has to offer in a way that is relevant to them. To create relevance with these travelers the key is to talk about all of these types of experiences, and as that is done, to connect it to the opportunity to explore and express culture: both theirs and that of others through heritage.

GOOD MESSAGES (AND STORIES) ARE INCLUSIVE

This study shows that the most effective messaging to African American Travelers will include them. Messaging should be more clear and direct, not relying too heavily on purely emotional connection. Messaging

should be delivered from a range of voices, include African American voices. They should also reflect a range of perspectives, including those of African Americans. This is part of what we heard from respondents after viewing the trailer for "Harriet." They appreciated the story told through her voice, and her experience. In that way, it struck them as both a well-known story and an untold story.

HISTORICAL SITES, DONE WELL, ARE COMPLETE AND RELATE TO TODAY

Because historical sites are such a unique and authentic product offer for tourism in Virginia, they warrant a special note. Historical sites are important and relevant to African American travelers.

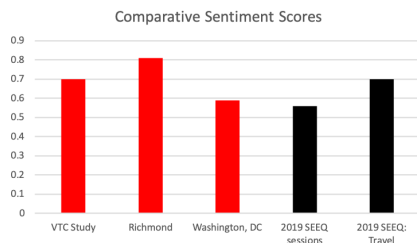
Authentic, historical sites "done right" help people journey through the past to the present. They must be balanced, or in the words of these travelers, "tell the truth." They should express both sadness and joy; pain and pride; oppression and the courage, strength and resilience that overcome oppression.

They want to trust the stories told at these sites and know that they are the complete story, the full story and include previously untold stories. They want to trust the people at the sites who tell the stories. Storytellers should be authentic, diverse and knowledgeable. They also want to trust the point of view from which the stories are told and, in fact, see the stories told from multiple points of view. This is another way that including often untold stories can help. Finally, historical sites that are "done right" don't gloss over or avoid the difficult emotions that many of these places evoke. They include them and share them and also do not allow the story to be limited by them.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

POSITIVE: WITH JOY, SADNESS AND MUCH TO BALANCE

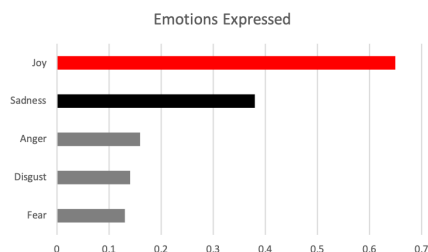
Overall, the stories that were shared with us scored quite positively, with a 0.70 score, above the 0.56 average sentiment we see across a comparative sample of sessions we conducted in 2019.



The chart above shows the average sentiment scores for this collection of stories as compared to other collections in our data set.

We did notice that the stories collected in Richmond were much more positive than those collected in Washington, D.C., which were closer to the average of what we typically see. Combined, however, they had a similar sentiment score to what we have seen among other stories of travel.

The emotions expressed when sharing stories about travel to Virginia were led by Joy. The next most expressed emotion was Sadness, however it was at a below average level.



The chart above shows the average emotion scores for this collection of stories.

Joy, and the mix of emotions along with that, follows with what we heard in the sessions and read the the stories. These travelers have a lot to balance. They feel both safe in Virginia (lower crime than in other places) yet also at risk (for getting pulled over by the police), or made to feel uncomfortable by other (mostly white) residents.

"My experiences of traveling in Virginia can be really touchy."

There are lots of beautiful places and fun things to do in Virginia (enjoy really nice parks, the beach, the food) as well as painful places (plantations and many historical sites). These travelers also talked about feeling the tug of what they wanted to do (go to parks, the beach, skiing) and what they felt they needed to do (visit historical places, particularly with their children). Finally, they can feel welcome, like they fit in (having a great time with family and friends, visiting HBCU's, reunions) and unwelcome or reminded that in some places they don't fit in (confederate flags, looks or attitude while shopping, at restaurants or on tours).

"I love traveling around the state and the many things that there are to see and to do. If you want to hit up the mountains, the beach, the ships in Norfolk or the amusement parks, Virginia has it. I enjoy these places quite often with friends and family."

"The reason why the aforementioned trip is meaningful to be because it requires me to always remember to balance the joy with the pain, the sorrow with the gladness. To remember that even though a "place" may cause you pain, it does not mean that it is devoid of joy."

"I noticed right away how all of the other non-African American hotel guests were looking at us with alarm and disdain. Some of them just got their drinks quickly and left. We were having too good of a time."

"I suppose if I had to sum up my experiences regarding 'The Commonwealth' in one word? That word would be 'duality'."

THE VALUE OF TRAVEL

There is a lot that these travelers told us they get out of travel in Virginia. They enjoy an opportunity to connect, build memories and share both personal and family history with one another. Travel is also a nice break, an opportunity to enjoy big spaces along with the sounds, smells and beauty of nature. So often in these stories we heard descriptions of wonderful food.

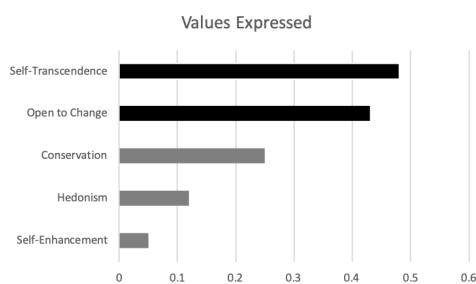
"I remember feeling very happy. I couldn't stop smiling because for the first time, I figured out that learning or teaching your family about African American culture can bring you all together; and all I can [remember hearing] from everyone was how good it smelled in Virginia: the grass and trees how green everything is..."

"The meal was so delicious. I ordered pancakes, eggs, and sausage. It was the best home-style meal that I had tasted in a long time."

"The food was the most memorable aspect of my trip, it brought me to a place of familiarity and comfort. Next, was the proximity to nature. I couldn't possibly be surrounded by so many trees in the city. Lastly, the peace. The silence, the sounds of the wind and the trees, the sounds of children playing, and the sound of nothing were all such pleasant contrasts to a typical day in the city."

Nearly all of the stories we heard and read helped us understand that for many of these participants, travel is intentional and purposeful. Even when it is focused on a much needed break, or time with family, there was also a sense that the real underlying desire was to connect with something bigger than themselves. For example, we heard an amazing story about how learning about the story of Maggie Walker inspired a young girl to become a lawyer as a way to give back to her community.

The data from the stories support this, as we saw that the top value expressed across the stories was Self-Transcendence, the awareness of being a part of something much bigger than oneself.



The chart above shows the average scores for the values expressed in this collection of stories.

While Open to Change was the second most expressed value in these stories, we noticed something else in the data that kept us focused on Self-Transcendence. Whether we looked at all of the stories together, or separately by market, Self-Transcendence was a value that showed to be both significant in the stories as well as highly correlated to other needs, values and personality traits with a high degree of predictability.

VALUE	SELF TRANSCENDENCE	correlation
Harmony		0.73
Stability		0.62
Vulnerability		0.53
Curiosity		0.44
Activity Level		0.39

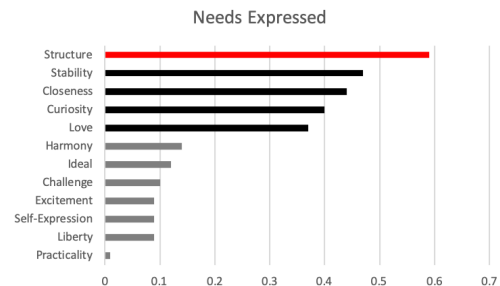
The table above shows traits that are predictively correlated to the value of Self-Transcendence across the collection of stories.

What this table suggests is that when these travelers express their value of self-transcendence they also need harmony, stability and feel vulnerable and curious. Looking back at the stories we can see evidence of this in what was shared.

"We continued our journey, my boyfriend and I hand in hand having this experience together....We heard stories and experienced reenactments of all of the horrors that took place in that prison. We then finished our journey at the slave burial grounds. All of this time I knew it was right there off of I-95, but there was something about placing my bare feet on those sacred grounds that made me feel more connected with my ancestors than ever before."

ALIGNMENT OF NEEDS WITH VALUES: BELONGING

Seeing the correlation between the needs of Stability, Curiosity, and Self-Transcendence is underscored when we look at the top needs that were expressed across these stories.



The chart above shows the average scores for the needs expressed in this collection of stories.

Both are not just correlated to the top value, but they are also among the top five needs expressed in the stories. Of course, the top need expressed is that of Structure, along with Closeness and Love.

We heard these participants talk a lot about wanting to feel welcome, accepted and safe. They are understandably very aware when they are the "only" and so are looking for signs to reassure them that it is alright for them to visit and that they won't be made to feel as an outsider or unwelcome. These are all expressions of needing Stability, Structure, Closeness and Love.

"There seems to be the collective feeling of not minding that black people come but not really courting my demographic...sometimes stopping in the little towns (and even in Richmond) along the way you will see the Confederate flag flying and you are reminded that "you" are not welcome."

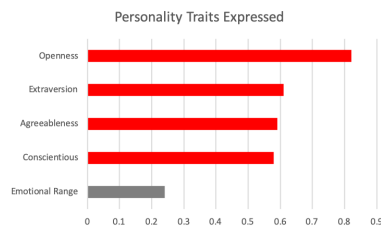
"It felt good to share this experience with my new family members. Many of them had never been to Virginia, let alone an apple orchard. We did notice that we were the only African American family on the mountain that day. My husband's mother got upset when we started to talk and laugh too loud that we were acting 'black'."

"The experience of being the only black family staying at the resort at that time felt proud. The experience of having 30 plus family members going to a restaurant or water park would be an experience that makes you feel proud and hold your head high."

When we thought about what we read and heard, this combination of needs, along with valuing Self-Transcendence made sense to us. In order to be connected to and a part of something bigger, it makes sense one would need to feel safe (in a structured, stable environment), close, curious and loving. For us, belonging (and the ability to be immersed in a place) seems to perfectly encapsulate this combination of needs and top value.

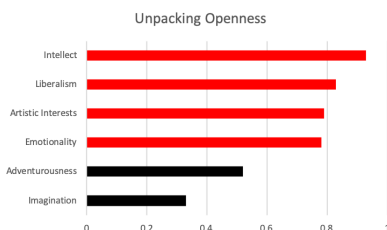
PERSONALITY TRAITS EXPRESSED

As a whole, these participants expressed a high degree of Openness as well as higher than average degrees of Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness.



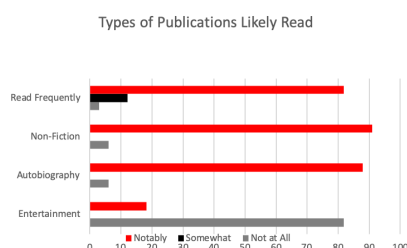
This chart shows the average scores across the stories collected for the five major personality traits.

Because these stories scored so high for Openness, we took a look at the personality sub-traits that comprise Openness below.

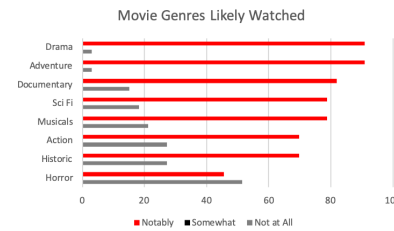


This chart shows the average scores across the stories collected for the personality traits that comprise the Openness score.

When we look at what was driving the high Openness scores, we see that Liberalism, Intellect, Emotionality and Artistic Interests were all expressed at a higher rate than average across the stories. This aligned with other data we looked at. For example, when scored against a representative database of modeled behaviors and interests, we see that this group looks similar to other readers with a broad range of interests across different music and movie genres.



This chart shows how these participants modeled for interests in various publications as compared to a representative database.



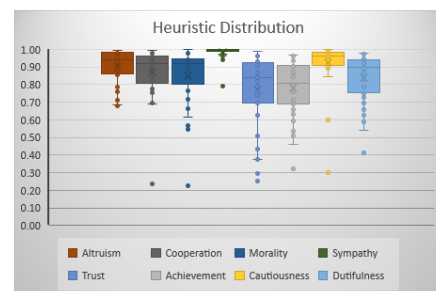
This chart shows how these participants modeled for interests in various movies as compared to a representative database.

This aligns with what we observed in the stories we read as well. These participants are interested in learning through travel experiences. They are interested in history, and the stories told about and by people in connection to that history.

"It's comforting to know that a piece of history is so close to home and my children can go see places they read about in history books up close and personal."

"Overall, exploring my own backyard, especially after a time of heartache was one of the most uplifting experiences I ever had, and I thank my parents and the history of Virginia for giving me that unforgettable moment."

In addition to the traits that comprise Openness, there were several other traits that were commonly expressed at high levels and with very little variance. These include: Altruistic, Cooperation, Morality, Sympathy, Trust, Achievement, Cautiousness and Dutifulness.



This chart shows the distribution of select scores across the stories collected

Of this list along with the traits of Openness, a few caught our eye: Cooperation, Achievement and Emotionality. These traits also scored as significant and predictive across the stories.

At a high level, when we think of this collection of traits expressed together, we are reminded of what we noticed while reading these stories. When these participants talked about travel, and visiting historical sites in particular, they talked about an interest in history and learning as a tool to connect more deeply to the present day. This made some of us wonder if "edutainment" might be some of what they are looking for.

These participants didn't give us the impression that they were interested in learning about history only to know what had come before, but instead to give them a base from which to look forward. They spoke with joy and pride about resilience, determination and achievement. They expressed feeling very emotional and also feeling inspired.

However that is not all we heard and saw in the data. We observed significant emotional bundles that could be predicted through correlated traits that were not so positive: Depression, Vulnerability and Anxiety. In fact, all three of these traits appear to be somewhat interrelated. We saw this in the stories as well. What was interesting is that many of the correlated features across both the positive and negative emotional bundles were shared. For example, Emotionality is positively correlated to Self-Transcendence; as is Anxiety.

EMOTIONALITY	correlation
Self Transcendence	0.50
Liberalism	0.45
Agreeableness	0.17
Morality	0.13
Self-Discipline	-0.50

ANXIETY	correlation
Vulnerability	0.90
Self Transcendence	0.56
Trust	0.28
Morality	-0.54
Self-Discipline	-0.66

The tables above show traits that were found to be significant across the stories and also predicted by the traits that are correlated to them.

This gives us a richer view as to why travel may be a balancing act for these participants. Their top value is Self-Transcendence. However, that value also drives Emotionality and Anxiety. Travel seems to be inherently emotionally complex. This was described in their stories, especially as we paid attention to their experiences visiting historical sites.

RELEVANCE & HISTORICAL SITES

Among these participants, travel to Virginia, and particularly to historical sites is a complex experience.

It makes them both joyful and sad. They feel pride and also pain. They are reminded of oppression and resiliency and rising up in spite of those circumstances. They are looking for all of these elements from the places they visit.

"At the grounds, there were reenactments, stories, tears, release. I felt a sea of overwhelm but also a flood of gratitude because of the strength and resilience shown."

"No hard truths just a young friendly tour guide telling us the history from one perspective. I think when historical places gear their tours towards the majority because they do not want to offend anyone, they make the whole tour less authentic and I get angry and I'm less inclined to visit again or bring/ recommend it to anyone else."

They also want to be able to trust the stories that are being told at these locations and those telling the story. Is it the full story? Whose story is it? Who is telling the story and how much did they really know? What point of view is being represented? Ultimately, did they feel welcomed and included in these places and spaces?

"As human beings, everyone wants to be represented regardless of the circumstances. I'd rather be told the whole story rather than half a story just to make people comfortable. So really, the larger impact is that next time when I want to get away I will choose neutral places like amusement parks because I can be guaranteed a good time without hopefully being reminded I'm not important enough to be fully represented."

"Being an African American 'touring' a plantation is surreal. I can honestly tell you, I don't think I could ever tour a plantation, but I would certainly take a shot at being a guide so I can provide more of a perspective of how life might have been for the slaves at the plantation."

"The reason why the aforementioned trip is meaningful to be because it requires me to always remember to balance the joy with the pain, the sorrow with the gladness. To remember that even though a 'place' may cause you pain, it does not mean that it is devoid of joy."

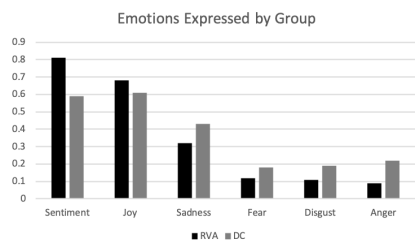
Ultimately, historical sites are meaningful and appealing destinations for these African American travelers. Yes, they create many feelings at once, as many of these feelings are inter-connected. They are difficult to visit, yet necessary and can even be uplifting. The best will provide experiences that create a sense of welcome and belonging for all. The best provide rich, full, complete and balanced pictures of our past, while inspiring all of us to move forward with joy, together.

DIFFERENCES BY WHERE ONE LIVES

So far, we have been looking at what the complete set of stories showed us. However, both the data and our direct observations showed a noticeable difference between the stories we collected in Richmond, VA from those currently living in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Northern Virginia.

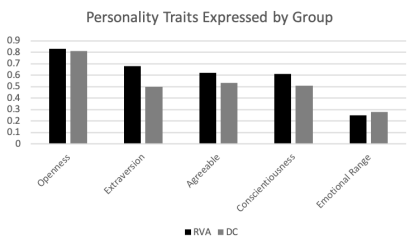
THE FRIENDLY INSIDERS & SKEPTICAL OUTSIDERS

As mentioned earlier, the stories from Richmond had a more positive sentiment. They also had less Sadness and Anger than the D.C. area, which is a group living in a much more urban area.



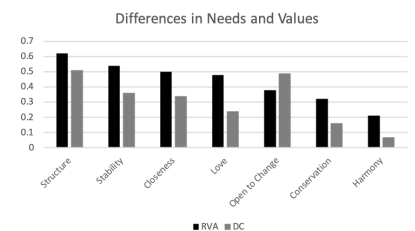
The chart above compares the average scores for emotions expressed between the group in Richmond and that in Washington, D.C.

The Richmond group expressed more Agreeable, Conscientiousness and Extraversion personality traits.



The chart above compares the average scores for personality traits expressed between the group in Richmond and that in Washington, D.C.

In addition, there were several needs and values that scored quite differently, by group.



The chart above compares the average scores for needs and values that scored differently between the group in Richmond and that in Washington, D.C.

The final difference we observed in the data between the two groups is the stories from Richmond generated emotional bundles that were significant and predictive. Those emotional bundles are illustrated below.

GREGARIOUSNESS		correlation
Friendliness		0.92
Cheerfulness		0.89
Conservation		0.77
Immoderation		0.44
Openness		-0.80

CONSERVATION		correlation
Structure		0.79
Gregariousness		0.77
Harmony		0.60
Self-Expression		0.44
Sadness		-0.59

FRIENDLINESS		correlation
Cheerfulness		0.98
Imagination		0.92
Self Efficacy		0.52
Agreeableness		0.40

The tables above show traits that were found to be significant across the stories from Richmond and also predicted by the traits that are correlated to them.

Across these bundles we see reflected several of the factors that we see in other data from the Richmond groups. For example, in the last chart, we saw that Richmond participants valued Conservation. Cheerfulness, Gregariousness and Friendliness are sub-components of their strong Extraversion score. We have already seen a higher need for Structure from this group as well as a stronger need for Harmony.

In contrast, the stories from Washington, D.C. did not illuminate any notable emotional bundles. While we have looked at the averages of this collection of stories, it suggests that for the D.C. group, the average scores can belie deeper differences within the group, itself.

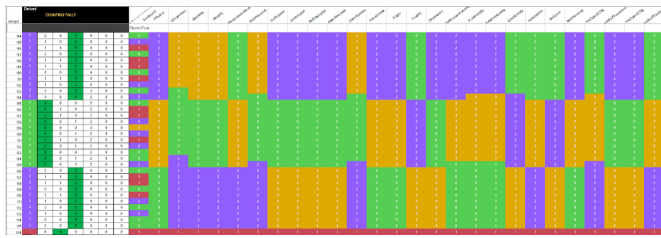
There could be a number of factors for this. Perhaps the group in D.C. had a wider range of differing experiences, both in life and with travel. We certainly heard very different stories when we were there: ranging from traveling and living across the country and even around the world, to having grown up in a very similar community or a few communities all one's life with more limited travel. It is also possible that given D.C. is a larger metro market than Richmond, this group experiences more hustle and bustle in everyday life, impacting both their perceptions of Virginia as well as their needs, values and emotions. Certainly participants from Richmond are residents of Virginia, and perhaps have a stronger sense of belonging and immersion in the state that impacts what their stories express.

While our work done so far does not allow us to know for sure what the reasons might be, exactly, for the differences between the two markets, it was clear that it was worth looking at a different analysis to see if we could find groups within the data, independent of market. That is next.

THREE TRAIT-BASED SEGMENTS

DISCOVERING SEGMENTS

We looked at the data for clusters, based on the sentiment, emotions, personality traits, needs and values that were scored for each story. We believe that three segments best describe the collection.



Three groups emerged from the analysis.

Cluster One is comprised of stories from D.C. Cluster Two is comprised of stories from both Richmond and D.C. Cluster Three is comprised of stories from Richmond.

CLUSTER ONE: FRUSTRATED IDEALISTS

Cluster One values Open to Change and Self-Transcendence equally. Their biggest need is Structure. While they, like the other two clusters, expressed Joy and Sadness as their top two emotions, they expressed slightly more Sadness and twice the Anger than the other clusters did. Their stories also included more references to negative experiences.

The personality traits they expressed the strongest were Openness, scoring in the 77th percentile, and to a more average degree Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. When we look at the components of Openness, this group was above the 70th percentile for Intellect (91), Liberalism (79) and Emotionality (74).

As compared to the other clusters, Cluster One expressed the traits of Self-Efficacy and Activity level more than Cluster Three and similarly to Cluster Two. They also expressed less Orderliness, Cheerfulness, Artistic Interests and Imagination than either of the other two clusters.

This group is critical to the goals of VTC if for no other reason than they are the group representing travelers entirely from out of state. Their idealism is grounded in pride of their blackness and they have a high bar. They need direct and straightforward messages that Virginia is welcoming and that if they visit, they will enjoy a sense that they, too, belong there. They also need evidence that historical sites are "done right": that they tell a complete and accurate story and connect their history to present culture in a contemporary way.

CLUSTER TWO: CONFIDENT IDEALISTS

Cluster Two values Self-Transcendence and to a slightly lesser extent, Open to Change. This group expressed needs for Structure, Stability, Curiosity, Love and Closeness. As was true in the overall look at the stories, the emotions they expressed were Joy and Sadness.

This cluster's personality traits expressed are Openness and Extraversion. They stood out from other clusters by also having the highest expression of Trusting Others (84th percentile), Achievement (83rd percentile), Liberalism (91st percentile) and Artistic Interests (84th percentile).

Like Cluster One, this cluster expressed the traits of Self-Efficacy and Activity Level more than Cluster Three. While not necessarily strong expressions, they did express more Cheerfulness, Excitement, Gregariousness, Anxiety, Vulnerability and Imagination than either of the other two clusters.

While this group has much in common with both groups, based on the traits that stand out for them, we see them as the bridge between the other two. They are open to inspiration (Liberalism, Trust, Artistic Interests and Imagination) and once inspired, are equipped to share it (Cheerfulness, Gregariousness and Excitement). Seek to inspire them and learn from their communication cues and experience cues to drive relevance among out-of-state African American Travelers.

CLUSTER THREE: HARMONIZERS

Cluster Three values Self-Transcendence. They need Structure. Like Cluster Two, the emotions they expressed were Joy and Sadness.

The personality traits they expressed most strongly were Openness, Agreeableness and Extraversion. In many ways, this cluster shares much in common with the other two. However they expressed the trait of Orderliness the strongest (Cluster One expressed it the least). While not always weak, they expressed less Self-Efficacy, Activity Level, Excitement, Gregariousness, Anxiety and Vulnerability than the other clusters.

This group has harmonized the experience of Virginia. They are more comfortable here and they know how to welcome people from out of the state and help them enjoy their visit. While they are also the most desensitized group to the frustrations of travel throughout the state, they often have close bonds of friendship and family that are helpful in their bringing outsiders in. Since they already think in itineraries, emphasize the trip, not a specific experience. Learn from the itineraries they build for visitors. Convey the broader experience of the itinerary, as they do. They will also likely be a good source of stories and experiences to share more broadly.

“...don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.”

MICHELLE OBAMA



AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

ADDITIONAL OUT-OF-STATE MARKETS

In this study, we focused on Washington D.C./Maryland as our out-of-state markets and used Richmond, VA as a point of comparison. Having found that perspectives were, indeed, different in these two places, it makes us wonder what we might find were we to conduct a similar study in two additional markets. For example, perhaps New York and Atlanta would be interesting markets to explore.

EXPLORATION & EXPRESSION OF CULTURE

We believe that history is most relevant and impactful in the context of today's culture. In this study, we heard that these travelers enjoy both exploring and expressing culture: both theirs and those of other people. This leaves us curious about further study of what it looks like in its best forms as well as what meaning it has for travelers today.

DIFFERENT OUT-OF-STATE GROUPS

We realize that out-of-state African American travelers are but one group of several out-of-state travelers that VTC will want to attract to the state. We also recognize that while some segmentation of messaging is possible through certain channels, both for breadth and efficiency, in some cases a singular message to out-of-state travelers will be needed.

Because of this, it may make sense to conduct a similar study among non-African American out-of-state travelers to understand their drivers of relevance and requirements of messaging. This will help us understand areas of intersection and help guide the creation of master messaging and marketing execution that serves a broader set of consumer needs.