

Economic Impact of Covid-19 on the Christian Camp Industry in 2020

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Abstract

This study seeks to develop a greater understanding of the economic impact of Covid-19 on the Christian camp industry in 2020. The sample used to conduct this study was 778 camps in the United States. These were subdivided into four population groups (list the four groups here in the parenthesis) for optimal comparison analysis. The 2020 camp's operational status was assessed through a four-question quantitative survey on the Covid-19 impact. The survey was emailed to various camp organizations and uploaded to google forms for greater population exposure. A comparison was made between the 2020 camping year and the non-Covid-19 camping years to assess the difference in operational status.

Keywords: Covid-19, Camp, Christian Camp Industry, Impact of Camp, Impacts of Covid-19, Operational Status, Attendance, Economic Loss

Economic Impact of Covid-19 on the Christian Camp Industry in 2020

Introduction

Prior to Covid-19, people were unaware that this virus existed and the major implications that it could have on the world. However, once the virus was discovered, the world experienced exponential corporate and personal changes. In addition, peripheral and non-traditional professions, such as the Christian camp industry, have been negatively impacted during this pandemic. Within the Christian camp world, physical interaction and a close community are of great importance. Children are constantly touching the same equipment while playing games, sleeping in the same cabins, and are sitting in close proximity during mealtimes. However, as Covid-19 spread at a rapid rate, camps realized that they either had to shut down their camp or completely restructure their programming methods to fit within the Covid-19 guidelines.¹ This study seeks to find the economic impact that Covid-19 has had on the Christian camp industry through evaluating factors such as attendance and the operational status of various camps.

Literature Review

Impacts of Camp

Camp has had a major impact on children and adolescents in many areas. Socially, children have gained new friends, learned new communication skills, and have been taught how to properly engage with different cultures. Emotionally, children have become more confident in themselves and have found new ways to handle stress. Physically, children have spent more time outside and learned new skills and ways of how to stay active outside of camp. Finally, in terms

¹ Parts of the Introduction was taken from “Final Thesis Proposal.”

of Christian camping, children have found God through nature and outdoor activities, deepened their relationship with Christ, and have found new ways in how they can grow in their faith.

Social

According to Monke, 74% (123 out of 155) of campers reported that during camp they got to know more about their friends.² Camp allows children to communicate with their friends on a deeper level, strengthening their social skills. When campers develop more personal friendships, it helps them grow in their confidence, trust, and self-esteem. Another study, “Helping Kids Change Their Stories: What We Are Learning”, found that 85% of Level 5 youth reported increased interpersonal skills from their experiences at camp.³ When campers develop the ability to form interpersonal connections, they are going to have an easier time connecting with people on a personal level. They will not only be able to understand their peers’ emotions through their verbal communication but also their body language. Sometimes people wear their emotions on their sleeve and that is revealed through non-verbal communication. Having this ability will help campers as they transition from being an adolescent to a young independent adult.

In addition, camp helps children develop the necessary social skills that are going to play a vital role in them being successful as they grow older. Monke found that 62% (103 out of 157) campers reported gaining a greater ability to understand their friends’ emotions.⁴ In a camp

² Audrey Monke, “Why Making Friends is One of the Most Important Things That Happens at Summer Camp,” ACA Camps, accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.acacamps.org/campers-families/parent-blog/why-making-friends-one-most-important-things-happens-summer-camp>.

³ Katie Wheatley, “Helping Kids Change Their Stories: What We Are Learning,” ACA Camps, accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.acacamps.org/news-publications/blogs/research-360/helping-kids-change-their-stories-what-we-are-learning>.

⁴ Audrey Monke, “Why Making Friends.”

setting, there are going to be times when campers open up and express their true emotions to their peers. When campers develop the ability to understand how their peers are feeling, they are going to be more effective in providing support and knowing how to handle situations. This also will help as they grow older. In a professional setting, they are going to have to change the way they present themselves based on the emotions of their coworkers. Camp provides an amazing setting where campers can deepen their friendships with their peers and gain valuable skills that will be essential to succeed in the adult world.

Emotional

The emotional capacity of a person is based on different settings, situations, and manners in which they were raised. Some children develop poor emotional abilities due to many factors including "...living in an unsafe community, receiving care with a low-quality child care setting, lack of resources available in the community or lack of policies supporting children and families, etc."⁵ However, there are many outside environments where children grow in their emotional skills, one of which is a camp experience. One of the desired outcomes that directors base their programming on is helping a child gain confidence, emotional intelligence, and positive trusting behaviors. The American Academy of Pediatrics stated, "...the camp experience has proven to have a lasting effect on psychosocial development, with positive effects on self-esteem, peer relationships, independence, leadership values, and willingness to try new things."⁶ Camp helps

⁵ "Tutorial 6 · Recognizing and Supporting the Social and Emotional Health of Young Children Birth to Age Five," *Factors That Influence Children's Social and Emotional Development*, accessed January 31, 2022, https://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/social-emotional/mod1_2.html.

⁶ "Guidance for Families and Pediatricians on Camp Attendance during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Home*, https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/guidance-for-families-and-pediatricians-on-camp-attendance-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/?_ga=2.218293531.340753406.1650761156-675084041.1650761156.

children gain the emotional confidence of venturing out of their comfort zone to attempt new opportunities while also gaining a greater sense of self-esteem. One research study, “The Impact of Camp Experiences on Social Skills and Happiness”, looked at the emotional happiness of a child after attending camp. According to the results, 31% (48 out of 155) reported a small increase in happiness after camp. Furthermore, 43% (67 out of 155) reported that their happiness level increased a great deal after camp.⁷ Overall, 74% of the campers claimed that they experienced a significant improvement in their happiness due to being at camp. Camp allows a child to get away from the stress in their life and experience a peaceful environment. When children leave camp with a greater amount of happiness, they are also taking away the understanding of what makes them happy. Now, if they are in a stressful situation, they can take what gave them joy at camp and manipulate it into the setting that they are currently in. In addition, when campers are happier post-camp, they are going to have more positive interactions with their peers. They will have a more joyous demeanor and that will reflect on the way that they interact with their peers. Camp provides a space where campers can be themselves, engage in positive relationships, and participate in exciting new adventures, resulting in an improvement in a child’s emotional health.

Wheatley found that 83% of level 5 youth reported increased positive identity.⁸ There are many children today who struggle with self-worth and confidence. However, camp creates a platform where campers can learn to love themselves for who they are. They do not have to put on a fake identity to be loved. An increase in confidence has long-term impacts as it helps build

⁷ Audrey Monke, “The Impact of Camp Experiences on Social Skills and Happiness,” Camps, accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/camping-magazine/impact-camp-experiences-social-skills-happiness>.

⁸ Katie Wheatley, “Helping Kids Change Their Stories.”

character, improve their outlook on life and how they make a decision. They are not going to let the negative comments of the world tear them down because they know their worth. They will have greater success in completing their best work, fulfilling their calling, and helping others love themselves. Camp helps children not only have fun, but learn valuable lessons about self-love, responsibility, and confidence.

Physical

Statistics show that “less than one-quarter (24%) of children 6 to 17 years of age participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day.”⁹ Children are now spending hours playing on their electronics and reducing their time participating in physical activities. Camp, however, provides an electronic-free zone where the programming is based on improving a child’s mental, emotional, and physical health. According to the study, “Children’s Summer Camp-Based Physical Activity”, residential campers averaged 19,699 steps, exceeding the daily physical guidelines suggested by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.¹⁰ When campers exceed the recommended 60 minutes of activity per day, they are improving their cardiovascular and respiratory health, as well as their overall well-being. They also gain a greater amount of flexibility, endurance, and strength. This is all done in a setting where children are being active while having fun. Camp provides a setting where children can strengthen their physical abilities while participating in fun and captivating activities. Camp provides a setting

⁹ “Physical Activity Behaviors of Young People,” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 21, 2020), last modified April 21, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/facts.htm#:~:text=Less%20than%20one-quarter%20%2824%25%29%20of%20children%20%20to,all%20%20days%20of%20the%20previous%20week.%209.>

¹⁰ Benjamine Hickerson and Karla Henderson, “Children’s Summer Camp-Based Physical Activity,” ACA Camps, accessed January 30, 2021, <https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/articles/children%E2%80%99s-summer-camp-based-physical-activity>.

where children can strengthen their physical abilities while participating in fun and captivating activities.

Economic

The study, “New Wisconsin Summer Camp Economic Impact Study Highlights Important Role of Camp Industry”, found that in the state of Wisconsin, “...camps provide a statewide impact of \$717 million in economic activity.”¹¹ As more campers attend camp, the camp’s financial revenue increases, allowing for a greater improvement in the economic position of the county. According to the study, *Economic Impact Study of Organized Youth Camps in Western North Carolina (Buncombe, Jackson, Henderson, and Transylvania Counties)*, camps had an annual economic impact of \$365 million in just four counties in North Carolina.¹² This study shows that “There was also 10,335 full-time jobs created beyond camp staff and nearly \$33 million in new tax revenues.”¹³ This massive financial gain has allowed for new opportunities and greater improvements to the community. In addition, the camp industry has had a major economic impact on the surrounding businesses in the community. When campers attend camp, many of the families are going to either stay in that area or spend time site-seeing the nearby neighborhood. As campers attend camp, their families are spending money at the local shops and businesses, providing additional revenue. Also, camps are going to use outside businesses for improvements, repairs, and other services. This will provide community businesses with

¹¹ American Camp Association, “New Wisconsin Summer Camp Economic Impact Study Highlights Important Role of Camp Industry,” ACA Camps, March 30, 2021, <https://www.acacamps.org/news-publications/press-release/new-wisconsin-summer-camp-economic-impact-study-highlights-important-role-camp-industry>.

¹² Michelle Gacio Harrolle et al., *Economic Impact Study of Organized Youth Camps in Western North Carolina (Buncombe, Jackson, Henderson, and Transylvania Counties)*, January 2011, accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.nccamps.org/pdf/economic-impact-study-full.pdf>, 5.

¹³ Michelle Gacio Harrolle et al., *Economic Impact Study*,” 13.

additional income, helping them gain greater economic self-sufficiency. The camp organization provides great economical gain to businesses, families, and even entire counties.

Covid-19 Impact

Businesses

Covid-19 had a major impact on businesses all around the world. As stricter guidelines were being set by the government, businesses were no longer able to maintain their clientele, resulting in financial loss, growing debt, and even some companies claiming bankruptcy. The agricultural business sector was one of many companies that felt the negative impacts of Covid-19. Even before the pandemic hit, the agricultural industry was struggling to survive. One study, “The Socio-Economic Implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19): A Review”, found that “a global crash in demand from hotels and restaurants has seen prices of agricultural commodities drop by 20%.”¹⁴ As agricultural prices have already been reduced due to the government, this decrease has been a great hindrance to this industry. Not only does it cause farms to go out of business, but it also leaves families without a steady income. As agriculture plays a vital role in the consumer industry, the Covid-19 pandemic has left a negative imprint that will take years to overcome.

Scholars have found that “hotel industry revenue per available room in the United States fell 11.6% for the week ending March 7, 2020.”¹⁵ Hotels receive their commission from their room capacity. Therefore, not only are they having to lower their prices, but they also have fewer

¹⁴ Maria Nicola et al., “The Socio-Economic Implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19): A Review,” *International Journal of Surgery* 78 (2020): 185-193, accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7162753/>, 185.

¹⁵ Maria Nicola et al., “The Socio-Economic Implications,” 188.

guests staying in their hotels. This has caused the hospitality industry to lay off thousands of employees, seek financial support, and even permanently shut down their business. These companies were thriving before the pandemic and in one moment, their industry was profoundly impacted. As restrictions have been lifted, there has been an increase in guest reservations. However, the implications that this pandemic had on the hospitality industry will have a long-lasting impact.

Schools

According to one study, “The Socio-Economic Implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19): A Review”, the median cost per student is \$142/week. Therefore, researchers estimated that “... a four-week closure of New York City would result in an economic cost of \$1.1bn and that a nationwide closure for 12 weeks would cost 1% of GDP.”¹⁶ This example was focused on NYC, but still demonstrates the great financial crisis that has been generated due to the pandemic. With this financial decrease, employees are being laid off and there is a lack of support for students. According to one source, “...employment fell by 8% at public K-12 schools.”¹⁷ There is not enough funding for necessary school programs that would have a great impact on students. The education industry will never be the same after the COVID-19 pandemic hit and it has caused detrimental consequences for educators, families, and students.

According to the study, “Social and Economic Impact of School Closure during the Outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Quick Online Survey in the Gaza Strip”, “...majority of

¹⁶ Maria Nicola et al., “The Socio-Economic Implications,” 186.

¹⁷ Chad Aldeman, “During the Pandemic, 'Lost' Education Jobs Aren't What They Seem,” *Brookings* (Brookings, March 22, 2021), last modified March 22, 2021, accessed January 31, 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/03/02/during-the-pandemic-lost-education-jobs-arent-what-they-seem/>.

households (77.9%) reported their wage loss during the closure.”¹⁸ A lack of childcare left many parents without child support. One study found that “two out of three working parents have changed their childcare arrangements due to Covid-19, and the majority have yet to find a permanent solution.”¹⁹ Therefore, they had to quit going to work so that they could take care of their children. This led to many families either losing their job or having a lower income. In the United Kingdom, 16% of the workforce was predicted to be absent from their jobs due to the closures.²⁰ This pandemic caused families to take drastic measures to protect their children. However, in doing so, they lost the majority of their income which was necessary for their survival.

Youth Mental Health

Statistics show that “1 in 6 U.S. youth ages 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year.”²¹ However, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, their emotional states took a turn for the worse. They were forced to stay in closed quarters, not see their friends, or participate in extra-curricular activities. For some of these children, these platforms were the only time where they did not have to stress. It can be found that “a survey including 2111 adolescents with mental health history in the UK reported that 83% of them agreed that the pandemic had worsen their

¹⁸ Eqbal Radwan and Afnan Radwan, “Social and Economic Impact of School Closure during the Outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Quick Online Survey in the Gaza Strip,” *Pedagogical Research* 5, no. 4 (November 2020), accessed January 30, 2022, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1263555.pdf>, 3.

¹⁹ “COVID-19 Impact on Childcare,” *U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation*, December 2020, <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/reports/covid-19-impact-childcare>.

²⁰ Eqbal Radwan and Afnan Radwan, “Social and Economic Impact of School Closure,” 4.

²¹ “Mental Health by the Numbers,” *NAMI*, accessed January 31, 2022, <https://nami.org/mhstats>.

mental health.”²² The pandemic forced people to live in the unknown, resulting in an increase of fear, depression, and anxiety. Many children learn how to cope with their struggles through different environments such as school, therapy, and peer interactions. However, they no longer have those outlets to help them and they are put in the middle of stressful situations at home. Scholars found that “...21% of boys and 27% of girls reported an increase in family arguments.”²³ This pandemic has led to significant trauma in the younger generation and without the proper help, long-term struggles could arise.

Camps

Statistics show that “...more than 14 million children and adults take advantage of the camp experience.”²⁴ However, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, this type of business was majorly impacted. According to the study, *Summer Camp and the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Comprehensive Report of Multiple Studies*, 68% of people spent a great amount of time at overnight camps in 2019. However, in 2020, only 7.5% of people reported attending overnight camp.²⁵ This is a total of a 61.5% decrease in attendance due to the pandemic. A lack of camp participation has led to camps losing a great amount of their revenue. Their expenses are now

²² Sélim Benjamin Guessoum et al., “Adolescent Psychiatric Disorders during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Lockdown,” *Psychiatry Research* 291 (2020): 113264, accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165178120318382?via%3Dihub>, 3.

²³ Jacob Hoofman and Elizabeth Secord, “The Effect of COVID-19 on Education,” *Pediatric Clinics of North America* 68, 5 (2021): 1071-1079, accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8445757/>, 1074.

²⁴ American Camp Association, “Camp Trends: Enrollment,” ACA Camps, <https://www.acacamps.org/press-room/camp-trends/enrollment>.

²⁵ Victoria Povilaitis and Taylor Wycoff, *Summer Camp and the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Comprehensive Report of Multiple Studies*, February 2021, accessed January 30, 2022, https://www.acacamps.org/sites/default/files/resource_library/research/Summer-Camp-COVID-19-Pandemic-Comprehensive-Report-2021.pdf, 32.

exceeding their income and they are not able to support themselves as an organization. Many camps had to make the hard decisions to cut their staff, get rid of programming activities, and some even permanently shut down their organization. Even as the pandemic began two years ago, camps are still trying to overcome the economic loss they experienced in 2020.

Method

Subject

The subjects used for this study were Christian camps located within the United States. These camps were associated with the Christian Camping Conference Association (CCCA). The camp average attendance varied between the following populations: 0-500, 500-1000, 1000-5000, and 5000+. Residential camps were the targeted population, but some of the camps surveyed were also retreat centers that ran overnight camps during the summer season. Since personal camp data was not collected, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was not required.

Apparatus

The researcher used a four-question survey to collect the statistical data for the chosen participants. The survey was generated using google forms. The questions used consisted of one short-answer question about the state that their camp is located in, with the remaining questions being multiple choice. The first question gave initial data on the state in which the camp is located. The participants were required to write in their designated state as this was not a multiple-choice question. The provided answers were deemed important as they allowed for greater analysis when comparing the given data. The comparison was used to determine which states were most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as well as observe the areas in which camps were more freely able to operate. The next question was put in place to provide a baseline

of camps' average attendance before the Covid-19 pandemic. This baseline was used to compare the average attendance provided with the population of campers that attended camp in 2020. The given options were divided into the four following categories: 0-500, 500-1000, 1000-5000, and 5000 or more. The researcher generated these groups to distinguish small residential camps from larger ones. This question plays an essential role in the study as it allows one to see the extent that Covid-19 had on the economic status of Christian camps in the summer of 2020. The third question in the survey gave the researcher a greater understanding of the economic status of camps during the 2020 summer season. The multiple-choice options were the following: "We did not have camp at all," "We has a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season," and "We had a full summer." This question allowed the researcher to gain further knowledge as to the operational status of the camps. Even if camps were to have a modified camp season, there would still be a significant economic impact that would have taken place. Finally, the last question provided numerical data on camp attendance during the summer of 2020. The multiple-choice options were as follows: 0-500, 500-1000, 1000-5000, 5000, or more. This answer was the dependent variable that was compared with the baseline attendance data during a non-Covid-19 summer. Based on this data, the researcher was able to develop a conclusion as to the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Christian camp industry in 2020.

Procedures

The survey was sent out via email to 778 camps that are affiliated with the Christian Camp Conference Association. The researcher gained access to the email addresses through a fellow honors student who used the same population for their thesis. During the emailing process, twenty-six camp addresses were invalid or the provided staff email was no longer in use. The first set of emails was sent out on October 5-6, 2021, and a second reminder email was

sent on November 28, 2021. Out of the 778 surveys that were distributed among the different camps, 271 camps (34.8%) completed the survey. One camp provided the wrong data on the survey and therefore, that response was taken out of the study.

Results

Introduction

The results from the survey provided good statistical data to investigate the economic impact of Covid-19 on the Christian camp industry. As displayed in Figure 1, fifty-four states (19.9%) were located in the Southeast, fifty (18.5%) in the Northeast, seventy-six (28.0%) in the Midwest, thirty (11.1%) in the Southwest, fifty-nine (21.8%) in the West, and two (.7%) that were in the other category. The other category is for camps that included multiple sites in various states and one camp that included twenty different states for their entry. Only states within the United States were surveyed.

State Regions

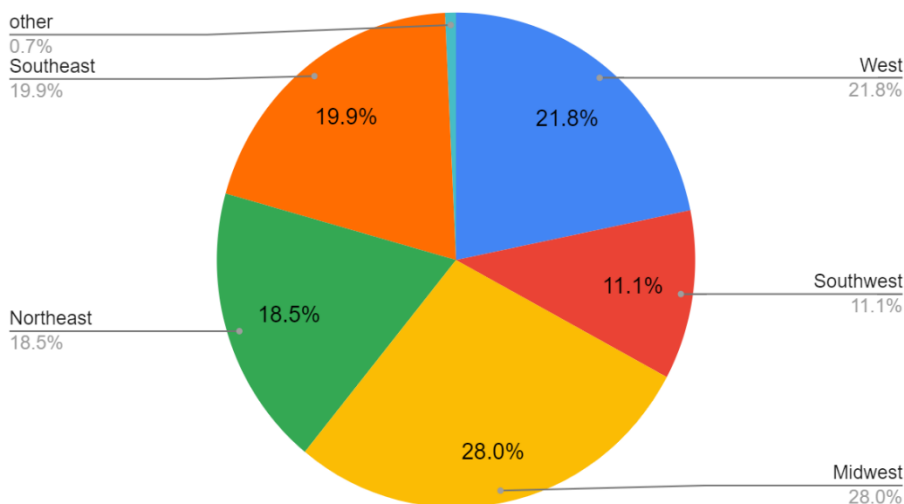


Figure 1: Camp Responses divided into State Regions. Unless otherwise noted, subsequent figures are the researchers' originals.

Overall

Typical Camper Attendance

The survey question regarding the normal camper population during a typical summer was based on the overall summer camp season. As displayed in Figure 2, seventy-four (27.3%) have an average attendance of 0-500, seventy-three (26.9%) with 500-1000 campers, ninety-three (34.3%) with 1000-5000 campers, and thirty-one (11.4%) with 5000 or more campers. The majority of the campers surveyed held an average attendance of 1000-5000 campers per summer.

How many campers does your camp have in a Non-Covid summer?
271 responses

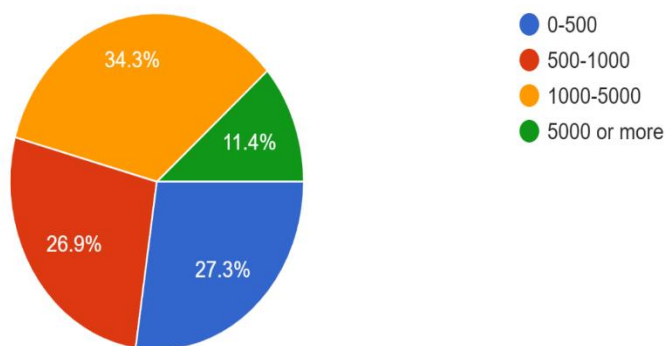


Figure 2: Average Campers during non-COVID summer.

2020 Operational Status

This survey question looked at the operational status of Christian camps in 2020. The options for this question were as follows: “We did not have camp at all,” “We had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season,” and “We had a full summer.” As displayed in Figure 3, one-hundred and forty-four camps (53.1%) had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season, eighty-two (30.3%) did not have camp at all, and forty-five (16.6%) had a full summer. Based on the

responses to this question, 83.4% of the Christian camps were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, this 83.4% were impacted both economically and by the total number of summer campers.

In the summer of 2020, which answer describes your camp?

271 responses

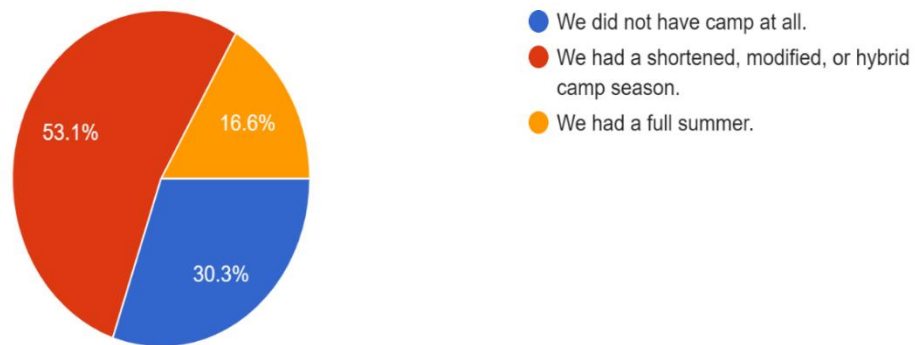


Figure 3: Operational Status of Camps in 2020.

2020 Summer Camper Attendance

This survey question evaluated camper attendance during the summer of 2020. As displayed in Figure 4, one-hundred and ninety-three camps (71.2%) had 0-500 campers, thirty-eight (14.0%) had 500-1000, thirty-five (12.9%) had 1000-5000, and five (1.8%) had 5000 or more. Among the four options presented, 0-500 campers were of the largest percentage and 5000 or more had the lowest percentage.

How many campers did your camp have in the summer of 2020?

271 responses

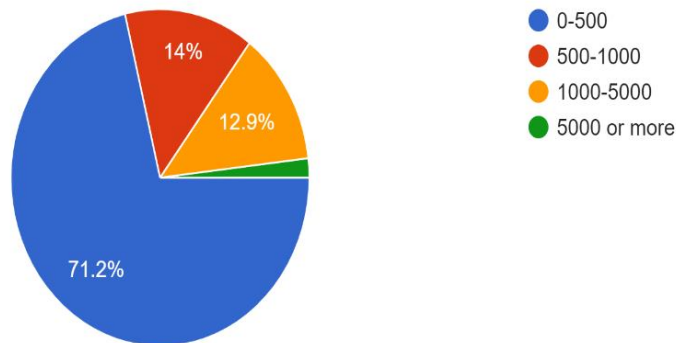


Figure 4: Attendance in Summer of 2020.

Based on Size

2020 Operational Status

As displayed in Figure 5, for camps that averaged 0-500 campers, thirty-eight (51.4%) had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season, sixteen (21.6%) had a full summer, and twenty (27.0%) did not have camp at all. As seen in Figure 6, for camps that average 500-1000 campers, thirty-four (46.6%) did not have camp at all, thirty-one (42.5%) had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season, and eight (11.0%) had a full summer. As displayed in Figure 7, for camps that averaged 1000-5000 campers, fifty-three camps (57.0%) had shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season, twenty-three (24.7%) had no camp at all, and seventeen (18.3%) had a full summer. As shown in Figure 8, for camps that have an average attendance of 5000 or more, twenty-two camps (73.3%) had shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season, five (16.7%) did not have camp at all, and three (10.0%) had a full summer.

2020 Operational Status for 0-500 camps

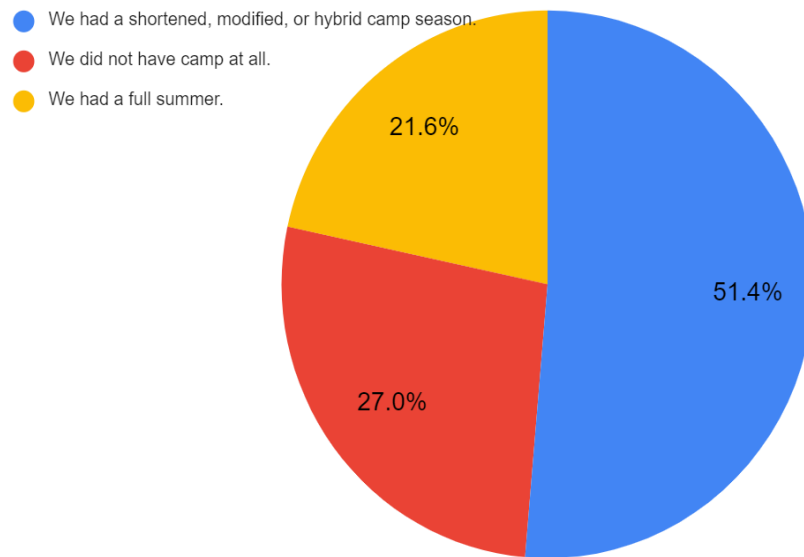


Figure 5: Operational Status in 2020 for Camps that have a normal average of 0-500.

2020 Operational Status for 500-1000 camps

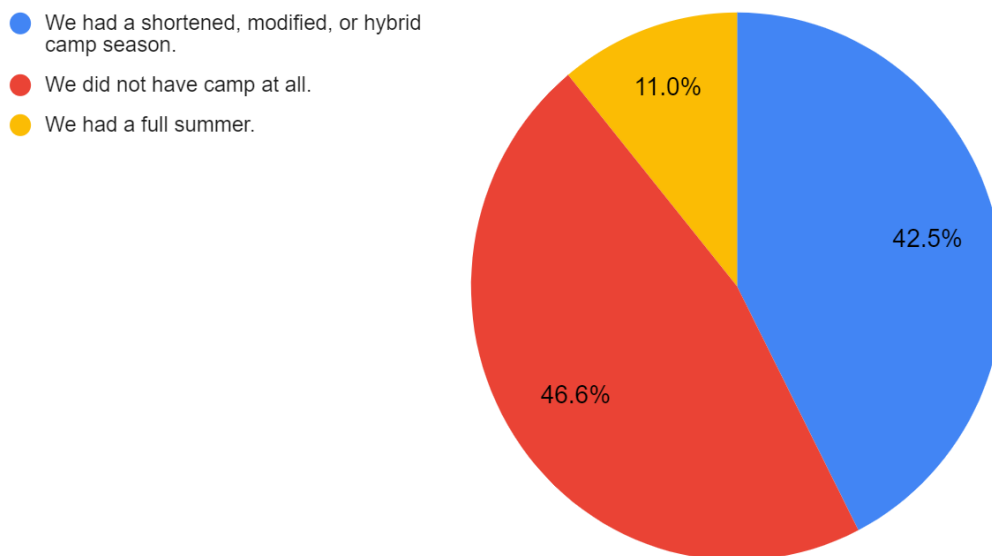


Figure 6: Operational Status in 2020 for camps that have a normal average of 500-1000.

Operational Status for 1000-5000 camps

- We did not have camp at all.
- We had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season.
- We had a full summer.

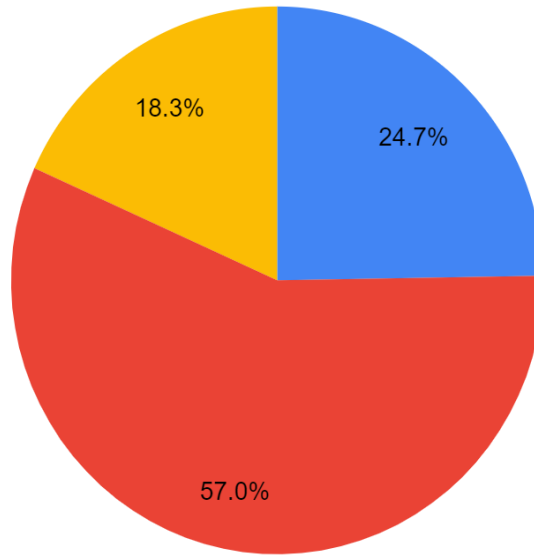


Figure 7: Operational Status in 2020 for camps that have a normal average of 1000-5000.

Operational Status for 5000 or more camps

- We had a full summer.
- We had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season.
- We did not have camp at all.

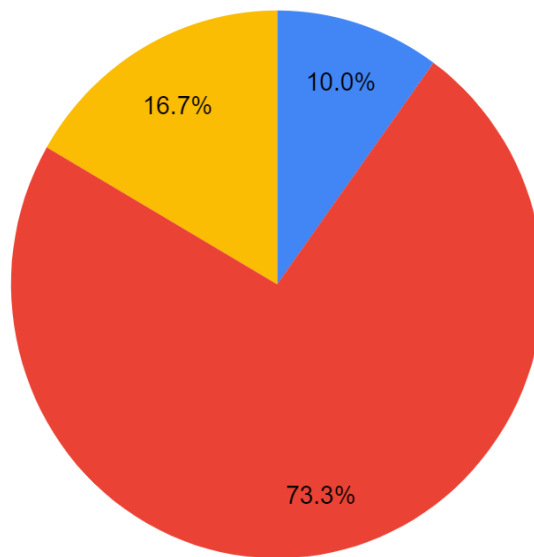


Figure 8: Operational Status in 2020 for camps that have a normal average of 5000 or more.

2020 Attendance

These results are based on the statistical data of average camp attendance during the 2020 summer camp season. Figure 9 shows that for camps that have 500-1000 campers, sixty-three camps (87.5%) had 0-500 campers and nine (12.5%) had 500-1000. As shown in Figure 10, for camps that average 1000-5000 campers, forty-six (49.5%) had 0-500, twenty-four (25.8%) had 1000-5000, and twenty-three (24.7%) had 500-1000. As displayed in Figure 11, for camps that have an average attendance of 5000 or more, eleven camps (35.5%) had 0-500 campers, ten (32.3%) had 1000-5000, five (16.1%) had 500-1000, and five (16.1%) had 5000 or more.

2020 Attendance for 500-1000 camps

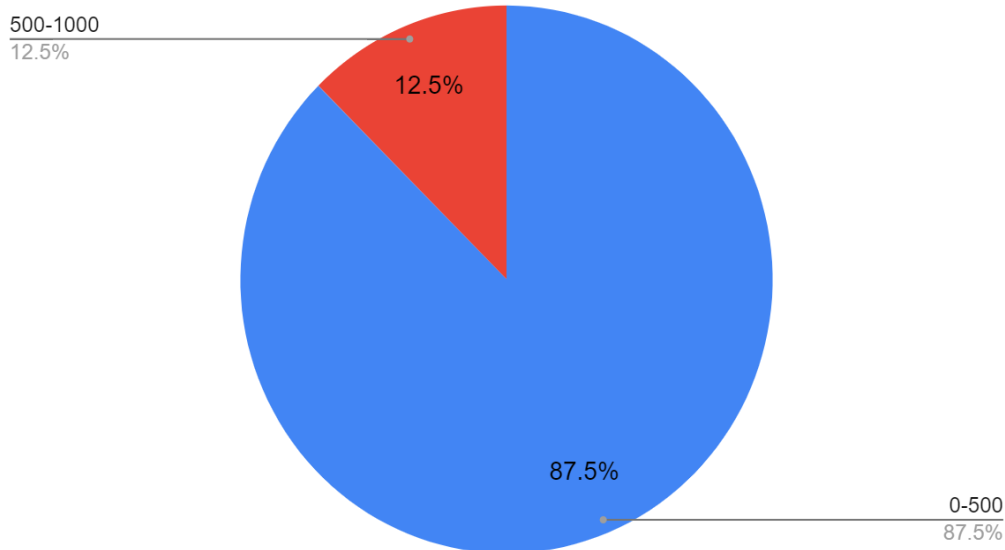


Figure 9: 2020 Attendance for camps that have a normal average of 500-1000.

2020 Attendance for 1000-5000 camps

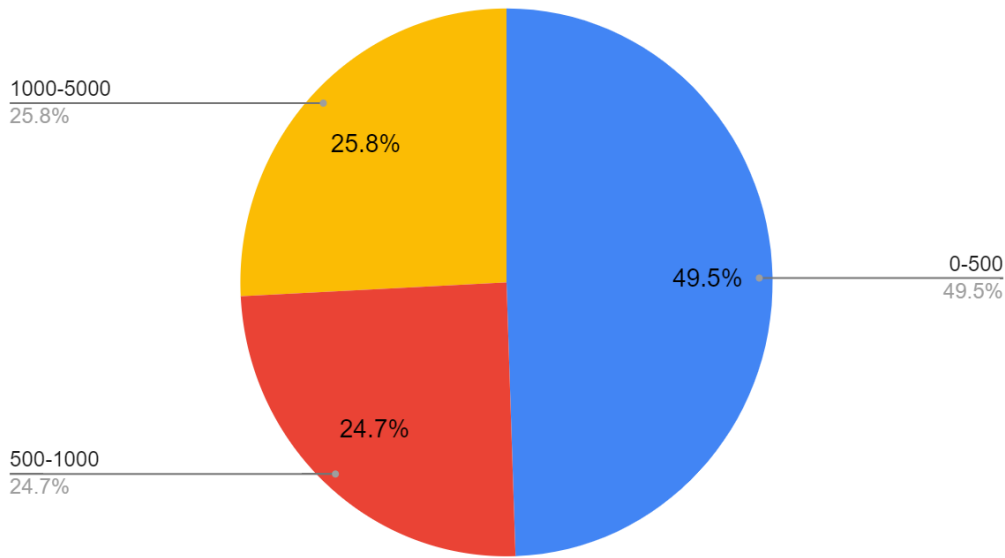


Figure 10: 2020 Attendance for camps that have a normal average of 1000-5000.

2020 Attendance for 5000 or more camps

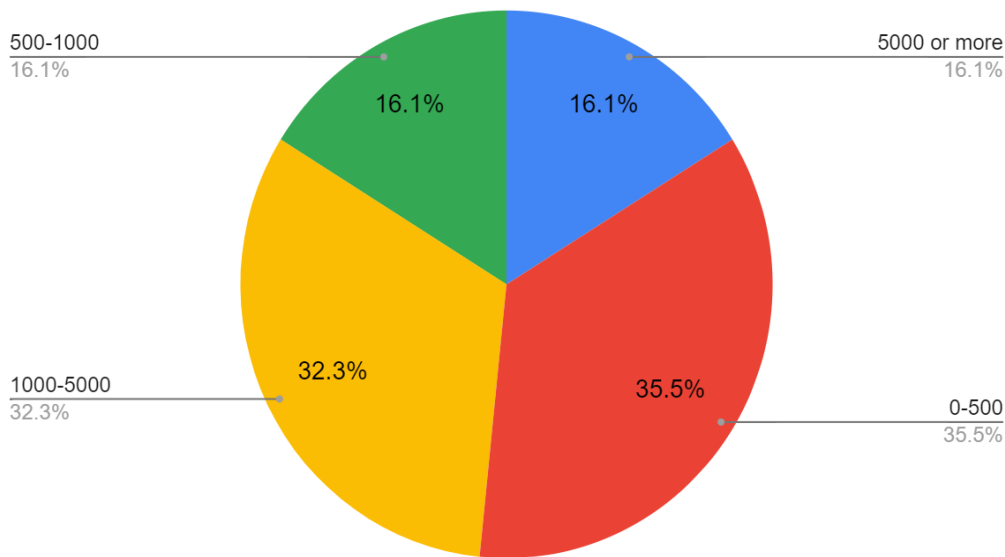


Figure 11: 2020 Attendance for camps that have a normal average of 5000 or more.

Based on Region***2020 Operational Status***

Figure 12 shows that out of the surveyed camps in the Western Region, twenty-eight camps (47.5%) had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season, twenty (33.9%) did not have camp at all, and eleven (18.6%) had a full summer. In the Midwest (Figure 13), forty-nine (63.6%) had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season, sixteen (20.8%) had a full summer, and twelve (15.6%) did not have camp at all. In the Northeast (Figure 14), twenty-two (47.8%) had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season, eighteen (39.1%) did not have camp at all, and six (13.0%) had a full summer. In the Southeast (Figure 15), twenty-six (45.6%) had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season. Twenty-four (42.1%) had no camp at all, and seven (12.3%) had a full camp. In the Southwest (Figure 16), nineteen (63.3%) had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season, seven (23.2%) did not have camp at all, and four (13.3%) had a full summer. Finally (Figure 17), for camps in the other category, one (50%) had a full summer and one (50%) did not have camp at all.

Western Region Operational Status

- We did not have camp at all.
- We had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season.
- We had a full summer.

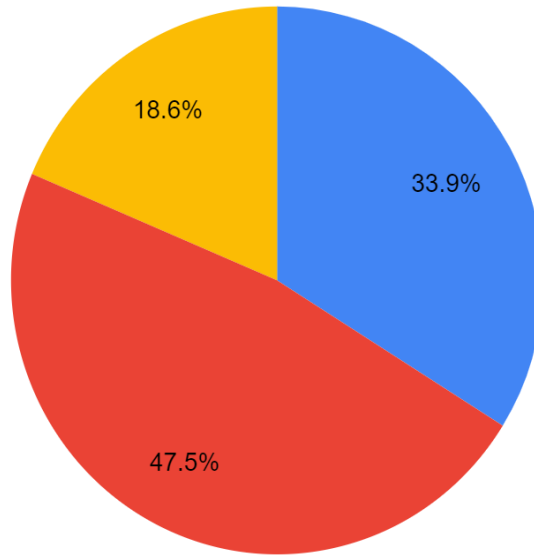


Figure 12: Operational Status in 2020 for camps in the Western Region.

Midwest Operational Status 2020

- We had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season.
- We did not have camp at all.
- We had a full summer.

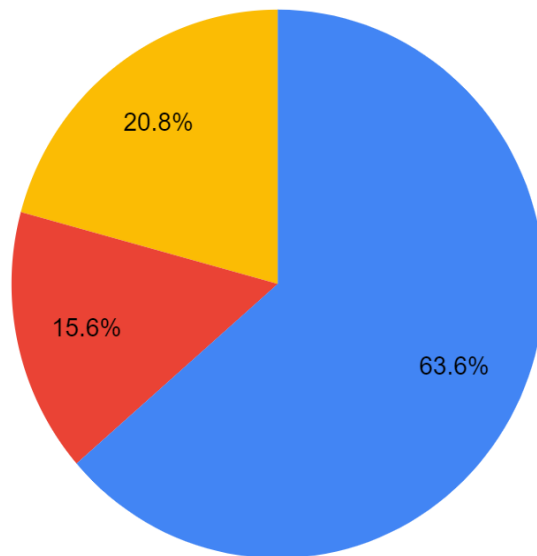


Figure 13: Operational Status in 2020 for camps in the Midwest Region.

Northeast Operational Status 2020

- We did not have camp at all.
- We had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season.
- We had a full summer.

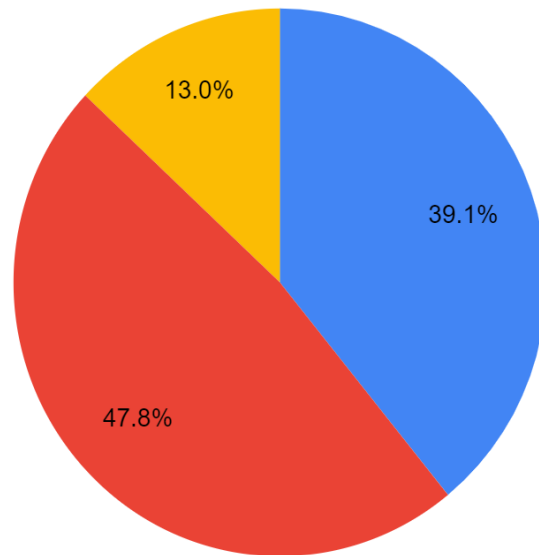


Figure 14: Operational Status in 2020 for camps in the Northeast Region.

Southeast Operational Status 2020

- We did not have camp at all.
- We had a full summer.
- We had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season.

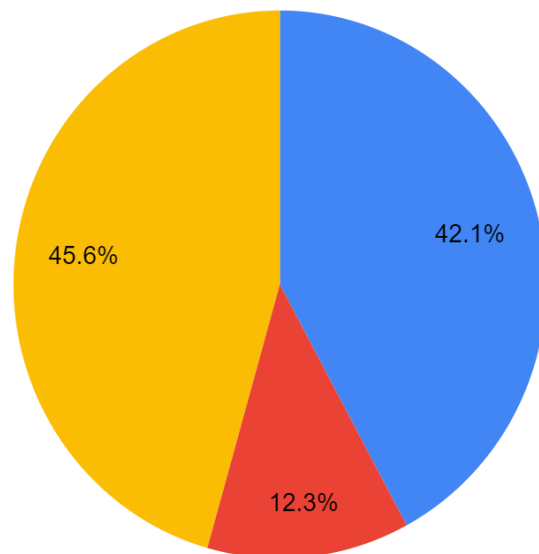


Figure 15: Operational Status in 2020 for camps in the Southeast Region.

Southwest Operational Status 2020

- We had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season.
- We did not have camp at all.
- We had a full summer.

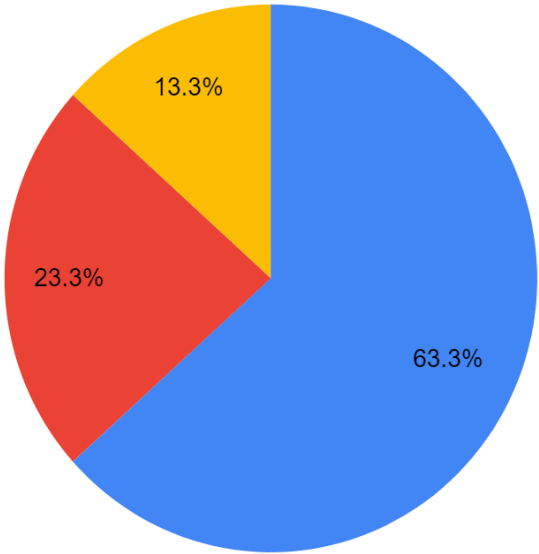


Figure 16: Operational Status in 2020 for camps in the Southwest Region.

Other Operational Status 2020

- We did not have camp at all.
- We had a full summer.

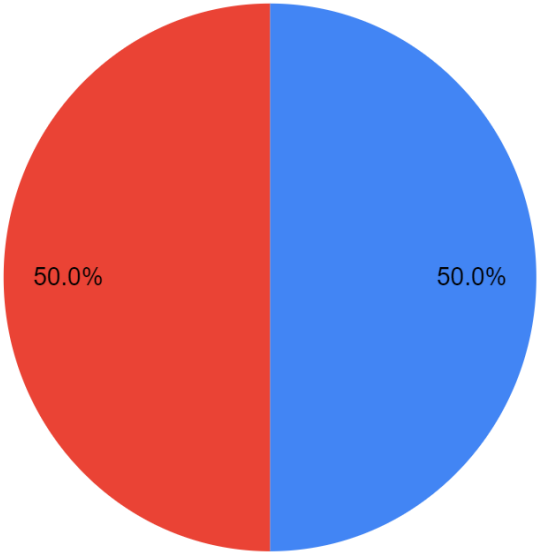


Figure 17: Operational Status in 2020 for camps in the Other Category.

Discussion

Based on the statistical data received from the provided survey, a greater understanding of the economic impact of Covid-19 on the Christian camp industry in 2020 has been established. Figures 1, 12-17 were divided into different geographical regions to compare the data more effectively to who had camp and who did not. Many different factors impacted camps such as government rules and state health department recommendations. In addition, the governor had complete control over what decisions were made regarding how the state was going to handle the pandemic. Due to this fact, camps had very little say in how they were allowed to operate. Even if their area was not experiencing a significant number of cases, they would have to shut down if the governor said so. For example, camps in the Southeast had the greatest rate of not having a camp season (42.1%) because of the strict regulations set by the government. On the other hand, camps in the Midwest had the lowest cancelation rate (15.6%) due to the more relaxed orders given by the governor. When separating the states into different regions, the researcher was able to see what areas experienced a higher negative impact, resulting in a greater region-wide economic loss. The researcher provided this statistical data with the hope of delivering future guidance if another pandemic were to occur. The data allows these regions to understand the capacity in which they were impacted. They can then formulate plans of how to protect themselves from experiencing such a great economic loss.

Another set of graphs (Figure 2-3) were essential to generate an accurate assessment of the economic impact of Covid-19 on Christian camping. This researcher needed to compare a normal operational camp season in both attendance and economics to determine the decline in both of these areas in 2020. This provided a baseline for the average attendance that each camp had during the summer. This allows the researcher to gain an understanding of their economic

status before the pandemic hit in 2020. For example, 34.3% of the surveyed camps averaged 1000-5000 campers. For this example, the researcher is going to say that it cost the camp \$300/camper. If the camp had 5000 campers in the summer, they would have an economical gain of \$1.5 million for just that one season. Without this data, an accurate understanding of the implications of Covid-19 could not be established.

The third section of graphs (Figures 5-8) played a key role in the researcher gaining a greater knowledge of the operational status of Christian camps in 2020. Due to increased Covid-19 cases, government restrictions, and county numbers, camps had the three following options of how they were going to run their camp: stay open, create modified versions, or have no camp. This was an important factor for the researcher to include because it provided data on the general impact that Covid-19 had on Christian camps. For example, the Midwest had the smallest percentage of permanent closures (15.6%), but the largest percentage (63.6%) of shortened or modified camps. Even though these camps were still able to use a different method of running camps, they still experienced significant economic loss. The researcher wanted to gain insight into the different ways in which camps dealt with the pandemic and how that impacted them on an economical level. The researcher hopes that camps look at this data and generate plans to help them better prepare for potential situations in the future.

The charts (Figures 4, 9-11) displaying the 2020 attendance based on camps' average population provided the variable that the researcher used to understand the economic impact of Covid-19 on the Christian camp industry in 2020. This data gave evidence of camp attendance in 2020 which was then compared with the average attendance of different camps (Figure 2). For example, in camps that averaged 500-1000 campers a year, 87.5% of them only had 0-500 campers. This is a significant decrease in attendance which results in a major loss of revenue.

With each percentage that was given through the evaluation of the survey, the greater economic impact the researcher observed. Even if camps were still able to obtain a small percentage of their average attendance before the pandemic, there was still a great impact that the virus had on attendance and their financial status. The overall data in this section provided evidence of what the researcher believed before they began the study. The data showed that every camp experienced a greater amount of economical loss than they gained in revenue. The researcher hopes that this data helps shed light on the economic turmoil that camps experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Through this research, the desire is that camps look at their economic status and create safety measures to protect themselves if something like this were to ever occur again.

Furthermore, the researcher found that there was a massive loss of income based on the 2020 attendance data. Camps that averaged 1000-5000 campers, 49.5% of the camps only have 0-500 campers. For some camps, this is a loss of 4500 children. To put this into perspective, if it costs a camp \$350/camper and they only had 500 campers instead of 5000, that is a \$1.575 million financial loss. That camp lost 90% of its income. For some camps, that loss leads to catastrophic consequences. This is especially true for smaller camps that rely on summer attendance to pay their expenses. The data showed for camps that average 500-1000 campers, 87.5% had 0-500 children attend camp. The researcher found that if camps that averaged 1000 campers had no camp at all, they had a financial loss of \$350,000. The economic impact that the pandemic had on these camps will take years to overcome. Even if they are to overcome their financial loss, their programming methods and economic structure will never look the same. However, the researcher hopes that through this study camps will evaluate their financial and economic status and generate safety plans to reduce the risk of an economic crisis if a world pandemic or problem were to arise in the future.

Conclusion

Based on all this data, the researcher found that there was a severe economic impact of Covid-19 on the Christian camps in 2020. Camps that averaged 1000-5000 campers, had an economical loss of 74.2%. This means that the camps lost anywhere from 500-4500 campers. If camps paid an average rate of \$350/camper, that is a \$175,000-\$1.575 million financial loss. Also, for camps that averaged 500-1000 campers, 87.5% reported only having 0-500 children. These are just a few of the negative economic impacts that Covid-19 had on the Christian camp industry. The region in which the camps were located also played a very prevalent role in the severity of the economic loss. However, there was still a major economic loss among many of the regions. The impact that Covid-19 had on Christian camps is something that will affect them for many years. As Covid-19 cases are increasing and regulations are changing, people do not know what the future holds for the Christian camp industry. However, the researcher believes that if camps put into practice safety measures regarding their economic status, they will be able to protect themselves from experiencing the massive economic loss that came with the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Appendix A

Good afternoon,

My name is Tori Beckwith and I am a current Senior in the Honors Program at Liberty University. In addition, I am receiving a B.S. in Camp and Outdoor Adventure Leadership. I am currently conducting a survey in order to analyze the economic impact that COVID-19 had on the Christian Camping Industry during the Summer of 2020. If you would be willing to fill out this simple, short, 4 question survey, I would truly appreciate it. The link is attached below. <https://forms.gle/AYVFZu6Mf6HtxvjD8>.

Thank you.

Tori Beckwith
B.S. Camp and Outdoor Adventure Leadership
Liberty University 2022

Appendix B

Answer the questions based on the facts for the camp that you work for.

Appendix C

What state is your camp located in?
How many campers does your camp have in a Non-Covid summer?
In the summer of 2020, which answer describes your camp?
How many campers did your camp have in the summer of 2020?

COVID-19 Summer Camp 2020 Survey

My thesis is looking at the economic impact of COVID-19 on the Christian Summer Camp Industry in 2020.

What state is your camp located in? *

Short answer text

How many campers does your camp have in a Non-Covid summer? *

0-500

500-1000

1000-5000

5000 or more

⋮

In the summer of 2020, which answer describes your camp? *

We did not have camp at all.

We had a shortened, modified, or hybrid camp season.

We had a full summer.

How many campers did your camp have in the summer of 2020? *

0-500

500-1000

1000-5000

5000 or more