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**Theater and Covid-19: Examining How the Pandemic Financially Affected
Production Crew Members in the Theater Industry**

Abigail Jasak

Arts and Entertainment Management

Department of Management, Pace University

Professor Chris Ramos

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Abstract

Since the beginning of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has severely impacted many aspects of almost every industry worldwide. This paper will cover the financial effect that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on production crew members working within the theater industry. Research will be conducted through literature review, evaluating similar historical events and current discussions throughout the industry, and one-on-one structured interviews with production crew members who were financially impacted by the pandemic. The main goal of this thesis is to examine the different financial situations of production crew members and determine if management and production companies within the industry were successful in financially supporting their employees throughout this difficult time. The Covid-19 pandemic began at the beginning of 2020 and is still ongoing as this research is being completed, due to the emergence of the Delta variant. Due to new discoveries and changes that will occur as the pandemic continues, this research will be updated as necessary but may not be entirely reflective of present-day situations.

Key Words: theater, Broadway, virtual theater, production, production crew, Covid-19, pandemic, production companies, finance, income

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Introduction

Since its beginning in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic spread fast, both through infection rates and overall impact on different industries. Each industry had its own challenges to overcome in terms of this new pandemic, trying to stay financially viable while keeping their employees and customers safe. Beginning March 12, 2020, the entire theater industry shut down due to concerns over the Covid-19 pandemic. This shutdown was continuously extended until recently, when theaters were permitted to re-open, and performances began in September 2021.

After a year and a half with little to no professional work available, one would wonder how members within the theater industry, specifically production crew members, were able to stay financially stable. In this study, production crew members will refer to any individual working “behind the scenes” of theater, assisting the technical and managerial requirements of a production, which includes but is not limited to set designers and builders, costume designers and wardrobe department, lighting and sound designers, general and company managers, and producers.

In addition, any mention of the theatrical industry refers to all theatrical productions as a whole, whether on Broadway, Off-Broadway, or touring companies. On Broadway refers to any professional theatrical production that is housed in one of the designated 41 Broadway professional theaters, each seating an audience of 500 or more (New York Theater Guide, 2021). A theater is considered Off-Broadway “if it has a capacity of between 100 and 499 seats and is located in Manhattan. Some companies have a presence both on Broadway and Off-Broadway. Productions can also transfer from an Off-Broadway venue to a longer run at a larger venue on Broadway" (New York Theater Guide, 2021). Typically, productions and shows begin Off-Broadway in order to gain funding, traction, audience support and recognition, until a

Broadway theater becomes available. Transitioning into a larger theater space, centralized in the theater district, gives the production more publicity, as well as a space to house a larger audience. As explained by Broadway.org (n.d.), touring production companies are Broadway shows that tour around the country or the world, bringing a slice of Broadway to smaller theaters and communities (Broadway.org Presented by The Broadway League, n.d.). Touring shows typically have the same script and similar stage direction as the original Broadway production, though the set and cast will differ from the original (*Ibid*).

Literature Review

Historical Literature Review:

Throughout the recent history of theater, very rarely have there been events or circumstances that have severely impacted the theater industry to the extent that the Covid-19 pandemic has. The closure of theaters throughout all of Broadway is an uncommon event because, despite any challenges, the show must go on, and the production must do everything in its power to deliver a performance for the audience. However, there have been a few instances in history where Broadway theaters went dark, one, in particular, being the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks. In the *Theater Survey* written by Marvin Carlson, in which he analyzes the response of the New York theater industry on 9/11, Carlson states:

“The theatres of New York, like the city as a whole, were of course profoundly affected by the events of 9/11. All were closed, along with museums and many other public gathering places, for several days... The Alliance of Resident Theatres, a service and advocacy group for more than four hundred nonprofit

theatres and related organizations in the city, estimated a \$5 million loss for 2001 as a direct result of the attacks and a \$16.3 million loss for 2002” (Carlson, 2004).

After only a few days of theaters being closed, the industry had an estimated loss of millions of dollars. Once Broadway had reopened its theaters and productions, there was a sharp decline in ticket sales. Tourists avoided theater and New York City in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001. In an effort to reignite the Broadway theater industry and boost ticket sales, a program was created to draw audiences back. Carlson explains the program below:

“On Broadway the emphasis was upon luring audiences back into escapist entertainment and to support the damaged tourist industry. In mid-December, with the Christmas vacations coming up, the administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani spent \$2.5 million dollars to buy fifty thousand theatre tickets to Broadway shows like *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Phantom of the Opera*. About one-third of these tickets were given away to World Trade Center rescue workers and the families of WTC victims. The rest were dedicated to a program entitled ‘Spend Your Regards to Broadway,’ designed to stimulate tourism and shopping” (Carlson, 2004).

This economic and financial boost for the industry aided in bringing funding and support for the industry, after a brief period of closures. While the closure of theaters in the midst of the September 11th terrorist attacks severely impacted the financial aspects of the industry, theaters were only shut down for a limited amount of time; ranging from two days to a week. In contrast, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Broadway theaters had been closed for well over a year.

The Covid-19 pandemic has not been the only pandemic to affect the theater industry. Almost one hundred years prior, the 1918 pandemic, often referred to as the Spanish Flu, majorly

impacted the industry as well. In a section of the Canadian Theater Review, titled “The Show Did Go On: How Theatre Changed after the Pandemic of 1918–19,” Cheryl Thompson writes “While the closure seemed unprecedented, this was not the first time a global pandemic had forced the shutdown of theatres. Theatres were also forced to close during the Spanish influenza (‘flu’) pandemic of 1918–19” (Thompson, 2021). During this pandemic, theaters were only closed for about two weeks (Thompson, 2021), a relatively short period of time in comparison to the lengths of theater closures during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Industry-Based Discourse Review:

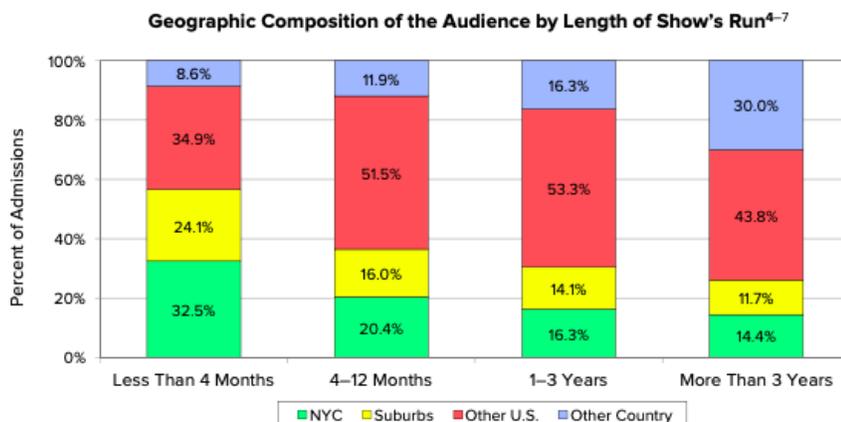
Commentary and discourse within the general Broadway and theatrical community span a wide range of mediums, including videos, music, news articles, opinion blogs, and often include a diverse range of vocabulary. Throughout this research, there is a focus on specific mediums, each pertaining to a different section of this research. News articles and press releases were analyzed, as they provide continuous updates about the effects and changes that Covid-19 has had on the theater industry. Personal blogs and individual statements were used to analyze the effects that Covid-19 has had on the individuals working within the theatrical industry, specifically members of a production crew. In addition, older, pre-pandemic, news articles and periodicals discussing theater and Broadway were incorporated, to analyze the financial situations of whole productions, individuals, and the industry prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, one periodical review titled “Broadway Is Coming Back. Can It Stay Open?”, written by James Tarmy (2021), discusses the re-opening of Broadway theaters, and the obstacles productions face, whether it be a drop in ticket sales or the accommodation of new Covid-19 guidelines. The article states:

“In contrast, Price’s *Jagged Little Pill*, which is based on music from the 1995 Alanis Morissette album of the same name, ran for only three and a half months before Covid shut it down. As a result, Price isn’t counting on tourists to keep the show running when it returns to Broadway on Oct. 2. ‘We feel that between the source material, and the awards, and the reviews, we have local audiences to make our way through,’ she says. And that’s the five boroughs as well as the tri-state area and Northeast Corridor” (Tarmy, 2021).

This quote mentions *Jagged Little Pill*, a rock musical featuring music by Alanis Morissette, and a plot inspired by Morissette’s album of the same name. As stated in the quote, this musical had a run time of only three and a half months before it was forced to close its doors due to Covid. Run time is a common phrase used within the theater community, referring to a period of time beginning once a show has had its first performance, otherwise known as opening night, and ending once a show has finished its final performance, often referred to as the closing night. This quote also includes thoughts and comments from Eva Price, a Tony-Award-winning producer. Price believes that source material, awards, and reviews will attract local audiences to finance the production, as opposed to a tourist-based audience (Tarmy, 2021). This information assumes that the reader understands the typical income source and audience breakdown for a production. For those unfamiliar with this concept and are outside of the theater industry, the biggest revenue source for a show comes from ticket sales (The Broadway League, n.d). As shows have become more costly to produce and create, and theater rentals continue to rise, average ticket prices for a musical can range anywhere from \$20 per ticket to \$175+ per ticket (Broadway.org, n.d.). Each ticket is priced differently determined by seating arrangements, production costs, show reviews, and even the time of year (*Ibid*). Typically, tourists are the biggest consumer group for theater

ticket sales. The Broadway League (2019) completed research during the 2018-2019 Broadway season, to analyze audience demographics, ticket sales, and Broadway's contribution to the New York economy. When analyzing the breakdown of ticket sales, the report states, "Sixty-five percent of admissions were made by tourists: 46% from the United States (but outside New York City and its suburbs) and 19% from other countries" (Hauser, 2019). Tourists typically visit New York City and buy tickets for the highly-rated, long-running productions that are seen as classics, such as *Phantom Of The Opera*. In their analysis of ticket sales, The Broadway League stated, "New shows had more local attendees than longer-running shows. This is not surprising as it takes time to generate word-of-mouth and then time for visitors to plan trips" (Hauser, 2019). Long running productions such as these are almost entirely funded by tourist ticket sales, while local theatergoers are more attracted to see newer productions, for example, *Jagged Little Pill*. This can be further proven through the Broadway League's statistical analysis, specifically the section analyzing the geographic composition of the audience by the length of the show's run. The graph for this data can be shown in Table 1:

Table 1:



4 Productions "Less Than 4 Months" included: *Ain't Too Proud*; *All My Sons*; *American Son*; *Be More Chill*; *Bernhardt/Hamlet*; *Burn This*; *Choir Boy*; *Frozen*; *Head Over Heels*; *Ink*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Oklahoma!*; *Ruben & Clay's First Annual Christmas Carol Family Fun Pageant Spectacular Reunion Show*; *Straight White Men*; *The Boys in the Band*; *The Illusionists—Magic of the Holidays*; *The Lifespan of a Fact*; *The Nap*; *The Prom*; *Travesties*; and *True West*

5 Productions "4-12 Months" included: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Parts One and Two*; *King Kong*; *Mean Girls*; *My Fair Lady*; *Network*; *Once on This Island*; *Pretty Woman The Musical*; *SpongeBob SquarePants*; *Summer*; *The Cher Show*; and *The Ferryman*

6 Productions "1-3 Years" included: *A Bronx Tale The Musical*; *Anastasia*; *Come From Away*; *Dear Evan Hansen*; *School of Rock—The Musical*; *The Band's Visit*; *The Play That Goes Wrong*; and *Waitress*

7 Productions "More Than 3 Years" included: *Aladdin*; *Beautiful—The Carole King Musical*; *Chicago*; *Hamilton*; *Kinky Boots*; *The Book of Mormon*; *The Lion King*; *The Phantom of the Opera*; and *Wicked*

From "The Demographics of the Broadway Audience, 2018-2019). By K. Hauser, 2019, *The Broadway League*, p. 14. Copyright 2019 by The Broadway League.

As shown above in Table 1, the data was first divided into 4 sections, based on how long the show had been running. The specific productions that were included in each section are listed below the graph, with *Phantom of the Opera* listed in the "More Than 3 Years" category. Each section was then divided up again, based on the geographic location that the ticket purchasers are from, in reference to distance from New York City, reflected as percentages. The trend, shown through the graph above, seems to be that the longer the show's runtime on Broadway, the higher the percentage of ticket sales made by tourists living outside of the New York City area.

Although several productions rely on tourists to financially support their show, the number of

tourists visiting New York City has significantly dropped, as people are fearful of the Covid-19 pandemic. This could cause financial challenges down the line as theaters reopen.

Over the course of this literature review, it was found that the target audience for industry based discussions tends to either be the actor/performer or the average audience member at a show. The biggest issue has been the lack of focus and inclusion of how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected production crew members, both financially and generally. Most articles discussing the financial impact of the pandemic and theater, either focus on the viewpoint of the actors and producers as individuals or the theatrical industry as a whole. As an example, Backstage.com (n.d.), a website designed to update industry members on upcoming news, events, productions, and auditions, focuses most of its articles with a target audience base of actors, directors, and choreographers; the more creative jobs within a production. One article featured on the website, titled “Why Actors Need More Than An Emergency Fund,” written by Brooke Tyler Benson (2020), explains the necessity of having a substantial savings account, specifically from the perspective of actors. This article was written in December 2020, the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic and industry shut-down, when every member of the professional theater community was being financially impacted by a lack of work within the industry. One line of the article states,

“As actors, we’re consistently between gigs, always looking for jobs, and don’t have the luxury of always knowing when our next paycheck is coming in. If we used our emergency fund every time we found ourselves unemployed, we would never be able to keep our hands off of it. It’s not sustainable to treat every season of unemployment as an emergency” (Benson, 2020).

Within the theatrical industry, it's a common understanding that the work is not consistent; unless you are one of the lucky few to gain enough fame to become a household name. This lack of stability is common for every position within a show, whether producer, actor, technical crew member, choreographer, etc. However, this specific article only targets actors for its audience, despite the fact that this information would be relevant and important to anyone involved in theater. This oversight on certain groups, specifically production crew members, can lead to a lack of general understanding and awareness of how crew members have been financially impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The financial struggles within the entire theater industry became a pressing matter, and even led the United States government to offer aid. This can be shown through the push for, and passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, otherwise known as the CARES Act, by the House Of Representatives. Overall, the CARES act provided financial resources and aid to people, across all industries, who lost their job or are unable to find employment, due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, 2020). One specific addition to the CARES Act included a rise in unemployment benefits by \$600, extending unemployment eligibility to include those who accepted positions and offers for productions that were postponed due to the pandemic and guarantees \$75 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, 2020). As stated on its own website, is "The National Endowment for the Arts is an independent federal agency that funds, promotes, and strengthens the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation" (National Endowment for the Arts, n.d.). With the \$75 million granted by Congress, the National Endowment for the Arts preserved jobs within the art and entertainment industry and supported organizations that

were forced to close and lose revenue as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Actors Equity Association, a United States labor union representing professional actors and stage managers, included a press release on its website, thanking Congress for including Arts Workers in the bill.

The press release from the Actors Equity Association states:

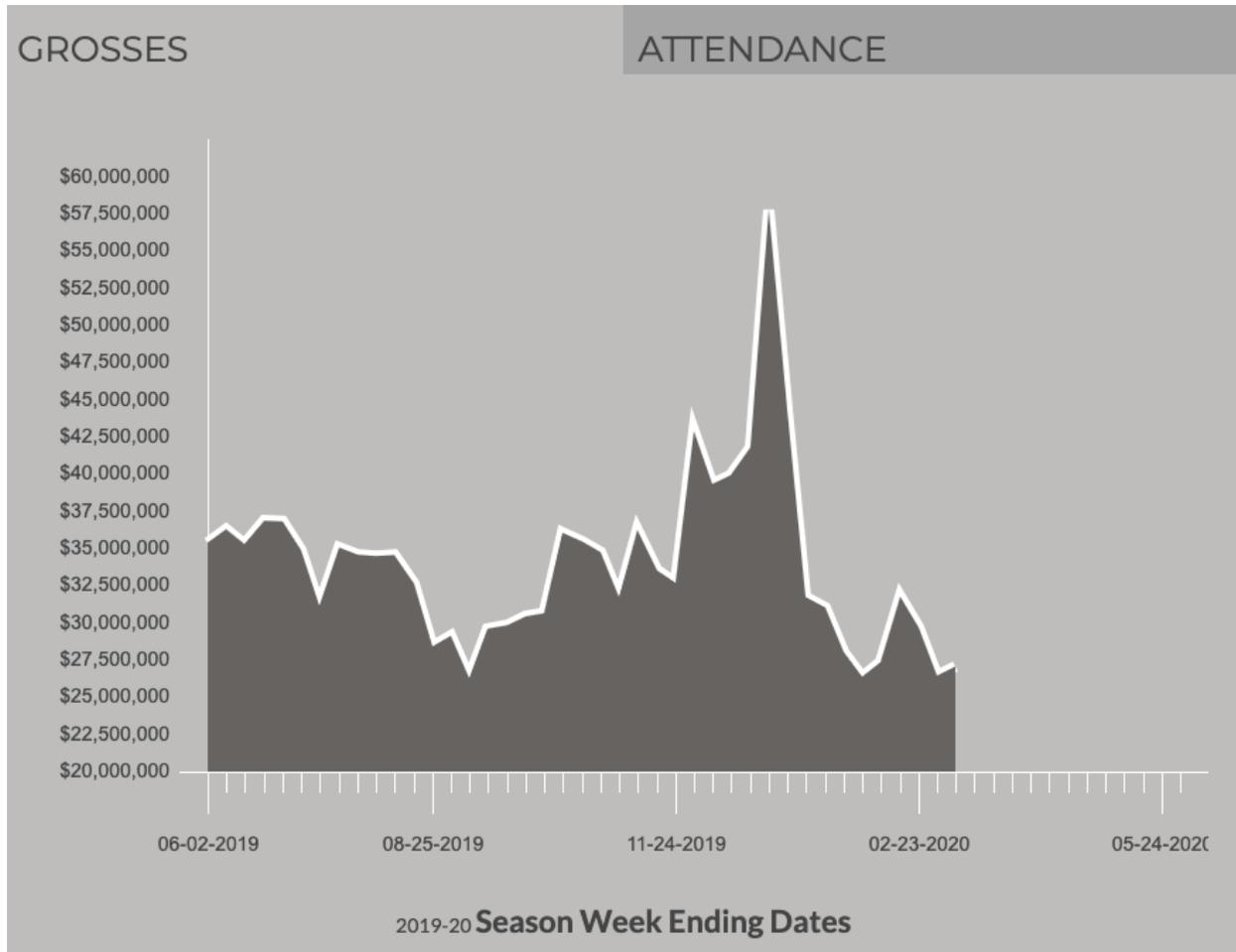
“The fight to protect arts and entertainment workers has only begun. We still have tremendous uncertainty before us. But for now, many of our members will have a little more security about being able to pay their rent and feed their families in the meantime. We will continue to fight for more arts funding so the arts can contribute culturally and economically to their communities” (Actors Equity Association, 2020).

This fight for financial security began with a broader picture, as it intended to include all members and occupations within a production and across the entire arts and entertainment industry. However, this widespread inclusion was only present within the theatrical community. Once larger news outlets outside of the industry became interested in the story and the push for financial aid and stability for arts and entertainment professionals, the focus began to shift towards the financial impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on actors, instead of all industry members as a whole. For example, USA Today released an article titled “One year later: Broadway Shutdown Puts Actors' Dreams on Hold as COVID-19 Pandemic Continues” (Benbrook, 2021). The article goes on to explain how the closure of theater has affected actors, and included some personal stories and testimonies as well. What the article fails to do, however, is include any information or testimonials from other types of industry professionals, such as theatrical production crew members. As mainstream news outlets narrowly focus on actors in this context, it spreads to a narrowed focus and awareness amongst the general public. The

support of the general public brings together a larger community of people, which, in turn, leads to a better understanding of the issue, and a stronger push for change. This lack of awareness and attention to the financial impact that Covid-19 has had on production crew members is one of the main inspirations behind this study and research.

Through research and analysis of different articles within the theatrical industry, there seemed to be a common trend that emerged. It was found that when finances and theater are discussed and analyzed in tandem, it's typically in reference to the profits of a show or production as a whole, instead of the financial profits or stability of the individual. Broadway makes up a huge sector of the New York City economy. In their biennial report analyzing the economic impact that Broadway has on the New York economy, The Broadway League states "During the 2018-2019 season, the Broadway industry contributed \$14.7 billion to the economy of New York City and supported 96,900 jobs. This amount consisted of direct spending in three areas: spending by producers to produce and run shows; spending by theatre owners to maintain and renovate venues; and ancillary purchases by 'Broadway Tourists'" (The Broadway League, n.d.). At the start of the pandemic, as theaters closed for an indefinite period of time, the New York Times released an article, stating "Broadway - central to, and symbolic of, New York - is not only the pinnacle of the American theater world, but is also big business: last season the industry grossed \$1.8 billion and drew 14.8 million patrons" (Paulson, 2020). Broadway theater has made itself essential within the New York economy and financial structure, through high ticket sales and being a large tourist attraction. The Broadway League provides statistics, both weekly and seasonally, of the gross profits for individual productions and the Broadway industry as a whole, and a graph of these statistics are shown below in Table 2:

Table 2:



From “Grosses - Broadway In NYC”, by The Broadway League, n.d, (<https://www.broadwayleague.com/research/grosses-broadway-nyc/>). 2015-21.

The overall gross profits of all combined Broadway musicals and plays for the final week before theaters shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic, totaled \$26,700,956: this gross profit margin was one of the lower-earning weeks of that season, with the highest-earning week being the week ending 12/29/2019 at \$55,765,408 (The Broadway League, n.d.). Although statistics and information for the finances of the theater industry as a whole are openly discussed and analyzed, little information is available when discussing the financial stability of individuals working

within the theater industry. Through research, analysis, and interviews, the goal is to supplement this gap of information and understanding.

Methods

Design and Procedure:

This research was inspired by the curiosity and lack of understanding on how production crew members were able to financially support themselves throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. It's a common understanding within the industry that working in theater is not a guaranteed financial success. Typically, many individuals working in theater have other sources of income to establish more financial security for themselves. While actors were able to repurpose their talents, either by becoming a teacher or coach or through participating in virtual productions, the talents of production crew members tend to be restricted to in-person productions. Once theaters shut down, leaving an entire industry out of work, many scrambled for outside sources of income in search of financial stability. Theater touring companies were quarantined and abruptly sent home. Broadway productions were initially put on a brief hold, although this shutdown was continuously extended for about a year and a half. As individuals were unable to work in the industry for an extensive amount of time, questions arose as to how these people were able to find financial support. Would their production companies provide a steady income throughout the pandemic? Would there be governmental aid given to these individuals? Were these members forced to find income in other industries during a time of record-high unemployment and outside industries closing as well? From an individual and financial point of view, the works analyzed above left these gaps of understanding. This research began as a way to supplement these gaps. In addition to supplementing gaps of information, the goal of this research is to provide advice

for both production crew members and production companies on how to better financially support and stabilize individuals working within a production crew. This information will be obtained through interviews with production crew members. It was decided that completing interviews with this group of individuals to obtain first-hand experiences and perspectives would be the best method to understanding this situation. The list of questions that were asked during the interview process can be found in the Appendix (see Appendix A).

These questions were developed for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Through quantitative analysis and comparing the raw numbers of each interviewee, one can assess how these individuals were financially affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Using a scale, ranging from 1-10 will provide a simplified understanding for the interviewer and provide an easier method of collecting and comparing data. By utilizing a numbered scale for the responses when collecting the quantitative data, it will allow for easily sorting and dividing the answers, based on level of impact and severity, 1 being high severity or impact and 10 being low severity or impact. The numbered scale will allow for statistical analysis as well: a maximum, minimum, and mean will be determined for each quantitative response.

In addition to collecting quantitative data, the interview questions also aim to find qualitative data as well. While this data tends to be more difficult to compare between responses, it will allow for the interviewee to add a more personal perspective. Part of this research is determining how to better support production crew members financially, in case of a future long-term shutdown of the industry.

Interviews and Sample Participants:

Because this thesis incorporates interviews as a primary research method, approval from the Institutional Review Boards, otherwise known as the IRB, was required to ensure safety and

security to all interview participants. An application was submitted to the IRB, complete with a thesis proposal (see Appendix B), interview consent form (see Appendix C), and a list of interview questions (see appendix A).

Once the application was reviewed and approved by the designated IRB board, potential interviewees were contacted to gauge interest in participation. Potential participants were contacted and chosen through mutual contacts within the theater industry. Initial contact was done through email, explaining the thesis and research process, asking if participants were interested, and including the consent form to fill out and return if the participant was interested.

Once the consent form was filled out and an interview time was scheduled, the interviewee was reminded that they could stop answering questions at any point during the interview for any reason. Participation was not mandatory, as there would be no direct benefit of compensation for the interviewees, should they voluntarily choose to participate in the study. With respect to all participants, all interviewees were kept anonymous, and any identifiable characteristics were omitted from the study to ensure privacy and security to all who participated. All interviews were conducted over Zoom, a virtual meeting platform. This was to prevent contact and exposure of the Covid-19 virus for all parties. By conducting interviews over Zoom, this allowed for a wider range of candidates across different geographic locations.

For this research, a total of five individuals were interviewed who had worked as production crew members at the beginning of the pandemic. These participants worked in a variety of different positions, locations, and productions within the industry, leading to each of them having their own unique experience. In order to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of these interviewees, this paper will refer to them with they/them/theirs pronouns and naming them Participant 1-5. All specific locations, companies, productions, and any other identifiers have

been omitted, as this research only cares to examine the financial stability, personal experience, and responses to the closure of theaters and productions due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Findings

Participant #1:

Participant #1 defined their official job title in three different parts; an assistant lighting technician, head electrician, and freelance stage tech. These three titles change based on the show/production that they are hired on. They've been working professionally within the industry for the past six years, since 2015.

When asked for their initial response to the closure of theaters and productions, they stated that they were relieved to have a break. As a stage technician/production crew member, the work is constant, with long hours and limited days off. Once the realization set in that this shutdown would extend longer than a month, they became panicked. At the time, they were on an international tour, which closed immediately, sending the whole cast and crew home just before international borders could close. Luckily, Participant #1 had another job, outside of the industry, that could provide them with work and financial stability. However, because the tour was prematurely canceled, they had lost half of their income revenue and stated that the entire experience was pretty jarring.

When asked to describe and rate their financial situation in 2019, Participant #1 stated that their financial situation was fairly stable, rating it an 8. However, following the closure of productions in 2020, and being sent home from an international tour, they rated their financial stability at a 2, simply stating, "Yikes." Following up with Question #6, they stated that the touring company was unable to provide any compensation and was unable to provide them with

any additional work. On the other hand, the main stage theater that they had a history of working for was able to provide additional work, however this wasn't until six months later, in the fall of 2020. This theater hired Participant #1 to work on virtual, livestream events, as well as events where outside companies had rented the theater space. This work, while appreciated by Participant #1, was inconsistent and infrequent, as they stated that it only occurred 1-2 times per month for only 2-3 days at a time; a total of six working days per month. In response to question 7, they stated that while the work was infrequent, the rate of pay didn't change, so they felt that the compensation was fair.

Due to the infrequency of the work, Participant #1 stated that they would not feel financially stable in their day-to-day life, if their theater/company continued to provide work in this fashion. Because they were only working a total of six days out of the month in the industry and the rate of compensation had not increased, it would not allow them to sustain financial stability for the long-term future. In order to compensate for the loss in pay, they had filed for unemployment on the weeks they were not working. This federal aid allowed them to slowly stabilize their finances once again. However, once theaters and productions began to reopen, Participant #1 stated that they would feel financially stable due to the work days/hours becoming more frequent and consistent.

In terms of preparedness, Participant #1 rated their level of preparedness a 3. They did not feel financially prepared for an extensive shut-down of the entire theater industry. Although they did have another job outside of the theater industry to provide additional finances, they had minimal savings and had to pay for rent in NYC. To add to the situation, they were on an international tour, which had abruptly closed, losing half of their expected income.

When asked if they would feel financially stable if theater were to go entirely virtual in the future, Participant #1 said that it would depend on a number of things. If the work were to stay consistent, with the same amount of hours and the same rate of compensation, then yes, they would feel financially stable. However, if the work mirrored their experience at the beginning of the pandemic, with minimal hours and inconsistent pay, then no.

At the end of the interview, Participant #1 was asked if they had anything additional that they would like to add or discuss. They shared that it was important to note how different institutions handled the shutdown. Through their experience, the touring company was unable to provide anything for the crew financially, leading to Participant #1 losing half of their income. However, the main stage theater did provide additional work and financial support, although it wasn't enough to solely financially support them. The only reason that they were able to have any financial support, was through their additional work/job outside of the theater industry and unemployment benefits.

Participant #2:

Participant #2 self defined themselves as a Production Coordinator/Associate Producer. In total, they had been working in the theater industry professionally for over twelve years, however had been specifically working in events for a total of five years.

When asked for their initial response to learning that live performances had been canceled due to Covid-19, Participant #2 stated that they were relieved to have some time off. At the time, they were a full-time college student, working as a part-time assistant production manager on an active event. The event date was only one month away, and the workload had severely increased, so they were thankful for what they thought was a week-long to month-long

break. However, as Covid-19 cases began to rise, and the event date continued to get pushed back and then eventually canceled, Participant #2 began to fully comprehend the seriousness of the situation. Jobs and events that they had already booked for the summer had been cancelled, and they were left with no work and, therefore, no income throughout the summer of 2020.

When asked to rate their financial situation in 2019, on a scale from 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, they rated it a 5. They explained that most of their earned income was going toward paying for school and rent in NYC; however, they had the privilege of generational wealth and support from their parents. When asked to rate their financial situation in 2020, following the closure of theaters and productions, they rated their situation at a 2. Participant #2 continued on, explaining that they still receive financial support from their parents, so their situation never became dire or drastic. However, because they had no work or income, they had lost all financial mobility, and were unable to continue to pay for school or rent, and had to move back home with their parents.

When asked, “Did your management/production company find other ways to keep you financially compensated active during the shutdown?” Participant #2 referred back to the event that they were working on at the beginning of the pandemic. Because the event/performance date was canceled, the company tried to refuse to pay Participant #2 for the work that they had already completed, prior to the shut-down. After two months of negotiations, the company had agreed to compensate them for only a portion of the previously agreed upon rate. Participant #2 did have some offers for work at the beginning of the summer of 2020, however, once it was clear that the shut-down was more long-term than expected, those offers were later rescinded. Concerned due to the lack of income, they applied and received a small business loan through the Payment Protection Program, which was later forgiven. They acknowledged that this was a

unique position that they were in, having worked under an LLC, which allowed for them to gain additional funding and financial support.

In response to question #7 (see appendix A), Participant #2 explained that towards the end of summer 2020, they had transitioned to freelancing on smaller shows as a producer. However, they stated that they were earning fractions on the dollar and were barely breaking even financially. They stated that this was the only time where their passion for theater felt more like a hobby instead of a career. By the end of 2020, they had decided to pivot their work and career entirely to producing corporate events, in order to recover financially. This career change came as a result of the lack of work, lack of pay, and lack of opportunities due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

When asked to rate their level of preparedness for the extensive industry shut-down, they rated it a 4. With their savings, Participant #2 stated that they were prepared for a maximum of two months without income, not for an industry-wide shut-down lasting over a year. Because of family and generational wealth, they were able to stay financially supported throughout the entirety of the pandemic. Participant 2 continued on, by stating that they would not feel financially stable if the theater industry went entirely virtual in the future. While they were actively working on virtual productions throughout the pandemic, the compensation was not enough to sustain themselves. They used this situation as an opportunity to learn a new style of production, however they didn't believe it would be worth doing again. Participant 2 wanted to add that, without financial support from their family, they would not have been able to financially survive or stay working in the entertainment industry. Most of their colleagues weren't as lucky, and were not able to financially survive in the industry during the pandemic, and were forced to find work in entirely different industries. Participant #2 continued on, stating

that even prior to the pandemic, finances were difficult just living month to month, let alone being able to build up their savings enough to have a substantial rainy day fund. Prior to the industry shut down, they were constantly working and were experiencing intense burnout.

Participant #3:

Participant #3 is a wardrobe supervisor/seamstress, working professionally in the industry for about 7 years. When they initially learned that live performances were canceled, they were panicked and worried; however, they did not think that it was going to have as large of an effect as it did. At the start of the pandemic, Participant #3 was working as a wardrobe supervisor on an international tour. As the Covid-19 virus spread from country to country and borders began to close, the tour was forced to cancel. They were flown home at the beginning of international panic, and understood the seriousness of the situation, but believed it would blow over within a few months. Initially, Participant #3 thought that they would be able to hold out financially, however as the reopening date kept getting pushed, and there was no source of income due to lack of work, the budget became tight. They questioned how they would be able to pay rent and continue to live in New York City, causing worry to set in as time progressed.

On a scale of 1-10, they rated their financial situation in 2019 a 2. Participant #3 had just moved to NYC in late 2019, and most of their savings were put into the move. This left them with little to no savings leading into 2020. They began to work on tour and had a full-time job lined up after the tour was completed. Both of these jobs were intended to be a way to build back up their savings and better stabilize their finances. After theaters and productions closed in 2020, Participant #3 rated their financial situation at a 1, as they began the pandemic with very little savings, and their only source of financial growth had been canceled.

After the tour was canceled, the touring production company was not able to provide any additional work or financial support for the cast or crew. The talent that was working with the touring company had tried to negotiate for the crew to receive their full pay as intended, including the shows that had been canceled, but were unsuccessful. Although Participant #3 had a full-time job lined up after the tour, after the industry had shut down due to the pandemic, the contract became nulled, and the company made no effort to keep them employed. With no work and no financial support, Participant #3 began to utilize their talents and skills to make and distribute masks throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Because their company/production did not provide any additional work or financial compensation for Participant #3, questions 7 and 8 of the interview were not applicable and, therefore, were skipped.

When asked to rate their level of preparedness, on a scale of 1-10, they rated it at a 1. They felt that they were extremely unprepared, as they had just spent a large sum of their savings on their recent move to NYC. Going into the pandemic with little to no savings, Participant #3 stated that they felt that the rug had been swept out from under them. If the theater industry were to go completely virtual in the future, they stated that they would feel financially stable in their day-to-day life. Even with virtual theater, there would still be a need for costumes and a wardrobe department and, therefore, they would still have a job in the industry. The logistics of working as a remote wardrobe supervisor/seamstress for virtual theater would become challenging, and they felt that the compensation should increase to accommodate for the equipment and materials needed for working from home. However, the basics of the job should stay relatively consistent.

When asked if there was anything additional that they would like to add, Participant #3 wanted to emphasize the difference in financial positions that they experienced at the beginning

of the pandemic, in comparison to their current day financial situation. At the beginning of the industry shut down, they felt very angry and frustrated, as they had gone into the pandemic already in an unstable financial situation: the Covid-19 pandemic only exacerbated this issue. However, today, as the industry begins to reopen, they stated that they are in the best financial position in their life. Throughout the pandemic, with little to no work opportunities, they had filed for and received federal unemployment. This program allowed for them to continue building back their savings and re-stabilize their finances, putting them in a stronger financial situation than they had, prior to the pandemic.

Participant #4:

Participant #4 listed several different job titles, stating that they had worked as a box office assistant, a box office manager, and, just prior to the pandemic, an assistant treasurer for a theater. They've been working professionally within the industry since 2017. Their initial response to the shut-down and cancellations of live performances was not immediate panic. At the start of the industry shut-down in March, they were in between contracts and jobs, with a contract ending in February and the next one starting in April. They believed that this shutdown was only temporary, only to last a few months. As the reopening date continued to be delayed, Participant #4 began to understand the long-term effects that this pandemic would cause. Once this realization hit, they began to try and shift to working in box offices in other related industries, for example, sports and concerts, as an effort to regain their lost income. Once these industries shut down as well, Participant #4 realized that this shutdown and lack of work was everywhere, and didn't know where to turn to in order to find additional work.

In 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, they rated their financial situation at a 6, based on a scale from 1-10. After recently graduating from college, they decided to live with their family in an effort to save money and build their finances in order to move to New York City. Although the big move to New York City took a lot out of their financial stability, they still had a decent amount in their savings. During this time, they began working in a union position, offering more stability, and were able to make a decent income to continue to add to their savings. Once the Covid-19 pandemic had shut down the entire industry, they rated their financial situation at a 4. They had lost all sources of income; however, they were fortunate to have built up enough savings prior to still feel relatively financially stable.

For question 6, asking if their management or production company provided additional work/financial support following the shutdown, Participant #4 responded, no. At the time, they were working as an apprentice at the ticketing union in New York. Because all performances were canceled, all box offices were closed as well and were unable to offer any additional work or financial support. Without performances, box offices were unable to financially support any remote work for any of their employees. The union was able to provide guidance on how to apply for unemployment benefits, which became the only source of income for Participant #4 throughout the entire pandemic. Because their company/production did not provide any additional work or financial compensation for Participant #4, questions 7 and 8 of the interview were not applicable and were skipped.

When asked to rate their level of preparedness on a scale of 1-10, 1 being extremely unprepared, 10 being extremely prepared, Participant #4 rated their level of preparedness at a 3. Initially, when they had lost all sources of income, they became panicked and stressed as to how they would be able to pay their bills, specifically their rent for their apartment. However, they

were able to receive unemployment relatively early on into the pandemic, which provided them with additional financial stability.

If theater went entirely virtual in the future, Participant #4 believed that they would feel financially stable in their day-to-day life. Prior to the pandemic, there was already an industry push to make box offices remote. Box offices were already turning to virtual platforms, as many people purchased their tickets online. If their work went entirely remote, they feel that the job requirements would be relatively similar to working in a box office in person, and they would most likely work in person at the theater in other ways, by assisting with smaller jobs, such as setting up the stage.

When asked if there was anything additional that they would like to add, Participant #4 wanted to stress the important role that federal unemployment played in their financial stability throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Because the industry shut-down gave them no opportunities to earn any income, federal unemployment benefits allowed for them to earn money throughout the pandemic and regain financial stability.

Participant #5:

At the start of the pandemic, Participant #5 worked as an equity stage manager and production manager and had been involved in theater for their entire life, although they had been working professionally in the industry since 2015. Once the Covid-19 pandemic shut down all live performances, they made the decision to completely switch career paths and went into medical school to become a physician's assistant.

At the start of the pandemic, their initial response was panic, as they worried about what they were going to do, to both help themselves and other people. At the time, Participant #5 was

on an international tour in Europe, working as a production manager. They stated that their love of theater stems from a love of serving others and leaving a personal impact, and questioned how they could continue to serve others if their industry was completely shut-down. As the Broadway reopening date continued to be pushed back and delayed, they made the difficult decision to switch career paths, in order to continue to help others in the midst of the pandemic. This led to Participant #5 pursuing a career in the medical field, which gave them the opportunity to help and support others while having a financially stable career.

When asked to rate their financial situation in 2019, prior to the pandemic, on a scale of 1-10, they rated their financial situation at a high 7. They described this period of time as the first time that they were able to comfortably support themselves financially. It was the first year of substantial growth financially while working within the theater industry, and they had several jobs and contracts lined up once they returned from the international tour. However, once the Covid-19 pandemic hit and productions and live performances were forced to close, Participant #5 rated their financial situation at a 4. Originally, they had provided a lower rating, a 1, but stated that they had received federal unemployment benefits, which had significantly aided their financial stability. While they did receive unemployment, they understood that this wasn't a permanent solution, and they couldn't depend on unemployment long-term, which led to the decision to switch career paths and industries entirely.

When asked if their management/production company found other ways to keep their employees financially supported and active throughout the industry-wide shutdown, Participant #5 provided a two-part response. The company that they were on tour for was unable to provide any additional work or financial support once live performances were canceled. Despite this, through Actors Equity and previous industry connections, they were able to work on three

different virtual productions throughout the pandemic. While all three of these virtual job opportunities were equity contracts, they did not provide much financial support or any health insurance benefits, and instead, were just opportunities to stay active and boost creativity throughout the pandemic. Although Participant #5 didn't feel that they were fairly compensated for their work on these virtual productions, they understood that these companies were struggling financially as well, so they didn't hold any resentment. They did state that, later on in the pandemic, closer to the reopening date of theaters, companies did provide additional work that would have allowed for them to stay financially stable. While the job was temporary, it paid well and would have significantly aided their financial stability. However, at this point in time, Participant #5 had already decided that they were going to switch industries to pursue a career in the medical field, which would allow them to have a more reliable source of income.

When asked to rate their level of financial preparedness after theaters and productions had closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, they rated it at a 1, extremely unprepared. At the beginning of 2020, they felt that they had such a clear career trajectory in the industry, with three jobs lined up and almost a year and a half of work planned out in advance. Although, once the pandemic had shut down the theater industry, none of these productions were able to continue, leaving Participant #5 with no work and no source of income. If theater went entirely virtual in the future, Participant #5 did not believe that they would feel financially stable in their day-to-day life. They disliked working on the virtual productions during the pandemic and felt that it was unstimulating and lacked the passion that drew them to the theater industry. Their love and drive for theater weren't tangible in a virtual setting, and while they appreciated the work that goes into creating a virtual production, Participant #5 did not feel that it would allow for them to stay financially stable or mentally stimulated.

When asked if there was anything additional that they would like to discuss, Participant #5 wanted to include some remarks and discussions that they've had with friends who are still working within theater as the industry reopens. Participant #5 described a few conversations with some friends working as stage managers while productions reopen and stated that the rules and regulations to follow Covid-19 safety guidelines are rigorous. The dynamic has changed, as stage managers are unable to directly interact with the actors, and swing actors are isolated from the rest of the main cast to promote social distancing. The cast and crew are constantly required to get covid tests at off-site locations, and Participant #5 emphasized that there was no change in compensation to accommodate for the time and resource challenges that these new regulations caused.

Discussion

Quantitative Results:

The interview questions consisted of two parts, both quantitative and qualitative analysis. In this section, the focus will be on analyzing the quantitative results. More specifically, this section will analyze the results for question #4, question #5, and question #9.

Question 4 asked "On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, how would you describe your financial situation in the year 2019?" Each participant provided a number, based on that scale, to reflect their financial situation, and the results are shown below:

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Question 4	8	5	2	6	7

The minimum rating is a 2, the maximum rating is an 8, and the mean rating is a 5.6. The range of ratings is so wide, because each participant was in dramatically different positions and

situations in their career and lives. Alone, the result of this question means little to nothing; however, when compared to the results of question 5, the real analysis begins.

Question 5 asked “On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, how would you describe your financial situation after the closure of theaters and productions in 2020?” The goal of this question, in tandem with question 4, is to compare the financial situations of each participant before and after the closure of theaters and productions. Each participant provided a number, based on that scale, to reflect their financial situation, and the results are shown below:

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Question 5	2	2	1	4	4

The minimum rating is a 1, the maximum rating is a 4, and the mean rating is a 2.6. When comparing the results of these two questions, it’s clear that each participant rated their financial situation a lower number for question 5 in comparison to question 4. One can infer from these results that every participant consistently had a poorer financial situation in 2020, after the closure of theaters, no matter the situation that they were in prior, in 2019. Although each participant had a different experience both before and throughout the pandemic, everyone’s financial situation significantly declined, as the average rating had dropped from a 5.6 to a 2.6; a full 3 point rating difference.

Question 9, the final quantitative analysis question, asked, “On a scale of 1-10, 1 being extremely unprepared, 10 being extremely prepared, how prepared were you financially following the closure of theaters and productions for the past year?” The goal of this question is to examine each participant's level of financial preparedness going into the pandemic, and determine if there are any similarities, despite each participant being in different positions. Each

participant provided a number, based on that scale, to reflect their financial situation, and the results are shown below:

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Question 9	3	4	1	3	1

The minimum rating is a 1, the maximum rating is a 4, and the mean rating is a 2.4. Every participant's rating was below a 5, with two participants providing a rating of 3 and two other participants providing a rating of 1. One can infer that, based on these results, production crew members were very unprepared financially for the shutdown of the theater industry. The reasoning for this lack of preparedness is undetermined, based on this quantitative research alone. However, this lack of preparedness could be a significant factor and reasoning for the low ratings provided in the results of question 5. Because all of these participants had low ratings of financial preparedness, they were unable to properly financially support themselves after the closure of theaters and productions, leading to a poorer rating for their financial situation in 2020.

Qualitative Results:

In this section, the focus will be on analyzing the qualitative results. More specifically, this section will analyze the results for question #3, question #6, and question #10. Because each participant described significantly different situations and stories throughout their one-on-one interviews, qualitative results become more challenging to analyze than quantitative results. Due to this, key words and phrases were chosen from participants' responses for each qualitative question.

Question 3 asked, “When the Covid-19 shut-down happened and live performances were canceled, what was your initial response?” Each participant described their positions and perspectives, and, based on their response, a few key words and phrases were selected from each participants response and are shown below:

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Question 3	relieved, panicked	exhausted, relieved	panicked, worried	denial	“What am I going to do?”

Every participant had a unique reaction to the closure of theaters and productions, based on the situations and jobs that they were a part of at the time. Participants #1 and #2 were both working on multiple stressful and busy productions, causing their initial reaction to be relieved for some time off of work, believing that the shut down would be short-term and temporary. Most of the participants' initial reaction turned into panic over their financial situation and the social situation of living in a world plagued with a pandemic. Based on the key words “exhausted” and “relieved”, one can infer that prior to the pandemic, production crew members were overworked and burnt out, and these participants initially believed that the closure of theaters would provide them with a short-term, well-deserved break.

Question 6 asked, “Did your management/production company find other ways to keep you financially compensated active during the shutdown, for example, virtual performances, outsourcing work/talent, etc.?” The goal of this question is to determine if and how different production/management companies provided financial support for their production crew members. Each participant described their positions and perspectives, and, based on their response, a few key words and phrases were selected from each participant’s response and are shown below:

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Question 6	No, the company was unable to financially support. Infrequent, virtual work	No, the company refused to pay. Job offers rescinded. Loans	No. Job offers rescinded. Unemployment benefits.	No, the company couldn't offer any work. Unemployment benefits	No, the company couldn't financially support. Minimal virtual work

Although each participant had entirely different careers within the industry and were all at different stages and situations, none of their production/management companies were able to provide them any financial support. Participants #2 and #3 both had jobs lined up for the summer 2020 season, which were both later rescinded due to the extended closure of productions.

Participants #1 and #5 were given the opportunity to work on virtual productions throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. However, they each stated that this work was minimal and infrequent and wouldn't be able to financially support them in the long term. In addition, all five of these participants received unemployment benefits, due to the lack of work and financial support in the theater industry. Based on these results, one can notice that most production crew members were not offered additional means of financial compensation by their production or management company. One can continue to infer that because of this lack of financial compensation, this led to the participants providing a lower rating for their financial situation throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, as shown through the results of question #5.

Question 10 asked, "If theater went entirely virtual in the future, do you believe that you would feel financially stable in your day-to-day life?" The goal of this question is to listen to the perspective of production crew members and examine if they would feel financially stable, should the future of theater turn to a virtual medium. Each participant described their positions

and perspectives, and, based on their response, a few key words and phrases were selected from each participants response and are shown below:

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Question 10	It depends. If work consistency and pay mimicked experience during pandemic, no	No. Used as a chance to learn, but wouldn't do it again	Yes, would just work remotely. Compensation should increase to reflect challenges of working from home	Yes, job field was already transitioning to remote work.	No. Virtual theater lacked the financial support, mental stimulation, and passion

Each participant had a different experience doing virtual theater throughout the pandemic, leading to drastic differences in each participant's response. Participants #3 and #4 stated that they would feel financially stable if theater went entirely virtual, due to the fact that their job positions can be easily transitioned to remote work. Participants #2 and #5 had a negative experience working on virtual productions, due to lack of pay and unstimulating, unfulfilling work, leading them to state that they would not feel financially stable if theater went entirely virtual. Participant #1 felt that they could feel financially stable in this situation, however only if the work hours/days and the pay were consistent with pre-pandemic. Based on the variety of these results, one can infer that financial stability within virtual theater differs for each production crew member, based on the production crew members previous experience, level of comfortability, and the individuals job position and its ability to be incorporated remotely.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to examine the different financial situations of production crew members within the theater industry after the Covid-19 pandemic forced theaters and

productions to close for over a year. Although each participant's individual situation and perspective differed, similarities were found through quantitative and qualitative analysis, based on responses given during one-on-one interviews. In recent history, the theater industry had yet to face a challenge as difficult as the Covid-19 pandemic, in comparison to the 1918 Spanish Flu and the terrorist attacks on September 11th. As the Covid-19 pandemic progressed, news outlets continually updated on the status of the theater industry, personal blogs discussed the obstacles that the industry would face as it re-opens, and Congress passed the CARES Act to provide additional federal financial support to those who lost their jobs and financial support due to the pandemic. Although all these discuss theater in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, none specifically analyze the effect that the closure of theaters had on production crew members within the industry. In order to supplement this gap, one-on-one interviews were conducted with five different production crew members, analyzing and discussing their perspectives and financial situations throughout the pandemic. Both quantitative and qualitative results were analyzed and found that production crew members within the theater industry suffered financially as a result of the pandemic. For further research, one can suggest that future researchers expand the research data, by interviewing additional production crew members from a wider range of job titles, positions, and industry experience, to add to the general understanding of how the Covid-19 pandemic financially affected production crew members. In addition, future researchers can focus on the interview questions that were not directly analyzed within this report, including question #7, asking "If you were compensated for your work, do you believe that you were compensated fairly for the amount of work that you provided," and question #8, asking "If your company did have another option available, do you believe that it would allow you to be financially stable?"

The closure of theaters led to a lack of work, and production/management companies were unable to provide any additional financial support for this group. This led to many people making drastic decisions, whether that be moving home with family members or changing career paths entirely. Although the future of theater is yet to be seen, the Covid-19 pandemic dramatically affected the lives and financial situations of production crew members, leaving each participant in an entirely different situation from where they began.

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Appendix

Appendix A:

Interview questions (for industry professionals):

1. What is your job title?
2. How long have you been working in the industry?
3. When the Covid-19 shut-down happened and live performances were cancelled, what was your initial responses?
4. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, how would you describe your financial situation in the year 2019?
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
5. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, how would you describe your financial situation after the closure of theaters and productions in 2020?
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
6. Did your management/production company find other ways to keep you financially compensated active during the shutdown, for example, virtual performances, outsourcing work/talent, etc.
7. If you were compensated for your work, do you believe that you were compensated fairly for the amount of work you provided?
8. If your company did have another option available, do you believe that it would allow you to be financially stable?
9. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being extremely unprepared, 10 being extremely prepared, how prepared were you financially following the closure of theaters and productions for the past year
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
10. If theater went entirely virtual in the future, do you believe that you would feel financially stable in your day-to-day life?
11. Is there anything additional that you would like to add or discuss?

Appendix B:**PACE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
PROPOSAL FORM****PACE IRB Code #****TITLE OF PROPOSAL:** Theater and Covid-19: Examining How the Pandemic Financially Affected Production Crew Members in the Theater Industry**TYPE OF PROPOSAL:** New proposal, not previously reviewed by Pace University IRB Continuation of previously approval proposal Modification of previously submitted proposal to Pace University IRBHas this proposal been or to be submitted to another Institutional Review Board? Yes No

If yes, give the name of the Institutional Review Board and attach letter requesting approval and/or approval letter.

PROJECTED STARTING DATE: *June 2021***PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:** *December 2021***SPONSOR/FUNDING SOURCE (If any):** *Pace University***FUNDING APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE (if applicable):** *n/a*

Note: Faculty, administrators and staff can serve as Principal Investigators. Undergraduate students cannot serve as a PI; the faculty advisor needs to serve in this capacity, but undergraduates can serve as co-investigators. Graduate students may serve as PI, but must have a faculty advisor.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Name: *Chris Ramos*

Title: *Clinical Associate Professor, Executive Director Arts and Entertainment Management*

Address: *Pace University, Lubin School of Business One Pace Plaza, Room W-467 New York, NY 10038*

Telephone Number: *(212) 618-6429*

E-mail Address: *cramos@pace.edu*

ADDITIONAL CO-INVESTIGATOR(S) (if applicable)

Name(s) and Title(s) *Abigail Jasak*

FACULTY ADVISOR(S) (if applicable) *required for undergraduate and graduate applications

Name(s) and Title(s) *Chris Ramos, Clinical Associate Professor, Executive Director Arts and Entertainment Management*

DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL: *Lubin School of Business*

Does the proposal involve human subjects who are:

- minors (under age 18);
- over 70;
- prisoners or others involuntarily institutionalized;
- developmentally disabled;
- physically ill;
- adults lacking decisional impairment during the research;
- pregnant women;
- fetuses;
- nursing women.
- none of the above

Does the proposal involve exposure to radioactive material? Yes No

Does the proposal involve use of recombinant genetic material? Yes No

Has the proposal has been submitted for funding? Yes No

If Yes, submitted for:

- External funding
- Internal (Pace University) funding.

Will the proposal be submitted for funding? Yes No

If Yes, submitted for:

- External funding
- Internal (Pace

University) funding.

Are you conducting this work as part of an outside/independent consulting arrangement?

Yes No

If Yes, please contact the Associate Provost for Sponsored Research before preparing and submitting this application.

The Study is submitted for the following review:

Yes No Exempt review – Participants are subjected to minimal risk and the research fits one of the 6 federally designated exempt review categories, e.g., research involving normal educational settings & practices, observation of public behavior, analysis of publicly available data sets; see [46.101\(b\)](#) 1-6 for a full description.

Yes No Expedited review – Participants are subjected to minimal risk and the study only involves procedures in one or more of the [9 federally designated expedited review categories](#). Expedited studies can involve collection of biological specimens or voice, video, digital or image recordings, utilize noninvasive procedures, and research on individual or group characteristics or behavior.

Yes No Full board review – Full board review is required for research that is greater than minimal risk and/or does not qualified by exempt or expedited review (for example, identification of the subjects and/or their responses could reasonably place them at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects in some way).

Please see the [IRB section](#) on the Office of Sponsored Research website for a description of these categories.

The investigator should provide thorough summary statements addressing the following points of information. Incomplete information may result in delay of the review and approval process.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: Briefly describe the purpose of the research study.

The purpose of the study is to assess how Covid-19 has financially effected production crew members of the Broadway and Theatrical community.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS (SUBJECTS): Describe the characteristics of the participants, such as number, age range, sex, ethnic background, and health status. Justify the inclusion or exclusion of any special classes of research participants such as reproductively active men or women, nursing women, fetuses, children, physically or mentally disabled individuals, those with certain health conditions, and adults lacking decisional capacity.

Adult men and women who work in the theatrical industry as a member of a production crew, of any ethnic background or health status.

If applicable, describe how the proposal complies with the NIH Guidelines on the inclusion of women and minorities as subjects in clinical research (i.e., provide for appropriate recruitment and retention of subjects of both genders and diverse racial and ethnic groups). (Refer to https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/women_min/women_min.htm for further information.)

n/a

If applicable, does the design of your study comply with FDA Guidelines for the Study and Evaluation of Gender Differences in the Clinical Evaluation of Drugs (i.e., will produce data on any gender differences in the pharmacokinetics and/or pharmacodynamics of the drug studied, and ensures adequate numbers of subjects of both genders to allow for detection of clinically significant gender-related differences in drug response)? (Refer to <http://www.fda.gov/RegulatoryInformation/Guidances/ucm126552.htm> for further information.)

n/a

3. METHOD OF PARTICIPANT (SUBJECT) SELECTION: Describe the method to be used to identify, recruit, and randomize (if appropriate) participants. Please upload copies of printed recruitment material and/or transcript of oral request for participation.

Abigail Jasak (Co-Investigator) plans to conduct STRUCTURED interviews and surveys with industry professionals (mainly Abigail's colleagues and colleagues' connections) in the theater industry. Please note, that no video or audio recordings will be taken during the interview process, in order to ensure maximum anonymity.

Interview questions (for industry professionals):

1. *What is your job title?*
2. *How long have you been working in the industry?*
3. *When the Covid-19 shut-down happened and live performances were cancelled, what was your initial responses?*
4. *On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, how would you describe your financial situation in the year 2019?*
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
5. *On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, how would you describe your financial situation after the closure of theaters and productions in 2020?*
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
6. *Did your management/production company find other ways to keep you financially compensated active during the shutdown, for example, virtual performances, outsourcing work/talent, etc.*
7. *If you were compensated for your work, do you believe that you were compensated fairly for the amount of work you provided?*
8. *If your company did have another option available, do you believe that it would allow you to be financially stable?*
9. *On a scale of 1-10, 1 being extremely unprepared, 10 being extremely prepared, how prepared were you financially following the closure of theaters and productions for the past year 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10*
10. *If theater went entirely virtual in the future, do you believe that you would feel financially stable in your day-to-day life?*
11. *Is there anything additional that you would like to add or discuss?*

5. RISK TO THE SUBJECT: Describe all potential risks to subjects including physical, psychological, social, legal, or other. Assess the probability, severity, potential duration, and reversibility of each risk. Describe the procedures utilized to prevent and/or minimize any actual and/or potential risk.

There is not much risk to this research as it is only being conducted through interviews and surveys. People might not want to share how the pandemic is affecting them, discuss their financial situations, or they just may not want to share their information (name, age, occupation, etc.) However, these do not seem very probable. To minimize potential risk, the participants will not be required to answer any questions that they may feel uncomfortable with. Please note that the names of the interviewees will not be mention on the final research paper.

6. BENEFITS: Describe any potential benefits to the subject as well as benefits that may accrue to society in general as a result of the study.

Participants and society at large will benefit from this research because it will help show how the industry can grow through the hardships of the pandemic and remain financially sustainable for individuals working within industry.

7. RISK-BENEFIT ANALYSIS: Explain why the risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits to either the subject or society.

As previously stated, the risks are minimal and very unlikely. Therefore, the benefits largely outweigh the risks.

8. INFORMATION INTENTIONALLY WITHHELD (DECEPTION): Yes No

If yes, describe any information intentionally withheld from subjects and justify this non-disclosure. Explain circumstances and personnel proposed for post-participation debriefing of and disclosure to subjects, if appropriate.

n/a

9. INFORMED CONSENT: Describe how informed consent will be sought, the approach of individuals seeking consent, the method of documenting consent, and the members of the study team who will be obtaining informed consent. Consent form(s) must be uploaded with the proposal. If consent is implicit, describe the manner in which consent is obtained.

Consent will be obtained through a consent form describing the project and what it entails for participants. The introduction will be at the top of the survey and the form will be sent in the emails to set up individual interviews.

The introduction is as follows:

Interview: My name is Abigail Jasak and I am a senior Arts and Entertainment Management major at Pace University. I am conducting my senior thesis project and the topic is "Theater and Covid-19: Examining How the Pandemic Financially Affected Individuals in the Theater Industry." I am reaching out to you for participation in a structured interview to share your personal experience with the financial effects of Covid-19 on the theater industry. No names, personal information, or video/audio recordings will be kept, in order to ensure maximum possible anonymity. None of the information you give will be used for anything other than this project, and will only be seen by me and the Pforzheimer Honors College staff.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY: Describe how confidentiality of data and privacy of subjects will be protected and maintained. Will it be possible to associate specific information in records with specific participants on the basis of name, position, or other identifying information? Include procedure for coding, storage, access to data, and destruction of data at the end of the study.

Abigail plans to do a structured interview and survey where no names will be mentioned in the final research paper. The only person with access to the data will be the co-investigator (Abigail Jasak and the principal investigator/faculty advisor (Chris Ramos). To identify the participants a specific code will be assigned to their names but the participants will NOT be mentioned in the final writeup of the research. No names, personal information, or video/audio recordings will be kept, in order to ensure maximum possible anonymity.

11. ANALYSIS OF DATA: Describe the analysis of data, including statistical procedures, if appropriate.

I will convert my findings to qualitative and quantitative data to analyze and compare survey and interview answers in order to examine the financial effects that the closure of theater had on the individual.

12. DRUGS USED IN STUDY: For each drug, describe the method and route of administration prescription or dosage, and potential adverse effects, including risks of interaction with other over-the-counter medications.

n/a

13. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF INVESTIGATORS AND ANY PERSONNEL WHO WILL INTERACT WITH SUBJECTS: Include information regarding the preparation of personnel to conduct the research, e.g., training, course-work, tutorials, prior research, Human Subject Training, etc.

The principal investigator (Chris Ramos) has more than 20 years of experience in the performing arts industry as a performer, choreographer, business manager, and artistic director; while the co-investigator (Abigail Jasak) has taken many arts and entertainment management and financial courses.

14. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS/SPONSORS: List all institutions collaborating in the study. Describe the terms of such collaboration, if applicable. Attach approval letters on institutional letterhead from appropriate authorized officials indicating support of the collaboration.

n/a

Appendix C:**Pace University, New York
CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECT****Theater and Covid-19: Examining How the Pandemic Financially Affected
Production Crew Members in the Theater Industry****RESEARCH TEAM****Principal Investigator**

Abigail Jasak - Senior Arts and Entertainment Management Student
Pace University - Lubin School of Business
585-953-2821 – aj75156n@pace.edu

Sponsoring Principal Investigator or Faculty Advisor

Chris Ramos - Clinical Associate Professor, Executive Director Arts and Entertainment
Management
Arts and Entertainment Management - Lubin School of Business
(212) 618-6429 - cramos@pace.edu

You are invited to participate in a research study through the online survey platform, Qualtrics. Participation is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand. One of the researchers listed within this Consent Form will be available to answer your questions.

Introduction and Purpose

My name is Abigail Jasak. I am an undergraduate student at Pace University working with my faculty advisor, Professor Chris Ramos, in the Arts and Entertainment Department of the Lubin School of Business. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study, which concerns the financial effects on an individual working within the theater industry, after the Covid-19 pandemic closed the industry, and analyze how to ensure financial stability for these individuals for the future.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in my research, I will ask you to participate in a structured interview or brief survey. The interview and brief survey will involve questions about your personal experience as an individual working in theater during the Covid-19 pandemic and should take about no longer than 30 minutes to complete.

Benefits

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. It is hoped that the research will provide insight as to how individuals and companies can use the effects of Coronavirus to continue to adapt in the ways most wanted by individuals working within the theater industry.

Risks/Discomforts

If some of the research questions may make you uncomfortable or upset, you are free to decline to answer any questions you don't wish to, or to stop participating at any time. As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, we are taking precautions to minimize this risk.

Confidentiality

Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used unless you give explicit permission for this.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, we will make sure only researchers listed on this document will have access to the data. When the research is completed, I may save the tapes and notes for use in future research done by myself or others. I will retain these records for up to a year after the study is over. The same measures described above will be taken to protect confidentiality of this study data.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Rights

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. If you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time by closing the browser window or the program to withdraw from the study. Whether or not you choose to participate, to answer any particular question, or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 585-953-2821 or aj75156n@pace.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights or treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact an IRB staff member within the Office of Research by phone at (212) 346-1689, or by e-mail at paceirb@pace.edu.

_____ Yes, I agree to allow the research team to audio record my interview.

_____ No, I do not agree to allow the research team to audio record my interview.

You should not "Accept" this consent form until all of your questions about this study have been answered by a member of the research team listed at the top of this form. **Participation in this study is voluntary.** You may refuse to participate in this study or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty.

If you agree to take part in the research, please print a copy of this page to keep for future reference, then click on the “Accept” button below. Clicking on the “Agree” button indicates that:

- You are 18 years old or older;
- You have read the above information;
- You voluntarily agree to participate.

Agree

Disagree