

Covid – 19 Pandemic and Its Influence on The Level of Preparedness of Graduating Students for The Upcoming Licensure Examination

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ABSTRACT

Preparedness plays an essential role in taking the licensure examination, but due to the implications of the Covid -19 pandemic on the general population, many are concerned about its influence on the student's level of preparedness for their upcoming licensure examination. This study investigated whether the Covid -19 pandemic and the students' demographic profile influence their financial, mental, academic, and learning environment preparedness. An online survey questionnaire was distributed to the graduating students enrolled in Partido State University board courses during 2022-2023. The collected data was analyzed using ordinal logistic regression. The responses showed that financial, learning environment, mental, and academic preparedness received weighted means of 2.67, 3.46, 2.99, and 2.42, respectively.

Meanwhile, the Covid -19 influence received an overall weighted mean of 5.01. These findings indicate that most students believe their financial, mental, and academic preparedness levels are low, while they perceive their environmental preparedness level as high. Despite this, most believe that the Covid - 19 pandemic was somewhat influential and beneficial to their preparedness. Lastly, the ordinal regression model revealed that only the age of the students is statistically significant at 10%. In contrast, the rest of the variables regarding the socio-demographic profile of the students and the perceived Covid -19 influence are not significant at all levels.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC) is a government organization in the Philippines tasked to administer and regulate the licensing processes for various fields and

professions. In essence, the Professional Regulatory Commission protects the public's safety and interests by ensuring that these aspiring professionals meet the required technical knowledge and skills to practice their professions competently.

As a result, licensure examinations are put in place to determine whether or not an individual possesses the necessary abilities, skills, and knowledge critical to their respective professions [1]. Furthermore, licensure examinations ensure that the graduate examinees produced by HEIs are high quality and more than capable once they join the country's workforce [2].

Given the importance of licensure examinations to advancing one's career path, one might wonder why many examinees fail. Many researchers, including Butcon et al. [3] and Fernan and Jake [4], have theorized that one of the main culprits why many examinees fail the examination is the lack of preparation. Furthermore, according to Tan [5], poor performance on the licensure examination may indicate that the examinees were not fully prepared for the examination.

To make matters more difficult for these future examinees, in recent years, the world has been experiencing the Corona virus or COVID-19, a highly infectious disease that has negatively impacted the lives of everyone around the globe, most notably the education system [6]. In addition, for most students, the disruptions in education systems have subjected them to an arguably more disadvantageous learning condition [7].

According to the studies of Essadek and Rabeyron [8], Plakhotnik et al. [9], Nadeak et al. [10], and others, the effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic has extended beyond the education systems [11]–[14], stating that the Pandemic has negatively affected the general population's way of life in a variety of ways, particularly their financial, environmental, and mental health. As a result, numerous scholars, most notably Cabatbat [15], have hypothesized the possible ramifications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the level of preparedness of graduating students for their licensure examinations.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought about unprecedented changes in how students are expected to prepare for their upcoming licensure examinations. Given their new circumstances, it is natural to wonder how well-prepared graduating students are for these critical examinations. However, to date, there has been a dearth of research exploring this specific question. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the level of preparedness of graduating students in four key areas: financial, mental, academic, and environmental. This study hopes to gain valuable insights into students' current conditions and develop interventions to support them in their licensure examination preparations by examining these factors.

To achieve the objective of this study, the researchers utilized the socio-demographic profile and perceptions of graduating students from Partido State University regarding their level of preparedness in four key areas: financial, mental, academic, and environmental. The study also explored the students' perceptions of the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on these areas.

2. METHOD

This study used a descriptive and causal research design. It was conducted in 2022 using an online survey questionnaire to determine the level of preparedness of graduating students for the upcoming licensure examination and assess the impact of COVID-19 on the preparedness of the graduating students.

Additionally, the respondents of this study are composed of graduating students of the academic year 2022–2023 from accountancy, geology, civil engineering, sanitary engineering, elementary education, secondary education, criminology, nutrition and dietetics, and fisheries courses offered at the three campuses of Partido State University, namely Goa, Sagñay, and Lagonoy using what is known as stratified proportional sampling. This method is thought to allow researchers to generate a sample population that best represents the total population for this study, ensuring that each subgroup of interest is represented.

Determining sample size using Cochran’s formula:

$$No = \frac{Z^2(p*q)}{e^2} \tag{1}$$

$$N = \frac{No}{1 + \frac{(No-1)}{n}} \tag{2}$$

Where: e = Desired level of precision; p = Proportion of the population; q = 1 – p; and n = Total population

Table 1. Distribution of Sample

Course	F	Excluded	Actual	Percentage (%)
Accountancy	18	0	18	19
Criminology	25	11	14	14
Civil Engineering	17	2	15	15
Elementary Education	11	5	6	6
Fisheries	9	1	8	8
Geology	16	3	13	13
Nutritionist and dieticians	5	4	1	1
Sanitary Engineering	11	1	10	10
Secondary Education	15	3	12	12
Total	127	30	97	100

Note: Those who did not take the survey seriously and answered incorrectly are excluded.

The researchers utilized a Likert Scale, with each point and range assigned a verbal interpretation, such as the following;

Table 2. 5 – point Likert scale

Range	Verbal Interpretation	
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Extremely prepared
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	Very prepared
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Moderately prepared
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Somewhat prepared
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Not prepared at all

Table 3. 7 – point Likert scale

Range	Verbal Interpretation
6.11 – 7.00	Very Favorably
5.26 – 6.10	Favorably
4.41 – 5.25	Somewhat Favorably
3.56 – 4.40	Neither Favorably nor Unfavorably
2.71 – 3.55	Somewhat Unfavorably
1.86 – 2.70	Unfavorably
1.00 - 1.85	Very Unfavorably

Ordinal Regression Model

The researchers have devised two (2) Ordinal Logistic models:

1. Relationship between the overall preparedness of the graduating students and their socio-demographic profile

$$OverPrep = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Age + \beta_2 Gend + \beta_3 Relg + \beta_4 FamS + \beta_5 FamT + \beta_6 ParS + \beta_7 BirthO + \beta_8 HouseInc + \beta_9 Loc + \beta_{10} Disc + \varepsilon$$

Where:

OverPrep = overall preparedness of the graduating students as the dependent variable

Age = age

Gend = gender

Relg = religion

FamS = family size

FamT = family type

ParS = parents' status

BirthO = Birth Order

HouseInc = Household Income

Loc = Location, and

Disc = distance of home as independent variables.

2. Relationship between the overall all preparedness of the graduating students and the influence of Covid-19

$$OverPrep = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CovFin + \beta_2 CovEnv + \beta_3 CovMent + \beta_4 CovAcd + \varepsilon$$

Where:

OverPrep = overall preparedness of the graduating students as the dependent variable

CovFin = perceived influence of Covid – 19 on financial

CovEnv = perceived influence of Covid – 19 on the learning environment

CovMent = perceived influence of Covid - 19 on mental, and

CovAcd = perceived influence of Covid-19 on academics of the graduating students as independent variables.

Table 4. Variable descriptions and sources

	Variables	Var	Description
Dependent Variables	Overall Level of Preparedness	OverPrep	Scale of 1 – 5 preparedness in terms of financial, mental, academic, and mental for the upcoming licensure examination
	Influence of Covid on Financial	CovFin	Scale from 1 – 7 influence of Covid-19 on financial preparedness.
	Influence of Covid on Environment	CovEnv	Scale from 1 – 7 influence of Covid-19 on environmental preparedness.
	Influence of Covid on Mental	CovMent	Scale from 1 – 7 influence of Covid-19 on mental preparedness.
	Influence of Covid on Academic	CovAcad	Scale from 1 – 7 influence of Covid-19 on academic preparedness.
	Age	Age	Age of the respondents
	Gender	Gend	0 = Female 1 = Male 2 = LGBTQIA+
	Religion	Relg	1 – Roman Catholic 0 – Other Religion
	Family Size	FamS	Number of family members of the respondents
	Family Type	FamT	1 – Nuclear family 0 – Other family type
Independent Variables	Parent status	ParS	1 = Living together 0 = Separated
	Birth Order	BirthO	1 = First born 2 = Middle born 3 = Last born
	Household Income	HouseInc	Monthly Income of the respondents in Php
	Location	Loc	1 = Rural 0 = Urban
	Distance	Disc	The actual distance of the home of the respondents from PSU in km

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Students

Frequency distribution of age, gender, and religion of the respondents

Table 5 shows the age, gender, and religion of the graduating students who participated in the survey questionnaire.

Of the 97 total respondents, 48 (50%) were aged 19 to 21 years old, 56 (58%) were female, and a significant majority of 77 (79%) identified as Roman Catholic. Only 3 (3%) were aged 25 to 27 years old, 2 (2%) identified as LGBTQIA+, and 20 (21%) had a religion other than Roman Catholic.

Upon analysis, it can be inferred that most of the graduating students from Partido State University fall within the age range of 19 to 21 years old, with a higher percentage of female students than males. Additionally, most of these students identify as Roman Catholics.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of age, gender, and religion of the respondents

Socio-Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
A. Age			
19 – 21 years old	48	50	1
22 – 24 years old	46	47	2
25 – 27 years old	3	3	3
Total	97	100	
B. Gender			
Male	39	40	2
Female	56	58	1
LGBTQIA+	2	2	3
Total	97	100	
C. Religion			
Atheist	1	1	5
Roman Catholic	77	79	1
Baptist	3	3	3
Aglipay	3	3	3
Born Again	8	8	2
I.F.I.	2	2	4
UCCP	1	1	5
Iglesia ni Cristo	1	1	5
Adventist	1	1	5
Total	97	100	

Frequency distribution of family size, family type, parents' marital status, birth order, and household income of the respondents

Table 6 presents the frequency count and corresponding percentage of various family-related variables, including family size, family type, parents' marital status, birth order, and household income, among graduating students who participated in the survey questionnaire.

The data indicates that most students come from families with 4 to 6 members, accounting for 44% (43 out of 97) of the total respondents. Additionally, 65% (63 out of 97) of the students reported coming from a nuclear family type, and 82% (80 out of 97) indicated their parents were still living together. Furthermore, 42% (41 out of 97) of the respondents reported being middle-born, and most had a monthly household income of less than Php 9,520 to 19,040. In contrast, only 8% (8 out of 97) of the respondents came from families with ten or more members, and 3% (3 out of 97) had step-family arrangements. Furthermore, 18% (17 out of 97) reported having separated parents, and none (0 out of 97) of the respondents had a monthly household income of Php 114,240 and above.

Table 6. Frequency distribution of family size, family type, parents' marital status, birth order, and household income of the respondents

Socio-Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
D. Family Size			
1 – 3 Family members	11	11	3
4 – 6 Family members	43	44	1
7 – 9 Family members	35	36	2
10+ Family members	8	8	4
Total	97	100	

Socio-Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
E. Family Type			
Nuclear Family	63	65	1
Extended Family	14	14	3
Step-family	3	3	4
Single Parent Family	15	15	2
Grand Parent Family	2	2	5
Total	97	100	
F. Parents' Marriage Status			
Living together	80	82	1
Separated	17	18	2
Total	97	100	
G. Birth Order			
First Born	30	31	2
Middle Born	41	42	1
Last Born	26	27	3
Total	97	100	
H. Household Income			
Less than Php 9,520	32	33	1
Between Php 9,520 to Php 19,040	32	33	1
Between Php 19,040 to 38,080	26	27	2
Between Php 38,080 to 66,640	3	3	4
Between Php 66,640 to 114,240	4	4	3
Between Php 114,240 to 190,400	0	0	5
At least 190,400	0	0	5
Total	97	100	

Frequency distribution of location and estimated distance of PSU from the home of the respondents

Table 7 presents the frequency distribution and percentage of home-related variables, such as the location and estimated distance of the graduating students' homes who participated in the survey questionnaire.

The data shows that most respondents, comprising 85 (88%) out of the 97 students, reside in rural areas. Additionally, a significant portion of the respondents, with a frequency count of 58 (60%) out of the 97 students, live within a 1 to 10 km radius of Partido State University.

Conversely, a small number of the respondents, only 12 (12%) out of 97, live in urban areas. Moreover, only 3 (3%) of the 97 respondents live farther away from the university, precisely 21 to 30 km.

Table 7. Frequency distribution of location and estimated distance of PSU

Socio-Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
I. Location			
Rural	85	88	1
Urban	12	12	2
Total	97	100	
J. Estimated Distance			
Less than 1km	6	6	3
1 – 10 km	58	60	1
11 – 20 km	15	15	2
21 – 30 km	3	3	4
31 km and above	15	15	2
Total	97	100	

3.2. Perceived Preparedness of Graduating Students In Terms of Financial, Mental, Environmental, and Academic

Financial Preparedness

Table 8 below reflects the perception of the graduating students concerning their financial preparedness. The scale used in the survey ranges from 1.00 to 5.00, with 4.21 – 5.0 indicating high financial preparedness and a weighted mean of 1.00 - 1.80 indicating low financial preparedness.

According to the table below, most of the 97 graduating students answered "neutral or undecided" to both statements about their ability to afford review materials and other costs associated with the licensure examination, resulting in a weighted mean of 2.76 and 2.67, respectively. At the same time, the majority disagreed with the statement about their ability to afford top-of-the-line review centers, resulting in a weighted mean of 2.59. The overall financial preparedness of the graduating students of Partido State University is neutral or undecided, with a weighted mean of 2.67.

This suggests that the majority of graduating students are not financially prepared enough for the licensure examination, which is evident from their responses which stated that they lack the financial resources to afford top-notch review centers and are unsure of their capacity to afford review materials and other costs associated with taking the licensure examination.

This may cause concern for these graduating students because, as stated in the study of Herrero [16], having adequate financial resources, lesser financial stress, or being financially prepared helps improve performance in the licensure examination. Though in the study of Bronola et al. [17], finances do not seem to affect the examinees' performance in the licensure.

Table 8. Perception of the graduating students concerning their financial preparedness

Statements	WM	Verbal Interpretations
1. Ability to afford review materials.	2.76	Neutral/Undecided
2. Ability to afford top-of-the-line review centers.	2.59	Disagree
3. Ability to afford other costs/expenses associated with the licensure examinations.	2.67	Neutral/Undecided
Grand Mean	2.67	Neutral/Undecided

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 (*Strongly Agree*), 3.41 – 4.20 (*Agree*), 2.61 – 3.40 (*Neutral/Undecided*), 1.81 – 2.60 (*Disagree*), 1.00 – 1.80 (*Strongly Disagree*)

Mental Preparedness

Table 9 below displays the graduating students' perceptions regarding their mental preparedness for the upcoming licensure examination. The survey used a scale ranging from 1.00 to 5.00, with a mean of 4.21-5.00 indicating high mental preparedness and 1.00-1.80 indicating poor mental preparedness.

The findings show that the majority of the graduating students responded "neutral" to all of the statements, which include feeling optimistic with a weighted mean of 2.80, feeling inspired with a weighted mean of 3.13, feeling enthusiastic with a weighted mean

of 2.91, feeling motivated with a weighted mean of 3.30, feeling confident with a weighted mean of 2.94, and feeling composed with a weighted mean of 2.87. The overall weighted mean of these responses indicates a neutral mental preparedness level of 2.99.

This implies that many of the graduating students at Partido State University have a neutral outlook regarding the licensure examination. They do not have a particularly positive or negative emotional state but instead feel indifferent. It is worth noting that this may indicate a low level of mental preparedness, as it is contrary to the findings of Lemmens [18], which state that there is a direct and positive relationship between an individual's preparedness level and performance. As such, the mental and emotional preparedness, or lack thereof, of the graduating students of Partido State University may negatively affect their performance in their licensure examination.

Table 9. Perceptions of the graduating students regarding their mental preparedness

Statements	WM	Verbal Interpretations
1. As a potential exam taker, I feel optimistic for the upcoming licensure examination.	2.80	Neutral
2. I am inspired by my own family, friends, or other people to participate in the upcoming licensure examination.	3.13	Neutral
3. I'm enthusiastic about the upcoming licensure examination.	2.91	Neutral
4. I use my personal goals and aspirations as motivation to partake in the upcoming licensure examination.	3.30	Neutral
5. I feel confident that I will pass the licensure examination.	2.94	Neutral
6. I feel composed despite knowing that I'll participate in the upcoming licensure examination.	2.87	Neutral
Grand Mean	2.99	Neutral

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 (*Strongly Agree*), 3.41 – 4.20 (*Agree*), 2.61 – 3.40 (*Neutral*), 1.81 – 2.60 (*Disagree*), 1.00 – 1.80 (*Strongly Disagree*)

Environmental Preparedness

Table 10 below shows the graduating students perceived environmental preparedness for the upcoming licensure examination. The survey used a scale ranging from 1.00 to 5.00, with a mean of 4.21-5.00 indicating high environmental preparedness and a weighted mean of 1.00-1.80 indicating poor environmental preparedness.

As shown in the table below, the majority of graduating students agreed to the statements regarding them choosing review centers with high board passers (3.49 weighted mean), numerous competent and credible reviewers (3.53 weighted mean), a positive reputation (3.58 weighted mean), tremendous and technologically advanced facilities or classrooms (3.44 weighted mean), and an ideal learning environment (3.59 weighted mean). On the other hand, they have a neutral response regarding review centers being one of the best in the country (3.30 weighted mean) and review centers being well-known (3.32 weighted mean).

The results indicate that most students actively seek and will enroll in an ideal review center to gain a competitive advantage for the upcoming licensure examination. This suggests that these graduating students are well-prepared regarding their environment for the licensure examination. These findings are consistent with a study by Villarmia [19], which found that students who enroll in an ideal review center tend to feel more prepared for the licensure examination.

Table 10. The graduating students perceived environmental preparedness

Statements	WM	Verbal Interpretations
1. The review center that I'm looking for must have a high number of board passers.	3.49	Agree
2. The review center that I'm looking for must have numerous competent and credible reviewers.	3.53	Agree
3. The review center I'm looking for must have a positive reputation amongst general public.	3.58	Agree
4. The review center that I'm looking for must have huge and technologically advanced facilities and classrooms.	3.44	Agree
5. The review center that I'm looking for must be well known across the country.	3.32	Neutral
6. The review center that I'm looking for must be perceived by the general public to be the best in the country.	3.30	Neutral
7. The review center that I'm looking for must have the ideal learning environment.	3.59	Agree
Grand Mean	3.46	Agree

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 (*Strongly Agree*), 3.41 – 4.20 (*Agree*), 2.61 – 3.40 (*Neutral*), 1.81 – 2.60 (*Disagree*), 1.00 – 1.80 (*Strongly Disagree*)

Academic Preparedness

Table 11 below is about the graduating students' perceived level of academic preparedness in the subjects covered in their respective licensure examinations before attending a review center and undergoing extensive review and preparation. The survey used a scale ranging from 1.00 to 5.00, with a mean of 4.21-5.00 indicating high academic preparedness and a weighted mean of 1.00-1.80 indicating poor academic preparedness.

According to the table below, graduating accountancy, civil engineering, elementary education, fisheries, dietetics, and secondary education students are "somewhat prepared" in the subjects covered in their licensure examination, with an overall weighted mean of 1.87, 2.20, 2.09, 2.60, 2.33, and 2.33, respectively, whereas graduating criminology, geology, and sanitary engineering students are "moderately prepared" with an overall weighted mean of 2.93, 2.69, and 2.75, respectively. Partido State University's students' academic preparedness across its nine board programs is "somewhat prepared," with an overall weighted mean of 2.42.

Based on the data, students in accountancy, civil engineering, elementary education, fisheries, dietetics, and secondary education programs may have inadequate academic preparedness for their upcoming licensure examinations. In contrast, criminology, geology, and sanitary engineering program students seem to have sufficient academic preparedness for their upcoming licensure examinations.

This finding may raise concerns for accountancy, civil engineering, elementary education, fisheries, dietetics, and secondary education programs. As highlighted in the studies by Kane [1], Tan [5], Buddin and Zamarro [20], and Ong [21], the licensure examination serves as a measure of a candidate's knowledge and proficiency in all relevant areas of their profession, ensuring that they are capable of practicing competently once they enter the workforce. Thus, having poor academic preparedness may increase the likelihood of students in these programs failing their licensure examination.

Table 11. The graduating students' perceived level of academic preparedness

Course/Subject	WM	Verbal Interpretation
Accountancy		
Financial Accounting and Reporting	2.06	Somewhat prepared
Advanced Financial Accounting and Reporting	1.67	Not prepared at all
Auditing	1.89	Somewhat prepared
Taxation	1.82	Somewhat prepared
Regulatory Framework for Business Transactions	1.89	Somewhat prepared
Management Advisory Service	1.89	Somewhat prepared
	1.87	Somewhat prepared
Criminology		
Criminal Law, Jurisprudence, and Procedure	2.93	Moderately prepared
Law Enforcement Administration	2.93	Moderately prepared
Crime Detection and Investigation	3.00	Moderately prepared
Forensic Science	2.79	Moderately prepared
Correctional Administration	3.00	Moderately prepared
Criminology	2.93	Moderately prepared
	2.93	Moderately prepared
Civil Engineering		
Applied Mathematics, Surveying, Principles of transportation and highway engineering, Construction Management, and Methods	2.27	Somewhat prepared
Hydraulics and Principles of Geotechnical engineering	2.27	Somewhat prepared
Principles of structural analysis and design	2.07	Somewhat prepared
	2.20	Somewhat prepared
Elementary Education		
General Education	2.00	Somewhat prepared
Professional Education	2.17	Somewhat prepared
	2.09	Somewhat prepared
Fisheries		
Aquaculture	2.88	Moderately prepared
Capture Fisheries	2.50	Somewhat prepared
Aquatic Resources and Ecology	2.63	Moderately prepared
Postharvest Fisheries	2.38	Somewhat prepared
	2.60	Somewhat prepared
Geology		
General Geology	2.85	Moderately prepared
Petrology and Mineralogy	2.77	Moderately prepared
Applied Geology	2.46	Somewhat prepared
	2.69	Moderately prepared

Course/Subject	WM	Verbal Interpretation
Nutritionist and Dieticians		
Nutritional Biochemistry and Clinical Dietetics	2.00	Somewhat prepared
Community and Public Health	2.00	Somewhat prepared
Foods and Food Service Systems	3.00	Moderately prepared
	2.33	Somewhat prepared
Sanitary Engineering		
Environmental engineering	2.90	Moderately prepared
Public health engineering	3.00	Moderately prepared
Sanitary science as applied to buildings	2.80	Moderately prepared
Civil engineering	2.20	Somewhat prepared
Wastewater engineering	2.80	Moderately prepared
Water supply engineering	2.80	Moderately prepared
	2.75	Moderately prepared
Secondary Education		
General Education	2.33	Somewhat prepared
Professional Education	2.33	Somewhat prepared
Field of Specialization	2.33	Somewhat prepared
	2.33	Somewhat prepared
Grand Mean	2.42	Somewhat prepared

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 (*Extremely prepared*), 3.41 – 4.20 (*Very prepared*), 2.61 – 3.40 (*Moderately prepared*), 1.81 – 2.60 (*Somewhat prepared*), 1.00 – 1.80 (*Not prepared at all*)

3.3. Perceived Influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Table 12 below presents graduating students' perceptions of how the Covid-19 Pandemic affected their financial, mental, academic, and environmental preparedness for their upcoming licensure examination. The survey used a scale of 1 to 7, where one indicates that the Pandemic had a very unfavorable impact, and 7 indicates a very favorable impact.

Most students perceived the Pandemic as somewhat favorable to their preparedness, with weighted means of 4.79 for financial preparedness, 4.98 for mental preparedness, 5.03 for environmental preparedness, and 5.22 for academic preparedness. These results are in contrast to the findings of some researchers, such as Tadesse and Muluye [6], Pokhrel and Chhetri [7], Plakhotnik et al. [9], Nadeak et al. [10], García-Morales [12], and Lapitan [13], who claim that the Covid-19 Pandemic had adverse effects, not only on the general population but also on students.

Table 12. The perceptions of graduating students on how the Covid-19 Pandemic affected their financial, mental, academic, and environmental preparedness

Preparedness	WM	Verbal Interpretations
Financial	4.79	Somewhat Favorably
Mental	4.98	Somewhat Favorably
Environment	5.03	Somewhat Favorably
Academic	5.22	Somewhat Favorably
Grand Mean	5.01	Somewhat Favorably

Legend: 6.11 – 7.00 (*Very favorably*), 5.26 – 6.10 (*Favorably*), 4.41 – 5.25 (*Somewhat favorably*), 3.56 – 4.40 (*Neither favorably nor unfavorably*), 2.71 – 3.55 (*Somewhat unfavorably*), 1.86 – 2.70 (*Unfavorably*), 1.00 - 1.85 (*Very unfavorably*)

3.4. Relationship between the overall level of preparedness of the graduating students and their socio-demographic profile

Table 13 below illustrates the relationship between the socio-demographic profile of graduating students and their overall preparedness for the upcoming licensure examination.

The results indicate that all of the independent variables, including gender, religion, family size, family type, parent status, birth order, household income, location, and estimated distance, obtained a P value greater than 5% or 10%, indicating that there is no statistically significant relationship between these demographic variables and the overall perceived level of preparedness among respondents. In other words, the relationship between students' overall level of preparedness and their demographic variables, if any, is likely due to chance.

However, the age of the students is a statistically significant demographic variable at 10%. This suggests that as students get older, they are less likely to be prepared regarding financial, mental, academic, and environmental factors for their upcoming licensure examination. These findings contradict the claims of Amankwaa [22], whose study suggested that students' socio-demographic profile had no impact on their licensure examination preparation or performance.

Table 13. Relationship between the socio-demographic profile of graduating students and their overall level of preparedness

Overall Level of Preparedness	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	P>z	[95% Conf. Interval]
Gender	-0.1338432	0.4019767	-0.33	0.739	-0.921703 0.654017
Age	-0.287123	0.1709737	-1.68	0.093	-0.6222252 0.047979
Religion	0.2372758	0.4827044	0.49	0.623	-0.7088074 1.183359
Family Size	0.0467448	0.0927569	0.5	0.614	-0.1350555 0.228545
Family Type	-0.5050532	0.5041982	-1	0.316	-1.493264 0.483157
Parent Status	0.3209387	0.6126886	0.52	0.600	-0.8799089 1.521786
Birth Order	0.1423772	0.2563394	0.56	0.579	-0.3600389 0.644793
House Income	-0.111079	0.2279195	-0.49	0.626	-0.5577929 0.335635
Location	-0.1909751	0.5563456	-0.34	0.731	-1.281392 0.899442
Est. Distance	-0.002875	0.0079773	-0.36	0.719	-0.0185102 0.01276

3.5. Relationship between the graduating students' overall preparedness level and Covid-19 Pandemic.

Table 14 below presents the relationship between the overall perceived preparedness of graduating students and their perception of how the Covid-19 Pandemic affected their level of preparedness.

The results show no statistically significant relationship between graduating students' perceived level of preparedness for the upcoming licensure examination and the perceived influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic, as evidenced by p-values greater than 5% or 10%. Therefore, any observed impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the level of preparedness of graduating students is most likely due to chance.

These findings contradict previous research conducted by Plakhotnik et al. [9], Akinkugbe et al. [23], and Agu et al. [24], which found a significant relationship between the COVID-19 Pandemic and students' level of licensure examination preparedness. Specifically, these studies suggest that the COVID-19 Pandemic impacts students' licensure examination preparedness in terms of mental, financial, academic, and learning environment. However, it is essential to note that these studies' sample size, methodology, and time frame may have differed from the current study, which could account for the conflicting results.

Table 14. Relationship between the overall perceived preparedness of graduating students and their perception of how the Covid-19 Pandemic affected their level of preparedness

Overall Level of Preparedness	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf. Interval]
Cov19Financial	0.093486	0.1488181	0.63	0.530	-0.1981921 0.385164
Cov19Mental	-0.0448007	0.2311439	-0.19	0.846	-0.4978345 0.408233
Cov19Environment	0.0802867	0.2031773	0.4	0.693	-0.3179335 0.478507
Cov19Academic	0.064534	0.1683448	0.38	0.701	-0.2654157 0.394484

4. CONCLUSION

Preparedness plays an essential role in the success of exam takers in their respective licensure examinations and, as such, needs to be given enough attention. Exam takers who were formerly students need to be adequately prepared in terms of financial, mental, environmental, and academic preparedness, which are obtained through rigorous preparations. However, according to the findings of this study, the majority of the students at Partido State University perceived their level of preparedness in terms of financial, mental, and academic aspects to be insufficient. On the other hand, they perceived their environmental preparedness as insufficient. Regardless, they also believed that the Covid-19 Pandemic positively impacted their preparedness for the upcoming licensure examination. Lastly, only the age demographic was statistically significant, while the other variables regarding the socio-demographic profile and Covid-19 were not statistically significant.

Any effects that may have been observed are most likely the result of chance. In light of the study's findings, the researchers recommend that, first, some financial assistance be provided to these students, at least enough to cover the costs of the licensure examinations and associated expenses such as review materials. While most students know the need for quality review centers and actively seek them, most lack the financial means to pay for them. Second, students must find it within themselves or with the help of others to have some form of positive emotion, such as motivation, confidence, inspiration, and the like, in anticipation of the licensure examination, as it is believed to have a direct and positive relationship with licensure examination results. Third, educational institutions and students must collaborate to enhance the latter's educational experience to the point where they are sufficiently knowledgeable in each subject in their respective fields. Given that most of the findings of this study are statistically insignificant except for age, further

extensive research exploring other variables not covered in this study regarding the influence of Covid-19 on the level of preparedness of graduating students for the upcoming licensure examination is needed.

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