How Much Do I Matter? A Study on Mattering among Distance Learners

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Abstract
The inception of distance learning in the Malaysian educational landscape began in the 1970's and ever since then the growth in distance learning kept increasing year by year. Despite the demand for distance learning due to the many benefits that it offers, there have been issues experienced by distance learners as well. Many studies have investigated the situation and relate them with university mattering. University mattering is an area of study that helps higher learning institutions understand on aspects that make learners feel that they matter. Hence, this study was conducted for the purpose of understanding distance learners' experience of mattering at their higher learning institution in the local setting. The objectives of this pilot study are twofold. Firstly, it is to investigate distance learners' perceptions of mattering with their faculty members and secondly, to investigate distance learners' perceptions of mattering with regards to their university's administration. Students coming from semester two onwards were selected as part of this study. Semi structured interviews were conducted via online, and data collected were presented based on the two objectives outlined in this study. Findings from the study revealed interesting outcomes which build as a platform for future studies on mattering among distance learners at higher learning institutions in the Malaysian educational setting.
Keywords: Mattering, Adult Learners, Distance Learners, Malaysian Higher Education Institution

Introduction
In today's borderless world, education is viewed as an essential tool that is indispensable. Many agree that education has become available for everyone and at any time as more and more universities are offering online distance learning courses without having learners attending physical classes. The World Bank (2021) highlighted that the demand for quality post-secondary education is ascending as it paves the way for employment, higher wages and financial stability. Since distance learning has provided flexibility in learning, a route to pursue a diploma or degree and open up places for adults to take up learning regardless of their daily responsibilities, hence, it offers them opportunities to be enrolled as distance learners who are also known as non- traditional learners. According to Chung et al. (2014)

non-traditional learners refer to those with socio-demographic characteristics that differ from traditional participants in higher education and they are also known as adult learners. Some of the common characteristics of adult learners may include, holding a job, having to juggle between family, and studies as well as carrying personal responsibilities. Due to their age and maturity, distance learners who are adult learners are always assumed and seen to be able to manage their multiple roles effectively (Bok, 2021). However, (Bok, 2021) pointed out that it is actually more on the contrary for some distance learners.

Issues Faced by Distance Learners
Distance learners face an overflowing of daily routines and responsibilities that require their attention, time, and money. They face challenges at the workplace, home and learning institution. In a study by Bok (2021) it was discovered that adult learners felt pressured in learning due to the multiple roles that they carry with them. Most of the time their learning will take a backseat when their responsibilities at the workplace or at home takes control. Some issues that these learners face include less interaction with class lecturers, tutors, or academic advisors at their faculties (Fojtik, 2018), the feeling of isolation from their peers, dropouts (Yilmaz & Karataş, 2022 & Stone; O 'Shea, 2019) which then led to incomplete degrees and others. Hence, it is pertinent for studies to be conducted in order to curb the issues mentioned and understand distance learners better (Bok, 2021; Croft et al., 2010; Fidalgo et al., 2020). With regards to the challenges and obstacles faced by distance learners a wide number of studies have been conducted on university mattering in the western higher education setting to understand distance learners better and find solutions to the many problems that they face. Many have related them with the Theory of Mattering established by (Rosenberg and McCullough, 1981; Burgos, 2020; Dandridge, 2018; Hart, 2017; Hayter, 2015; Israel, 2018). The Theory of Mattering consists of five dimensions, and they are attention, importance, reliance, ego- extension and appreciation. Attention is where a person receives attention from a person or people around him or her. Importance on the other hand, is where one is made to be felt important by a person or people surrounding him or her. Next, reliance is where a person is relied upon and ego-extension is where other people experience the same emotions as one such as the feeling of happiness, sadness, loss, and others. Lastly is the dimension of appreciation where one feels appreciated by a person or group of people.

Besides understanding the five dimensions under the Theory of Mattering, the two categories under the theory are individual mattering and societal mattering. Individual mattering is where a person feels that he or she is significant to an individual, such as spouse, partner a parent and others. Societal mattering on the other hand is where one feels that he or she is significant to a group of people. It could be to a learning institution, team, workplace and others and University mattering falls under societal mattering, where learners feel that they matter or significant to other people at the university. Other than that, they also feel valuable as people depended on them. In the Malaysian educational landscape, studies on mattering is considered at its infancy stage and there has been a lack of studies in this field (Francis & Lau, 2020). Besides that, a number of recent studies on mattering in the Malaysian education landscape mostly did not mention on distance learners (Foo & Prihadi, 2021; Wang & Prihadi, 2022). Therefore, this study focuses on the experience of mattering among distance learners with regards to their faculty and university's and faculty's administration.

Mattering to Faculty

A number of studies have investigated on undergraduates' perceptions and experience of mattering at their higher learning institutions. Goodman (2021) conducted a study on post-traditional students' perceptions of mattering with a specific focus on faculty- student relationship. The study looked into post-traditional students' perceptions of mattering based on faculty-student interactions. It was discovered that a positive faculty-student relationship has brought about many advantages to students. Some of the positive outcomes include academic success, social integration among students and faculty members, increased motivation as well as students' persistence to stay in the course or programme. Ewing Goodman, 2021 also highlighted that student rated their perceptions of mattering relatively high. However, some students left some comments at the end of the survey where they did feel marginalized. For instance, two students felt ignored and brushed off by their professors. A student also felt marginalized as the student experienced being seen and unseen at the same time by faculty members. In another study conducted by (Mullen, 2016) at a private Catholic undergraduate institution, it was discovered that the non-traditional students' perceived needs are met, therefore, based on the mattering construct, these non-traditional students will be likely to succeed in their studies and also remain at the learning institution. In the study Mullen (2016) found out that the faculty mattering scores exceeded the norm. As a snowball effect, the institution has a high chance to experience higher non-traditional students' retention rates. In another study by Sumner, (2012) where she investigated on senior students' perceptions of the mattering. It was discovered that students felt a nurturing relationship with the faculty members at their university. They pointed out about faculty members who made them feel that they matter and going the extra mile for them. Faculty members were genuinely concerned about their well- being. As a result, students felt that they mattered to the faculty members and in return had a positive impact to their learning experience.

Mattering to Administration

In the previous literature on mattering, several studies were highlighted with regards to the perception or experience of mattering among university students and faculty members. Aside from studies that investigated on mattering and faculty members, several studies have also looked into mattering among university students with regards to the administrators at their faculties. In a study conducted by Dandridge (2018) to gauge African American university students' perceptions of mattering and marginalization it was discovered that African American students felt that they were treated differently compared to White students. Approximately 86% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing. Students perceived that they were not assisted, given help or heard as much as the White students. Hence, this have affected students' learning experience. In another similar study conducted by Durham (2008), investigating African American university students' perceptions of mattering and marginality, an almost similar finding was discovered. Although students felt welcomed and perceived that they were treated fairly by the university but for statements where the word 'administration' was used in the survey, students gave an unfavourable view. Many students felt marginalized with the interactions they had with the administration. Likewise, students also highlighted that they felt marginalized by the treatment that they received from the administrators. Hence, it was proposed by the researcher that more studies need to be conducted as well as improvements to be made in order to address this issue. Klug (2008) explored on the perceptions of the phenomenon of mattering among senior university

students and discovered that the sense of mattering from campus administrators did influence students' experience of mattering. Klug (2008) highlighted that mattering is personal and unique based on individual's experience. Students expressed the feeling of being appreciated and friendliness shown by campus employees from the President to the support staff and this will inevitably lead to a constructive learning experience. Klug (2008) stressed that by inculcating mattering into daily practices by higher learning institutions' administrators can create sustainable learning environment for students and build their personal development.

Despite the many studies that have been conducted on mattering in the western educational setting, more studies need to be conducted in the local setting as number of studies in mattering is still low (Francis & Lau, 2020). Therefore, this qualitative study seeks to investigate the following objectives:
1. To investigate distance learners' experience of mattering with faculty members
2. To investigate distance learners' experience of mattering with the faculty's administration

Significance of the Study

This study brings a number of significance to a number of parties. The first significance of this study is that educators could understand better on the aspects that make distance learners feel that they matter during and after lessons with their distance learners. Secondly, the administrators as well as staff that works at the administration office could learn about aspects that make distance learners feel that they matter to their faculties. In the long run, the university could benefit from the input received from the distance learners and see as areas for improvement or betterment.

Methodology

In this pilot study, individual interviews were conducted with the respondents for data collection. Interviews were conducted in order to understand the experience of mattering among distance learners. Online interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams as the respondents were familiar with its features and prior to the set-up of the online meeting with the respondents, a consent letter was sent out to the Chief Executive Officer at the chosen learning institute seeking for permission to interview distance learners who were enrolled at the learning institution. Once consent was given, a discussion on the day, time and platform were set with the prospective respondents. Each respondent was given a consent form where they need to state their details and agreement on the use of the interview data collected for the purpose of this study. All personal details collected from the respondents remained confidential. The interviews were conducted individually on different days and time based on the availability of the respondents.

The three respondents in this pilot study came from three out of four learning clusters at the university which offer the online distance programme. The said clusters are, Science & Technology, Social Science & Humanities, and Business & Management. The respondents were selected by using criterion sampling where respondents should not come from semester one and therefore, from semester two onwards. The reason is because students in the first semester are still finding their ground with the services and facilities offered by the university as well as getting to know their peers and lecturers. Spradley (1979) as cited

in (Morse & Niehaus, 2009) pointed out that some criteria that a participant to be interviewed should possess include, necessary experiences or information, willingness to participate, availability, able to express oneself based on experience and well-articulated. The respondents were chosen with the assistance of lecturers teaching the students and in this study lecturers were regarded as key informants. Moser & Korstjens (2018) highlighted that one of the ways to gain access to respondents who can share rich information is via key informants.

Prior to the interview the respondents were given some time to clarify on any aspects that they were unclear of. During the interview, each respondent was allowed to speak in both Bahasa Melayu and English. The reason behind this was to ensure that they were able to express themselves well and feel as comfortable as possible during the interview. Other than that, as an interviewer, both languages were allowed to be used in order to assist the respondents should there be problems with the clarity of the interview questions. Bilingual interviewing is defined as conducting interviews in dual language and the interviewers having the ability to speak more than one language (Brown, 2008). Brown also highlighted that it is common to carry out surveys or interviews in native speaker's language especially in a multi racial country.

The semi structured interview questions were constructed based on the aspects of mattering according to Nancy Schlossberg's Theory of Mattering. Two of Schlossberg, LaSalle and Golec's Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education (MHE) were used as guidelines for the construction of interview questions. The two scales that were referred to are the scales with regards to faculty and administration. The list of bilingual interview questions was sent to language experts and expert in the field of the main issue discussed prior to conducting the interviews.

Once data have been collected, they were analyzed based on the aspects mentioned in the research objectives and they are mattering to the faculty as well as mattering to the university's administration. These two aspects became the main themes for the analysis, hence, thematic analysis was applied to analyse the transcripts. Under each theme, analysis focused on the distance learners' experience of mattering with regards to aspects, behaviours, practices, actions shown to them by their lecturers as well as the administrative staff at their respective faculties.

Findings and Discussions
Research Objective 1: To investigate distance learners' experience of mattering to their faculty
Question 1: How does your lecturer respond to your academic matters?

Table 1
Responses to Interview Question 1

R1	R2	R3
I think all my lecturers are doing an amazing job during the online classes. To be	*Alhamdulillah* miss *dari* (from) sem 1 *sampai* (until) sem 6 lecturers very very	We as *seorang yang bekerja* (someone who is working), so they (the lecturers) know how to help us
honest, during the class there's not much feedback that lecturers get from students… There's not much of interactions between students and lecturers but thankfully all my lecturers for all of my subjects they are very active and interactive even though they barely get any responses from the class. They're (the students) just listen to the lectures but I notice that most of my lecturers they will try to actively engage with the class.	*helpful tak berkira la (not calculative) Cuma ada sorang je la (except for one person) rasa sampai sekarang saya (that I could still feel until today). Saya pernah experience saya tanya soalan dekat dia (I asked a question to her) in class masa tu(at that time is) face to face class and then dia ada macam protest sikit sebab saya banyak tanya kot (she gave a protest maybe because I asked a lot). Tapi itu sorang (But it was just that one person only) je miss. Effect dia kepada saya sampai ke hari ini saya masih rasa (The effect could stoll be felt until today). Waktu tu saya masa sem 2 je (At that time I was in semester 2). Sebab saya tanya dia soalan sampai dia hentak kaki (pause)dia macam (pause) saya tak faham. Saya tak pandai, saya tanya dia banyak kali tu yang dia marah dekat saya kot (I am not smart,therefore, I ask a*	get done the assignments, to give us time, we study and work. But certain lecturers they treat us like the full time students like assignment, contoh nak hari ini(for example, they want it today),hari ni kene hantar(today we have to submit),no flexibility but not all lecturers only certain lecturers. Lecturers if the student ask a question regarding what they don't understand,lecturer will explain again but as for me experience with my class during online they usually don't answer because students don't ask questions. So lecturer like, ok kita teruskan (let us proceed). If there is anything that we do not understand we ask in Whatsapp group but for me I contact the lecturer personally.

	lot,maybe that is why she is angry with me). Dia hentak- hentak kaki tapi yang saya kesian kat dia pulak sebab kawan-kawan lain nampak (she was stamped her foot many times,I felt sorry for her because my friends saw this). Tapi yang lain sangat membantu (The rest (lecturers) are very helpful). *Tak kisah pukul berapa,*	

Based on the table 1 above it could be seen that all three students had the experience where their lecturers have been very helpful to them as distance learners. Respondent 1 even mentioned that his lecturer actively engaged with students. Respondent 1 even mentioned that his lecturers tried their level best to interactively engage with the students, hence, through this act of positive engagement it has made the respondent felt mattered and led to a productive learning experience.

As for respondent 2, majority of her lecturers were very helpful and would assist students regardless of time. They will find the time to assist her via the online platform Whatsapp. Respondent 3 pointed out that fast response was given to the learner whenever questions were asked. This act definitely showed how the student matter to the lecturer. Respondent 3 had an almost similar experience with Respondent 2 where some of his lecturers were helpful and understanding. However, both respondents 2 and 3 also had an unfavourable experience with regards to their lecturers. This could be seen based on the experience that they both had. Respondent 2 had the experience where her lecturer stomped her feet, protested, and also didn't help her much with her assignment. These actions have left a lasting impact to Respondent 2 until today. Besides that, she felt down and faced difficulties whenever she had questions to be asked. It could be seen that the lecturer's actions have brought effects on to her learning experience as a distance learner. As a result, this has created a marginalized learning situation for Respondent 2.

Based on Respondent 3's experience, some of his lecturers treated distance learners similarly to full time students. This could be seen based on the example given where some of his lecturers made it compulsory for the students to submit their assignments on the same day. As described by Pappas (2013) one of the characteristics of distance learners is that they are adults who juggle with multiple responsibilities. Hence, having sufficient time to complete class assignments or tasks is of essence for distance learners. Other than that, Respondent 3 highlighted that some of his lecturers were helpful as they guide the students with class assignments and would take the time to repeat their explanation. Some of the findings of this pilot study echoed to the study conducted by (Goodman, 2021). This could be seen when it was discovered in both studies where some distance learners were found to face some challenges when dealing with their lecturers. Based on Table 1, respondent 2 pointed out that her lecturer reacted unfavorably when she asked a question and also blocked her when she

wanted to ask a question. As a consequence, it has affected respondent's 2 learning experience as a distance learner. Respondent 3 on the other hand, highlighted that some lecturers were strict as deadlines for class tasks must be submitted on the day they were given. Given, that distance learners' characteristics differ than traditional students, therefore, this has given an impact on the students' experience of mattering with their lecturers. However, respondent 1 on the other hand had a different experience as he didn't experience any issues with his lecturers. This finding is similar to studies conducted by (Goodman, 2021; Mullen, 2016; Sumner, 2012).

Question 2: Could you share with me any acts, behaviors, or practices that your lecturers showed to you to reflect your importance?

Table 2

Responses to Interview Question 2

R 1	R 2	R 3
Sometimes from inside the class lecturers are trying to actively engage with the class trying to ask if there's any questions or anything or tell their own experiences with the students and also some of the students will share their experiences because I feel like between the part time students and the lecturers it's like a relatable thing. Both the students and lecturers are working, so I feel connect with each other. Well in my experience, for me, I usually ask my lecturers questions, I will take it to the private chat …and every time I ask my lecturers, I always get response almost immediately, so I	I think *yang paling* (the most) easy to respond is by using Whatsapp. *Banyak masa* (Plenty of time) *untuk* (to) reply and then directkan, *terus contact* (it is direct, and I can straight contact my lecturer). They can reply to me at any time.	Lecturers will normally respond to students who only active. If it is office hour, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., it's quite fast. If you text during night time, then next day *la*. Lecturers mostly *suka untuk* students *ramai tanya dalam* (like it when students ask in) Whatsapp group *tapi* (but) they(the student) are too shy but students mostly will pm personally. Everything lecturers answer is clear and I can complete the assignment. Explanation *dia* (lecturer) *sangat* (very) clear *la bila kita tanya* (when we ask).
would give credit to my lecturers for even if I am asking on a weekend or like outside office hours, they will still respond. And with regards to my assignments, they are so very helpful, sometimes also providing the whole class materials that can help them (the students) with their assignments). It shows that the lecturers actually care about the students, and they wanted us to like finish up our assignment and pass the subject. They don't want us to waste out time.		

Based on Table 2 above Respondent 1 pointed out that one of the acts, behaviours or practices that made him feel important to his lecturers was when he could feel that there is a connection between him and his lecturers due to the experiences that they shared as working adults. He saw that there were some similarities in their experiences hence, this made the bonding between lecturer and students closer. Due to the ease in communicating as well as shared experiences, these acts made the respondent feel that he's important to his lecturers. Other than that, his lecturers also took the initiative to reply to his questions even after office hours on weekdays and on weekends they would still respond to his questions. He further added that his lecturers would mostly reply almost immediately whenever he texted them. Respondent 1 also highlighted that his lecturers would also share materials in order for the students to complete their assignments and pass the subject too. As a result, respondent 1 felt that his lecturers made him feel important and cared about him which indirectly brought about a positive impact to his learning experience. These acts showed that he mattered to them.

As for Respondent 2, she felt that the act of responding to her text messages via Whatsapp reflected that she's important to her lecturers. Being able to contact with her lecturers straight via Whatsapp meant a lot to her as it made her feel important. A similar experience could be seen in Respondent 3's answer where his lecturers would give quite a fast response when asked via Whatsapp. Besides that, his class lecturers encouraged students to ask questions during lessons. This encouragement meant that the lecturers see the learners as important. To add, he also added that explanations given were clear whenever questions were asked. Hence, based on the actions shown by the lecturers it gave a positive impact to the students' learning experience.

Research Objective 2: To investigate distance learners' experience of mattering to their university's administration
Question 1: How do you find the administrative system of your faculty? How was it like dealing student matters with the administrative staff?

Table 3

Responses to Interview Question 1

R1	R2	R3
I feel like I can break down some parts of the system because I feel that there are some parts of the system that's very good on what they are doing but there are some parts of the system that needs improvement. For instance, like materials provided for us to study on and empathy towards e-PJJ students towards online classes, they are very good. Certain system there should be some improvements on. For example, maybe the website or is it the student's portal. Even though I work as an IT person, I find it difficult navigating the website. So many like different portals, sign ins and so many passwords. Sometimes like a new user, someone who is not as tech savvy as me trying to use the website, I don't think it's a good experience for them. I feel there should be improvement. When I was registering for my degree, everything was online. They provided a portal with all the docs digitally where we have to like prepare and also we have to do a physical copy of the document. Sometimes I am wondering	Contoh macam kita boleh apply untuk (like we can apply for) APEL C atau pengecualian kredit tapi saya dapat info dari others dan bukan dari administration sendiri (or credit exemption but I received the info from others and not from the administration themselves). So selalu info yang saya terima adalah dari orang lain dan bukan dari bahagian admin (usually I would receive information from others and not from the administrators). Kat situ saya rasa perlu ada sedikit penerangan tapi tulah, mungkin saya tak selalu scroll website untuk information tapi saya selalu rasakan kalaulah ada pendedahan dari fakulti atau admin ke apa tentang subjek yang kita boleh ambil atau samada ada kriteria yang kita perlu ada (Here I feel that there should be some explanation but then maybe because I do not scroll the website for information, but I always feel if there is exposure from the faculty or admin on subjects that we could take or if we can apply for APEL C and if there are criteria that we should have). Saya rasa ada beberapa kerugian kerana	As for me, for registration part, I just google how to register and then I met a certain person and then he like "ok you jumpa orang ni nanti dia akan tolong untuk semua pendaftaran"(ok you meet this person and this person will help you anything with regards to registration). After that, sem 2 and 3 we manage to find other person who studies and works at the admin office. So, we directly ask him. It'll be helpful to have someone (from the faculty's administration) because this person can remind us in group or contact person to get people to daftar (register). So, it'll be helpful to know this person. Overall, the response towards me is okay.

why we are doing double work.	saya tidak apply APEL C dan	
Registering is quite simple, easy to follow and sometimes when we lack a certain document which I did experience, I was missing a photo, I contacted the admin about the registration and the person assured me that there's nothing to worry about it. I think that it is good that they have a common channel for us. It eases work.	*waktu dah nak habis sem baru tahu* (I felt a lost as I didn't apply for APEL C and at that time I was about to finish the semester). *Saya rasa lebih selesa kalau fakulti atau admin macam sediakan* handbook *ke atau* pdf that can be shared via Whatsapp (I would feel comfortable if the faculty or admin prepares a handbook or a pdf). *Saya rasa pada saya* Whatsapp *ni lebih mudahlah untuk saya terima info* guideline *dari* first sem (For me, I feel that Whatsapp is easy for me to get info or guideline from semester 1). *Bila saya tanya status subjek saya* apply *ke* (When I asked about the status of my subject application), fast response. *Saya punya permohonan pun sangat cepat dapat reply daripada diaorang yang kata diaorang dah dapat permohonan saya* (I receive a fast response from them on my application). *Maklumat yang diberikan sangat membantu* (The information given was very helpful).	

Table 3 above investigates distance learners' experience of mattering with regards to their faculty's administration system. Respondent 1felt that there are some positive aspects to the system as well as some that require improvements. He felt that improvements should be made on the website as well as student portal. This is because students have got to remember many portals as well as passwords which made it difficult for them. He further added that those who are not technology savvy would face difficulties when navigating the faculty's website and other student portals. Based on this finding, Respondent 1 felt that it was an obstacle, and the technology may not be user friendly to those having difficulties with technology. Since distance learners are not always around at the university, therefore, it would be difficult for them to seek help from staff at the administration office. Other than that, he also pointed out that dealing with the staff at the administration office was not a hassle as the staff was very assuring. This on the other hand, made him felt that he mattered although he was only a distance learner. Similarly, Respondent 2 experienced the same when it comes to dealing with administration staff at the faculty. They gave a fast response to her enquiries. However, she felt that information should be disseminated to students in a more effective way especially for new students. This is because she missed out on important

information when she first joined the faculty. Hence it was suggested that having a handbook or pdf document containing important faculty information should be prepared and shared to new students. Respondent 3 on the other hand, had to look up on the internet on how he could complete the registration process. He stressed that it would be beneficial if the administrative staff could appoint a person who can assist distance learners by giving reminders on registration via a certain platform. He also stated that the overall response from the faculty administrative staff to him was alright. Based on the findings mentioned above it could be seen that all three respondents had a positive experience when dealing with the administrative staff at their respective faculties. However, all three respondents felt that administrative staff could assist them better if a number of services could be added as well as changes be made as distance learners do not have the same characteristic as traditional students. For example, respondent 1 felt that there were too many websites and portals for students to remember and the redundancy in submitting documents to the faculty for registration purposes. Respondent 2 felt that a handbook for students and the dissemination of information to students could be improved as she missed out on some essential information. As for respondent 3, he felt that reminders could be sent by the staff at the administration office so that students are aware on important matters at the faculty. Although the findings above did not reflect the findings found in studies conducted by (Dandridge, 2018; Durham, 2008). However, they are similar to the findings of the study conducted by (Klug, 2008).

Implications

Based on the study conducted it could be seen that distance learners' needs and feelings are important to be met so that they feel that they matter as well as bring about a positive outcome to their learning experience. If a learner feels that he or she matters to the different parties at the university, therefore, the learning experience would provide a fruitful outcome. However, if a learner does not feel that he or she matters, hence, it could lead to many issues. Hence, universities should give focus on university mattering so that they could learn better on distance learners' experience of mattering as it could help to overcome many challenges that distance learners face at present time.

Conclusion

To conclude, as universities welcome more distance learners to their grounds, it is integral to assure that not only quality education is provided to the distance learners but also putting in concerns on what matters most for them is essential too. It is hope that distance learners will not feel marginalized during their learning years and know that they matter. Future studies in mattering among distance learners should be put forward as an area that is worth studying.

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