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Happiness and Productivity Index: Exploring Motivation as Glue that Bonds Employees to Their Work: Botswana Experiences. A Case of Private Colleges in Francistown

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Abstract:

Quality graduates are a function of the level of happiness index attained by employees, especially the lecturing staff. It therefore follows that keeping staff motivated in institutions of higher learning should not be taken for granted as it impacts directly on the product produced. The purpose of this study was to explore on issues of motivation as practiced by private tertiary institutions in Botswana. Three private institutions were studied (selected) with 22 employees and managers interviewed on the phenomena. The findings indicate that the level of staff motivation is currently below par, suggesting the need to deeply institutionalise employee empowering programmes as this has direct impact on the quality of graduates produced. The study further recommends for a national wide research on the performance of private colleges and the degree of embracing motivation packages.

Keywords: Motivation, empowerment, institutionalisation

1. Introduction

Internal marketing is a collection or combination of strategies needed to ensure that service employees are willing and able to deliver quality services and that they stay motivated to perform in customer-oriented service minded ways (Zeithaml 2006). It is plain from the above definition that motivation is essentially one of the key strategies needed to ensure that employees deliver services which will accurately meet the needs of customers. Education services in Botswana are basically interpersonal. This suggests that dissatisfied lecturers and non-academic staff is bound to provide poor services, conversely motivated lecturers will deliver quality services.

2. Brief Background to Service Delivery by Private Colleges in Botswana

The major customer of private colleges in Botswana is the government, which in its endeavour to meet vision 2016 of educating more Batswana people, is sponsoring students in private colleges. However, there are few self and company sponsored students. Botswana was ranked one of the least in terms of education worldwide (UNESCO Report, 2006). Interestingly the government of Botswana has invested billions of Pulas to educate its citizens and we all need to applaud it for a bold stance it has taken to capacitate and invest in human capital. The government is investing millions of Pulas in sponsoring students in private colleges (Daily News-September 28, 2009). The country has several colleges apart from, and five technical colleges wholly owned by government. The few number of colleges in Botswana (comparative to other countries in the region) speaks volumes in terms of manpower developmental needs of the country –implying that there is indeed a deficit of trained employees. It is against this background that the country has been suffering from an acute shortage of skilled labour for many years. The industry of Botswana is growing at an increasing rate and Gaborone was ranked the fastest growing city in Africa in 2009. Owing to a shortage of skills, the industry of Botswana is dominated by expatriates from countries such as Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya and Malawi. In its effort to correct the trend, the early year 2000 saw the government of Botswana inviting and allowing more foreign and local private colleges to compliment its efforts to educate and train more people.

Some of these institutes have failed dismally to live to the expectation of the government and people of Botswana. A vast majority of colleges which are offering international courses are experiencing high failure rate (Daily News, January 2011). The industry is understood to be complaining seriously about the quality of most graduates coming from these private colleges. This raises alarm bells as to what extent are the employees meeting the international academic standards expected elsewhere. This also forces one to read between the lines as to the width and depth of motivation levels of employees and the quality of service delivery (Pratt, 1998).

A crucial point to note is that all private colleges and courses they offer are accredited by the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) in tandem with the Human Resources Development Council (HRDC). The establishment of these entities is a serious signal of

government's appetite to see a vibrant education system. This suggests that these institutes have the right materials and personnel to support the provision of quality services. Thus, the issue of quality problems can be attributed to other factors other than those mentioned.

It appears that –from the peripheral as already alluded to, these institutes are concentrating on external marketing and paying little attention on employee satisfaction. This has made them fail to deliver services according to their promises. It seems the subject of motivation is not being given due consideration in private colleges. They appear not to appreciate the idea that satisfying lecturers and non-academic staff is critical to meeting promises made to customers through external marketing. The general thinking among multi-stakeholders is that vast majority of these organisations are investing a good deal of their resources on advertising and promotion; and doing little to improve employee satisfaction. One of the key indicators of employee dissatisfaction in private colleges has to do with high labour turnover (Government Report, 2009). The situation above is a recipe of concern and many of the colleges have begun to show signs of wariness because of the standard of service rendered by some of the colleges.

Indeed, this study has been motivated by the need to interrogate and establish the realization of internal marketing as a tool to motivate employees and ultimately improve service delivery. It remains to be seen whether the motivation of employee's impact positively on service delivery.

3. Statement of the Problem

There is indeed employee outcry in terms levels of motivation and the strategies employed by private colleges in Botswana. The outcry spins back to employee outcry employed in these colleges as the general feeling is that there is more attention paid to external customers at the expense of internal customers. The issue arising appear to be 'a hidden agenda' were the investor interests is in maximizing shareholder value disregarding provision of the highest level of satisfaction to those who deliver the service. The underlining problem is therefore resulting in emerging poor service delivery motivated by low levels of morale- resulting from possibly absence of realistic internal marketing and effective motivation strategies. This however does not take away the splendid work being exhibited by some committed private colleges to complement government efforts in see in the establishment of a 'new world order and vibrant education system in Botswana'

4. Research Questions

The education system in Botswana seems to face challenges especially service delivery by some private colleges. Quality service is a function of employee satisfaction which results from the degree of internal marketing. With this in mind, the study intends to answer critical questions in order to get viable solutions to problems that are likely to be of perennial nature.

4.1. Primary Research Question

What motivation strategies (Internal marketing strategies) are employed by private colleges in Botswana?

4.2. Secondary Research Questions

- What is the impact of motivation on customer service delivery?
- Who is an internal customer?
- What challenges are the private colleges facing in meeting employee expectations?
- Is there any link between pay and performance?

5. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study underlines what the study has to achieve. Thus the objectives of this study are as stated below:

5.1. Primary Research Objective

- To investigate the nature of motivation strategies employed by private colleges in Botswana.

5.2. Secondary Research Objectives

- To evaluate the impact of motivation of employees on customer service delivery.
- To identify who the internal customer is within the private college.
- To critically assess challenges faced by private colleges in Botswana.
- To assess the linkage between pay and good performance

6. Hypothesis

- (a) Null Hypothesis (H_{20}): A demotivated workforce does not deliver effectively and efficiently resulting in poor service delivery
- (b) Alternative hypothesis (H_{2a}): A motivated workforce delivers services effectively and efficiently resulting in quality service delivery.

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7. Significance of the Study

The success and ultimate goal of any college is impressed upon the quality of graduates produced and this is a function of the quality of service provided. The quality of service is a function of the degree of motivation. It appears that in Botswana there is- along the service continuum a missing link. This study is a critical component towards improving the performance of the private colleges at large. In clear and precise terms, the study is significant and the key areas of focus are:

- The beneficiaries to the study are the private colleges and they will benefit immensely through adopting proper motivation and internal marketing programmes that will ultimately result in improved service delivery.
- Employees in the private college will enjoy from employee empowerment programmes identified as essential by the study.
- Service delivery by tertiary institutions will be improved
- Industry will receive quality graduates.

8. Limitations

- The distribution and collection of questionnaires demanded a good deal of money plus costs of doing the research
- Other employees did not answer questions as expected
- Others did not submit the questionnaires back

I therefore, in order to impress upon these limitations used a case study of colleges within Francistown to minimize on travelling time and costs of research.

9. Research Delimitations

The study was a case study of a colleges in Francistown because of the convenience they give the researcher who happens to be a resident in the city. Motivation is a broad subject and therefore the study limited itself to the key strategies and related concepts as it relates to internal marketing as a function of quality service delivery.

10. Research Methodology

Research methodology is the analysis of how research is done and / or should proceed. It does concern discussions on how theories are gathered and tested. It is paramount to note that, in under taking any study –the research paradigm takes a centre stage. The two dominant procedures are phemenology and positivism. Saunders, et al (1997) called this qualitative and quantitative research respectively. Phemenology is a fact or occurrence that appears when the cause in question. It is an approach that focuses on how life is experienced (Denscombe, 1998). Positivism conforms to the principle of natural science experimentation, that works with an observable social reality and that the end product of such research can be law like generalisation similar to those produced by physical and natural scientists (Lumkin, 1996). This study is a case study with a phenomenology paradigm (at the centre stage) complemented with positivism.

As already alluded to, phemenology concerns understanding the person from own frame of reference. I opted to employ this approach because of the “intention and nature “of the topic being studied: *‘Exploring motivation as glue that bonds employees to their work: Botswana experiences.’* the concern was basically that of perceptual views, opinions, and feelings of people on the ability of employees to perform competently in rendering their services. Thus a critical analysis of those views is needed, finding out from those respondents, how and why. It is difficult to quantify human perceptions and feelings as they are not constant (Denscombe, 1998). Based on this, I thus believe in the employment of phemenology as a fundamental approach to the study notwithstanding the general survey to get more quantitative responses on critical issue. Interviews were a major component of data gathering technique in this study. In order to gather much more meaningful data, one focus group interview and 10 in-depth interviews were held across the three colleges chosen in Francistown and 22 employees were also interviewed. Data analysis of interview questions and field notes were based on an inductive approach geared to identifying patterns in the data by means of thematic codes. Inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis has to come from the data, they emerge out of data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis (Dewhurst, 2003)

11. Literature Related to the Study

There is a lot of literature on motivation and service quality. Various studies have been carried out to identify and establish how the two correlate. It is interesting to note that there is no meaningful study in Botswana relating to private colleges and their internal marketing programmes. The literature here in, attempts to provide a preliminary framework upon which the raised research questions can be answered.

11.1. Definition of Key Terms and Statements

The following are definitions of key terms:

11.2. Motivation

It is the ability to influence employees to perform without coercing them (McCullinane, 2001). Employees must be able to do their work and feel part of the organisation. (Abbot, 1988). The researcher shares the views of these two definitions and will stick on to them throughout the study.

11.3. Employee Empowerment

This refers to providing employees with full autonomy in terms of the work they do. (Taylor, 1998). Employees need to be seen as mature people and hence can perform independently without relying much on their managers (Agashae and Bratton, 2001).

11.4. Services

According to Lovelock et al (2002), a service is an act or performance offered by one party to another. Although the process may be tied to a physical product, the performance is essentially intangible and does not normally result in any of the factors of production. Services can be delivered to support the tangible goods. Services are a form of products that consists of activities, benefits, or satisfaction offered for sale that are essentially intangible and do not result in the ownership of anything. Examples are banking, hotel, airline, tax preparation, and home repair services.

11.5. Effects of Employee Behaviour on Service Quality Dimensions

All five dimensions of service quality (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility) can be influenced directly by service employees. They directly influence customers' perceptions of responsiveness through their personal willingness to help and their promptness in service recovery. The assurance dimension of service quality is highly dependent on employees' ability to communicate their credibility and inspire the customers trust in the firm. Empathy implies that employees will pay attention to, listen, adapt, and be flexible in delivering what individual customers need. Employee appearance and dress are important aspects of the tangibles dimensions of quality, along with many other factors that are independent of service employees (Bitner et al, 2009).

11.6. Employee Satisfaction and Customer Satisfaction.

Satisfied employees make for satisfied customers (and satisfied customers can in turn, reinforce employees' sense of satisfaction in their jobs). Unless service employees are happy in their jobs, customer satisfaction will be difficult to achieve (Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler, 2009).

11.7. Motivation and Theories of Motivation

According to Thill (2008) motivation is a combination of forces that moves individuals to take certain actions and avoid others in pursuit of individuals. Motivation is the set of forces that causes people to behave in certain ways. One worker may be motivated to work hard to produce as much as possible, whereas another may be motivated to do just enough to get by (Ebert and Griffin, 2009). Other researchers such as Slocum and Hellreiegel (2009) say motivation represent the forces action on or within a person that cause the person to behave in a specific, goal-directed manner. They identified four different approaches to motivate people, and these are; meeting basic human needs, designing jobs that motivate people, enhancing the belief that desired rewards can be achieved, and treating people equally. We learn from the definitions that motivation is a combination of deliberate efforts designed to drive employees towards the attainment of set organisational goals. This is crucial in the delivery of services with high contact such as education. The service firm will have high chances of delivering quality services if front line employees are motivated.

Griffin et al (2009) researchers have suggested a variety of theories of human motivation, some of that describe *what* motivate people and others that describe *how* they go about fulfilling their needs. No single theory offers a complete and proven picture of motivation, but each can offer some perspective. As a manager, do not settle on a single theory to the exclusion of all others, and pay attention to new developments and ideas (Purcell, 1989). Over the past years three approaches of motivation have being identified, and these are; the classical theory and scientific management early behavioural theory, and the contemporary motivational theory.

11.8. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs model propose that people have several different needs that they attempt to satisfy in their work. He classified these needs into five basic types and suggested that they are arranged in a hierarchy of importance. (physiological, Security, Social, Esteem, and Self-actualisation). The first are low level needs and the late are high level needs. Lower level needs must be met before a person will try to satisfy higher-level needs. Once a set of needs has been satisfied, it ceases to motivate behaviour. *Other theories include Equity theory, Herzberg Two Factor theory, McGregor X and Y theory.*

11.9. Strategies and Techniques for Enhancing Motivation

They are a number of motivation techniques and strategies that institutions and companies can employ to boost their employee morals.

11.10. Reinforcing/ Behaviour Modification

Some institutions try to control workers' behaviour through systematic rewards and punishment. They first try to define specific behaviours that they want their works to exhibit (hard working, being courteous to customers, and stressing quality) and the specific behaviours they want to elimination (time wasting, being rude to customers and ignoring quality). Then they try to shape employee

behaviour by linking positive reinforcement with desired behaviours and punishing with undesired behaviours. Positive reinforcement is used when a company provides a reward when employees' exhibit desired behaviour (Ronald et al, 2009).

11.11. Job Enrichment and Job Redesign

Job enrichment is designed to add one or more motivating factors to job activities. For example, job rotation programs expand growth opportunities by rotating employees through various positions in the same firm (Griffin et al 2009). Lecturers can be rotated from one module to another every semester.

Job redesign is achieved through restructuring work to attain a more satisfactory fit strong between workers and their jobs; it can motivate individuals with strong needs for career growth. This can be done by increasing variety (Ebert et al 2009).

12. Findings

The table below represents the general response rate by category.

Item	No. of questionnaires dispatched	Total respondents	Spoiled In complete	% response	Total
Management	(10 in-depth interviews)	10	nil	100%	100%
Employees	22	20	2	90%	90%
Total	32	30	2	100%	94%

Table 1: General response rate(s)

12.1. Age of Respondents

The researcher wanted to establish age differentials amongst his respondents to determine the level of maturity and their relevance to provide mature treatment to clients. The table below indicates the statics to age differentials.

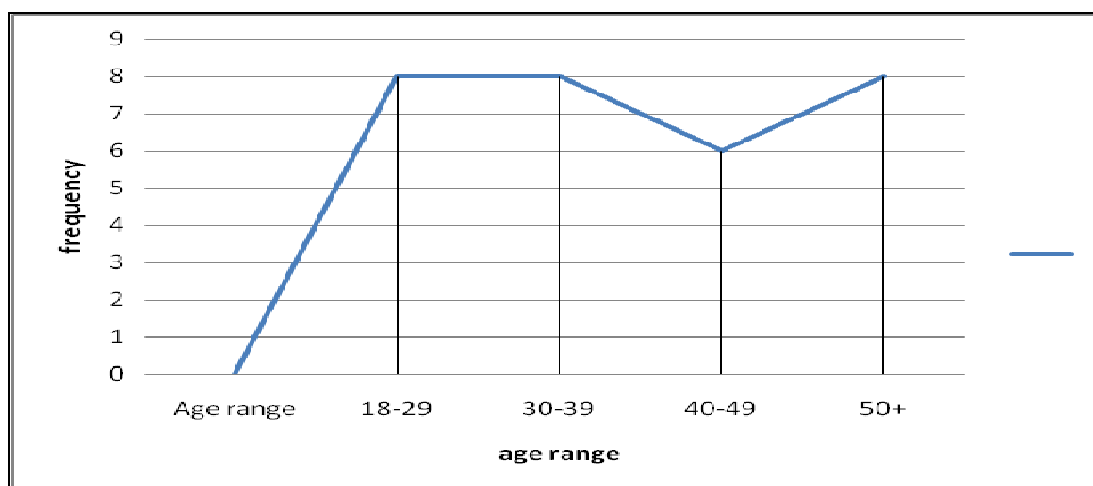


Figure 1: Age of respondents

The age of respondents is almost similar across age range. The majority of the staff are in the age group 18-29 and 30-39 respectively. The implication is that the three institution are made up of mature, active and maturing people and hence capable of understanding educational dynamics. That there is a fair representation of age groups provides a competitive advantage in all aspects of motivation and service quality.

12.2. Education Level of Respondents

I wanted to have a clear picture of the academic and professional qualification by respondents and results indicate that there is a generally high level of literacy and this should be regarded as a competitive strength in terms of being able to understand and deal with clients and global requirements in terms of teaching services in the best way possible.

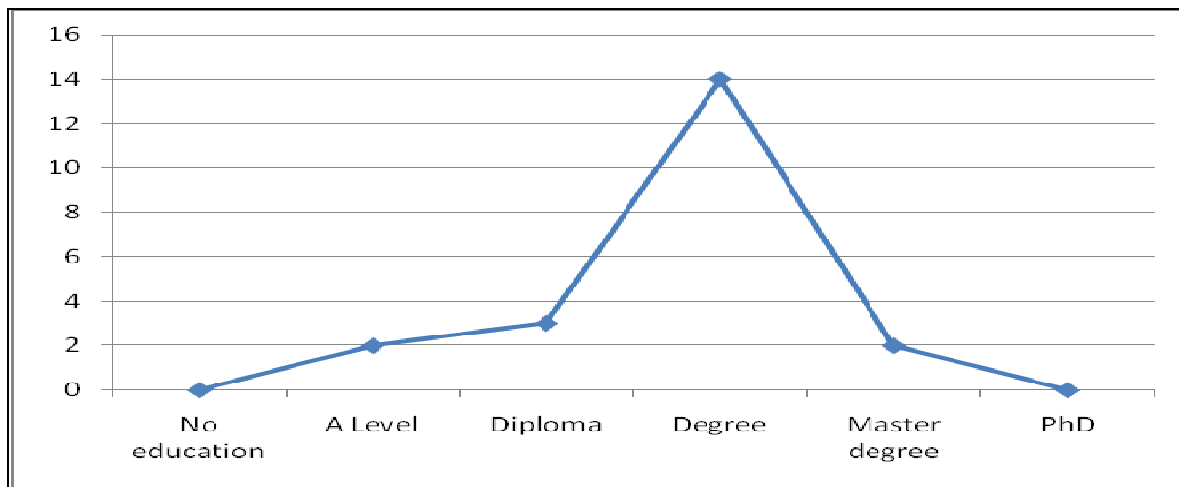


Figure 2: Academic qualifications

The bulky of the respondents either hold a diploma or have completed their first degree (73%) in sum. This shows that any attempt to deny employees the privilege to be motivated can be suicidal to effective attainment of quality education. These staff members are well informed and in some cases teach their students on these matters which they do not receive themselves. Seven employees have master Degrees suggesting that much has to be done to encourage staff members to pursue further studies in their respective areas of specialisation.

The study, on the main wanted to find out the key motivating strategies employed by the Colleges, creating an enabling work atmosphere that is conducive for quality service delivery. The respondents concurred on a number of areas. The general thinking was that employee empowerment was critical to ensure a happy worker. This could take a number of dimensions of course including employee participation in college programs, employee involvement, attractive salaries, job enrichment, parallel promotion and fringe benefits such as loans and credit facilities. This is what the senior members of staff had to say in the various interviews held by the researcher:

'We have a number of employee empowerment lined up for our staff, but unfortunately there is lack of commitment by the college Masters to implement some of them. For example, there has been talk about giving staff member's soft loans, for personal use and up to now nothing much has been done. It ends in the Boardroom...'

'We have a program of meeting staff members quarterly to get feedback on what they think the college needs to do in order to become more efficient and effective'

In terms of the impact of motivation on service delivery respondents had to say this: 'My experience clear here, when staff members suffer from low morale, expect nothing short of shoddy work. Two years ago, our staff requested for a salary adjustment by 3% and management did not agree to the adjustment...guess what happened, the pass rate decreased by 35% as compared to the previous year'

'The quality of teaching goes down, the rate of absenteeism increases, staff turnover rises and quality of work is poor. We have had a serious problem of staff missing lecturers. Apparently we discovered that the lecturers will be doing piece jobs somewhere to supplement their salaries. This has a direct negative veering on quality of work.' Thus given the responses above, the implication is that, motivation has a direct impact on service delivery (100% of the respondents concurred on this point). To establish who the internal customer was, the researcher posed a question, to the management on who their customer was. The results here were amazing. Only one out of the ten senior staff members appreciated the fact that, the employees are the first customers and are to be treated as an important business partner. The other eight members disqualified employees as customers and instead thought that the students were the most important customer. This is what they had to say:

'We have our students as the main customer ...'

'We cannot say the lecturers and non-academic staff are customers, they are workers who are supposed to look after our customers-students...'

The most common challenges faced by private colleges included -lack of resources to improve service delivery, lack of qualified staff as most lecturers only have first degrees, lack of commitment by the shareholders to deal with service quality (SERVQUAL) issues, and lack of respect of individual integrity. This is what some had to say:

'This college faces a dilemma in terms of staff turnover, and I believe the root cause is the college policies and culture...'

The study wanted to establish if there is a link between pay and performance. Most respondents felt that there was no real proof to say that pay motivates. The felt, in the short term it does but had no lasting effect t on performance. The majority were quick to point that employee empowerment had nothing to do with pay increase but making employees feel part and parcel of the institution. Salary increment was somehow secondary.

13. Discussion

The findings from the study indicates that the major strategies employed include employee empowerment (employee involvement, participation, parallel promotion although not readily implemented). Other strategies include application of leadership styles that are more contemporary than before (servant leadership, charismatic and transformational leadership).

The revelation on this area (*Impact of motivation on service delivery*) was that, motivation systems used had a direct bearing on the quality of service delivered. Because of lack of commitment by management, the general outcome was that the quality of service was below expectations as employees had a lot of unfulfilled promises. The college has a tendency of overpromising and under deliver. Staff members felt they were performing poorly because they were not treated as customers but as second class citizens. Thus without pleasing the employee, it was not feasible to expect quality service being rendered per se. The main challenges faced by the college was lack of resources to implement some of the key employee empowerment programs such as giving out loans for self sustenance, bonuses and salary increments for parallel promotion. The other challenges include lack of commitment by the top management and qualified personnel to do some of the tasks that are core to the college business. Generally, the senior staff members felt that salary was not a motivator while the staff members on the ground felt that modern life calls for cash and hence pay was a real motivator.

Motivation policies, in any organization are a pre requisite for successful attainment of organisational goals. Bearing in mind that the success of quality improvement is a function of the level of motivation and the prevailing college culture on internal marketing, it is important to mention that they were challenges that hinders successful execution of empowerment programs and these according to the results of the study included lack of resources to lack of commitment by both top management and members of staff.

14. Recommendations

Given the findings and conclusions above, I do hereby propose the following recommendations:

- There is need for private colleges to come up with a blue print (in black and white) and develop /establish a policy on employee empowerment spelling out programs that will meet employee expectations. Implementation of the policies becomes a critical requirement because the mere existence of a policy does not mean anything.
- Employees need to be given recognition as internal customers not employees who have no relevance when it comes to preferred treatment.
- Colleges must make an attempt to fulfil their promises to employees and avoid use of propaganda when dealing with employee welfare.
- Salary reviews need to be done annually
- All college programs and events must be done in consultation with the rest of the employees.
- There is need for establishing SERVQUAL programs and in the same endeavour train every member of staff in customer care.
- There is also need to involve the community in all college events.

15. Future Research

A nation-wide research need to be carried out focusing on the performance of the private colleges and how the quality of educational delivery can be improved in Botswana and beyond.

16. Conclusion

The general feeling among all the stakeholders, according to the study is that motivation has a direct bearing on the quality of service delivery by the private colleges in Botswana. Hence empowerment of employees is a critical ingredient towards that cause. Private colleges need to think above commercialisation of their programmes, and place employee satisfaction programmes, which ultimately will improve productivity, improve service delivery, and produce international graduates. A happy employee always makes the client happy, and continues to improve the quality of service unabated. The image of Botswana cannot be 'dislinked' to the nature and calibre of its education system, and hence a national call to embark on 'creating a new Botswana, that will boast of a 'world class employees produced by world class colleges and universities that respect and empower their employees'.

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