

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND PRIMARY HEALTHCARE RECRUITMENT POLICY IN CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study examined democratic governance and primary health care service recruitment in Nigeria: a case of central senatorial district of Cross River State. The study explored the survey method to collect information from respondents in order to attain the objective of the study, which is to infer whether selective recruitment process affects service delivery at PHC facilities at Cross River central senatorial district. For analysis the study used the four-point Likert scale with the help of SPSS. Outcome of the study indicated, democratic governance has positive influence in primary health care PHC service delivery furthermore, recruitment processes in primary health care does not meet residents' expectations. While, recruitment of staff has no positive impact on PHC service delivery. Based on these findings, the study recommends that; recruitment process for staff of primary health care institutions be made based on merit, this will improve on health outcomes of resident, thereby enable them to make meaningful political and economic contribution to the nation.

Key Words: Democratic governance, Primary Health Care, recruitment and Central Senatorial District

Introduction

Nigeria's governance has been hovering between military and democratic regimes since its independence in 1960. The present democratic governance was instituted in 1999, normally democratic governance is expected to promote inclusivity, accountability, service delivery expected from the public service, transparency and health care service delivery. The Primary Health Care Delivery system is expected to be effectively managed through public institutions being governed by the democratic framework, as regulated by elected representatives. Nevertheless, studies in Nigeria indicated otherwise, although, theoretical backing exists for the support of democratic framework providing needed health care services to promote citizens well-being, however various challenges which include, insufficient funds, political will, weak institutional framework, and political interloping most times negatively affects transformation of democratic ideas into positive health results (Sani, 2018).

The federal, state and local government structure as exhibited by the decentralization system assumed by the Primary Health Care system in Nigeria, allows for the federal government to focus on, policy framework, coordination and technical assistance, the states administer secondary health institutions and some Primary Health Care centers, whereas the local government mainly manages the Primary Health Care centers which includes recruitment of health care workers. The need for delivery of health services to meet local need is the goal of the decentralization policy. Nevertheless, it brings about challenges for proper coordination, effective allocation of resources and accountability, especially as it involves the local

government level with their low allocation and political susceptibility (Gyuse *et al.*, 2018; Eboime *et al.*, 2017). Inefficiencies in Primary Health Care services delivery are mostly as a result of poor role streamlining resulting in overlaps, poor referrals and poor service delivery from the Primary Health Care centers. Cross River State Central Senatorial District like any other area in Nigeria lacks adequate governance, local government in dire need of proper administration and inadequate financial resources, political instability and interference, these negatively affects quality service delivery. This also include poor recruitment and retention of quality PHC personnel (Adie & Anam, 2024). Merit takes back seat sometimes when there is political interference in recruitment and this dampen morale, which leads to negative impacts on service delivery.

Although, according to Adie and Anam (2024) preferably democratic governance is supposed to support participation and representation by the community in health governance. The recruitment choice, interfacing health priorities for the communities is the responsibility of the local government. Transparency in PHC recruitment and the association of PHC service delivery meeting community needs are possible because of community involvement. The Nigerian government have over the years especially at the policy stage birth programmes to ease the administration of PHC, one of such is the 'Primary Health Care Under One Roof' (PHCUOR) initiative was birthed at the national level in 2011. This initiative seeks to incorporate the services under the primary health care services beneath an amalgamated management to enhance resource allocation, coordination, and equality in service delivery (Gyuse *et al.*, 2018; Eboime, 2017). Correspondingly, in 2014 the federal government also established the framework for the National Health Act and funding system to improve primary health care provision and strengthen governance accountability.

Recruitment in primary health care remains a challenge in the central senatorial district of Cross River Sate and Nigeria at large in spite of various government policy in this direction. The challenging that confront the PHC system also includes, political patronage, inadequate human resource capacity and limited financial autonomy. Understanding how democratic governance influences or hinders effective PHC recruitment demands an in-depth examination of the interplay between political dynamics, administrative structures, resource flows, and community engagement within this district. This is the objective of this study.

Literature Review

Conceptual Literature

Recruitment

According to Hamza *et al.*, (2021) and Anwar and Surarchith (2015) procedure to identifying and choosing or employing the most suitable candidate within the organization or from outside or the steps taken to identified and entice the right persons to occupy vacancies is termed recruitment. While Hamza *etal.*, (2021) and Othman *et al.*, (2019) sees recruitment as the containing actions of an organisation geared towards attracting job seekers with the requisite competence required to improve the chances of the organization achieve its goals. In general, recruitment refereed to the key function taken by organization that opens way for acquiring talent that can help the organization towards the direction of achieving their goals.

The Recruitment Processes includes the following; Analysis, definition and job description, finding suitable candidates using various ways of recruitment, Applicants screening through test, interviews and assessment, Job offers and negotiating terms of engagement and Onboarding the employee for integration in the organisation.

Importance of Recruitment to an Organisation

Safeguards the organisation by acquiring the right talent for the role, recruitment helps in attracting and selecting candidates who have the skills, qualifications, and attitude to fulfill job requirements efficiently. Employment of the right people improves performance and productivity across the organisation. Enhance organizational growth and expansion, when companies grow, there is need for new talent. Employment of the right people ensures that the organization has a continuous supply of capable employees to support expansion, new projects, and market demands.

Theoretical Literature

A significant view is provided by the functionalist theory in interrogating the social structures and their places within the society, especially in the framework of democratic governance and health care delivery within the Nigeria. In maintaining balance and order in society, functionalism provides insight into how the different components interrelate to achieve this goal. Functionalism supports the notion that health is an essential component in achieving societal balance, this implies illness serves as a sanctioned kind of act that instigate social reaction to reestablish balance (Ogoko et al., 2025; Adeloje et al., 2017). The origin of functionalism is in political science and sociology, hence the view of a society as a complex system whose component parts works together to encourage balance, putting together the overall functioning of the whole. In this case, every institution is saddled with a function ta contributes to the sustenance and balance of the whole system. Therefore, the functionalist theory provides a comprehensive lens for examining the connection concerning democratic governance and primary health care Primary Health Care delivery, particularly in settings like the Cross River Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Empirical Literature

The examination of the obstacles and Challenges to Providing a Public Insurance System buttressed the fact that healthcare delivery in Nigeria is both a private and government business was done by Darlynton (2022). The Federal and State governments are allowed to set up hospitals and other health facilities. Effective healthcare delivery is usually a function of the quality, accessibility and affordability of the service. On the continuum, the author stressed further that over the years, there has been a rise in Nigeria's poverty level and consequently, the ability to afford basic healthcare for common illnesses by the average Nigerian reduced drastically and in more extreme illnesses, citizens had to resort to the sale of personal effects and/or real property, rely strongly on personal savings and/or resort to taking loans to be able to attend to their health needs adequately. According to Aigbedion et al., (2016) in a work titled Impact of Health Sector Public-Private Partnership on Effective Health Care Delivery for Economic Growth in Nigeria: an Error Correction Model posited that health sector public-private partnership and effective health care delivery have a positive impact on economic growth in Nigeria. Additionally, the poor per capita income in Nigeria has resulted in poor healthcare service delivery in Nigeria. Since the average citizens are poor and with low per capita income it becomes difficult for them to access good healthcare services and on the other hand, reduce the private sector investment in the health sector in Nigeria. More also, it becomes difficult for government alone to provide the full health care service needed by the huge population of the country.

Similarly, Akujuru and Enyioko (2020) interrogated Democracy and Social Service Delivery in Nigeria focusing on free Medical Programme of Rivers State Government (2007-2013). The study postulated that the deeper a country's reservoirs of social capital and the more these are based on horizontal and vertical relations emanating from both government and public realms, the more formidable is the entire body polity. The benefits accruing to this not only enhance social service delivery in Rivers State but also transcends beyond the unknown in our overall national life. While, Ekong (2020) studied Democracy and Sustainable Development in Cross River State 1999 – 2020 stressed the significance of the government in championing the goal of service delivery to the people. According to the author, democracy and sustainable development are two good bedfellows and inseparable twins. Many events account for the failure of democracy to sustain development in Cross Rivers State. In this sense, economic development could have fueled development in Cross River State. Poor budgeting and implementation are traced to a fall in federal allocation to the state as it adversely affects accruals to the state to meet sustainable development. It is this issue of inadequate funding that adversely affected poor road maintenance culture, rural electrification, potable water supply, difficult terrain, and absence of peoples' participation in the budgeting process led to no capturing of their needs. Nigeria generally as a country is vulnerable to weak governance and poor decisions making, where poverty, inequality, and economic instability are severe and unsolved.

Anaemene (2016) conducted a study entitled, Democratic Governance and Health Care Delivery in Nigeria, 1999 – 2007. The study argued that a country's political structure affects almost every aspect of society including health. Utilizing historical approach and mixed method of data collection and analysis, the study revealed that democratic governance can impact positively on human development in various ways including population health and wellbeing. Thus, the absence of democracy, in particular can have deleterious consequences on health. Thus, to surmount the health challenges and to achieve sustainable health development in the new democratic dispensation, there is the need to securitize health. To securitize an issue is to frame and present it as susceptible to threat. For Suraj (2016) he carried out a study on how democratic governance actualizes development through effective service delivery in local government areas of Katsina State using employment, water supply and education using questionnaire on a sample of 384 respondents. Three hypotheses were tested using sample percentage and chi-square tools. The findings revealed that democratic government in Katsina State was very effective as it provides the physical socio-economic infrastructure. The study found that political participation, accountability and transparency are passionate in Katsina state. It was also found that, periodic election, rule of law and non-partisan politics are very present in the state. This study is limited as the researcher used questionnaire only as a tool for data generation as it uses simple percentage only which will never show the level of relationship.

Mato and Jacob (2011) carried out a study on the Nexus of democracy and development in Nigeria. Data were collected and analysed using theoretical approach. The finding revealed that there is no good governance that guarantees development which Nigerians Crave for. Unemployment, inequality poverty as well as all other indices of low/poor quality of life are experienced and present in this country. The study found that although Nigeria practices democracy, Nigeria is still under developed. While Okeke (2014) conducted research on nexus between democracy and service delivery for sustainable development in Katsina state local governments using critical mode of research and employing political economy framework as a theoretical framework for the study. It was argued that, the underpinning brand of democracy fully shows the tendencies of democratic capitalism, otherwise known as capitalist democracy.

The Finding of the study highly support the thesis that, there is politics without progress in Nigeria. The study found that there is democracy without development in Nigeria. The study is also limited as it was unable to identify the methodology and tools of analysis for the work.

Nathaniel (2012) noted that meaningful development cannot take place in any country without a healthy population. Nigeria, a country endowed with rich human and natural resources is one of the developing countries of the world having a rising profile of poverty. Thus, it becomes imperative that an efficient public health care system is very essential for reducing the incidence of poverty and the poverty trap. It is also necessary for economic growth and development. Moreover, efforts towards improving the public health care delivery system in Nigeria would contribute to reducing poverty in the country. Therefore, the following strategies can help improve the performance of the public healthcare system: First, the government's expenditure on healthcare service delivery should be increased. This will make it possible for medical facilities to be improved in public hospitals and for health workers adequately remunerated. This is necessary because the current public expenditure on health care service delivery is grossly below international standards. Okoye (2009) in a study titled Access to Primary Health Care Services and Child Mortality reveals that poor access to primary health care services is blamed, in part, on Government negligence which is manifested in lack of training and re-training of health workers; inadequate supervision of health workers; lack of medical supplies and consumables as well as maintenance of the existing health facilities. Further, the result also shows that the people's poor access to primary health care services is influenced by the people's lack of knowledge about the services available at the primary health care centres. For instance, even though people were aware of immunization and insecticide-treated nets, they still fail to utilize these services.

Methodology

This study used the survey method to collect data from respondents; the population of the study consist of 250 randomly selected residents within the study area. A four-point Likert scale was used for analysis of the collected data, while 2.5 was arrived at as the threshold value ($1+2 +3 + 4 = 10/4 = 2.5$). data collected were analyse with the use of SPSS and Microsoft Excel and presented in frequency tables and percentages.

Demographics of the Respondents

Table 1. Demography

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	122	48.8
Female	133	51.2
Local Government		
Abi	41	16.4
Boki	41	16.4
Etung	42	16.8
Ikom	42	16.8
Obubra	42	16.8
Yakurr	42	16.8

Source: Authors computation with extracts from SPSS

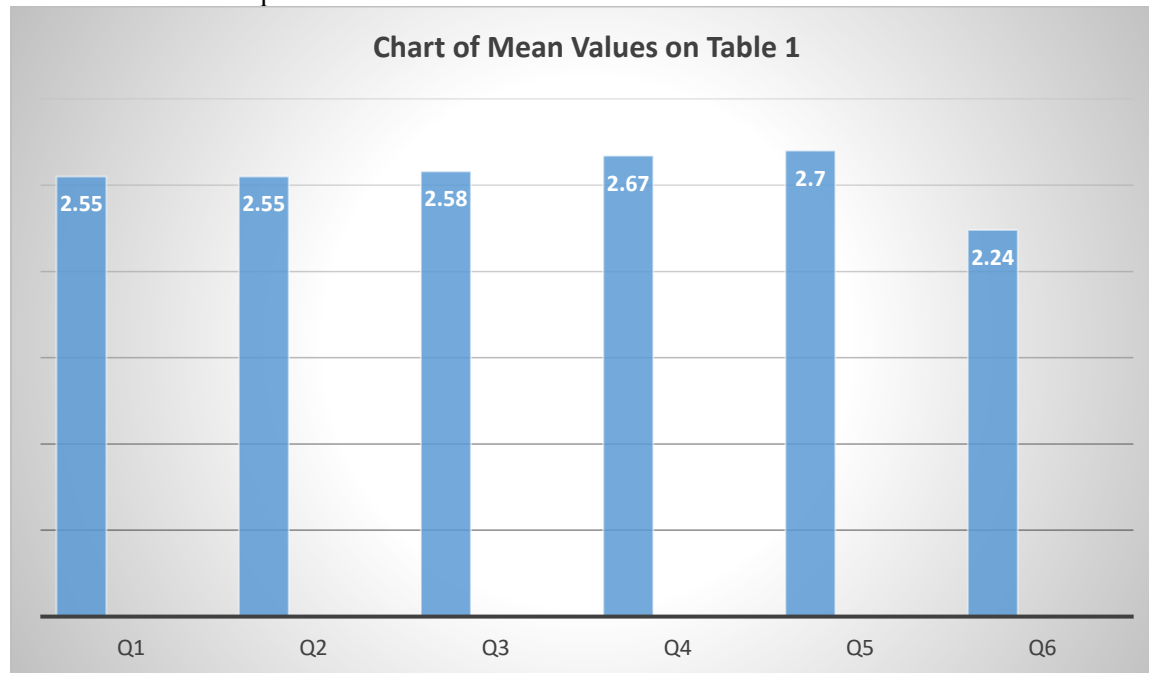
Demographic outcome showed that, 48.8% of the respondents were males while 51.2% were females.

Democratic Governance in Primary Health Care PHC

Table 2. Democratic Governance in Primary Health Care PHC

S/No	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1.	Democratic governance in Cross River State promotes transparency in the recruitment of PHC workers	43 (17.2)	73 (29.2)	87 (34.8)	47 (18.8)	2.55	Positive
2.	The government ensures fairness and equal opportunity during the recruitment of PHC staff	36 (14.4)	85 (34.0)	85 (34.0)	44 (17.6)	2.55	Positive
3.	Recruitment policies for PHC workers are influenced by the democratic principles of accountability and participation	34 (13.6)	81 (32.4)	91 (36.4)	44 (17.6)	2.58	Positive
4.	There is adequate involvement of the community in decisions related to PHC recruitment	24 (9.6)	85 (34.0)	90 (36.0)	51 (20.4)	2.67	Positive
5.	Democratic governance has improved funding for primary health care services in the Central Senatorial District	27 (10.8)	75 (30.8)	93 (37.2)	55 (22.0)	2.70	Positive
6.	The current democratic administration prioritizes recruitment of qualified health personnel for PHC	95 (38.0)	30 (12.0)	94 (37.6)	31 (12.4)	2.24	Negative
						2.59	Positive

Source: Authors computation with extracts from SPSS



Source: Authors computation

Respondents' responses in regards to Democratic Governance in Primary Health Care PHC on Table 2 indicated that, for question 1, the mean arrived at is 2.55 which is slightly above the

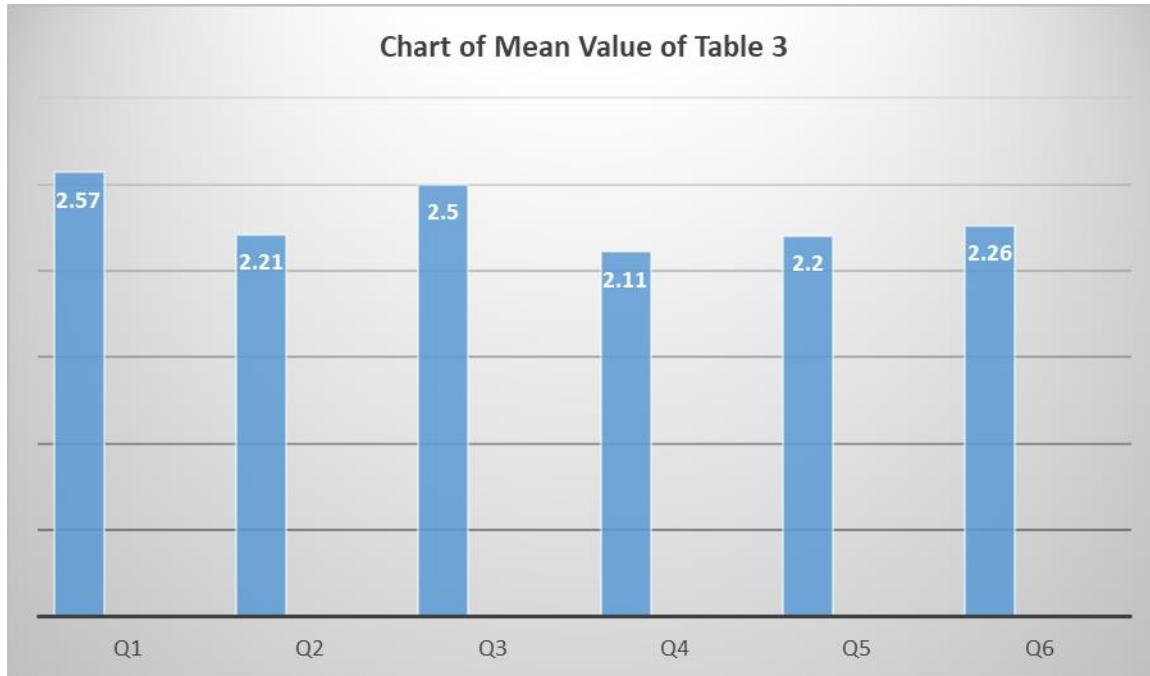
threshold value of 2.5, implying that, Democratic governance in Cross River State promotes transparency in the recruitment of PHC workers. On question 2, the mean is 2.55 slightly above the threshold value meaning that, the government ensures fairness and equal opportunity during the recruitment of PHC staff. While question for question 3, the mean is at 2.58 slightly above the threshold value of 2.5, implying that, recruitment policies for PHC workers are influenced by the democratic principles of accountability and participation. For question 4, the mean value is at 2.67 also slightly above the mean value threshold, this means that, there is adequate involvement of the community in decisions related to PHC recruitment. While for question 5 the mean value is 2.70 above the threshold value meaning Democratic governance has improved funding for primary health care services in the Central Senatorial District. And for question 6, the mean is 2.24 below the threshold value of 2.5, this implies that, the current democratic administration did not prioritize recruitment of qualified health personnel for PHC centers in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. However, the overall mean is 2.59, this means that, Democratic Governance has positive influence in Primary Health Care PHC service delivery in Cross River State Central Senatorial District.

Recruitment Processes in Primary Health Care

Table 3. Recruitment Processes in Primary Health Care

S/No	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1.	Recruitment of PHC workers in Cross River State CSD follows a clear and standardized procedure	31 (12.4)	86 (34.4)	93 (37.2)	40 (16.0)	2.57	Positive
2.	The recruitment process for PHC workers is free from political interference and favoritism	63 (25.2)	99 (39.6)	61 (24.4)	27 (10.8)	2.21	Negative
3.	The recruitment process adequately screens candidates based on qualifications and experience	37 (14.8)	91 (36.4)	83 (33.2)	39 (15.6)	2.50	Positive
4.	Recruitment advertisements and vacancies for PHC positions are sufficiently communicated to the public	74 (29.6)	100 (40.0)	51 (20.4)	25 (10.0)	2.11	Negative
5.	Recruitment exercises attract enough qualified candidates to fill PHC vacancies	67 (26.8)	95 (38.0)	60 (24.0)	28 (11.8)	2.20	Negative
6.	The recruitment process ensures that local residents from the Central Senatorial District are given preference	59 (23.6)	96 (38.4)	65 (26.0)	30 (12.0)	2.26	Negative
						2.30	Negative

Source: Authors computation with extracts from SPSS



Source: Authors computation

Table 3 on recruitment processes in PHC it showed that respondents responses, for question 1, the mean value stood at 2.57 above the threshold value of 2.5 and indication that, recruitment of PHC workers in Cross River State CSD follows a clear and standardized procedure. For question 2, the recruitment process for PHC workers is not free from political interference and favoritism, based on the mean value 2.21 which is below the threshold value of 2.5. While for question 3, the recruitment process adequately screens candidates based on qualifications and experience, this is derived as a result of the mean value of 2.50 which is at the threshold value. For question 4, recruitment advertisements and vacancies for PHC positions are not sufficiently communicated to the public, this is based on the mean value of 2.11 which falls short of the threshold value of 2.5. For question 5, recruitment exercises do not attract enough qualified candidates to fill PHC vacancies, the mean value at 2.20 echoed this. While for question 6, The recruitment process does not ensure that local residents from the Central Senatorial District are given preference, the mean value of 2.26 allows for this as it stands below the threshold value of 2.5. However, the overall mean at 2.30 is an indication that recruitment Processes in Primary Health Care does not meets residents' expectations.

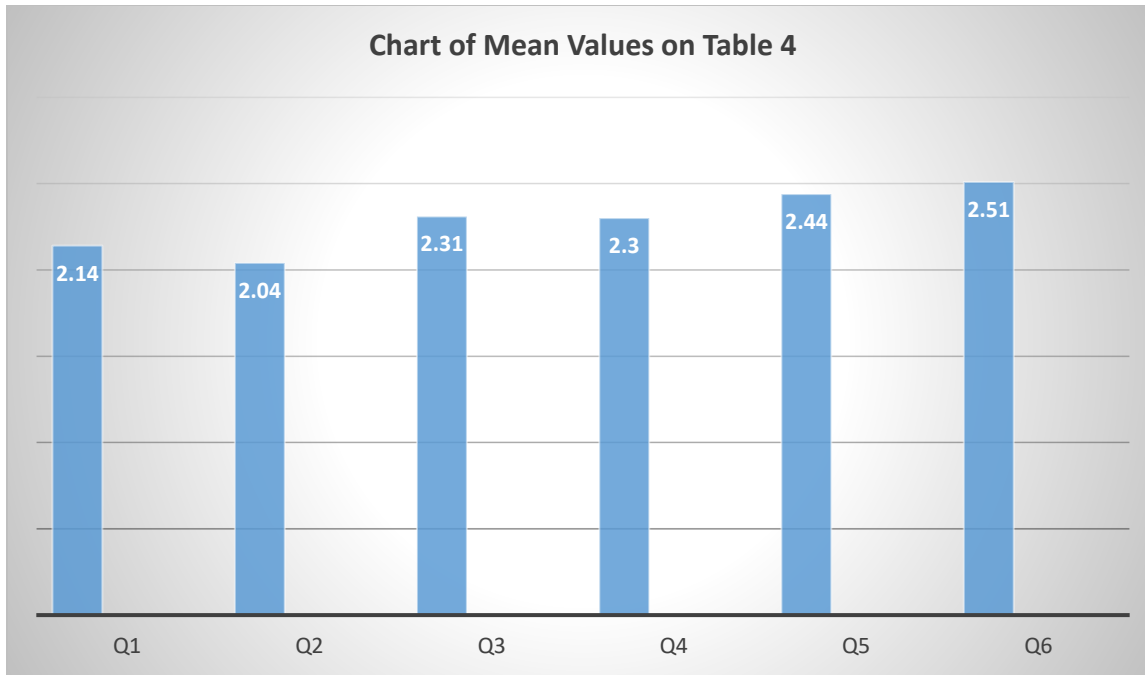
Impact of Recruitment on PHC Service Delivery

Table 4. On Impact of Recruitment on PHC Service Delivery

S/No	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1.	The recruitment of qualified personnel has positively impacted the quality of PHC services	65 (26.0)	109 (43.6)	52 (20.8)	24 (9.6)	2.14	Negative
2.	There is sufficient staffing in PHC centers to meet the healthcare needs of the population	81 (32.4)	102 (40.8)	43 (17.2)	24 (9.6)	2.04	Negative
3.	Recruited PHC workers demonstrate adequate professional competence and dedication	55 (22.0)	93 (37.2)	72 (28.8)	30 (12.0)	2.31	Negative
4.	Recruitment exercises are timely and consistent with the needs of PHC facilities	60 (20.4)	92 (36.8)	61 (24.4)	37 (14.8)	2.30	Negative

5.	Democratic governance supports ongoing capacity-building and training for PHC staff	41 (16.4)	90 (36.0)	87 (34.8)	32 (12.8)	2.44	Negative
6.	Recruitment and retention of health workers in PHC centers improve health outcomes in the district	48 (19.2)	79 (31.6)	71 (28.4)	52 (20.8)	2.51	Positive
						2.29	Negative

Source: Authors computation with extracts from SPSS



Source: Authors computation

In Table 4, on impact of recruitment on PHC service delivery indicated that, for question 1, recruitment of qualified personnel has not positively impacted the quality of PHC services based on the mean value of 2.14 which falls short of the threshold value of 2.5. for question 2, the mean of 2.04 fall short of the threshold value of 2.5, meaning that, there is no sufficient staffing in PHC centers to meet the healthcare needs of the population. For question 3, the mean value falls short of the threshold value of 2.5, this means that, recruited PHC workers do not demonstrate adequate professional competence and dedication. For question 4, recruitment exercises are not timely and consistent with the needs of PHC facilities based on the threshold value which is below at 2.30. For question 5, the outcome implies Democratic governance did not support ongoing capacity-building and training for PHC staff, based on the mean value of 2.44. However, for question 6 outcome implies that, recruitment and retention of health workers in PHC centers improve health outcomes in the district, based on the mean value of 2.51. The overall mean of 2.29 is an indication of negativity, and implies that, recruitment of staff has no impact on PHC Service Delivery in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Discussion

This study examined Democratic Governance and Primary Health Care Service Recruitment in Nigeria: A case of Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. And outcome indicated that,

Democratic Governance has positive influence in Primary Health Care PHC service delivery in Cross River State Central Senatorial District. Furthermore, recruitment Processes in Primary Health Care does not meets residents' expectations. While, recruitment of staff has no impact on PHC Service Delivery in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. The positive influence of Democratic Governance may refer to the role of public institutions in living up to their responsibility in the provision of public goods in this case PHC services. Improved health care services led to healthy citizens to make meaningful political and economic contribution to the growth of the country. This outcome might be influence by the presence of PHC facilities spread across the Central Senatorial District of Cross Rivers State, and many other places in Nigeria, although one of the major challenges might be functionality and the sustainability of functionality of these facilities. Furthermore, the residents indicated that the recruitment process did not meet their expectation which implies poor services delivery, by the health care workers resulting from selective recruitment, which led to their incompetence. This led to the residents to submits that staff recruitment has no impact on PHC service delivery. These findings are in line with that of Nathaniel (2012) where he finds that, health care workers over the years have lost sense of service delivery. However, his reasons might imply lack of competence of inadequate numbers of health care workers to meet the increasing needs of the rising population.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study interrogated Democratic Governance and Primary Health Care Service Recruitment in Nigeria: A case of Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. And outcome indicated that, Democratic Governance has positive influence in Primary Health Care PHC service delivery Furthermore, recruitment Processes in Primary Health Care does not meets residents' expectations. While, recruitment of staff has no impact on PHC Service Delivery. Based on this findings, the concluded that; Democratic Governance has not Impacted Primary Healthcare Service Recruitment in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. On this premise, the following recommendations were made;

Recruitment process for staff of primary health care institutions be made based on merit, this will improve on health outcomes of residents wherever the PHC facilities are located.

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