ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFICIENCY OF TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES AT USATV IN DAGUPAN CITY

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Abstract

This study evaluated the effectiveness of technical support services provided by USATV in Dagupan City, a local internet and cable service provider recognized for offering fiber connections and expanding its coverage in Northern Luzon. The research aimed to evaluate average response times and resolution durations, understand customer perceptions of service quality, identify common challenges faced during service interactions, and propose best practices to enhance technical support operations. Using a descriptive research design, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods, including surveys and thematic analysis. A structured questionnaire measured customer satisfaction, response efficiency, and service quality, while unstructured interviews uncovered deeper issues and suggestions from users and support personnel.

Findings revealed that USATV's technical support performance showed moderate efficiency, with varying response and resolution times across service cases. Customers expressed mixed satisfaction levels, citing communication delays, recurring technical issues, and limited follow-up. Thematic analysis identified key challenges, including slow troubleshooting, insufficient technician training, and inconsistent service protocols. Based on the findings, the study recommends implementing a formal ticketing system, conducting regular staff training and upskilling, improving communication procedures, and incorporating quality management practices, such as ISO 9001 frameworks.

The results of this study provide valuable insights for USATV management and other regional ISPs seeking to improve their delivery service. Furthermore, the proposed best practices may serve as a basis for operational reforms, customer retention strategies, and the design of more responsive and effective technical support systems in the local telecommunications sector.

Keywords: Technical Support Efficiency, USATV, Response Time, Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, Dagupan City

1. Introduction

In an era where digital connectivity is no longer a luxury but a critical necessity, the efficiency of technical support services provided by Internet service providers (ISPs) assumes heightened importance. This study examines the efficiency of technical support services at USATV, a locally based fiber and cable provider operating in Dagupan City, Philippines (Trigger & Harrison, 2006). Daunting challenges like unreliable service, slow incident handling, and poor communication have frequently been spotlighted by consumers, underscoring an urgent need for systematic investigation into service delivery practices (Amsal & Kartika, 2023). For example, in various local discussions, internet subscribers lament long wait times, inadequate follow-up, and ineffective customer service management—frustrations that punctuate the everyday experiences of Filipinos living in increasingly online-dependent communities (Bustillo & Aguilos, 2022).

To situate USATV's technical support within its broader regulatory context, it is essential to consider the guiding legal and policy framework. Republic Act No. 7925, known as the Public Telecommunications Policy Act of 1995, mandates that telecommunications users are entitled to "thorough and prompt investigation of, and action upon complaints," as well as reliable, non-

discriminatory service provision. Complementing RA 7925, regulatory requirements such as licensing, quality-of-service standards, and consumer protection are overseen by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), as specified under the same Act and further elaborated through subsequent rules. More recently, amendments to the Public Service Act (RA 11659) have liberalized the sector—redefining public utilities, easing foreign investments, and affirming the importance of efficient, accessible services. Together, these policy imperatives highlight the responsibility of providers like USATV to uphold operational reliability and ensure responsive support for customers (Nikityuk, 2020).

Despite such a strong regulatory foundation, scholarly studies focusing on the efficiency of technical support within Philippine ISPs remain limited. Globally, research into broadband ISP performance reveals that customer-perceived service quality is significantly influenced by response latency, complaint resolution effectiveness, and continuity of support (Khan et al., 2023). Such findings suggest that even minor delays or communication gaps can erode user trust and satisfaction. In the Philippines, anecdotal evidence—shared in public forums and media—points to deep-rooted service delivery issues across multiple ISPs, reinforcing the relevance of empirical studies on technical support efficacy (Raji et al., 2021). Yet few academic or policy analyses have systematically documented these experiences, particularly within regional, non-metropolitan contexts like Dagupan City.

Moreover, USATV's expansion across Northern Luzon, coupled with its reputation for fiber connectivity and promotional installation offers, positions it as a compelling case for investigation. The company operates within a competitive local market where customer trust and service dependability are key differentiators (Luningning, 2023). By assessing metrics such as average response times, issue resolution duration, communication quality, and customer satisfaction, this study endeavors not only to map the current state of technical support operations but also to align its findings with national standards of service mandated by law (Amsal & Kartika, 2023).

Against this backdrop, the present study adopts a descriptive research design, employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture a well-rounded picture of USATV's technical support landscape. Survey questionnaires will quantify user satisfaction and perceived effectiveness, while structured interviews with support personnel will surface operational realities, procedural bottlenecks, and areas for improvement (Galdolage, 2022). Through thematic analysis aligned with service quality dimensions recognized in both regulatory frameworks and existing ISP performance literature, the study seeks to illuminate the gap between regulatory expectations and on-the-ground service delivery realities.

This research thus creates a clear research space by establishing the need (users' frustration and limited scholarship on regional ISP support), the gap (absence of empirical data on technical support efficiency in local Philippine markets), and the purpose (to evaluate performance against legal standards and propose evidence-based, context-appropriate enhancements). It will produce findings relevant to USATV management and other regional ISPs alike, offering grounded recommendations—including the potential adoption of digital ticketing systems, structured communication protocols, staff upskilling, and alignment with ISO-style quality frameworks—that reflect both customer expectations and regulatory obligations.

In summary, this study underscores the critical role of reliable technical support in ensuring service quality and customer satisfaction in the Philippines' evolving digital infrastructure. By examining USATV's technical support services within the legal mandates of RA 7925, NTC regulations, and broader Public Service Act reforms, and anchoring the inquiry in both empirical measurement and qualitative exploration, it strives to contribute meaningful insights to regional telecommunications practice and policy.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design utilizing a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively assess the efficiency of technical support services at USATV in Dagupan City. Quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaires administered to customers to measure service performance indicators such as average response time, resolution duration, and perceived quality and effectiveness of technical support. These numerical findings were complemented by qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with both customers and technical support personnel, which provided deeper insights into recurring challenges, service interaction dynamics, and potential areas for improvement. This design was deemed appropriate as it allowed for the systematic collection, analysis, and integration of both statistical measures and narrative accounts, ensuring a holistic evaluation of the technical support services in alignment with the study's objectives and the regulatory framework governing telecommunications service quality in the Philippines. relevant for improving grammar proficiency in authentic classroom settings.

2.2 Participants

The study consisted of two primary groups: customers of USATV's fiber internet and cable television services in Dagupan City, and the company's technical support personnel. Customer respondents were purposively selected to include individuals who had recent interactions with the technical support team, thereby ensuring that their feedback reflected current service experiences. Technical support staff, including front-line helpdesk agents and field technicians, were likewise included to provide operational perspectives and firsthand accounts of challenges encountered in service delivery. This selection was intended to capture a balanced view of both service recipients and providers, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of technical support efficiency and aligning with best practices in service quality assessment studies.

2.3 Instrumentation

The study utilized two primary research instruments: a structured survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The survey questionnaire, designed to gather quantitative data, consisted of sections measuring average response times, resolution durations, and customer perceptions of service quality and effectiveness, using a combination of Likert-scale items and time-based metrics. The semi-structured interview guide was employed to elicit qualitative insights from both customers and technical support personnel regarding recurring service challenges, communication gaps, and potential areas for process improvement. Both instruments were subjected to content validation by a panel of experts in information and communications technology (ICT) services and research methodology to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. Pilot testing was conducted to refine question structure and wording, thereby enhancing reliability and ensuring that the tools effectively captured the multifaceted dimensions of technical support efficiency.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data gathered from the survey questionnaires were systematically tallied, tabulated, and subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, specifically employing mean and standard deviation, to determine the average response times, resolution durations, and customer perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of USATV's technical support services. These statistical tools provided a quantitative basis for identifying performance trends and levels of satisfaction among respondents. Meanwhile, qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring issues, challenges, and

improvement opportunities from the perspectives of both customers and technical support personnel. This dual approach allowed for the triangulation of findings, ensuring that quantitative results were complemented and contextualized by qualitative insights, thereby enhancing the validity, depth, and comprehensiveness of the study's conclusions.

3 Results

The study revealed that the efficiency of technical support services at USATV demonstrated both strengths and areas for improvement. Quantitative analysis showed that the average response time for addressing customer concerns was 3.8 hours. In comparison, the average resolution duration was 9.5 hours, indicating that while some issues were addressed promptly, others required extended periods to resolve. The standard deviation for response time (±1.6 hours) and resolution duration (±4.2 hours) reflected a considerable variability in service delivery, suggesting inconsistency in operational efficiency. This was further supported by customer satisfaction ratings, which averaged 3.42 out of 5, signifying moderate satisfaction but underscoring the need for systematic improvements in handling service requests.

Customer perception data revealed that while respondents appreciated the courtesy and professionalism of USATV's technical support personnel, they consistently identified recurring concerns that hindered service effectiveness. Among these, 62% of customers cited delays in receiving status updates, 55% experienced repetitive troubleshooting procedures before resolution, and 48% noted unclear or incomplete explanations regarding the cause of service issues. Despite these challenges, 68% of respondents agreed that technical staff demonstrated competence in problem-solving, albeit constrained by procedural inefficiencies and resource limitations. These findings highlight the gap between technical expertise and service process optimization, suggesting that customer experience is shaped not only by problem resolution but also by efficiency and transparency of communication.

The qualitative results from interviews with support personnel further contextualized the quantitative findings. Support staff reported that their workload was often influenced by peak service demand periods, with an average of 15–20 tickets per day per technician, leading to delays in promptly attending to all customers. They also cited insufficient technical tools, lack of integrated issue tracking, and limited training updates as major barriers to operational efficiency. Furthermore, both customers and personnel identified the absence of a structured escalation process, which often prolonged the resolution of complex issues. These results collectively emphasize the need for strategic interventions, such as adopting a robust ticketing system, implementing targeted training programs, and establishing standardized communication and escalation protocols to enhance the overall efficiency of USATV's technical support services.

4 Discussion

The study aligns with the results of Sahhar et al. (2021), who examined the operational efficiency of a cable and internet service provider in Central Luzon and found that while technical personnel were generally competent, inefficiencies in service resolution were often linked to inconsistent internal processes and a lack of updated tools. Similar to the present study, Villanueva reported that customers valued technical expertise but were dissatisfied with delays in communication and prolonged service interruptions. This corroboration underscores the idea that the quality of technical support is not solely dependent on the knowledge of personnel but also on the effectiveness of organizational systems and workflows. Furthermore, both studies emphasize the role of consistent communication in building customer trust, a finding consistent with Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's SERVQUAL model (1988), which identifies reliability and responsiveness as critical dimensions of service quality.

In parallel, Kuehnel et al. (2019) conducted a study on customer service management in the Philippine telecommunications sector. They reported that long response times and the

absence of proactive updates were among the top contributors to customer dissatisfaction. These findings mirror the results of the current study, where 62% of respondents expressed concern over delayed status updates. Lorenzo and Cruz further highlighted that the integration of automated ticketing and notification systems significantly improved service ratings. This reinforces the current study's recommendation for USATV to adopt a more structured escalation and communication protocol, as automation not only reduces response time variability but also ensures consistent follow-up with clients.

Moreover, the results of the present research resonate with Novak et al. (2019), who studied the efficiency of after-sales technical support in the electronics industry. Their study found that workload distribution, lack of advanced troubleshooting equipment, and inadequate training were key factors that slowed down resolution times. In USATV's case, technical staff similarly reported handling 15–20 tickets daily, leading to service delays. Guzman et al. argued that workload management and continuous skills development directly influence operational performance, suggesting that organizations should prioritize both process reengineering and employee capacity-building to maintain high service standards. This supports the current study's call for targeted training programs and the provision of more sophisticated technical tools for support staff.

Finally, Purba and Hidayati (2020) investigated service delivery gaps in local broadcast and cable companies, concluding that customer perceptions of efficiency were significantly improved when companies implemented clear escalation pathways for complex cases. In both Purba's work and the present study, the lack of a structured escalation process was identified as a critical barrier to quick resolutions. By comparing these findings, it becomes evident that the efficiency of technical support services is strengthened not only by enhancing technical skills but also by establishing operational protocols that prevent bottlenecks in service delivery. Collectively, these related studies reinforce the conclusion that USATV's efficiency can be significantly improved through systemic interventions that integrate technology, training, and structured processes to meet customer expectations effectively.

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