

Tourist Profiling Using Modified AIO Model: Case Study in Alegria, Surigao Del Norte

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Abstract

Tourist profiling can support destination planning and product development, but visitor preferences need to be considered alongside destination readiness, community interests and resource constraints. This study profiled tourists visiting Alegria, Surigao del Norte, Philippines, using a Modified Activities, Interests and Opinions (AIO) Model integrated with Push-Pull Motivation Theory and destination-equity constructs. A descriptive concurrent mixed-method design was used in this study, which included 200 tourists who participated in interviews using convenience intercept sampling between September and November 2024. Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the demographic and travel characteristics, travel motives, destination equity and advocacy-related behavioral responses from the quantitative data and the five qualitative data sets were thematically analyzed and combined with quantitative results. Visitors were mainly younger, female, college-educated and came to visit the attractions and destinations in the region. High scores were obtained for internal push motivation (M=4.20), destination pull attributes (M=4.26), destination equity (M=4.03) and behavioural intention (M=4.27). The qualitative responses focused on the elements of relaxation, escape, family and social connection, nature, fresh air, hospitality and value and the recommendations included signage, safety, infrastructure, more activities and improvements to existing attractions. Visitation focused on Lumundo Waterfalls in order to promote a managed diversification. The results are in favour of positioning Alegria as a nature-based product, a relaxation product and a family product and consider the carrying capacity, protection of the environment, community interests, readiness of infrastructure and the distribution of tourism benefits aspects, in addition to the long-term management considerations of the destination, in the process of tourism planning.

Keywords: Destination Marketing, Product Positioning, Sustainable Tourism, Tourist Behavior, Travel Pattern.

Introduction

Tourism has become a significant driver of economic growth and community development, contributing to employment generation, local entrepreneurship and destination competitiveness (1). As tourism markets become competitive, destinations need information about visitor characteristics, preferences, behaviors and motivations to develop appropriate products and services (2). Tourist profiling describes demographic, behavioral and motivational characteristics and supports destination planning, segmentation, product development and promotion (3-5). Previous tourism research has shown that demographic characteristics, travel patterns, lifestyle and motivation can influence destination choice, travel intention, satisfaction and loyalty (6-8). However, demographic profiling alone provides only a partial understanding because it does not explain what visitors value, why they travel, how

they evaluate destinations, or how these evaluations influence behavioral responses (9).

Lifestyle-oriented approaches provide a broader perspective. The Activities, Interests and Opinions (AIO) framework examines what tourists do, value and think about their experiences, supporting lifestyle segmentation and destination positioning (10). Push-Pull Motivation Theory complements AIO by distinguishing internal travel motives from destination attributes that attract tourists. Internal push motives may include relaxation, escape, adventure, family bonding, fulfillment and social interaction, whereas pull factors may include scenic beauty, recreation, cultural experiences, safety, hospitality and facilities (11, 12).

Destination evaluation is important because experiences and perceptions may influence visitors' relationships with destinations.

Customer-Based Destination Equity (CBDE)

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complements this perspective through destination awareness, association, perceived quality and loyalty. Existing research examines destination perceptions, experiences, satisfaction, loyalty and behavioral outcomes, but these perspectives are often treated separately (13-15). There is less evidence on how these perspectives can be integrated within an emerging, municipality-level destination, particularly in the Philippine context. Alegria, Surigao del Norte, represents an emerging destination with waterfalls, caves, hot springs, lake-sunset areas, cafés and other nature-based attractions. Lumundo Waterfalls is a prominent attraction, while Doña Conchita Café, Poblacion Lake Sunset, Alipao Lake Sunset and Tabon-tabon Cave offer complementary experiences. Earlier tourism research has emphasized the importance of infrastructure, destination quality, visitor experience and tourism-product diversification, but much of the available evidence concerns destinations other than Alegria (16, 17). Consequently, limited empirical evidence describes the combined demographic, behavioral, psychographic, motivational, destination-equity and qualitative characteristics of Alegria's tourists (18). Product positioning should consider tourist demand alongside destination readiness, environmental protection, community interests, infrastructure, safety and resource capacity. In an emerging destination, understanding visitor preferences, demand concentration and needed improvements can support balanced product development and visitor management. Against this

background, the present study aimed to develop a comprehensive profile of tourists visiting Alegria, Surigao del Norte, using a Modified AIO Model integrated with Push–Pull Motivation Theory and CBDE constructs. Specifically, the study aimed to: (a) describe the demographic and travel profile of tourists visiting Alegria; (b) determine tourists' travel motivations in terms of internal push and destination pull factors; (c) assess tourists' perceptions of destination equity and advocacy-related behavioral responses; and (d) explore tourists' activities, interests, opinions and recommendations and integrate these findings with the quantitative evidence to inform tourism product positioning.

The study's novelty lies in integrating psychographic profiling, travel motivation, destination equity, advocacy related behavioral responses and qualitative visitor accounts within an emerging Philippine municipality. Rather than using tourist preferences as the sole basis for destination development, the study interprets visitor evidence in relation to destination readiness, attraction concentration, environmental considerations, community interests and the need for capacity sensitive tourism planning. This approach provides a cohesive basis for identifying a defensible tourism position for Alegria while recognizing that sustainable destination development requires alignment between market demand, resource conditions and local management priorities.

Table 1: Comparison of Original AIO Dimensions and the Modified Framework in this Study

Dimension	Original Concept	Operationalization in this study
Activities	What consumers do during leisure and travel	Preferred activities and attractions visited in Alegria; visitation concentration is used to identify diversification opportunities.
Interests	What consumers are interested in or value	Tourist interest in destination information and attraction attributes, including nature, scenic environments, relaxation, recreation and social/family experiences.
Opinion	How consumers evaluate products, experiences and issues	Destination association, perceived destination quality, qualitative evaluations, concerns and recommendations.
Integrated Push-Pull	Not an original AIO dimension; added as a motivational lens.	Internal push motives: relaxation, adventure, family bonding and social interaction
Customer-Based Destination Equity	Not an original AIO dimension; added as a destination-equity lens.	Destination awareness, destination association, perceived destination quality and destination loyalty.
Advocacy-Related Behavioral Responses	Not an original AIO dimension; added as an outcome-oriented construct	Recommendation, experience-sharing and intention to promote Alegria.

Not: AIO = Activities, Interests and Opinion

Table 1 presents the modified AIO framework that adapts the original AIO psychographic dimensions to a destination context and integrates them with

Push-Pull Motivation Theory and CBDE. The relationships are summarized in Figure 1 (19, 20).

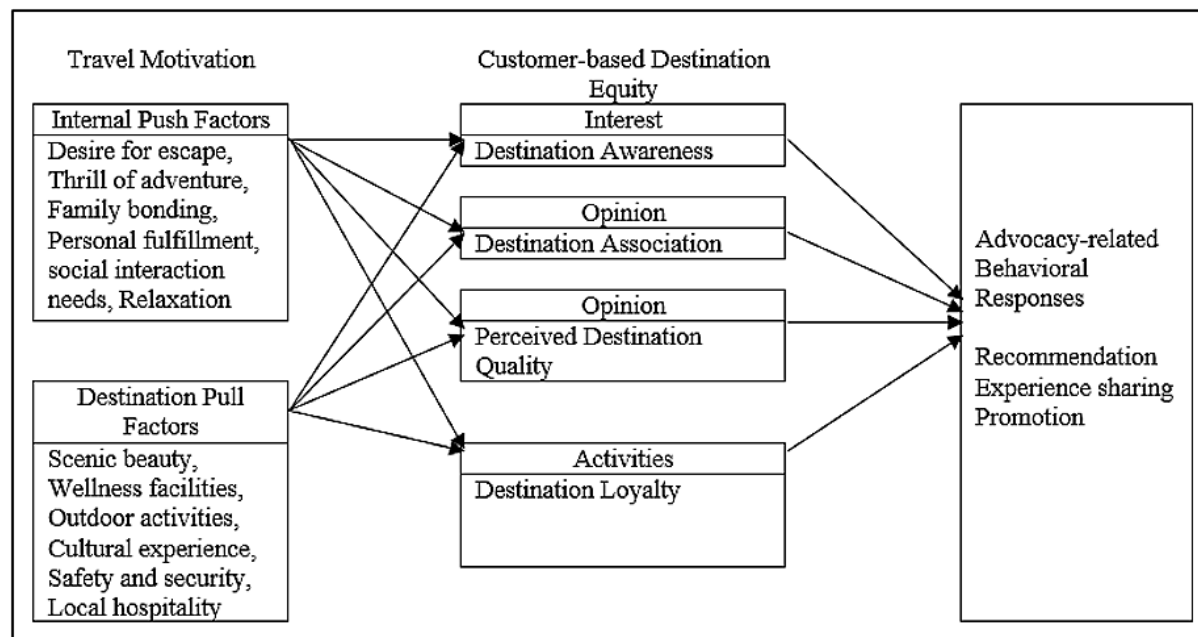


Figure 1: Modified AIO Framework Integrating Travel Motivation, Customer-based Destination Equity and Advocacy-related Behavioral Responses

Figure 1 illustrates the study's integrated conceptual framework. The Modified AIO Model serves as the organizing psychographic lens, while Push-Pull Motivation Theory provides the travel-motivation perspective and Customer-Based Destination Equity captures destination awareness, destination association, perceived destination quality and destination loyalty. Advocacy-related behavioral responses represent recommendation, experience sharing and promotion. The quantitative push and pull constructs correspond to the Likert scale items administered in the questionnaire. Additional factors identified through the open-ended responses were treated as qualitative themes. The framework is intended as an integrative profiling framework rather than a causal path model.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive concurrent mixed-method design to develop a comprehensive tourist profile of visitors to Alegria, Surigao del Norte, approximately located at 9° 28' 0.59" N Longitude: 125° 34' 22.79" E. The quantitative strand described demographic characteristics, travel patterns, travel motivations, destination equity perceptions and advocacy related behavioral responses, while the qualitative strand

explored tourists' activities, interests, opinions, experiences and recommendations. The two strands were collected concurrently during the same field period, analyzed separately using their respective procedures and integrated during interpretation to identify convergence and complementarity. Mixed-method integration was treated as an interpretive step rather than as a statistical combination of the datasets (21).

The study was conducted from September to November 2024 in selected tourism attractions and supporting establishments in Alegria, Surigao del Norte, Philippines. A total of 200 tourists participated. Because a complete sampling frame of visitors was unavailable, convenience intercept sampling was used. Tourists encountered at selected sites were invited to participate voluntarily. Five respondents were drawn from the 200 quantitative participants and provided open-ended responses during the same survey encounter. Enumerators followed the prescribed questionnaire questions and did not conduct additional probing, maintaining consistency in qualitative data collection. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert-type agreement scale for the measured items: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

For the interpretation of travel motivation, internal push factors refer to tourists' internal desires or needs that motivate travel. These include desire for escape, thrill of adventure, family bonding, personal fulfillment, social interaction needs and relaxation. Destination pull factors refer to attributes of the destination that attract tourists, namely scenic beauty, wellness facilities, outdoor activities, cultural experience, safety and security and local hospitality. A researcher-made questionnaire was developed from the Modified AIO Model, Push-Pull Motivation Theory and CBDE literature. It contained sections covering demographic and travel profile, travel motivation, destination awareness, destination association, perceived destination quality, destination loyalty, advocacy-related behavioral responses and open-ended questions on activities, interests, opinions and recommendations. The motivation items were rated using a five-point Likert scale. Internal push motivation comprised relaxation, adventure, family bonding and social interaction. Destination pull comprised scenic beauty, wellness facilities, cultural experiences and safety/security. CBDE was operationalized through destination awareness, destination association, perceived destination quality and destination loyalty. The behavioral intention items assessed recommendation, experience-sharing and promotion. The overall instrument demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.933$).

For quantitative analysis, frequencies and percentages summarized categorical demographic and travel variables, while means and standard deviations summarized the Like-type agreement-scale constructs. Respondent level composite scores were calculated by averaging the items belonging to each construct before inferential analyses. Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine the associations among travel motivation, Customer Based Destination Equity and behavioral intention. The Mann-Whitney U test was used for sex because the grouping variable had two independent categories, while the Kruskal-Wallis H test was used for age and visit frequency because these variables contained more than two independent groups. Shapiro-Wilk tests indicated non-normal distributions for the composite outcomes (all $p < .001$); consequently, non-parametric procedures were used. The

analyses assumed independent observations and independent comparison groups. For the group comparisons, Holm adjustment was applied to control the family-wise error rate. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = 0.05$, with $p < .05$ indicating a statistically significant result. Because the group comparisons were supplementary to the descriptive mixed-method objectives and the study was cross-sectional, statistically significant group differences were interpreted as non-causal and exploratory. Qualitative responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. Responses were reviewed, coded, grouped into related categories and organized into themes corresponding to the AIO framework and Push-Pull Motivation Theory. The analysis focused on recurring descriptions of activities, interests, opinions, motivations, destination attributes and recommendations (22). The quantitative and qualitative strands were merged during interpretation by comparing whether qualitative accounts converged with, complemented, or contextualized the quantitative patterns. The study adhered to established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the Local Government Unit of Alegria and relevant tourism stakeholders. All respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw participation at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained before participation. No personally identifiable information was collected and responses were used solely for academic and research purposes.

Results

Table 2 presents the visitor market was predominantly regional, female and college educated. The largest age group was 28–37 years (36%), followed by 18–27 years (31%) and 38–47 years (28%). Female respondents represented 58.5% of the sample, while 50.5% had college education. More than half reported monthly income of ₱5,001–₱10,000 (51.0%). Tourist attractions and destinations were the most common purpose of travel (54.5%), sightseeing was the dominant preferred activity (91.0%) and 52.0% were first-time visitors. Most respondents originated from Surigao del Norte (48.5%) and Agusan del Norte (35.0%), confirming the predominantly regional character of the visitor

market. Overall, the findings indicate that the visitor market of Alegria is largely composed of young adults, females, college educated

individuals, middle-income earners and tourists originating from nearby provinces.

Table 2: Distribution of Demographic Profiles of the Participants

Variable		Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-27 years old	62	31.00
	28-37 years old	72	36.00
	38-47 years old	56	28.00
	48-57 years old	10	5.00
Sex	Male	83	41.50
	Female	117	58.50
Marital Status	Single	103	51.50
	Married	92	46.00
	Widowed	5	2.50
Educational Attainment	Elementary	12	6.00
	High School	58	29.00
	College	101	50.50
	Graduate Studies	29	14.50
Monthly Income	3,000 below	36	18.00
	3,001-5,000	32	16.00
	5,001-10,000	102	51.00
	10,001-50,000	27	13.50
	Above 50,000	3	1.50
Purpose of Travel	Travel for Recreation/Leisure	68	34.00
	Tourist Attractions and Destinations	109	54.50
	Visit Family and Friends	21	10.50
	Meetings/Business	2	1.00
Source of Income	Salary	97	48.50
	Business	28	14.00
	Others/Allowance	75	37.50
Frequency of Visit	Once	104	52.00
	Twice	72	36.00
	Thrice or more	24	12.00
Preferred Activity	Sightseeing	182	91.00
	Adventure sports	13	6.50
	Religious activities	3	1.50
	Cultural activities	2	1.00
Place of origin	Agusan del Norte	70	35.00
	Agusan del Sur	6	3.00
	Surigao del Norte	97	48.50
	Surigao del Sur	4	2.00
	Davao City	8	4.00
	Cagayan de Oro	4	2.00
	Lanao del Norte	2	1.00
	Dinagat Island	4	2.00
Total		200	100

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Tourist Destinations Visited by Respondents

Tourist Destination Visited in Alegria	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Lumundo Waterfalls	200	100.00
Alipao Lake Sunset	27	13.50
Poblacion Lake Sunset	44	22.00
Doña Conchita Resort and Café	60	30.00
Puting Bato Cave	22	11.00
Pongtud Hotspring	16	8.00
Downhill Skateboarding	11	5.50

Table 3 is a multiple-response distribution; percentages therefore do not total 100%. Lumundo Waterfalls was visited by all respondents (100.0%), followed by Doña Conchita Resort and Cafe (30.0%), Poblacion Lake Sunset (22.0%), Alipao Lake Sunset (13.5%), Puting Bato Cave (11.0%), Pongtud Hotspring (8.0%) and

Downhill Skateboarding (5.5%). The 30.0% value for Doña Conchita Resort and Cafe is consistent with the frequency of 60 respondents. The concentration of visitation at Lumundo Waterfalls identifies it as the principal attraction anchor while also indicating opportunities for broader visitor dispersal.

Table 4: Tourists' Perception of Travel Motivation in Terms of Pull and Push Factors

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Push Factors			
Traveling for relaxation purposes is a major motivation for me.	4.21	0.69	Strongly Agree
I actively seek adventure and thrill when planning a trip.	4.16	0.72	Agree
Family bonding is a key reason for my travel decisions.	4.21	0.69	Strongly Agree
Social interaction plays a significant role in influencing my travel choices.	4.23	0.73	Strongly Agree
Categorical Mean	4.20	0.71	Agree
Pull Factors			
Scenic beauty greatly influences my decision to visit a destination.	4.31	0.70	Strongly Agree
The availability of wellness facilities affects my choice of travel destinations.	4.27	0.73	Strongly Agree
Experiencing different cultures is an important part of my travel plans.	4.19	0.73	Agree
Safety and security are key considerations when planning my travels.	4.28	0.72	Strongly Agree
Categorical Mean	4.26	0.72	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.23	0.72	Strongly Agree

Note: SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 4 presents the respondents' travel motivations in terms of push and pull factors. Internal push motivation obtained a categorical mean of 4.20, interpreted as "Agree." Social interaction had the highest internal-push mean ($M = 4.23$), followed by relaxation and family bonding ($M = 4.21$ each), while adventure and thrill obtained the lowest mean ($M = 4.16$). Destination pull obtained a higher categorical mean of 4.26, interpreted as "Strongly Agree." Scenic beauty had

the highest destination-pull mean ($M = 4.31$), followed by safety and security ($M = 4.28$) and wellness facilities ($M = 4.27$), while experiencing different cultures obtained the lowest mean ($M = 4.19$), interpreted as "Agree." The overall mean of 4.23 indicates that respondents strongly agreed with the push- and pull-factor statements, suggesting that both internal travel motives and external destination attributes were important considerations in their travel decisions.

Table 5: Tourists' Perception of Customer-based Destination Equity

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Destination Awareness			
I am familiar with Alegria as a tourist destination.	3.83	0.82	Agree
I have seen promotional materials or advertisements about Alegria.	4.00	0.76	Agree
I frequently come across information about Alegria in travel-related media	3.81	0.85	Agree
I feel well-informed about the attractions Aleria offers	3.78	0.89	Agree
Categorical Mean	3.85	0.83	Agree
Destination Association			
I strongly associate Alegria with cultural tourism experiences.	3.90	0.74	Agree
Alegria meets my expectations as a travel destination.	4.03	0.67	Agree
I believe Alegria provides unique travel experiences compared to other destinations.	4.10	0.65	Agree
I consider Alegria to be an ideal destination for relaxation and leisure.	4.07	0.73	Agree
Categorical Mean	4.02	0.70	Agree
Perceived Destination Quality			
Alegria provides good value for money in terms of tourism services.	4.08	0.86	Agree
I am satisfied with the facilities and infrastructure available in Alegria	4.14	0.79	Agree
I perceive Algeria as a well-maintained tourist destination.	4.16	0.78	Agree

Alegria offers quality experiences compared to other travel destinations.	4.19	0.73	Agree
Categorical Mean	4.14	0.79	Agree
Destination Loyalty			
I am satisfied with the variety of activities Alegria offers to tourists.	4.16	0.69	Agree
The quality of activities available in Alegria meets my expectations.	4.04	0.69	Agree
I feel strong emotional connection to Alegria based on my travel experiences.	4.05	0.70	Agree
I would choose to visit Alegria again because of the activities it provides.	4.19	0.78	Agree
Categorical Mean	4.11	0.72	Agree
Overall Mean	4.03	0.76	Agree

Note: SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 5 respondents generally agreed with the statements measuring Customer Based Destination Equity, as reflected by the overall mean of 4.03. Destination awareness obtained a categorical mean of 3.85, destination association obtained 4.02, perceived destination quality obtained 4.14 and destination loyalty obtained 4.11. Among the four dimensions, perceived destination quality obtained the highest categorical mean ($M = 4.14$), followed by destination loyalty ($M = 4.11$), destination association ($M = 4.02$) and destination awareness ($M = 3.85$). These findings indicate that respondents generally agreed that Alegria is familiar to them, has positive associations, provides quality destination experiences and

encourages favorable destination-related responses.

Table 6 presents the three items measuring advocacy-related behavioral responses toward Alegria. The overall mean of 4.27 indicates that respondents strongly agreed with the behavioral intention statements. Sharing travel experiences obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.33$), followed by the likelihood of promoting Alegria on social media or other platforms ($M = 4.27$) and recommending Alegria as a travel destination to friends and family ($M = 4.23$). These findings suggest a strong tendency among respondents to engage in positive advocacy toward Alegria.

Table 6: Tourists' Advocacy-Related Behavioral Responses toward Alegria

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
I would recommend Alegria as a travel destination to friends and family.	4.23	0.73	Strongly Agree
I have shared my travel experiences in Alegria with others.	4.33	0.68	Strongly Agree
I am likely to promote Alegria on social or other platforms.	4.27	0.81	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.27	0.74	Strongly Agree

Note: SD = Standard Deviation.

Supplementary non-parametric comparisons examined whether selected composite outcomes differed across sex, age and visit-frequency groups. After Holm adjustment, no statistically significant differences were observed across sex or age at the 0.05 level. Significant differences across visit-frequency groups were observed for internal push

motivation (Kruskal-Wallis $H = 10.025$, adjusted $p = .0333$), destination awareness ($H = 15.371$, adjusted $p = .0032$) and destination loyalty ($H = 14.215$, adjusted $p = .0049$). These comparisons were supplementary to the four study objectives and were interpreted as non-causal.

Table 7: Thematic Analysis of Activities, Interests, Opinions and Push-Pull Factors

Major Theme	Subthemes	Significant Statements
Internal Motivations for Visiting (Push Factors)	Relaxation and Escape	"It helps me get away from stress" (R3); "I come here to relax" (R2)
	Family Bonding and Social Connection	"We ate and went swimming" (R1); "Just for bonding and a date" (R5); "We celebrated a birthday" (R1)
	Adventure and Exploration	"It was really tiring going uphill, but I was still able to manage" (R2); "We got lost, but we still enjoyed it" (R5)
	Personal Fulfillment and Enjoyment	"It was worth it" (R3); "It was affordable" (R2)
	Scenic Beauty and Natural Environment	"The beauty really attracts you to come back" (R1); "I prefer nature-based destinations" (R4)

Destination Attributes that Attract Visitors (Pull Factors)	Fresh Air and Pleasant Climate	"What attracted me the first time was the fresh air" (R5)
	Hospitality and Service Quality	"I was also very satisfied" (R3); "Their services were good" (R2)
	Safety and Infrastructure Considerations	"Signage is important" (R1); "Safety along the trails is really important" (R3)
Visitor Recommendations for Destination Enhancement	Improved Infrastructure	"You can get confused if there are no signs" (R1)
	Affordability and Worth	"They should add more activities to make the experience more worthwhile" (R3)
	Additional Recreational Activities	"Maybe they should bring back the animals" (R2)
	Enhancement of Existing Attractions	

Note: R = Respondent.

Table 7 presents the thematic analysis of tourists' activities, interests, opinions and travel motivations using the Modified AIO Model and Push–Pull Motivation Theory. Three major themes emerged from the analysis: Internal Motivations for Visiting (Push Factors), Destination Attributes that Attract Visitors (Pull Factors) and Visitor Recommendations for Destination Enhancement. Under Internal Motivations for Visiting, respondents frequently described visiting Alegria as an opportunity for relaxation and escape from daily stress. This was reflected in statements such as "It helps me get away from stress" (R3) and "I come here to relax" (R2). Family bonding and social connection also emerged as important motivations, with participants mentioning activities such as swimming, dining, dating and celebrating special occasions. Adventure and exploration were likewise evident in participants' experiences, particularly in relation to hiking and discovering attractions. In addition, respondents expressed personal fulfillment and enjoyment through positive evaluations of their overall travel experience and perceived value for money. The second major theme, Destination Attributes that Attract Visitors, highlighted the characteristics of Alegria that influenced visitation. Scenic beauty and the natural environment were frequently mentioned by respondents, with several participants expressing appreciation for the municipality's landscapes and nature-based attractions. Fresh air and a pleasant climate were also identified as appealing destination attributes. Furthermore, respondents expressed satisfaction with the hospitality and services they received during their visit. Safety and infrastructure considerations were likewise raised, particularly regarding the importance of directional signages and safe access routes. The third major theme,

Visitor Recommendations for Destination Enhancement, reflected participants' suggestions for improving the tourism experience in Alegria. Respondents emphasized the need for improved infrastructure, particularly the provision of clearer signages. Additional recreational activities were also suggested to increase visitor engagement and enhance the overall tourism experience. Some participants further recommended the enhancement of existing attractions to encourage greater tourist interest and satisfaction.

Discussion

The demographic findings indicate that Alegria primarily attracts young and middle-aged adults, particularly females, college-educated individuals and middle-income earners from nearby provinces. The largest age group was 28–37 years (36%), followed by 18–27 years (31%) and 38–47 years (28%). The majority of respondents came from Surigao del Norte and Agusan del Norte, indicating a predominantly regional visitor market. This profile suggests that Alegria currently serves a nearby leisure market and has an opportunity to strengthen both initial attraction and repeat visitation through distinctive experiences and appropriate destination positioning. Tourist profiling provides a useful basis for segmentation and product development, but these market characteristics should be interpreted together with destination capacity and stakeholder considerations (23-25).

Visitation was strongly concentrated at Lumundo Waterfalls, which was visited by all respondents. Secondary attractions received substantially fewer visits. This pattern identifies Lumundo Waterfalls as the principal attraction anchor while also indicating opportunities to broaden visitor movement across the municipality. Concentration

can strengthen destination identity, but excessive dependence on a single site may increase visitor pressure and limit the distribution of tourism benefits. Product diversification through linked attractions, tourism circuits and packaged itineraries may therefore help distribute visitor flows while maintaining the flagship attraction's role (26-28).

Internal push motivation was high ($M=4.20$), with social interaction obtaining the highest item mean ($M=4.23$), followed by relaxation and family bonding ($M=4.21$ each). Destination pull attributes obtained a slightly higher mean ($M=4.26$), led by scenic beauty ($M=4.31$), safety and security ($M=4.28$) and wellness facilities ($M=4.27$). These findings indicate that tourists are motivated by both internal needs for relaxation and social connection and external attributes associated with Alegria's natural and experiential environment. The findings are consistent with research emphasizing psychological motives and destination attributes as complementary components of travel motivation (29-31).

Destination awareness was comparatively lower ($M=3.85$), while destination association ($M=4.02$), perceived destination quality ($M=4.14$) and destination loyalty ($M=4.11$) were higher. Advocacy-related behavioral response was the highest-rated construct ($M=4.27$). These results suggest that positive visitor evaluations can coexist with a developing level of destination awareness, consistent with Alegria's predominantly regional visitor market. Destination quality and loyalty showed stronger associations with Advocacy-related behavioral response than awareness and association, indicating the importance of the actual visitor experience in sustaining favorable advocacy-related outcomes (32, 33).

Differences across respondent groups were limited after Holm adjustment. No outcome differed significantly by sex or age. Visit frequency, however, showed significant differences in internal push motivation, destination awareness and destination loyalty. The pattern suggests that repeat visitation may be associated with stronger internal motivations and more developed awareness and loyalty, but the cross-sectional design does not establish that repeat visits cause these differences (34).

The qualitative findings provided convergence with the quantitative results. Respondents described Alegria as a place for relaxation, escape from stress, family bonding, social connection, adventure and enjoyment. Nature, scenic beauty, fresh air, peacefulness and hospitality were repeatedly identified as attractive destination attributes. These narratives reinforce the high internal-push and destination-pull ratings and provide contextual explanation for the destination's nature- and relaxation-oriented appeal. At the same time, respondents identified concerns about signage, access, safety, visitor amenities and limited recreational activities. These concerns indicate that favorable tourist evaluations do not eliminate destination-readiness gaps (35).

Product positioning should emphasize Alegria's nature-based, relaxation and family/social experience while avoiding a strategy based solely on increasing visitor volume. Tourist preferences are important market evidence, but they are not sufficient by themselves to establish sustainable-development priorities (36). Planning should also consider environmental protection, community interests, infrastructure capacity, safety, resource availability and equitable distribution of tourism benefits (37). The concentration of visitation at Lumundo Waterfalls makes carrying capacity an important destination management consideration. The present study did not directly measure physical, ecological, social, or managerial carrying capacity; consequently, it cannot determine an appropriate visitor limit. Instead, the findings support capacity-sensitive planning in which secondary attractions are developed only after their environmental limits, infrastructure requirements, safety conditions, community acceptance and management resources are assessed. Tourism circuits and diversified itineraries may then be used to disperse visitor flows while maintaining the flagship attraction as an anchor (38, 39).

Because tourist motivations and destination pressures may vary across seasons, future destination planning should compare peak and off-peak periods. Seasonal analysis can determine whether motivation profiles, visitor concentration, infrastructure pressure and perceived destination quality change over time. This would strengthen

the evidence base for adaptive product positioning and capacity management.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Alegria's tourism market is predominantly regional and is characterized by tourists who value nature, relaxation, social interaction, family bonding and accessible leisure experiences. The integration of the Modified AIO Model, Push-Pull Motivation Theory and CBDE provided a cohesive profile of who visits Alegria, why they travel, how they evaluate the destination and how these evaluations relate to Advocacy-related behavioral responses. Internal push motivation ($M=4.20$), destination pull ($M=4.26$) and Advocacy-related behavioral response ($M=4.27$) were high, while destination awareness ($M=3.85$) was comparatively lower. The significant relationships between motivation and destination equity, together with the positive associations between destination equity and Advocacy-related behavioral response, indicate that visitor motivations and destination evaluations are relevant to destination positioning.

The practical contribution is the identification of a defensible market position for Alegria as a nature-, relaxation- and family-oriented destination, supported by waterfalls, lake-sunset experiences and affordable outdoor recreation. However, tourist preferences should be treated as one input to planning rather than the sole basis for sustainable-development priorities. The Local Government Unit and tourism stakeholders should balance market demand with environmental protection, community interests, infrastructure capacity, safety and equitable tourism benefits. The concentration of visitation at Lumundo Waterfalls also indicates the value of capacity-sensitive diversification through linked secondary attractions, tourism circuits and packaged itineraries.

The study is limited by its convenience sample, cross-sectional data collection, focus on one municipality and small qualitative subsample. Seasonality was not directly examined and the study did not measure physical, ecological, social, or managerial carrying capacity. Future research should compare peak and off-peak periods to determine whether tourist motivations and destination pressures vary by season, expand sampling to broader domestic and international

markets and incorporate direct carrying-capacity indicators and comparative destination analysis. Such work can strengthen evidence-based tourism planning while preserving the environmental and community resources on which Alegria's destination appeal depends.

Abbreviations

AIO: Activities, Interests and Opinions, CBDE: Customer-Based Equity, LGU: Local Government Unit

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Author Contributions

Richel Pitogo N: Conceptualization, Software Analysis, Validation, Formal Analysis, Data Gathering, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Review and Editing, Visualization of the Conceptual Framework, Project Administration, Funding Acquisition, Princess Florgeliene Perez P: Formal Analysis, Data Gathering, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Earl Niño Franco G: Supervision, Investigation, Conceptualization, Funding Acquisition.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assistance

When writing this manuscript, the author(s) applied Grammarly and Turnitin to check grammar, spelling, language clarity, similarity and originality, respectively. All the material has been reviewed and accepted by the author(s) and the overall responsibility of the manuscript is solely with the author(s).

Ethics Approval

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study because Caraga State University Cabadbaran Campus had no institutional ethics

committee during the study period. Nevertheless, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Local Government Unit of Alegria and relevant tourism stakeholders. All participants provided informed consent, participation was voluntary and no personally identifiable information was collected. The authors confirm that no respondents below 18 years of age participated.

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