



PATIENT'S AND PARENT'S PREFERENCES REGARDING GENDER, ATTIRE AND ATTITUDE OF ORTHODONTIST IN NORTH GUJARAT POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Investigation was done in north Gujarat population to check whether patients and their parents in different groups are influenced by the gender, attire and attitude of an orthodontist. **Methods:** The opinions of 175 patients and 175 parents regarding 1) which gender of orthodontist you choose for the treatment? either male or female. 2) 3 types of attire (from photos) were investigated using a questionnaire. 3) Nature of the orthodontics towards patient. **Results:** female orthodontists were preferred over male orthodontics by the parents and patients. A white coat (apron) was the preferred attire, followed by scrubs and formal by both the groups. Majority of the patients and parents preferred respectful attitude of orthodontist. **Conclusions:** Patients consider female to be an important factor when choosing an orthodontist because "women have more patience and dedicate more attention.". The participants largely preferred who dressed in white coats, because this type of attire was considered clean and hygienic. Majority of the patients and parents preferred respectful attitude of orthodontist.

KEYWORDS : Gender, Attire, Attitude of Orthodontist

INTRODUCTION:

Patient may consider several factors while choosing orthodontics because more orthodontics in the job market have triggered a higher level of competition, professional become more aware of aspect that could improve their ability to attract patients.^{1,2} Some professionals respond by investigating more in appearance and marketing.

This is called social networking. Therefore age, sex and attire may contribute to patient's selection towards doctor.³

Dentist who wear inappropriate attire may give unprofessional impression on patient. Physician who wear white are consider more reliable, experienced and competent, but on the other hand younger patient tend to prefer professional who wear less formal clothes.^{4,5}

Paediatric patients may prefer professionals who meet particular criteria for age, sex, attire.⁶

This survey was done in north Gujarat population at Department of Orthodontics and dentofacial Orthopaedics, Narsinhbhai Patel Dental College and Hospital, Visnagar to check whether patients and their parents in different groups are influenced by the gender, attire and attitude of an orthodontist.

Material and Methods:

The sample comprised of 350 patients and parents who were divided in two groups in 1 group 175 patients and second group comprise of 175 parents of the patients. This sample size was determined using a power analysis that adopted a significance rate of 5% and a sample power of 80% to yield a minimum difference of 20% between the variables. This analysis indicated that a minimum of 97 participants per group were needed. All participants were students at local schools and universities who required orthodontic treatment, and were getting treated at Department of Orthodontics and dentofacial Orthopaedics, Narsinhbhai Patel Dental College and Hospital, Visnagar. Students without malocclusion were not included in the sample.

One orthodontist was selected as model. Three sets of photographs were obtained. First photo comprises of apron, second photo comprise of formal and third photo comprise of scrub. Each participant (n = 370) was interviewed separately using a questionnaire.

Observed by one researcher who assisted with the application but did not interfere with the participant's answers. Each participant analysed, was questioned regarding which orthodontist he or she would choose for treatment either male or female and why? This research step was designed to verify the influences of gender on the selection of an orthodontist. The remaining image sets were presented in sequence to investigate the attire preferred by the participants. Third question is asked to all 370 participants is about the nature of orthodontist towards patient and their parents during treatment duration.

Data were collected between December 2018 to August 2019.



Photographs of orthodontist wearing 3 types of attire: white coat, formal clothes, and scrub.

Result:

Preferred Gender of Orthodontist by the patients and parents wise Distribution

Preferred Gender	Patient n (%)	Parents n (%)	Total n (%)
Female	103 (58.9)	105 (60)	208 (59.4)
Male	72 (41.1)	70 (40)	142 (40.6)
Total	175 (100)	175 (100)	350 (100)

Non Significant ($P > 0.05$)

Majority of the patients (58.9%) and parents (60%) preferred

female Orthodontist. Statistically, no significant difference was present between patient's and parent's in preference of gender of Orthodontist. ($P > 0.05$)

Attire of Orthodontist wise Distribution

Attire	Patient n (%)	Parents n (%)	Total n (%)
Apron	68 (38.9)	76 (43.4)	144 (41.1)
Formal	45 (25.7)	44 (25.1)	89 (25.4)
Scrub	62 (35.4)	55 (31.4)	117 (33.4)
Total	175 (100)	175 (100)	350 (100)

Non Significant ($P > 0.05$)

Majority of the patients (38.9%) and parents (43.4%) preferred Apron as an Attire of Orthodontist. statistically, no significant difference was present between patients and parents in preferred Attire of Orthodontist. ($P > 0.05$).

Attitude of Orthodontist wise Distribution

Attitude	Patient n (%)	Parents n (%)	Total n (%)
Friendly	82 (46.9)	85 (48.6)	167 (47.7)
Respectful	93 (53.1)	90 (51.4)	183 (52.3)
Total	175 (100)	175 (100)	350 (100)

Non Significant ($P > 0.05$)

Majority of the patients (53.1%) and parents (51.4%) were preferred Respectful Attitude of Orthodontist. statistically, no significant difference was present between patients and parents in preferred Attitude of Orthodontist. ($P > 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

Despite investing in marketing tools with the intent of reaching new patients as well as maintaining good relationships with patients already undergoing treatment, orthodontists must remain aware of patients' opinions. As noted above, orthodontists have gradually changed their attire from the traditional white to more contemporary outfits. In this investigation, we proposed an important and scientific approach to justifying the changes observed in the attire of dentists, especially orthodontists, and additionally investigated whether these changes meet patients' expectations.

Using standard photographs with the same background and facial expression, hairstyle, and jewellery, our investigation showed an overall preference for female orthodontics. The Kelly et al,⁸ who noted that a young woman was the professional most preferred by patients. In our study, the participants mainly justified their choice majority of the patients (58.9%) and parents (60%) were preferred female Orthodontist. These justifications conflict with the outcomes reported by Lee et al,¹⁴ who stated that empathy between a patient and a professional does not depend on facial appearance.

A small proportion of the participants (8%) justified their choice for a female orthodontist based on the statements that "women are more trustworthy," "women are more careful and gentle," "women make me feel more comfortable," and "women have more patience and dedicate more attention." However, gender did not play a significant part in the study by Budny et al.⁷ Previously, Smith and Dundes¹⁶ observed that patients were more comfortable with female dentists. Specifically, female dentists dedicated more attention and time to their patients and allotted more time to discussions of treatment plans. Only 2 participants used male gender to justify their selection of an orthodontist.

Regarding attire, majority of the patients (38.9%) and parents (43.4%) preferred apron as an attire of orthodontist followed by scrubs and formals. Similar preferences were reported by

Budny et al,⁷ McKenna et al,¹² and AlSarheed.³ However, Edwards et al¹⁷ reported that patients had no strong preferences for attire when choosing a professional (eg, a surgeon). Still, Aitken et al¹⁰ reported that clothing style had a minor influence on the search for a professional; in that study, the most strongly expressed preference was for social clothing, followed by white coat, suit and tie, and surgical scrubs. By contrast, Kelly et al⁶ indicated that the relatives of patients preferred orthodontists who wore more formal clothing or surgical scrubs.

CONCLUSION:

In our study, the patients generally preferred female orthodontists. Moreover, the Apron (white coat) was preferred as the most appropriate attire for an orthodontist because it is associated with cleanliness and hygiene. Majority of the patients and parents preferred respectful attitude of orthodontist.

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