

# PATIENTS' PREFERENCE REGARDING FACIAL APPEARANCE, GENDER AND ATTIRE OF ORTHODONTISTS

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## ABSTRACT

*We investigated whether the facial appearance, gender and attire have an influence on the choice of orthodontist.*

*Using a questionnaire regarding 4 orthodontists and 3 types of attire and facial appearance was judged by 450 participants from different age groups. The chi-square test was applied preferences by the participants.*

*Male orthodontist with facial hair was preferred by 72.4%. Female orthodontist was preferred by 73.6%. White coat attire was preferred by 48.2% over tie with coat and t-shirt. Female orthodontist with scarf was preferred by 56%.*

*It was concluded that the facial appearance, gender and attire of the orthodontist does influence the choice of participants for their treatment.*

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## INTRODUCTION

To treat according to the desire of the patient is the main goal of the patient centered approach.<sup>1</sup> Thus orthodontic treatment is also based on the principle that patient should be satisfied and treated according to their desires.<sup>2</sup>

Today, people are more conscious about their oral health and how their teeth can influence their smile. More and more people are getting orthodontic treatment to enhance their smile and thus improve quality of life.<sup>3</sup>

It is the age of information technology, where social media has gained wide popularity and world has become so small. People usually use this medium not only to interact but also to gain knowledge about better services regarding their medical and dental needs.<sup>4</sup>

When deciding, from which orthodontist they are going to get braces treatment and straighten their teeth people get help not only from their family dentist but also from the social media and friends.<sup>5</sup> Orthodontic treatment can be regarded as one of the treatment that is done worldwide for status symbol and thus can influence the patients attitude while choosing from which of the orthodontist they are going to get their treatment.<sup>6</sup> Patients perception about his/her orthodontist depends on several factors including facial appearance, gender, attire, age, behavior and other multiple factors.<sup>5</sup>

The way a clinician first greets a patient and the verbal and physical attitude including clothing and cleanliness are the factors a patient develops his or her positive or negative image of an orthodontist.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, when a clinician attends a patient and gives the care needed is all related with better health of the patient<sup>7-11</sup>. This importance states back to the Hippocrates that the physician "must be clean in person, well dressed, with sweet-smelling unguents<sup>12</sup>. Much work has been done regarding attire and facial appearance of the clinician in medical field, however in

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dentistry less attention has been paid area of interest.<sup>13</sup>. Patient confidence is said to be reduced if a dentist has got tattoos funky hairstyles and jewelry<sup>14</sup>.

In a competitive environment of today, orthodontist should have considered all factors that have an influence on gaining better patient satisfaction and attention<sup>13</sup>. Overtime, different medical professionals start using formal dress with decrease in popularity of white overall<sup>15</sup>. A research conducted in Japan found no difference for age and gender preference for white overall<sup>16</sup>.

A study in Brazil found that patient preferred white overall while a study conducted in Hawaii revealed that patient did not prefer white coats.<sup>17-19</sup> Similarly, in a study it was found that patient preferred blue jeans and scrubs over slippers or shorts<sup>18</sup>

The aim of this study was to find out patients' preference for facial appearance, gender, and attire of an orthodontist.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study was initiated after approval by the IRB committee at Multan Medical and Dental College, Pakistan having number "MDC 0417". The sample size calculated to be 450 participants equally distributed into 3 equal groups according to their age, Group 1 with age range of 9 to 12 years, Group 2 with age range of 13 to 16 years, and Group 3 with age range of 17 to 20 years. All participants were students at local schools and colleges. Pictures of 4 orthodontists were shown to the participants. Out of 4 sets of photographs, Set 1 comprised of photograph of 2 orthodontists (identified as 1-2) compared with regard to their appearance, especially facial hair (Fig I). Set 2 photographs were used for gender preference for male and female orthodontist (Fig II). Set 3 comprised of 3 photographs for the same male orthodontist with different attire first with white coat, second with formal dressing and third with casual T-shirt considering attire preferences. (Fig III). Set 4 comprised of 3 photographs of the same female orthodontist with different appearance, first with scarf, second with tied hair and third with loose hair (Fig IV). Participants were shown all sets of photographs on a projector one by one with power point presentation and were assisted with 1 researcher for answering the questionnaire (Appendix 1). Data were collected from April 2019 to July 2019 and analyzed using SPSS for windows Version 20.0 Chicago Inc. USA

## RESULTS

In this study total participants were 450 out of which, 199 (44.2%) were male & 251 (55.5%) were female.

The analysis of the total sample showed that pref-

erence for the presence of facial hair was (72.4%) & without facial hair was (27.6%) as given in (Table 1).

Male participants preferred orthodontist with facial hair about (71.19%) & without facial hair (28.1%). Female participants preferred orthodontist with facial hair (72.9%) & without facial hair (27.1%) as shown in (Table 1).

Categorized on the basis of age, Group 1 (9-12 yr) Group 2 (13-16yr) and Group 3 (17-20yr) preferred orthodontist with facial hair 75.3%,71%,70.7% and without facial hair 24.7%,28.7%,29.3%, respectively (Table 2).

Regarding gender preference for their treatment, total sample showed the preference for the female orthodontist was (73.6%) compared with male orthodontist that was (26.4%) as given in (Table 3).

47.7% male participants preferred male orthodontist & 52.3% of male preferred female orthodontist. 9.6% female participants preferred male orthodontist & 90.4% female participants preferred female orthodontist (Table 3).

Group 1(9-12yr), Group 2(13-16yr) & Group 3(17-20yr) preferred male orthodontist 11.3%, 28%,40% and female orthodontist 88.7%, 72%, 60%, respectively. (Table 4)

Regarding attire of male orthodontist, total sample showed the significant preference (48.2%) for white coat, followed by orthodontist with tie & coat (40.2%) & then with casual T-shirt (11.6%) as shown in (Table 5).

Male participants preferred orthodontist with tie & coat (46.2%) followed by orthodontist with white coat (39.2%) and then casual T-shirt (14.6%), female participants preferred orthodontist with white coat (55.4%) followed by tie and coat (35.5%) and then casual T-shirt (9.2%) (Table 5).

Group 1 (9-12yr), Group 2 (13-16yr), Group 3 (17-20yr) preferred orthodontist with white coat 42.7%, 48%, 54% & orthodontist with tie & coat 48%, 35.3%, 37.3% & orthodontist with casual T-shirt 9.3%, 16.7%,8.7%, respectively (Table 6 ).

Regarding attire of female orthodontist 56% of sample preferred scarf, 18.4% preferred tied hair & 25.6% preferred loose hair (Table 7).

57.8% male participants preferred scarf, 27%, preferred tied hair & 15.1%, preferred loose hair. 54.6% female participants preferred scarf, 11.6%, preferred tied hair & 33.9%, preferred loose hair. (Table 7).

Group 1 (9-12yr), Group 2 (13-16yr), Group 3 (17-20yr) preferred female orthodontist with scarf 70%,

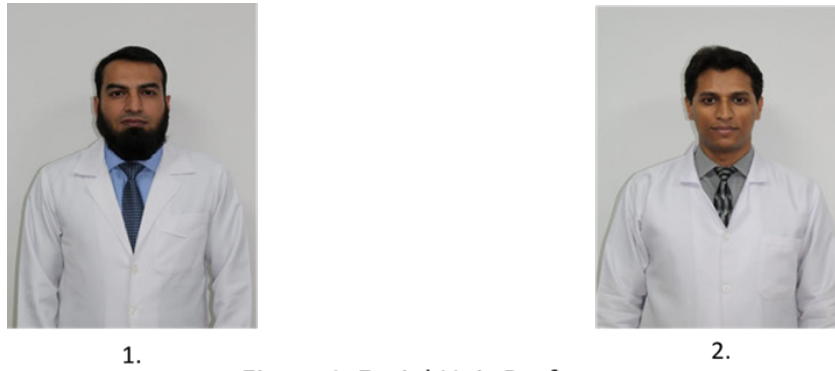


Figure I: Facial Hair Preference

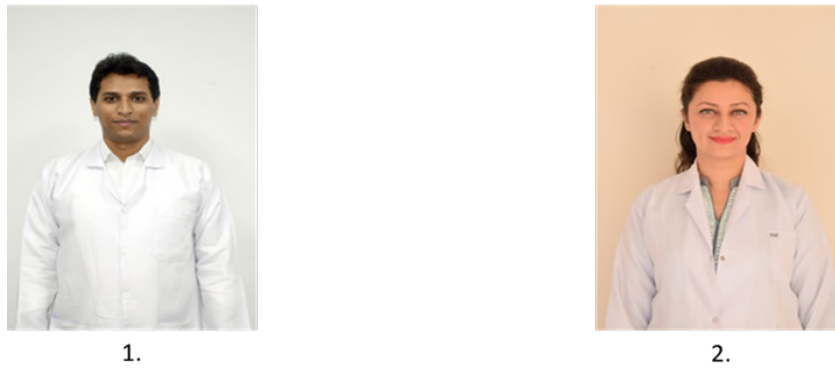


Figure II: Gender Preference



Figure III: Attire of Male Orthodontist Preference

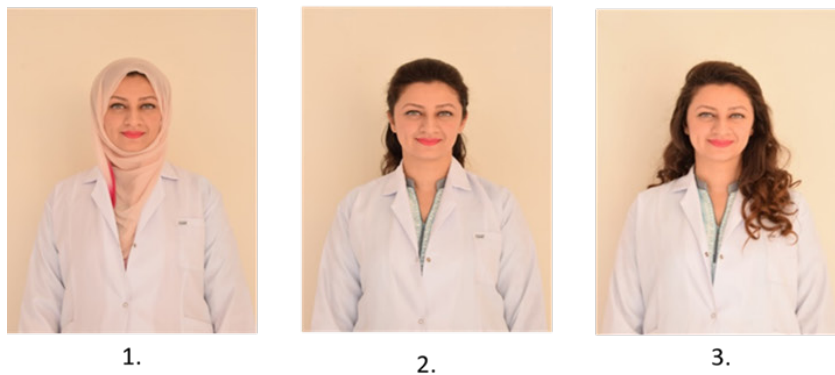


Figure IV: Attire of Female Orthodontist Preference

TABLE 1: FACIAL HAIR

	With Facial Hair		Without Facial Hair		Total
	Participants No.	Parentage	Participants No.	Parentage	
Total sample	326	72.4%	124	27.6%	450
Male preference	143	71.9%	56	28.1%	199
Female preference	183	72.9%	68	27.1%	251
Total	326		124		450

TABLE 2: AGE-FACIAL HAIR

Age	Facial hair		Total
	with facial hair	without facial hair	
9-12 years	113	37	150
Count % within Age	75.3%	24.7%	100.0%
13-16 years	107	43	150
Count % within Age	71.3%	28.7%	100.0%
17-21 years	106	44	150
Count % within Age	70.7%	29.3%	100.0%
Total	326	124	450
Count % within Age	72.4%	27.6%	100.0%

TABLE 3: GENDER PREFERENCE

	Male Orthodontist		Female Orthodontist		Total
	Participants No.	Parentage	Participants No.	Parentage	
Total sample	119	26.4%	331	73.6%	450
Male preference	95	47.7%	104	52.3%	199
Female preference	24	9.6%	227	90.4%	251
Total	119		331		450

TABLE 4: AGE- GENDER PREFERENCE

Age	Gender Preference		Total
	Male	Female	
9-12 years	17	133	150
Count % within Age	11.3%	88.7%	100.0%
13-16 years	42	108	150
Count % within Age	28.0%	72.0%	100.0%
17-21 years	60	90	150
Count % within Age	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Total	119	331	450
Count % within Age	26.4%	73.6%	100.0%

TABLE 5: ATTIRE OF MALE

	White Coat		With Tie & Coat		Causal		Total
	Partici- pants No.	Parentage	Partici- pants No.	Parentage	Partici- pants No	Parentage	
Total sam- ple	217	48.2%	181	40.2%	52	11.6%	450
Male pref- erence	78	39.2%	92	46.2%	29	14.6%	199
Female preference	139	55.4%	89	35.5%	23	9.2%	251
Total	217		181		52		450

TABLE 6: AGE ATTIRE OF MALE

Age	Attire of male			Total
	white coat	with tie and coat	causal	
9-12 years	64	72	14	150
Count % within Age	42.7%	48.0%	9.3%	100.0%
13-16 years	72	53	25	150
Count % within Age	48.0%	35.3%	16.7%	100.0%
17-21 years	81	56	13	150
Count % within Age	54.0%	37.3%	8.7%	100.0%
Total	217	181	52	450
Count % within Age	48.2%	40.2%	11.6%	100.0%

TABLE 07: ATTIRE OF FEMALE

	with scarf		Without scarf with tied hair		Without scarf with loose hair		Total
	Partici- pants No.	Parentage	Partici- pants No.	Parentage	Partici- pants No	Parentage	
Total sam- ple	252	56%	83	18.4%	115	25.6%	450
Male pref- erence	115	57.8%	54	27.1%	30	15.1%	199
Female preference	137	54.6%	29	11.6%	85	33.9%	251
Total	252		83		115		450

62.7% 56.0% & with tied hair 3.3%, 10.7%, 18.4% & with loose hair 26.7%, 26.7%, 25.0%, respectively (Table 8 ).

**DISCUSSION**

Worldwide marketing has become an important tool to promote business. This trend has also being reported in dentistry and especially orthodontic practices. More and more people are getting awareness about their oral health and interested in getting braces treatment, to

improve their smile and hence quality of life. People are getting help from other dentist, friends and social media to get information regarding the orthodontists for their treatment. Thus, orthodontists have to compete with other orthodontist to promote practices and have better impact on patients' opinion.

In last few years, changes have been observed in the attire of orthodontist. White coats have been replaced by the scrubs and patients are appealed by appearance and attire of the orthodontists. So this study



TABLE 8: AGE-ATTIRE OF FEMALE

Age	Attire of female			Total
	with scarf	Without scarf with tied hair	Without scarf with loose hair	
9-12 years	105	5	40	150
Count % within Age	70.0%	3.3%	26.7%	100.0%
13-16 years	94	16	40	150
Count % within Age	62.7%	10.7%	26.7%	100.0%
17-21 years	53	62	35	150
Count % within Age	35.3%	41.3%	23.3%	100.0%
Total	252	83	115	450
Count % within Age	56.0%	18.4%	25.6%	100.0%

was conducted to justify, whether patient's opinion is influenced by facial appearance, gender and attire of orthodontist.

In studies conducted so far researchers have observed mostly the attire preference for orthodontist and gender preferences but little attention has been given to facial hair preference. Statistically significant difference was found for facial appearance, our study showed that orthodontists with facial hair were preferred 72.4% over 27.6%. In addition, no statistically significant difference was found in the preference of male and female participants for the facial hair comparison.

Appearance and attire of the orthodontist is main determining factor effecting the decision regarding selection of orthodontist.<sup>13</sup> However studies have shown that white coat attire has no negative impact on patients' preference.<sup>19, 20</sup> Patients in our study also preferred white coat attire of the male orthodontist by 48.2%, followed by tie and coat by 40.2% then causal dresses by 11.6 %. Similar to the studies by de Souza et al<sup>5</sup> Budny et al<sup>14</sup> AlSarheed<sup>21</sup>. Although Aitken et al<sup>15</sup> concluded that clothing style has negligible influence over doctor's preference.

In gender comparison, we compared male orthodontist without facial hair with the female orthodontist rather than orthodontist with facial hair because the facial hair could have created bias in the results. In our investigation the preference for male or female orthodontist resulted in an overall preference for the female orthodontist 73.6% similar to the study conducted de Souza et al<sup>5</sup> and Swami et al<sup>20</sup>. In our study, 90.4% female participants preferred female orthodontist for their treatment compared to male participant. Statistically significant difference was found for the preference of the female orthodontist by the female participants

Our study also investigated the preference for fe-

male orthodontist with scarf and without scarf which was to our knowledge not investigated so far. The result showed that the participants preferred the female orthodontist with scarf 56%, followed by orthodontist without scarf and loose hairs then tied hairs. This might have been due to cultural differences.

The limitations of this study were that the participants' preference is influenced by the socio-economic status. As the study was conducted in schools, with students who belong to middle and lower middle class families. If the study would have been conducted in the schools with upper middle class, the result would have been different. Future studies should be conducted to evaluate for recommendation regarding the facial hair comparison and gender preference according to different cultures of society to find out the preference of participants from different cultural background. It should also be evaluated that whether facial attractiveness plays any role selection of orthodontist.

## CONCLUSION

In our study, it was concluded that the participants preferred orthodontist with facial hair for their treatment. Female participants preferred female orthodontist more than the male participants. White overall was preferred as the most preferred attire for the male orthodontist and the female orthodontist with scarf was preferred more significantly.

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