



Knowledge, Perception and Factors Impacting Selection of Orthodontic Clinic Among Patients: A Questionnaire Study

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KEYWORDS

Orthodontic Awareness, extraction, Motivation, esthetics.

ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of study was to assess awareness regarding orthodontic treatment and identify the major factors influencing the selection of an orthodontic clinic.

Materials and Method: A cross-sectional, questionnaire-based survey was conducted among participants to evaluate their knowledge of orthodontic treatment, motivations, barriers, and criteria for selecting clinics. Data were analyzed descriptively and compared with existing literature.

Results: Present study showed good awareness about orthodontic treatment such 85.6% subjects heard about orthodontic treatment, 72.2% know about malocclusions, 88.9% knew that treatment is beneficial for both teenagers and adults, and 86.7% were aware of need of extraction during treatment. More of subjects (55.6%) felt that orthodontic treatment is expensive and higher percentage (76.7% subjects) considered that perfect smile is very important. Cleanliness of clinic was extremely important factor for 68.9% subjects. Similarity friendliness of the clinic staff was also important and mostly subjects preferred comfortable seating and calm and relaxing atmosphere. Minimum waiting time at appointment was very important for 63.3% and important for 30%. Maximum number of subjects (74.4%) preferred orthodontist who offers multiple treatment options such as braces and clear aligners.

Conclusion: Awareness of orthodontic treatment remains inconsistent and is shaped by social, economic, and cultural factors. Improving affordability through flexible payment plans and government support, along with targeted awareness campaigns, can enhance utilization of orthodontic services. At the clinical level, orthodontists should focus on patient-centered communication and creating supportive clinical environments to improve satisfaction and influence clinic selection.



INTRODUCTION

An attractive smile in modern day society is considered an asset in work settings and social interaction, as it plays an important role in facial expression and appearance.¹ Various types of malocclusion compromise appearance of face and smile of individuals.

In a modern world teeming with social media websites and interactive communications, there is significantly increased awareness and attention to facial appearance and smile beauty. Thus, the need to make orthodontic correction among young population has become prevalent. In addition to its impact on the psychosocial well being, a positive facial appearance and attractive smile increase the confidence and self-esteem.²

The major benefits of orthodontic care include improving mastication and speech, prevention of periodontal tissue damage caused by malocclusion, and enhancement of dental and facial appearance.³ Malocclusion, particularly dental crowding and misalignment, is one of the most common dental problems worldwide and can have functional, esthetic, and psychological consequences.⁴ Reports suggest that the global prevalence of malocclusion is high, though it varies across populations, with esthetic awareness being a key driver of increasing demand for orthodontic treatment.⁵

Previous research was mostly done to improve the patient's knowledge about the need for orthodontic treatment among adult patients. Such studies are usually done with the aim of improving the patient's understanding regarding their oral conditions. In one study, in the population living in the localities of South Wales, parents and children were questioned regarding their preferences for orthodontic care. Some of the questions were designed to assess the knowledge about the type of orthodontic appliance, the level of pain, or the length of time that orthodontic care is supposed to take.⁶ Patients and parents expect improved esthetic sense and appearance of their dentition, oral health, and function from orthodontic procedures, according to the previous studies by Yao *et al.*⁷ In the study conducted by Ackerman and Macey *et al.*⁸ the impact of misalignment on dental health and the effectiveness of orthodontic treatment on oral health are not sufficiently explored by the available research. In a previous study conducted by Shrestha *et al.*⁹ knowledge and attitude of

Nepalese patients towards orthodontic treatment and the difference in perception between female and male patient were compared.

Awareness of orthodontic treatment is crucial in motivating individuals to seek care, as understanding the process, duration, and expected outcomes builds confidence and compliance.¹⁰ Socioeconomic background and parental attitudes further influence treatment-seeking behavior, especially in children and adolescents.¹¹ At the same time, barriers such as high cost, long treatment duration, and fear of pain continue to prevent many individuals from initiating therapy.¹²

Selection of an orthodontic clinic is also shaped by the reputation of the orthodontist, cost of treatment, accessibility of the clinic, quality of communication, and recommendations from peers or general dentists.¹⁰ Patients increasingly value not only the technical expertise of the orthodontist but also interpersonal skills, clinic environment, and trust-building during consultation.¹³

Given these considerations, it is important to assess awareness of orthodontic treatment and to identify the major factors influencing patient decision-making and clinic selection. Such insights can guide both public health strategies aimed at increasing awareness and clinical strategies to improve patient-centered care. Thus the aim of present study was to evaluate awareness about orthodontic treatment, perception and attitude towards treatment and factors influencing selection of an orthodontic clinic.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An electronic questionnaire survey was conducted. A total of 90 subjects were randomly selected. Sample size was calculated using statistical formula.

Study design:

A 25 item pre-structured questionnaire was used (Table 1). Approval has been taken from the ethical committee of the Dental College to proceed further for the study. Consent has been taken from each patient to be included in the study. The examiner explained the purpose of the study and the questionnaire format to each participant before administration. The participants' perspectives on their awareness of orthodontic treatment and the factors



influencing their choice of an orthodontic clinic were recorded using a specially designed questionnaire.

The questionnaire included personal details such as the participants' name, email ID, along with questions assessing their awareness of orthodontic treatment, perception and attitude towards treatment and the factors influencing their choice of an orthodontic clinic. The participants completed the questionnaire based on their existing knowledge.

Sample size:

- A total of 90 subjects responded to the questionnaire
- n = 90

Sampling technique:

- Simple Random sampling technique was used

S. No.	Question	Response
1.	Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below 18 • 18-25 • 26-35 • 36 and above
2.	Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Female
3.	Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school • Secondary school • Bachelor's degree • Postgraduate • Other (Please specify)
4.	Have you ever heard of orthodontic treatment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
5.	How important do you think it is to have straight teeth for overall health?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important • Somewhat important • Not important at all • I don't know

6.	Are you aware that there are different types of malocclusions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
7.	How important it is for you to have a "perfect smile"?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important • Somewhat important • Not important at all • I don't know
8.	Do you think orthodontic treatment is only for teenagers, or can adults benefit from it as well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only for teenagers • Both teenagers and adults • Only for adults • I do not know
9.	How do you learn about orthodontic treatment (e.g.; braces, aligners)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a dentist/ Orthodontist • From family / friends • Through media) TV, internet etc)
10.	Are you aware that some orthodontic treatment may require the extraction of teeth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
11.	Do you think orthodontic treatment requires frequent adjustments or is a "one-time" process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent adjustments • One time process • I don't know
12.	How do you feel about the cost of orthodontic treatment in your area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive but worth it • Expensive and not worth it • Affordable • I don't know
13.	Have you or someone close to you ever undergone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No



	orthodontic treatment?	
14.	Are you currently considering or planning to undergo orthodontic treatment in the near future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
15.	Do you know about the different types of braces or appliances used in orthodontic treatment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, I am aware of different types • No, I am not aware • I have some knowledge but not detailed
16.	Are you aware that orthodontic treatment may cause temporary discomfort, ulcers, or speech difficulties?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Not sure
17.	Do you prefer an orthodontist who offers multiple treatment options (e.g., braces, clear aligners)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, it is important to have options • No, I trust the Orthodontist to decide the best option • I am not sure
18.	How important is the clinic's proximity to your home or workplace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important • Somewhat important • Neutral • Not important
19.	How much do online reviews or testimonials influence your decision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important • Somewhat important • Not important at all
20.	How important is it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important

	for you to feel comfortable and welcomed at the clinic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat important • Neutral • Not very important
21.	What do you consider most important when choosing an orthodontic clinic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanliness • Comfort of the clinic environment • Convenient location and accessibility • Affordable cost and payment • Modern technology and treatment options
22.	How important is cleanliness to you when selecting an orthodontic clinic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely important • Important • Neutral • Not very important • Not at all
23.	How important is the friendliness of the clinic staff to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important • Important • Neutral • Not very important • Not at all
24.	Would you prefer a clinic with:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable seating (e.g. Lounge chairs, cozy waiting areas) • A calm and relaxing atmosphere (e.g. soft music, calming colors) • Environment options (TV, magazines, Wi-Fi)



25.	How important is it for you to minimize waiting time when visiting the clinic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important • Important • Neutral • Not very important • Not at all
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Table 1: Questionnaire used for study

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics: A total of 90 participants completed the questionnaire. The majority were aged 26–35 years (44.4%), followed by 18–25 years (33.3%), 36 years and above (20.0%), and below 18 years (2.2%). Slightly more than half of the respondents were male (53.3%), while females comprised 46.7% of the sample. Half of the participants held a postgraduate degree (50.0%), 43.3% had a bachelor's degree and a small proportion reported secondary school (2.2%), primary school (2.2%), or other educational backgrounds (2.2%) (Table 2).

Awareness and knowledge: Most respondents (85.6%) heard of orthodontic treatment, while 14.4% had not. A large proportion were aware of the existence of different types of malocclusion (72.2%), and 88.9% believed that orthodontic treatment could benefit both teenagers and adults; only 6.7% felt it was for teenagers only. Higher percentages of subjects (86.7%) were aware of need of extraction for orthodontic treatment and most of subjects (72.2%) knew that, treatment needs frequent adjustments of appliances. Awareness of potential side effects, such as temporary discomfort, ulcers, or speech difficulties, was high that was found in 73.3% of sample (Table 3).

Perceptions and attitudes: More of subjects (55.6%) felt that orthodontic treatment is expensive and 26.7% considered cost is affordable. Higher percentage that was 76.7% subjects considered that perfect smile is very important, 15.6% as "somewhat important," and for 7.8% it is not important and large proportion (67.8%) of subjects believed that straight teeth are good for overall health. Seventy percent of subjects have gone orthodontic treatment or their close relatives have received orthodontic treatment and half of subjects have

knowledge about different types of braces or appliances used in orthodontic treatment (Table 4).

Preferences for selection of orthodontic clinic: Most respondents (52.2%) considered clinic's proximity to their home or work place as very important and for 30% it was somewhat important. Online reviews or testimonials are not so important for choosing Orthodontist as 56.7% subjects considered it as somewhat important and only 37.8% considered it very important. Cleanliness of clinic was important factor for subjects as for 68.9% it is extremely important, important for 25.6%. Similarity friendliness of the clinic staff was also important (very important for 67.8%, important for 26.7%). Mostly subjects preferred comfortable seating like Lounge chairs, cozy waiting areas and calm and relaxing atmosphere with soft music and calming colors (62.2% and 60% respectively). Minimum waiting time at appointment was very important for 63.3% and important for 30%. Maximum number of subjects (74.4%) preferred orthodontist who offers multiple treatment options such as braces and clear aligners (Table 5).

S. No.	Question	Response	Percentage
1.	Age	Below 18	2.2%
		18-25	33.3%
		26-35	44.4%
		36 and above	20%
2.	Gender	Male	53.3%
		Female	46.7%
3.	Education level	Primary school	2.2%
		Secondary school	2.2%
		Bachelor's degree	43.3%
		Postgraduate	50%
		Other (Please specify)	2.2%

Table 2: Demographic information of sample



S. No.	Question	Response	Percentage
1.	Have you ever heard of orthodontic treatment?	Yes No	85.6% 14.4%
2.	Are you aware that there are different types of malocclusions?	Yes No	72.2% 27.8%
3.	Do you think orthodontic treatment is only for teenagers, or can adults benefit from it as well?	Only for teenagers Both teenagers and adults Only for adults I do not know	6.7% 88.9% 3.3% 1.1%
4.	How do you learn about orthodontic treatment (e.g.; braces, aligners)?	From a dentist/ Orthodontist From family / friends Through media) TV, internet etc) From school/ education programs	57.8% 30% 27.8% 20%
5.	Are you aware that some orthodontic treatment may require the extraction of teeth?	Yes No	86.7% 13.3%
6.	Do you think orthodontic treatment	Frequent adjustments One time	72.2%

	requires frequent adjustments or is a "one-time" process?	process I don't know	13.3% 14.4%
7.	Are you aware that orthodontic treatment may cause temporary discomfort, ulcers, or speech difficulties?	Yes No Not sure	73.3% 12.2% 14.4%

Table 3: Frequency of Awareness and knowledge among the sample subjects

S. No.	Question	Response	Percentage
1.	How do you feel about the cost of orthodontic treatment in your area?	Expensive but worth it Expensive and not worth it Affordable I don't know	55.6% 10% 26.7% 7.8%
2.	Have you or someone close to you ever undergone orthodontic treatment?	Yes No	70% 30%
3.	Are you currently considering or planning to undergo orthodontic treatment in the near future?	Yes No Maybe	23.3% 56.7% 20%
4.	Do you know about the different types of braces or appliances used	Yes, I am aware of different types	52.2%



	in orthodontic treatment?	No, I am not aware I have some knowledge but not detailed	25.6% 22.2%
5.	How important do you think it is to have straight teeth for overall health?	Very important Somewhat important Not important at all I don't know	67.8% 24.4% 5.6% 2.2%
6.	How important it is for you to have a "perfect smile"?	Very important Somewhat important Not important at all I don't know	76.7% 15.6% 7.8% 0%
7.	How important is it for you to feel comfortable and welcomed at the clinic?	Very important Somewhat important Neutral Not very important	76.7% 15.6% 6.7% 1.1%

Table 4: Perception and attitude among the sample subjects

S. No.	Question	Response	Percentage
1.	How important is the clinic's proximity to your home or workplace?	Very important Somewhat important Neutral Not important	52.2% 30% 15.6% 2.2%

2.	How much do online reviews or testimonials influence your decision?	Very important Somewhat important Not important at all	37.8% 56.7% 5.6%
3.	What do you consider most important when choosing an orthodontic clinic?	Cleanliness Comfort of the clinic environment Convenient location and accessibility Affordable cost and payment Modern technology and treatment options	53.3% 48.9% 40% 48.9% 60%
4.	How important is cleanliness to you when selecting an orthodontic clinic?	Extremely important Important Neutral Not very important Not at all	68.9% 25.6% 5.6% 0% 0%
5.	How important is the friendliness of the clinic staff to you?	Very important Important Neutral Not very important Not at all	67.8% 26.7% 4.4% 0% 1.1%
6.	Would you prefer a clinic with:	Comfortable seating (e.g. Lounge chairs, cozy waiting areas) A calm and relaxing	62.2% 60%



		atmosphere (e.g. soft music, calming colors)	
		Environment options (TV, magazines, Wi-Fi)	28.9%
		A Family-friendly environment with toys or play areas for children	27.8%
7.	How important is it for you to minimize waiting time when visiting the clinic?	Very important	63.3%
		Important	30%
		Neutral	5.6%
		Not very important	1.1%
		Not important at all	0%
8.	Do you prefer an orthodontist who offers multiple treatment options (e.g., braces, clear aligners)?	Yes, it is important to have options	74.4%
		No, I trust the Orthodontist to decide the best option	17.8%
		I am not sure	7.8%

Table 5: Factors influencing selection of clinic

DISCUSSION

Beyond clinical indications, orthodontic treatment is sought for psychosocial reasons also, as dental appearance strongly influences self-confidence, social interactions, and quality of life. Thus, orthodontics is no longer considered purely corrective but also preventive and esthetic in nature. However, the decision to pursue orthodontic treatment is multifactorial, influenced by individual awareness about benefits of orthodontic treatment, socioeconomic status, accessibility of services, and cultural perceptions.⁵The present questionnaire-based study assessed awareness regarding orthodontic treatment, perception and attitude towards treatment and the factors influencing the selection of an orthodontic clinic.

Awareness levels have been reported to be relatively low in developing countries. In Navi Mumbai, India, a study among young adults found limited knowledge about orthodontic treatment needs and benefits.¹⁴Similarly, poor awareness and perception were observed in the Aljouf region of Saudi Arabia, even among educated participants.¹³ In contrast, Malaysian adult orthodontic patients demonstrated high awareness, with 97.8% understanding the purpose of braces and over 80% recognizing the importance of follow-up visits.¹⁵Similarly present study also showed good awareness regarding various questions indicating awareness about orthodontic treatment such 85.6% subjects heard about orthodontic treatment, 72.2% know about malocclusions, 88.9% knew that treatment is beneficial for both teenagers and adults, and 86.7% were aware of need of extraction during treatment (Table 3). This present study also reported that 72.2% subjects have information about frequent adjustment of orthodontic appliances and 73.3% were aware of temporary discomfort such as ulcers or speech problem with orthodontic treatment (Table 3). In contrast to present study, Shukla et al¹⁶found that majority of the patients were unaware of the fact that orthodontic treatment can be done in adults. They knew that it can be done only in children and early teens. Such variation highlights the influence of prior exposure to dental services and health communication strategies.



In present study more of subjects (55.6%) felt that orthodontic treatment is expensive and 26.7% considered cost is affordable. Higher percentage that was 76.7% subjects considered that perfect smile is very important, 15.6% as “somewhat important,” and for 7.8 % it is not important. and large proportion (67.8%) of subjects believed that straight teeth are good for overall health. Seventy percent of subjects have gone orthodontic treatment or their close relatives have received orthodontic treatment and half of subjects have knowledge about different types of braces or appliances used in orthodontic treatment (Table 4).

In a previous study, when asked whether there is a correlation between systemic disease and bleeding gums, 67.3% answered yes and 58.2% have experienced sensitivity associated with malaligned teeth. 85.7% patients thought that malaligned teeth lead to periodontal lesion and 73.5% patients think that teeth should be properly positioned for a better facial appearance.⁶ We also found that higher percentage that was 76.7% subjects considered that perfect smile is very important and large proportion (67.8%) of subjects believed that straight teeth are good for overall health. Similarly, more subjects (76.7%) regarded having a “perfect smile” as very important, 15.6% as “somewhat important, and 7.8 % as not important. Ashwini TL et al¹⁹ reported that enhancement of dentofacial appearance and improvement in self-confidence was cited as the most important motivating factors in almost 80% of respondents. While 15% of respondents’ sought treatment for health reasons, only 15% received orthodontic treatment for functional reasons.

Barriers to orthodontic treatment are well-documented and include high treatment costs, fear of pain, embarrassment, and the long duration of therapy. Cost has consistently been reported as the most significant deterrent while social stigma and embarrassment associated with braces negatively affect patient satisfaction.¹⁷ Socioeconomic status (SES) is a strong determinant of orthodontic treatment uptake. Another study showed that adolescents from lower SES backgrounds were significantly less likely to undergo orthodontic care compared to higher SES peers.¹⁷ Age and parental perception also play a role; parents are more likely to seek treatment for older children and for visible malocclusions such as crowding or overjet¹⁸

Similarly, fear of discomfort and treatment duration discourages many patients from seeking care.¹⁸ Shukla et al¹⁶ reported that longer duration of treatment is prime restricting factor for start of treatment and cost of orthodontic treatment is second common factor for reluctant behavior of patients to start treatment. Similarly in present study 55.6% subjects feel that treatment is costly although it is worth to invest, only 26.7% considered it affordable (Table 4). Present study reported that 52.2% subjects knew about different types of braces and appliances used for orthodontic treatment. Another study found mixed response about availability of various treatment options, but majority of participants knew that only wire and metallic braces can correct the malalignment of teeth.¹⁶ Another study reported that 30.60% subjects considered treatment is expensive and 42.90% felt that treatment is long time procedure.¹⁹ Shrestha et al⁹ also observed that 68.5% of patients consider that orthodontic treatment is costly.

Apart from awareness and motivational factors, the choice of orthodontic clinic depends on several practice-related characteristics. Good communication, professionalism, and competence of the orthodontist are highly valued by patients.¹⁰ A clean and modern clinic environment, punctuality in appointments and involvement of patients in decision-making processes has also been shown to enhance trust and satisfaction.¹⁰ Recommendations from peers, family, and general dentists further influence preferences.¹⁶

Similarly in our study it was reported that for 52.2% subjects clinic’s proximity to their work or home place is important for selecting clinic, only 37.8% gave importance to online reviews or testimonials and cleanliness of clinic is extremely important for 68.9%. Higher percentage of subjects (67.8%) gave consideration to friendly behavior of clinic staff and higher percentage of subjects (62.2% and 60%) considered comfortable seating such as Lounge chairs, cozy waiting areas and calm and relaxing atmosphere with soft music and calming colors during selection of clinic. Minimum waiting time during appointments was also important for most of patients (very important for 63.3% and important for 30%) (Table 5).

The orthodontist’s demeanor and attitude appear to have a significant impact on patients’ perceptions of the treatment process.²⁰ In this study, interpersonal



characteristics including politeness, friendliness, and tranquility were favorably connected with the patient. Patient satisfaction was positively connected with the concepts of being treated as a “human being” and being treated “on the same level.” These findings were comparable to those of Sinha et al,²¹ who discovered a strong positive relationship between patient satisfaction and orthodontist behavior.

These findings suggest the need for targeted awareness campaigns that emphasize both the esthetic and functional benefits of orthodontic treatment. Community-based dental camps, school education programs, and social media campaigns led by professional bodies such as the Indian Orthodontic Society have demonstrated effectiveness in raising awareness¹¹. Improving affordability through flexible payment plans and government subsidies can address socioeconomic disparities. At the practice level, orthodontists should ensure empathetic communication, shared decision making, and patient-friendly clinical environments to improve both patient satisfaction and clinic selection.

CONCLUSION

- Study reported that 85.6% subjects heard about orthodontic treatment, 72.2% know about malocclusions, 88.9% knew that treatment beneficial for both teenagers and adults, and 86.7% were aware of need of extraction during treatment. This study also reported that 72.2% subjects have information about frequent adjustment of orthodontic appliances and 73.3% were aware of temporary discomfort such as ulcers or speech problem with orthodontic treatment.
- In present study more of subjects (55.6%) felt that orthodontic treatment is expensive and 26.7% considered cost is affordable. Higher percentage that was 76.7% subjects considered that perfect smile is very important and large proportion (67.8%) of subjects believed that straight teeth are good for overall health. Seventy percent of subjects have gone orthodontic treatment or their close relatives have gone orthodontic treatment and half of subjects have knowledge about different types of braces or appliances used in orthodontic

treatment. Maximum number of subjects prefers orthodontist who offers multiple treatment options such as braces, clear aligners. Similarly, more subjects (76.7%) % regarded having a “perfect smile” as “very important,” 15.6% as “somewhat important,” and 7.8 % as “not important.”

- Our study reported that for 52.2% subjects clinic’s proximity to their work or home place is important for selecting clinic, only 37.8% gave importance to online reviews or testimonials and cleanliness is extremely important for 68.9%. Higher percentage of subjects (67.8%) gave consideration to friendly behavior of clinic staff and higher percentage of subjects (62.2% and 60%) considered comfortable seating such as Lounge chairs, cozy waiting areas during selection of clinic. and calm and relaxing atmosphere with soft music and calming colors. Minimum waiting time during appointments was also important for most of patients (very important for 63.3% and important for 30%).

This study highlights the general awareness of orthodontic treatment and the factors influencing clinic selection. Most people are familiar with orthodontic treatment and recognize its benefits for both teens and adults. When choosing a clinic, patients prioritize comfort, cleanliness, and friendly staff, along with practical considerations like short waiting times and convenience.

Technology and online reviews also play a significant role in decision-making. In conclusion, while awareness of orthodontics is strong, there is potential to further educate the public about treatment options, while clinics should focus on creating a welcoming environment and utilizing modern technology to attract patients.

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