

An overview of Visagism: Enhancing your smile to mirror your inner glow**Abhisheik Sachdeva^{*}, Vinod Viswanathan, Sonal Shah, Nikita Sadafule, Aditi Tripathi,****Rajat Mahajan.**

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ABSTRACT

Visagism goes beyond traditional dentistry; it embodies a philosophy that infuses vitality into smiles. By merging both the physical and psychological aspects of each person, it enables dental experts to create more than just visually pleasing outcomes. With Visagism, smile transformations mirror the essence of the individual, capturing not only their outward appearance but also their inner character and disposition. This holistic approach humanizes dentistry, enabling practitioners to shape smiles that deeply resonate with the person, enhancing lives on a profound level. In the realm of smile aesthetics lies a profound connection to the psyche, influencing not just dental features but also personalities and social interactions. Understanding this intricate relationship is essential for dental professionals entrusted with crafting smiles. It's not merely about the superficial attributes like shape, size, or color; it entails delving into the emotional landscape of each patient. By considering their unique traits, desires, and hopes, practitioners can devise smiles that surpass mere aesthetics, becoming authentic reflections of individuality and assurance. Humanizing the smile design process means acknowledging that each smile carries a distinct narrative, and it's our responsibility as professionals to assist in articulating it genuinely. Orofacial aesthetics transcends surface-level enhancements; it profoundly impacts personality and behavior, influencing how individuals engage with the world. In this context, Visagism emerges as a guiding principle, ensuring that aesthetic interventions align not only with the physical characteristics of the patient but also with their distinct personality and sense of self. By embracing Visagism, professionals recognize the intrinsic connection between outward appearance and inner identity, allowing treatments to echo the essence of each person. It's about empowering patients to not only look their best but also to authentically express who they are, fostering genuine confidence and enriching their interpersonal bonds.

Keywords: Visagism; Smile; Temperament; Personality; Discrimination.**INTRODUCTION**

The significance of the smile extends far beyond its aesthetic appeal; it serves as a universal language, conveying emotions and bridging connections between individuals. As highlighted

by a 2018 National Geographic publication, the frequency and recognizability of smiles underscore their importance in daily human interactions. But to truly understand the depth of its impact, we turn to Visagism, a doctrine rooted in the fusion of Hippocrates' Theory of Temperament and the physical image of an individual.

Visagism not only acknowledges the physiological aspects of the smile but also delves into its psychological and societal implications. It recognizes that patients seek esthetic treatments not merely for superficial reasons but as a means to align their outward appearance with their inner selves. By incorporating Visagism into orthodontic and smile design procedures, practitioners can address not only the physical needs of patients but also their emotional and social desires. In doing so, they contribute to the enhancement of interpersonal relationships and the overall well-being of society, affirming the smile's transcendental significance in human interaction.¹

The way individuals perceive themselves and the image they project to others play pivotal roles in their success in navigating their environment. This perception can lead to positive integration or negative discrimination, as highlighted in studies such as those published in the *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*.

Aesthetics, being inherently subjective, cannot be defined by rigid parameters. This philosophy allows us to distinguish between what is merely pleasant and what is truly artistic. An aesthetic element has the power to evoke pleasure and distinction, bearing significant social and expressive functions. Thus, dentists, akin to artists, must approach each case from multiple perspectives: that of the professional, the patient, and the broader social context in which the patient interacts. Human behaviour often hinges on perceived societal perceptions, driving individuals to conform to external expectations.

While dental aesthetics may be perceived as superficial, they encompass a far more profound domain. These treatments not only enhance physical appearance but also exert profound effects on self-esteem, interpersonal dynamics, behaviour, and various psychological facets, including emotions and confidence. Health professionals must adopt an integrated approach, recognizing the interconnectedness of physical and mental well-being. Visagism, therefore, advocates for a broader understanding of individuals, emphasizing the intricate relationship between their physical image and psychology, and acknowledging the profound impact of this connection on their lives and relationships.

Despite its significance, the synapse between aesthetics and the psyche is often overlooked or underestimated. This underestimation underscores the importance of compiling information from scientific articles to underscore the critical role of Visagism within dental treatments. By

bridging the gap between aesthetics and psychology, Visagism offers a holistic approach that transcends mere cosmetic enhancements, ultimately enriching the lives and well-being of patients.

Relationship of visagism with dentistry

The smile serves as a powerful canvas through which individuals express their self-perception and personality, making it a cornerstone of esthetic rehabilitation. Despite its significance, discussions surrounding the deeper psychological aspects of the smile are often overlooked in clinical planning. This oversight poses a challenge in achieving personalized treatments that truly capture the essence of the patient, potentially leading to unmet objectives and expectations.

Understanding Visagism equips dental professionals with the tools to ensure that a patient's smile not only enhances visual aesthetics but also authentically reflects their self-esteem, temperament, desires, and even behavioural traits. By incorporating Visagism principles, practitioners can craft smiles that instill confidence, improving not only the patient's self-esteem but also their social interactions, including within professional environments.

However, achieving satisfactory results begins with thorough anamnesis—the initial conversation and interview conducted by dental professionals. During this crucial phase, professionals delve into the patient's motivations for seeking esthetic treatment, their specific desires, and their awareness of available treatment alternatives. Subsequent intraoral and extraoral clinical examinations lay the foundation for comprehensive case planning, ensuring that the treatment aligns with the patient's individual needs and aspirations. Through this holistic approach, Visagism empowers dental professionals to create smiles that resonate deeply with patients, fostering not just aesthetic enhancement but also emotional well-being and social confidence.^{7,9}

The fifth dimension of the smile

For years, dentistry approached the smile through four primary dimensions: biology, function, structure, and esthetics. However, as we've come to understand, true treatment success transcends these dimensions to include a fifth: the expression of each patient's personality and identity through their smile. Consider this: a person with a delicate personality, characterized by political and friendly attitudes, may not feel entirely comfortable sporting a smile adorned with overly large and robust incisors and canines. Conversely, an individual with a dominant and assertive personality might find such a smile more fitting.

By recognizing and incorporating this fifth dimension, prosthodontic treatments like "smile designs" evolve from mere cosmetic enhancements to powerful tools of visual communication. The result? Patients don't just leave with a new smile; they depart amazed, uplifted, and brimming with heightened self-esteem. This comprehensive transformation enriches their quality of life in profound ways, demonstrating the profound impact of personalized dental care that honours the individuality of each patient.⁷

The universal language

Lines and geometric figures serve as the elemental building blocks of a universal language, transcending cultural, linguistic, and educational barriers. This shared understanding finds its roots in the Optic Thalamus, a component of the Autonomic Nervous System, which possesses the remarkable ability to recognize archetypal characteristics and evoke emotional responses.

Horizontal lines evoke sentiments of stability, tranquillity, and comfort, while vertical lines convey notions of strength, power, and masculinity. Inclined lines exude dynamism and joy, while curved lines embody delicacy, femininity, gentleness, and sensuality. It's the interplay and predominance of these lines that give rise to varied expressions: rectangles, with their vertical orientation, symbolize strength; triangles, dynamism; squares, stability; and ovals, delicacy and femininity.

Through the combination and dominance of these fundamental elements, a rich tapestry of expressions emerges, each carrying its unique emotional resonance. This understanding not only enriches our appreciation of art and design but also permeates our daily interactions, influencing how we perceive and interpret the world around us.^{2,7}

Types of temperaments and their relation to the maxillofacial massif

According to Hippocrates' ancient understanding, the human body is governed by the balance or imbalance of four bodily fluids: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. This delicate equilibrium determines one's health or predisposition to disease.

Expanding upon this theory, Paolucci describes how these bodily fluids correspond to specific temperaments, each leaving its imprint on facial and dental morphology:

Choleric (strong): These individuals exude leadership, decisiveness, and passion. Their rectangular faces boast pronounced angles, mirroring their assertive nature. Their teeth often follow suit, featuring a rectangular shape.

Sanguine (dynamic): Characterized by their communicative prowess, extroversion, and enthusiasm, sanguine individuals possess angular faces with prominent noses and wide mouths. Triangular teeth, with incisal edges longer mesiodistally than at the cervical third, complement their vibrant demeanor.

Melancholic (sensitive): Empathic and organized, melancholic individuals tend to be shy and reserved. Their oval faces, coupled with closely-set teeth and eyes, reflect their introspective nature and perfectionist tendencies.

Phlegmatic (pacifist): Diplomatic and serene, phlegmatic individuals exude discretion and spirituality. Their round or square faces, heavy eyelids, and prominent lips embody their calm demeanor. Square teeth harmonize with their facial features, completing their peaceful appearance.

Understanding these associations allows dental professionals to tailor treatments to not only enhance aesthetics but also resonate with the patient's inherent temperament and personality, fostering a deeper sense of self-awareness and confidence.^{2,11,19}

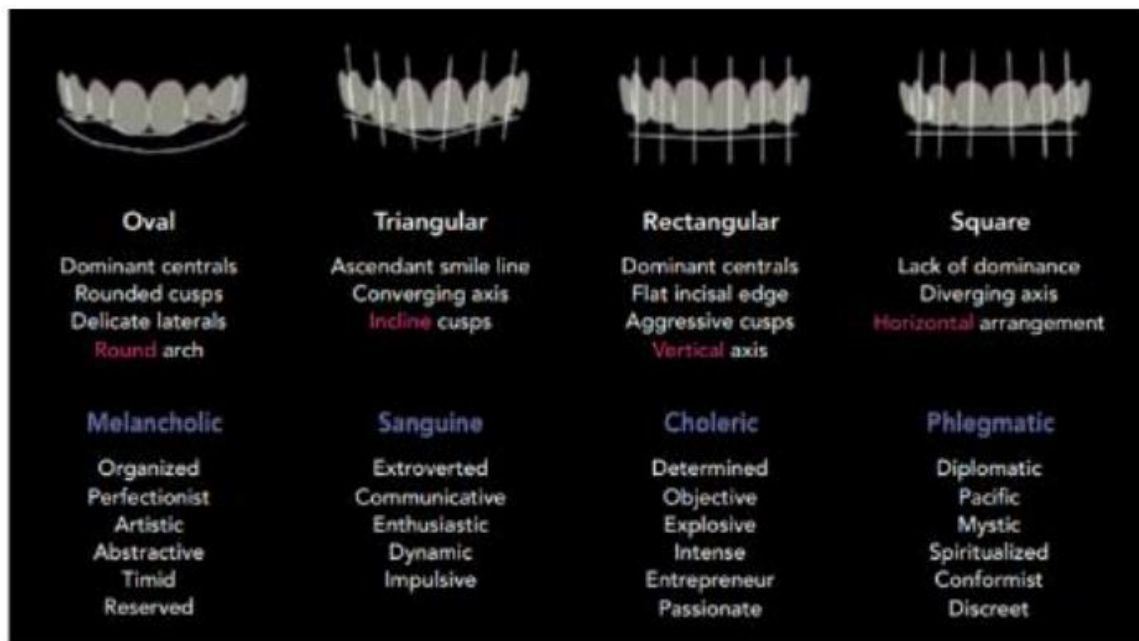


Figure 1 Relationship of smile characteristics and temperaments by Hippocrates

Visual Identity of Smile (VIS) or Visual Identity of Smile (IVS)

In the realm of Visagism, the smile is not just a mere cosmetic enhancement; it's a unique expression of individuality, carefully composed to harmonize with the colour, shape, and size of the teeth, as well as their function within the stomatognathic system. This holistic approach gives rise to the concept of Visual Smile Identity (SVI), where four fundamental designs

delineate the desired characteristics of a smile based on both the professional's expertise and the patient's aspirations. These designs are meticulously chosen to align with the patient's physical appearance and personality, ensuring a bespoke smile that resonates authentically.

When a patient arrives at a consultation armed with images or references of their desired smile, it's imperative to delve deeper into the motivations behind their choices. Often, these preferences extend beyond mere aesthetics to encompass the emotional and psychological resonance that the smile conveys. However, achieving or even approximating these expectations can prove to be a daunting task, especially considering factors such as facial structure, other physical attributes, or potential contraindications. In some instances, meeting these expectations may be exceedingly challenging or even unfeasible.

By recognizing the complexities involved in crafting a smile that transcends visual appeal to embody the essence of the individual, dental professionals can navigate these challenges with empathy, expertise, and a commitment to personalized care. This approach not only enhances the patient's satisfaction but also fosters a deeper connection between the smile and its bearer, enriching their overall experience and well-being.⁹

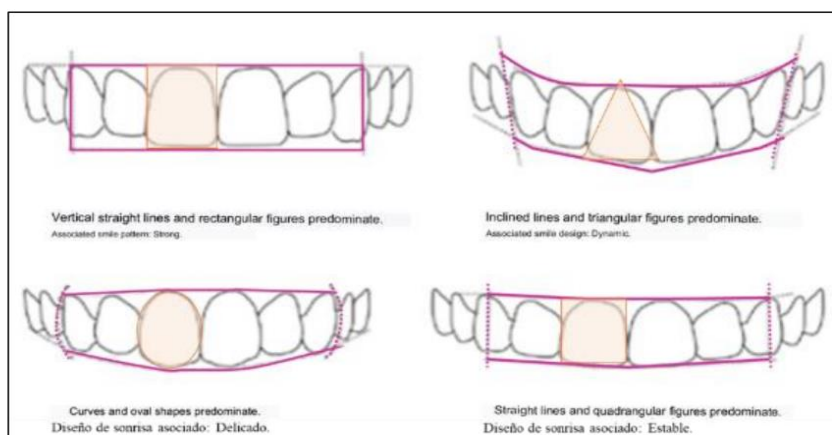


Figure 2 Visual Identity of the Smile

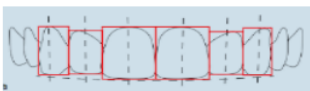
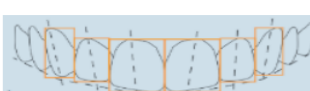

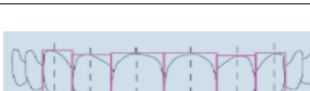
Types	Characteristics	Graphic reference
Strong	Rectangular teeth Incisors and canines with similar crown lengths and dominant size 3D alignment of the teeth (occlusal view): rectilinear (7)	
Dynamic	Triangular or trapezoidal teeth Standard dominance (size) 3D alignment of the teeth (occlusal view): angled Straight incisal edge (7)	
Delicate	Oval teeth Medium dominance (size) 3D alignment of the teeth (occlusal view): standard Curved incisal edge (7)	
Calm/Stable	Square teeth Weak dominance (almost symmetrical teeth) 3D alignment of the teeth (occlusal view): straight or standard Horizontal incisal edge (7)	

FIGURE 3 Smile characteristics

Psychosocial impact of aesthetics and dental health

Beauty is indeed subjective, influenced by a myriad of factors such as age, social class, culture, and media exposure. Within this complex tapestry, dental aesthetics emerge as a significant aspect of an individual's life, profoundly impacting their perception of self and their interactions within society. This influence can range from promoting acceptance to perpetuating discrimination, underscoring the link between dental aesthetics and overall quality of life.⁶

Personal experiences and societal norms shape an individual's self-perception, presenting a challenge when planning dental treatments that aim to enhance smile characteristics. Patient expectations often carry considerable weight, sometimes overshadowing professional recommendations. Cultural influences and media portrayals of "ideal" aesthetics further complicate matters, with patients frequently bringing reference images to convey their treatment expectations, often inspired by celebrities or media representations.¹⁹

Discrimination, particularly related to physical appearance, including dental aesthetics, permeates social interactions and can have profound consequences from an early age. Studies highlight how concerns about smile appearance can lead to discrimination within social and healthcare settings, exacerbated by societal ideals and the opinions of healthcare professionals. However, it's essential to recognize that an individual's self-confidence and security play a crucial role in how they perceive and respond to discrimination.

It's imperative to emphasize that discrimination is a violation of human rights and should never be justified or romanticized. Legal frameworks such as the Ecuadorian COIP and

Constitution categorize discrimination as a crime, underscoring the importance of fostering inclusive and respectful environments where individuals can embrace their uniqueness without fear of prejudice or bias.¹⁴

Aesthetic parameters of the smile

Indeed, while beauty is subjective, certain objective criteria shape the aesthetic appeal of a smile. Factors such as color, texture, shape, and alignment of the teeth contribute significantly to smile aesthetics, but the gingival tissues and facial characteristics also play crucial roles.

Among the teeth, the upper central incisors take center stage, drawing the most attention. Their position, alignment, incisal edge, and the presence of interincisal pockets are pivotal considerations in evaluating smile aesthetics. Additionally, the height of the smile, or gingival exposure, is a key determinant of its attractiveness. A medium smile, with a gingival exposure ranging from 0 to 2 mm in the upper jaw, is generally considered more aesthetically pleasing. Conversely, smiles with excessive gingival exposure (high smile) or minimal exposure (low smile) may be less aesthetically appealing.

Understanding these objective criteria allows dental professionals to assess and enhance smile aesthetics effectively. By considering not only the teeth but also the surrounding gingival tissues and facial features, practitioners can tailor treatments to achieve harmonious and visually pleasing smiles that enhance their patients' overall appearance and confidence.

parameters	Classification	Ideal
Arc of smile	Convex	Height between centrals and upper wings: Women: 1.0 to 1.5 mm Men: 0.5 to 1.0 mm (15)
	Consonant	
	Curved	
	Straight	
Symmetry Relationship of the Maxillary Central Incisors	straight	The maxillary lateral incisors should be 75-85% of the dimensions of the central ones (more in women than in men). (fifteen)
	75%	
	85%	
Proportion between Upper Anterior Teeth	Golden Ratio: 1:1.618 and 1:0.618	Golden Proportions: the lateral incisor represents 60 - 62% of the width of the central and the canine, 60 - 62% of the width of the lateral. (8, 15)
Buccal Runners	Widths: Present when the dental arch is narrow	Intermediate (15)
	Intermediate: Present when the dental arch is intermediate	
	Narrow/None: Present when the dental arch has a severe transverse diameter	
Gingival design	Classic: Canines and Central Incisors at the same level	Classic (15)
	Modified: Canine gingival margin above the central one; side and center at the same level	
Gingival exposure	High Smile: Exposure of 100% of the crown + continuous fringe of gum	Medium Smile (15)
	Medium Smile: Exposure from 75 to 100% of the crown + gingival papillae	
	Low Smile: Exposure less than 75% of the crowns without gingival exposure	
Shape and Size of the Teeth	Square Face: Quadrangular Teeth	It depends on the characteristics of the patient (15)
	Oval Face: Oval Teeth	
	Rectangular Face: Rectangular Teeth	
	Triangular Face: Triangular Teeth	
	Women: More rounded and elongated teeth	
	Men: More angular and square teeth	

Also, it is necessary to take the smile as a set of various tissues and not only of teeth. All its components act as "frames" for each other and should be looked at from the inside out: 1) the lines, angles and axial inclinations are the frame of a single tooth, 2) the gingival margin frames the teeth as a whole, 3) the lips correspond to the frame of the teeth and gingiva, and finally, 4) the face which frames all the above elements. (16)

Fig 4 Aesthetic parameters of the smile\

Discussion

The works by Paolucci, Rodrigues de Holanda, and López-Rodríguez collectively underscore the profound impact of smile aesthetics on an individual's life. They align in their recognition that the characteristics of a smile can serve as a window into a person's emotions and self-identification. Alvarez-Ramirez further elaborates on aesthetics as elements capable of evoking feelings and sensations in observers, emphasizing the importance of nonverbal communication in expressing one's temperament and personality through a smile.

Bangor University's study on smiling highlights the innate human ability to discern genuine smiles from forced ones, reinforcing the authenticity and significance of nonverbal communication.

While the influence of physical beauty on social relationships remains a contentious topic, Carbajal and Klages emphasize its direct correlation with an individual's quality of life, self-esteem, and social success. This recognition extends to societal biases favouring attractiveness, as noted by Carbajal, while Morales-Domínguez underscores the role of cultural, educational, and socioeconomic factors in shaping perceptions of beauty.

Within Visagism in Dentistry, the interplay of lines and archetypal geometric figures serves as a universal language, capable of eliciting various emotions and impressions of personality. Paolucci and Gürel elaborate on how disharmony between a person's physical appearance and their smile can lead to discomfort and dissatisfaction, emphasizing the importance of achieving aesthetic alignment through treatment.

Hippocrates' ancient temperaments provide a framework for associating specific physical characteristics with personality traits, informing smile design and aesthetic considerations. Rambabu further develops this concept as the Visual Identity of Smile, rooted in the principles of the Universal Language.

Ultimately, achieving optimal and comprehensive results in smile aesthetics necessitates a multidisciplinary approach, with Psychology playing a vital role in understanding the patient's temperament, personality, and the psychosocial impact of aesthetics on their life, as elucidated by Paolucci, Klages, and Arenas-Sánchez. This collaboration ensures that treatments not only enhance physical appearance but also promote mental and emotional well-being, embodying the holistic approach advocated by these scholars.

Conclusion

Visagism offers a holistic approach to aesthetic treatments, aligning with the patient's physical characteristics, personality, and identity. By embracing this doctrine, professionals can engage in multidisciplinary collaboration to achieve comprehensive results.

The unique aspects of each temperament, as described by Hippocrates, are reflected in the shape of the smile arch, dental morphology, and soft tissues. Understanding these

associations enables professionals to better anticipate and meet the expectations of their patients.

Orofacial aesthetics wield significant influence over self-esteem and interpersonal relationships, potentially contributing to both discrimination and inclusion. By recognizing and addressing the psychological aspects of their patients, professionals can craft smiles that authentically express personality, emotions, and temperament.

While discrimination and stereotyping are societal challenges, the impact of physical beauty on individual psychology and social relationships cannot be overlooked. Multidisciplinary treatment approaches, involving psychology professionals and assessment tools like the PIDAQ questionnaire, are essential for addressing patients' concerns related to their physical appearance and navigating potential conflicts that may arise in communication and socialization.

Ultimately, Visagism empowers dental professionals to consider the holistic well-being of their patients, fostering inclusive and authentic smiles that enhance not only physical appearance but also emotional and social confidence.

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