

## **The Role of the Acceptance Zone in the Psychology of Set**

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*The given study has identified the Acceptance Zone as an important attitude dimension.*

*The Acceptance Zone can measure the conscious acceptability of behaviors, statements, judgments and evaluations related to positions different from the research participant's position during assessment.*

*The study shows a statistically significant correlation between an Acceptance Zone and attitude/typological characteristics.*

*Narrow Acceptance Zone (about 25% of research participants): Extreme and one-sided point of view; low level of acceptance of others' opinion, low level tolerance (acceptability); high confidence, locus control falling within the mid-range, competitiveness in conflict situation.*

*Moderately wide Acceptance Zone (about 50% of research participants): higher level of tolerance; intense feeling of self-confidence, social courage, success and inner strength; low intensity of conflicts, compromise/competitiveness and higher level of cooperation in conflict situations.*

*Wide Acceptance Zone (about 25% of research participants): Moderate and versatile points of view; tolerance; external locus of control, hesitation; low self-confidence and internal conflicts; higher sociability; avoidance behavior in conflict situations.*

*Acceptance Zone is an important concept for attitude and behavior research. It can be also useful for Theory of Set and in general, for the psychology of Georgia. The Acceptance Zone can be also used for a simple typological-character test. The concept in question can be considered with the development of simple tests measuring personality typology and character traits.*

*Question Formulation and Explanation of the Key Notions*

D. Uznadze's works on the peculiarities of personality attitude have inspired numerous studies in the Georgian psychological field. For example V. Norakidze and his fellow researchers studied the correlation between attitude types and data achieved through other psycho-diagnostic methods and confirmed their close connection (Norakidze, 1966) (though more precise measuring is needed). Thus, the method of the fixed attitude grew into a serious psycho-diagnostic technique, which gives us the possibility of revealing characteristic peculiarities of a personality. Formal-dynamic characteristics of the fixed attitude point to the characterological features of a personality (Norakidze, 1966).

In the recent research (Burduli, 2010; Burduli, 2009; Burduli, *Psychology XX*, 2007; Burduli, *Matsne*, 2007; Burduli, *Matsne*, 2006; Burduli, *Caucasiology*, 2006; Burduli, *Caucasiology*, #9, 2005; Burduli, *Caucasiology*, #7, 2005; Burduli, *Psychology XX*, 2005; Burduli, *Intelecti*, 2005; Burduli, *Matsne*, 2004) personal, social attitude characteristics have been studied: Valence, acceptance zone, extremeness-moderation, etc. It has also appeared that perception, sensorimotor and personal-social attitude formation, activity, and alteration regularities are similar (Nadirashvili, D, 2005).

Sh. Nadirashvili discovered the regularities of fixed attitudes in the sensorimotor modality: I. Fixed attitude has an assimilative nature; this kind of assimilative reaction somatises causes illusions. II. In cases of fixation, causes assimilative response; III. Under radically different circumstances, causes contrast response (Nadirashvili, Sh., 2014; Nadirashvili, Sh., 1983-85).

Sh. Nadirashvili discovered the same regularity in personal-social evaluation. It appeared that for example in case we ask a subject to evaluate acceptable or slightly unacceptable statement many times (on the 10- score scale) they even more contrastively evaluate the radically different morally unacceptable statements (Nadirashvili, Sh., 2014; Nadirashvili, Sh., 1983-85). This is comparable to when the same gray color seems light with a black background and dark with a white one.

In different modalities contrast-assimilative regularities of attitude have the same effect. It means that the objects far or distant from the fixed attitude are evaluated contrastively and the near or proximal objects assimilatively.

The same can be said about the perceptive, sensorimotor, cognitive or personal-social attitude cases. This regularity was demonstrated in the experiments of Sh.Nadiarshvili (Nadirashvili, Sh., 2014; Nadirashvili, D., 2005).

We consider it necessary to define some of the key notions.

*1. Dispositional attitude* - a long term, stable attitude. Its particular types are: aptitudes, habits, typological-characterological individual traits and features, individual tendencies, and value orientation dispositions.

*2. Disposition of the Value Orientations - Dispositional Attitude* – reveals itself in the consciousness as an attitude.

*3. Position or attitude* - feeling of acceptance or nonacceptance towards any cultural-social phenomenon or value orientation, or natural or personal-psychological point of view and desire. For example attitude of a person towards one or another political party, nation, doctrine, church, mathematics, animals, classical music, jazz, homosexuality, antique objects, ect. We do not consider it appropriate to limit the positions and approaches with “social attitudes,” of only one particular type (Vakhania, 2007); Instead we use a wider marker – “personal-social”. Approach and position belong to estimating dimensions and thus are always directed towards certain value orientations (Vakhania, 2009).

An approach or a position has three constituting components: I. sensitive-emotional, II. volitional, which is the desire to perform certain behaviors, to not perform them or hesitation toward them; III. Cognitive, which is appropriate judgment and evaluation. The I and II are effects of an ordinary evaluating disposition and the III, the cognitive one, is the consecutive cognitive activity.

Attitude is a value orientation disposition – or one of the types of the fixed and stable attitudes and is a reflection of feelings in the consciousness.

Characteristic features of an approach are the following:

*4. Valence* - positive-negativeness, unilateral non- neutrality. Valence is given to an approach through the sensitive component, as feeling is the element that loads the emotion with valence (Vakhania, 2009).

Valence in the subjective consciousness which is revealed in the positive-negative context: (a) feelings of likeness-acceptance and non-likeness-non-acceptance; (b) willingness-attractiveness or unwillingness-avoidance impulses or the conscious intentions. Both of them are accompanied with an emotional background.

5. *Attitude Intensity* - Measure for the valence volume. Valence has only two meanings: "+" or "-", but it is clear that both of them have different levels or degrees: more positive and less positive; slightly negative and extremely negative. Intensity is measured by means of special scales. We used the Turstone 11 score scale. The scale can be imagined on the numeric axis with the values being placed in the following positions: -5, -4, -3,...0, +1,...+5. These statements are preliminarily elaborated and assessed by the experts according to the statistical procedures (Dawes, 1972); Consequently, each of them has a marker of intensity and each particular statement corresponds to the figure given on a numeric axis. The statements are in fact evaluative judgments or evaluative propositions. Each scale measures a subject's attitude towards one of the value orientations.

A subject is given a scale or 11 statements and selects the statement most acceptable for him or the closest to him. This is the way of stating:

6. *Subject Position* (Towards the appropriate Value Orientation) - A figure from - 5 to + 5, which corresponds to the first value statement by a subject. Naturally, it is the valence and intensity combination.

The positions (on the basis of the long time analyses of the empirical material) were divided into the 3 groups from the extremeness-moderation point of view: extreme (-5, -4, +4, +5), medium (-3, -2, +2 +3) and moderate (-1, 0, +1).

We think it is necessary to clarify some aspects of this: neutrality, indifference, and promiscuity are characterized by the zero valence or zero position. However, this is not always true: when a subject selects in the inquiry zero or selects on the Turstone scale a statement relevant to zero. Indifference does not always equal zero, 0 - sometimes it denotes ambivalence. For example a person's choice is between +3 and -3 and in case he/she cannot choose any of them, he/she chooses 0 instead. In reality, subjects avoid any sort of choice. Like Buridan's donkey, standing between

two haystacks, not knowing which one to prefer. It means, that both of them are equally unacceptable. In other words, in psychology unlike mathematics, real 0 (indifference) essentially differs from the sum of +3 and -3.

After clarifying the position, a subject is required to choose other statements on the same scale being acceptable for him.

7. *Attitude Monomy-Polimony* – it is acceptable to measure the subject's quantity for the statements being chosen by them from the Turstone scale. In a case when a subject chooses 1 or 2 statements, his/her attitude is monomonic, in case of choosing more than 1 or 2 his/her choice is polimonic (towards the given values).

8. *Acceptance Zone* – is the segment of the scale being marked by the subject with the smallest and greatest numbers evaluating acceptable for him value orientations. For example if a subject chooses the statements corresponding to +2, +1, -2 and +3, then the acceptance zone starts from -2 to +3 (even if the two figures 0 and 1 are missed).

Acceptance Zone is the consciously accepted measure for the approved probabilities of the corresponding behaviors, statements, judgments or evaluations. Wide acceptance zone points to the higher levels of tolerance, the narrow one points to the lower level of tolerance.

Analysis of the longstanding empirical data enabled us to divide the acceptance zone as follows: narrow (ranges covering 1 or 2 statements), medium (3, 4), wide (5, 6, 7, 8) and very wide (9 or more). As for the very wide zone it is so rare (not more than 1-1.5%), that we considered it an exception, but we combined it with the wide zone, in order to avoid the difficulties in statistical processing and analysis.

It is natural that the following question arises: what do the markers of the analyzed attitude depend on more, the scale or the personality traits? For clarifying this question, we compared attitude markers with several personality-social values such as: mathematics, alcoholic drinks, church and freedom, as well as Georgians and Russians. It turned out, that not less than 70% of the subjects reveal narrow, medium or wide acceptance zones towards all the values. The same situation is in cases of extremeness-moderation and monomy-polimony. For example, the Monomonic

position towards one value points to monomonic attitudes towards other values as well and correspondingly, a polinomic position points to a polinomic attitude. Between the markers or characteristic features the correlations are positive and valid ( $p < 0.01$ ). Accordingly, the examined markers are the typological markers or characteristic features of a personality.

We also have a group of «variable» attitude subjects (compare D.Uznadze notion «Variability of an attitude» (Uznadze, 1977)). And it is natural, for each group to have individual personality traits and different social behavior tendencies.

## *2. Relation of the Acceptance Zone to other Traits of the Attitude*

Our research proved that the acceptance zone is an independent and important denominator (Burduli, 2010; Burduli, 2009; Burduli, Psychology XX, 2007; Burduli, Matsne, 2007; Burduli, Matsne, 2006; Burduli, Caucasiology, 2006; Burduli, Caucasiology, #9, 2005; Burduli, Caucasiology, #7, 2005; Burduli, Psychology XX, 2005; Burduli, Intelecti, 2005; Burduli, Matsne, 2004). We have studied the relation of the acceptance zone size towards the extremeness-moderation of the attitude and monomony-polimony.

We studied attitude or approaches according to the three units: 1. Alcoholic drinks, as the objects of consumption; 2. Mathematics, as an object of cognition; and 3. Church, as a social institution. Instruction was as follows: “Choose the statement that is most acceptable in your opinion first and then all the other statements which are acceptable for you.”

Empirical material was processed using SPSS. It appeared, that the relationship between the acceptance zone size and the moderation-extremeness of the positions, as well as monomony-polinomy is valid. In majority of cases we have  $p < 0.01$  and only in one case  $p < 0.05$ . The table shows the averaged data:

<i>Volume of the acceptance zone</i>	<i>% Distribution of subjects</i>	<i>Intensity of a position</i>	<i>Monotomy. Polinomy.</i>
Narrow - 1.6	25	4.2	2.3
Medium - 3.4	50	2.4	3.4
Wide - 6.5	25	1.2	4.3

*Conclusion: Wide Acceptance Zone is connected with the moderate and polinomic attitudes and the narrow acceptance zone with the extreme and monomonic ones.*

### *3. Relation of the Acceptance Zone with the Contrastive and Assimilative Evaluation*

In the research described in the second paragraph, subjects had to choose statements acceptable for them. In the third paragraph the regularities of evaluating (and not choosing) of different statements by the subjects are described. It is widely known that the distance from a subject's position to the scale position of the evaluated statement determines the essence and style of the evaluation; namely, a statement expressing a position close to the position of a subject is assimilatively evaluated. (a subject considers it closer, than it is in reality), as for distant statements, they are evaluated contrastively (a subject considers it more distant, than it is in reality) (Nadirashvili, Sh., 2014; Nadirashvili, Sh., 1983-85; Nadirashvili, D., 2005; Nebieridze, 1971).

We have to stress the fact that during the study of the acceptance zones we have changed the notions of closeness-farness or proximity-distance, which were introduced by Sh. Nadirashvili. They were dependent only on the scale of distance. We called the "close" or proximate to the subject notion the one located in the acceptance zone and the "far" or distant – the notion being located beyond the acceptance zone.

The “close” or proximate to the subject statement does not necessarily mean acceptance by the subject, the “close” statement can be acceptable and at the same time non-acceptable by the subject; Videlicet, a statement can belong to the acceptance zone, but not chosen by the subject (studying of the reasons of the above mentioned behavior is a subject for further research).

170 subjects participated in the study and it was a random choice sample. First of all, we measured the subject’s position and acceptance zone (see par. 2). At the second stage of the experiment, we showed the subject the locality of his/her position on the scale and placed a statement expressing his position on the scale near the appropriate figure. Then a subject was given a statement for evaluation which was distant on the scale from his position by the two units.

The instructions given to the subjects were as follows: “Evaluate the given statement and give it an appropriate score and place on the scale.”

We have distinguished the following cases in the evaluated statements as being distant by two scores:

1. “Close” or proximate statement to be evaluated and an acceptable statement (belongs to the acceptance zone and has been chosen by a subject).
2. “Close” statement to be evaluated and an unacceptable statement (belongs to the acceptance zone, but has not been chosen by a subject);
3. “Far” or distant statement to be evaluated (it does not belong to the acceptance zone and it was not chosen by a subject).

Thus, we studied the correlation of the acceptance zone latitude with the:

- Evaluation of the “close” or proximate statements;
- Evaluation of the “far” or distant statements;
- Acceptance-non acceptance of the “close” statements.

The achieved research data was statistically processed with the SPSS method.



The percentage index of the data is shown in the table:

<b>Acceptance Zone</b>	<b>Narrow</b>			<b>Mid-Range</b>			<b>Wide</b>			<b>Very Wide</b>		
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Assessment</b>												
<b>„Close“</b>	34	65	1.8	25	48	28	27	48	26	26	57	18
<b>„Far“</b>	28	28	45	33	22	45	20	35	45	-	-	-

*Assessments: 0 - Adequate, 1 - Assimilative, 2 - Contrastive, but within the Acceptance Zone, 3 - Contrastive, but beyond the Acceptance Zone*

As we can see from the table, in the case of narrow acceptance zones, the assimilative type of evaluation towards the statements (mathematics, alcohol, church) is more frequent, when the “close” or proximate statements are evaluated, this is followed by the adequate types and the last one is the contrast type of evaluation. In the case of medium acceptance zones, assimilative evaluation was more frequently seen, followed by contrast type and the last one is adequate. In the case of wide and very wide zones of acceptance assimilative evaluation is the first, then comes adequate and contrast types of evaluation.

Thus, the majority of the subjects (48-64%) evaluate assimilatively with the statement expressing his/her position and being “close” to his attitude (distant from his position by two scores) or it means, that a subject regards it as a position similar to his attitude. Approximately, 24-26% of the subjects adequately evaluate the statement expressing a position being close to him/her, as they estimate it on the scale these statements with an appropriate score and gave them an adequate place. A certain amount of the subjects (2-28%) contrastively evaluate the similar statement and regard it as a position being remote or distant from his/her position, as they evaluate it with at least two scale scores and give it a place, being remote or distant from his/her position.

Towards the given personal-social value orientations, in the case of narrow and medium acceptance zones, contrast evaluation of the “far”, but two scores distant statement from the subject’s position are more frequent; then come adequate assessments. In the case of wide acceptance zone, contrast

evaluations again come first followed by assimilative ones.

Thus, the latitude of the acceptance zone influences the style of evaluating “close” and “far” statements; in spite of the size of an acceptance zone, assimilative evaluations of the “close” statements are dominant, as for the contrastive evaluations they prevail in cases of “far” statements, but in cases of narrow acceptance zones, adequate assessments are more frequent and with the growth of the zone space contrastive evaluation of the “close” statements and assimilative evaluation of the “far” statements become more frequent ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*Conclusions:* The regularity discovered by Sh.Nadirashvili was proven once again; namely: contrastive and assimilative evaluations depend on the farness–closeness or proximity–distance of the statement from the position of a person. In spite of the latitude of the acceptance zone, when the “Close” statement is remotely two units from the position of a person is more frequently evaluated assimilatively (55%), but in the case of the “far” statements being remote by two scores from the position of the person are evaluated contrastingly (45%). Though, as we have already marked, subjective farness-closeness or proximity-distance does not mean farness-closeness on this scale. It appeared that “close” statement, being separated by the same scale distance is assimilatively evaluated and the “far” or distant statement more contrastingly (i.e., in evaluating the statements subjective closeness–farness - distance and not the scale of distance are determining).

*General Regularity Changes According to the Different Acceptance Zone Subjects:*

<i>Assessment of Statements showing a position</i>	<i>LL Latitude of the Acceptance Zone</i>			
		Narrow	Wide	
<b><i>Close</i></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>A s s i m i l a t i v e</b>		<b>1</b>
	<b>2</b>	Adequate	Contrast	<b>2</b>
	<b>3</b>	Contrast	Adequate	<b>3</b>
<b><i>Far</i></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>C o n t r a s t</b>		<b>1</b>
	<b>2</b>	Adequate	Assimilative	<b>2</b>
	<b>3</b>	Assimilative	Adequate	<b>3</b>

The narrow acceptance zone in comparison with the wider zone points to a more adequate evaluation. It seems, as if the narrow zone creates more favorable conditions for the adequate development of evaluation and points to a high level of adaptability of a subject, but in reality it is different. In fact, it is the other way around. Under changed conditions the strong contrast illusion is necessary from the very start for blocking the inadequate assimilative activities and then for the better adjusting of the individual's behavior to the changed conditions by means of attitude differentiation (Vakhania, 2008). The significance of the latitude of the contrast illusion for quick and easy adjustment to the environment was proven by Sh.Nadirashvili (Nadirashvili, Sh., 2014).

*4. Correlation of the Acceptance Zone with the Personality Features.*

Relationships between the volume of the acceptance zone and personality features were revealed. Zones of acceptance are related to certain personality features. For example, people who have different latitude

acceptance zones differ from each other by the Locus of Control, conflict proneness, social boldness, self-confidence, self- estimation. They also differently assess the emotionality and prosperity of their own nation and happiness, will, conflict proneness, activeness and emotionality of another nation (the Russian nation).

112 Georgian subjects from the age of 18 to 60 participated in the research. We studied the latitudes of the acceptance zones of the Georgians towards their own and the Russian nation. For studying the personality traits of the subjects, we used popular tests, which helped us check their self-control, self-estimation, conflict proneness, locus of control, assertiveness (self-confidence and social boldness) and forms of reaction to conflict situations, such as: rivalry, cooperation, compromise, escape and adjustment (Mayers, 2009).

The table reflects only statistically valid correlations ( $p < 0.05$ )

<b>Personality Features</b>	<b>Acceptance Zone</b>			
	<i>Narrow</i>	<i>Mid-Range</i>	<i>Wide</i>	<i>Variable</i>
Locus Control	11.50		15.05	
Compromise	1.03		1.60	
Rivalry	8.00	6.74		
Assertiveness	5.88	5.86	4.84	5.44
Social Boldness	3.64	4.73		
<i>Self-Assessment</i>				
Success	5.84	5.98	5.42	5.57
Emotionality		6.53	5.61	
Conflict Proneness	4.13	4.04	5.07	
Optimist			5.74	6.56
<i>Own Nationality Assessment</i>				
Emotionality (Warm-Cold)	6.57	7.50		
Success		5.70	4.63	
<i>Other Nationality Assessment</i>				
Emotionality (Warm - Cold)	4.93	4.03	4.04	
Happiness		5,90	5.21	
Stability		6.10	5.10	
Conflict proneness	6.03	6.76	6.90	
Activeness		6.22	7.16	

For the group with the narrow acceptance zone, a high level of rivalry is characteristic in the conflict situation, as well as for the mid-range Locus of Control, assertiveness, strong feelings of success and low levels of conflict proneness are specific. They consider their nation prosperous and less emotional.

Narrow acceptance zone, for which there is less acceptance of other positions and the preciseness of the personal position is characteristic must have conditioned the high level of rivalry in conflict situations. The preciseness of the position and the small quantity of acceptable positions is connected with high levels of assertiveness, which in turn gives rise to the strong anticipation of success; High self-esteem implies lower level of the inner conflict. It is clear, that a narrow zone makes the process of acceptance difficult and results in the low assessment of one's own nation.

The group of the medium acceptance zone has a low level of compromise in conflict situations and a low level of rivalry with the Russian nation in the conflict situations. The group is also assertive, self-confident, socially bold, and has strong personal feeling and weak conflict proneness. These kind of people evaluate their own nation, as warm and successful and the Russian nation, as less emotional and less active.

On the basis of the given results it can be said that the medium zone of acceptance shows more ability to share positions and are consequently more tolerant towards different opinions and have a low level of rivalry. A high level of acceptance of different opinions and positions is associated with a high level of activity, self-confidence, feeling of success and the conditions and the personal strength resulting in their low conflict proneness. Thus, it is natural that they evaluate their nation more highly, than the Russian nation.

We can expect that people of the medium acceptance zone prefer the collaborative strategy.

A group from the wide acceptance zone has an external locus of control, they have a low level of self-confidence and assertiveness, success, personal strength and have a high level of conflict proneness. They consider their own social group less emotional and more active.

At the same time, a wide acceptance zone is associated with adaptability and a high level of adjustment in a person to the social environment, an external locus of control and social boldness (Burduli, Matsne, 2007).

In our opinion, the wide zone of acceptance sharing both positions: similar and different and their equal acceptance is revealed in the obscurity and ambiguity of the personal position. Consequently, it naturally conditions proneness to conflict, uncertainty and feelings of failure and personal weakness. These kind of people avoid responsibility which is revealed by the external Locus of Control. The fact they represent their own nation as less emotional and more distant must have been the result of the sensation of failure.

We can expect that the wide zone acceptance personality will preferably choose the avoidance strategy.

People having the variable acceptance zone are assertive and have high level of prosperity and optimism. (Though this data needs to be checked).

### *5. Summary and Generalization*

Thus, we can say, that an acceptance zone latitude is one of the independent characteristics of an attitude. It also points to a psychological typology.

Personality features, as well as an attitude, show the valid correlation towards the acceptance zone. As it became apparent for a person with the narrow acceptance zone, low levels of forgiveness, acceptance of other positions, higher level of rivalry and absolute positions are characteristic and differ from people who have a wide zone of acceptance, who are more absolving, they accept other people's opinions, they can express their position using various means of presenting it; they try to avoid conflicts.

Narrow acceptance zone points to the over assertiveness of a personality and non acceptance of a different opinion. Wide acceptance zones point to the uncertainty of a person and hesitation and inner proneness to conflict (though it also points to more sociability). Thus, it is obvious that the zone of medium acceptance is the most optimal one.

Acceptance zones play a great part in studying attitudes of personality and corresponding social behavior. Consequently, investigation of that latter and the achieved results are very significant for the attitude theory. Besides, the acceptance zone is very easy to measure (selection of the statements from the several different scales is enough). It can also be used for elaborating a simple typological-character test. It is natural that study of the latitude of an acceptance zone is very important for the psychological typology of a personality.

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