

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

**Faculty of Social and Political Sciences**

**Irina Zhvania**

**STUDYING OF “FALSE UNIQUENESS EFFECT” AND “FALSE  
CONSENSUS EFFECT “AND FACTORS AFFECTING ON THEM**

**Ph.D. Thesis SUMMARY**

*Supervisor: Dr. Dali Parjanadze*

**Tbilisi, 2008**

# Contents

<b>CHAPTER I.</b> Intorduction.....	3
<b>CHAPTER II</b> Examination of “False Uniqueness Effect” and “False Consensus Effect” .....	7
<b>CHAPTER III</b> Tendency of spreading of personal features (positive and negative) among “others” .....	12
<b>CHAPTER IV</b> The releathionship between the Self-evaluation and “False Uniqueness Effect ” and “False Consensus Effect” .....	20
<b>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	33
<b>CONCLUSSIONS</b> .....	38
<b>References</b> .....	40

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

Study of personality has a long history. Scientists have been long trying to answer the questions connected with the person's nature, inner world of a human being as well as his development and behaviour. However study of the aspects connected with a person and aspects connected with this construct is still actively conducted presently, it can be said that the examination of this sphere is endless.

Throughout the years various approaches of persons' studies have been established and different aspects of the person have been focused by the different authors. A great number of theories existed in this sphere can be broken up into two large groups: 1. The theories, according to which inner forces, constitutional conditions, structural world are considered as less dependent on environment and a person is perceived as a relatively stable organization (Continental theories); 2. The theories where the main focus is laid on interpersonal relations and the person is perceived as a relatively brittle organization (Anglo-Saxon theories).

It should be noted that this study unites both standpoints and implies deep inner aspects, as well as establishment of interaction with others with the help of the first.

The consideration of the person as integrity of psychic regularity has encouraged us to study "self" as a key construct of this integrity. "Self" refers to a complex system playing an integral part in the person's existence and functioning. "Self" in the first place includes the knowledge about ourselves (Self-conception) and self-evaluation.

Considerable attention is paid to an issue- of the influence of knowledge about ourselves on the sense of our self-esteem. However in the process of self-evaluation the another issue has also high importance – how the person attributes the personal features and opinions to others; how personal characteristics are perceived as unique by the person.

There exist view according to which, the people strive to create and preserve the sense of their own uniqueness. In other words, on a certain person attributes people show a uniqueness effect. It means that, when a person wants to accentuate his uniqueness, he underestimates the number of others who possess the features that are similar to his/her own

ones. Or, a person prefers to think that the positive traits, characteristic for him, acceptable or effective behavior, are less common. Otherwise, he believes that the number of people, who are bearers of similar features and has similarly effective behavior, is rather small. This is the so called, “Effect of false uniqueness” (Goethland, 1999. [8] ).

On the other hand, the tendency of “overestimation” of others also is existed. In 1977, Ross, Green and House published series of studies, which gave birth to the concept of “False Consensus” [7]. According to the tendency of “False Consensus” the person is biased to think that “others” behave and think the same way they do. In other words the person tends to assume that his own opinions are more common and shared than they really are (Kruger & Clement, 1994; Marx & Miller, 1987); In contrary, people assume that their characteristic features are less common; Thus, the person overestimate the number of people with the same features and tends to believe that the number of people with similar behavior is quite big, i.e. presence of “False consensus effect”.

These two concepts “Effect of False uniqueness” and “Effect of False consensus” introduced into psychology are considered as being directly connected with such important concepts as “Self-concept” and self-evaluation. Studies of these effects are very important due to two main reasons: (1) they play a key role in the process of self-evaluation and (2) they have a high importance in evaluation of others according to the personal features and predispositions – how personal characteristics can be seen or not in others.

Despite the great interest towards the given phenomenon as well as a value of the conducted research, we think that there is a lack of studies analyzing the issue from the general and socio-psychological perspectives. This focus was captured by the theory by Leon Festinger “Theory of social comparison”, which accentuated inter-personal relations in the process of evaluation.

In this respect, the theory of attribution introduced by Franz Heider (1944) also should be considered. According to this theory the process of casual attribution can influence the “False Consensus Effect”. The Author points out that when the person attributes the causes of a concrete behavior to an external situation, it is expected to have the high level of consensus; but when the causes of the behavior are attributed to the personal predispositions it is less

expected to have assumptions about the similarity in personal behavioral patterns and behavior of others. It can be said that this is an attempt to explain “False Consensus Effect”; however this explanation makes a main stress on the causes and the evaluation is considered through the causes (external and internal causes) [6] [8].

We think that it is important to analyze the both effects in regard with “self” and others. Moreover identification the factors influencing these effects also has high importance and requires more detailed examination.

As we have already stated, the essence of “false uniqueness” lies in the fact that a person considers desirable and effective behavior characteristic of him unique (it has been also confirmed in case of positive features) (Marx, 1984); [4]. While the “false consensus effect” implies that a person’s personal stand and ineffective behavior characteristic of him, is quite common.

In respect with the given tendency, the issues of distribution or non-distribution of ineffective and undesirable behavior is considered by various authors. In our study the main focus was made not on distribution of ineffective behavior but rather on distribution of negative personal features; accordingly the “false consensus effect” was studied from this perspective.

Following from the nature and importance of these events we intended to test a question whether these effects (“false uniqueness effect” and “false consensus effect”) are universal or they depend on culture. In order to answer this question the study based on Georgian population was carried out.

The study was based on process of the self-evaluation. Though the self-evaluation is relatively deeply learnt and its different forms have been existing, the few studies have focused on examination of self-evaluation from the following perspective – when a person not only evaluate the personal features and opinions but also evaluate the distribution of his/her personal features and opinion in others. It means that the person makes self-evaluation not only by evaluation of personal features and opinions, but by the attribution of these characteristics to others, i.e. the factors influencing this process also have a high importance.

Thus, this study investigates the assumption that “False Consensus Effect” and “False Uniqueness Effect” can be considered as universal regularities and later examines the factors influencing them.

We assume that despite the fact that “I” and self-evaluation (as one of the main aspects of I) are well studied, examination of self-evaluation from this perspective is very up-dated and comprehensive.

### **Aims and Tasks of Research**

This study has been focusing on examination of the factors and regularities influencing the process of self-evaluation. The following issues have been addressed:

- 1) The relationship between evaluation of one’s personal features and opinions and attribution of these personal characteristics to others
- 2) Examination the forms of self-evaluation (high/low level) as the factors influencing the “False Consensus Effect” and “False Uniqueness Effect” – whether these forms make these effects stronger or weaker.

**The research question has been narrowed down and the following basic tasks have been identified:**

- Identify the “False Uniqueness Effect” while evaluating others in accordance with own positive personal features;
- Identify the tendency of spreading of one’s opinions among others
- Identify the “False Consensus Effect” while evaluating others in accordance with own negative personal features;
- Identify the relationship between the form of self-evaluation and the “False Uniqueness” and “False Consensus effects”; the research was carried out in several series – study 1, 2, 3 and 4.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Study I**

#### **Examination of “False Uniqueness Effect” and “False Consensus Effect”**

Defining the “False-Uniqueness Effect” and “False-consensus Effect” as universal regularities was the aim of the first stage of the research. We were interested whether the above-mentioned effects act in Georgian population while evaluating others in accordance with personal characteristic features and opinions.

On that stage we aimed to check the following hypotheses:

- “False-Uniqueness Effect” and “False-consensus Effect” are general tendency in the process of self-evaluation and are not determined by cultural background;
- In the process of evaluation of others in accordance with own negative personal features “False-consensus Effect” acts.

### **Methodology**

#### **Subjects and Procedure**

For exploring the hypothesis an empirical research was conducted.

In the first stage there was examined the hypothesis about the assumption that a person tends to think that his/her personal characteristic features are unique while his/her own negative features as well as opinions are widespread among others.

The research 1 was carried out at Tbilisi State University on 434 students assigned into 4 groups; there were three groups with 100 subjects and one group with 134 ones.

On this stage the instrument of the research was a questionnaire with four different questions, each questionnaire was consisted of two open questions (annex 1).

We separated the questions in questionnaires 2 and 3 as we considered that many of people might have not the same opinions but they might agree with us.

Instruction for group I: the subjects were asked to name one positive feature and evaluate others according to this feature

Instruction for group II: the subjects were asked to name at least one personal opinion and estimate the number of students (at the same department or the whole university) who possess the similar opinion

Instruction for group III: the subjects were asked to name at least one personal opinion and give the number of students (at the same department or the whole university) who share the similar opinion

Instruction for group IV: the subjects were asked to name one negative feature and evaluate others according to this feature

As it is seen from the given material during per second question the subjects were asked to mention the number of those persons that possessed the characteristic features named by them or that shared their opinion. The percent pointed by the subjects reflects his/her subjective attitude. The information that we got on the second question have lack of objectivity. These very data are interesting for our researches and not what is the percent that actually possess the similar characteristic features (both, positive and negative) or opinion. According to this answer we understand how does the subjects evaluate himself and at the same time what does he think about others “like he” and how does he evaluate the persons having the same status. Thus it was not important whether the “others” were the students just at the department or in the whole University for the subjects.

**Analysis of Results** In the first case when the subjects were asked to name just one characteristic feature (positive) and then to evaluate the others according to this characteristic feature, we received following results: 71.3% of subject mentioned that less than 50% of others (the students from the same department or the whole university) possess the same characteristic feature named by the subject. [ $\chi^2=10,46$ ;  $d.f.=1$ ;  $p<0,001$ ].

As we have already mentioned above great number of subjects think that the characteristic feature named by him is less common than . . . (it means that the characteristic feature that he possesses is common to less than 50%) but the other part thinks that this characteristic feature is common to more than 50%. ( $Z = 6,36$ ;  $p<0,001$ ].NAKLEBAD



In the second case when the subject were asked to name their one opinion and the number of students that share this opinion we got following results: 80.2% of subjects think that more than 50% of the group shares his opinion [ ( $\chi^2=40,08$ ;  $d.f.=1$ ;  $Pp<0,001$ )].

It was revealed that while the great number of subjects think that many people share their own opinion (more than 50%) only few respondents mentioned that less than 50% do this ( $Z = 8,9$ ;  $p<0,001$ ).

In the third case when the subjects were asked to define the number of those students that possess the opinion mentioned by them it appeared that the number of students was not exaggerated. The answers of those subjects saying that the same opinion possess more than 50% of others (the students from the same department or the whole university) and of those that say less than 50% are equally distributed.

While evaluating others according to own negative characteristic features totally 43 such features were named; 20 out of this features were considered as more negative than the others (Table #1). Also according to the data 75% from these 20 negative features are common to the majority of others (i.e. more than 50% of the tested group) and only 25% are common to the minority (i.e. less than 50 ( $\chi^2 = 12,841$ ;  $d.f. =1$ ;  $p<0.01$ )).

Table # 1: Negative features

#	FEATURE
1	laziness
2	stubbornness
3	egocentric
4	disorganized
5	weak - willed
6	jealousy
7	aggressiveness
8	late
9	lack of purposefulness
10	labiality
11	harmful speech
12	Forgetting offence easily
13	liar
14	extremely interested
15	exigent
16	impulsivity
17	lack of sense of responsibility
18	indifference
19	to become bored with people quickly
20	Arrogance

**The results are following:** while evaluation of others according to own positive features the subjects assume that these features are less distributed among others. But in case of opinions and negative features the number of students is overestimated – the subjects

assume that these opinions and negative features are more common and distributed among others. It also should be mentioned that the subjects' answers concerning possessing the similar opinions among others were divided in two equal groups: 50 %of subjects think that the others possess the same opinion and the same number of subjects believe that their own opinions are less common and distributed among others.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Tendency of spreading of personal features (positive and negative) among “others”**

#### **Study II**

A person is not any substantial meaning but he is a system integrated in a direction. Certain necessity moves the person and the environment makes certain influence on him. Thus the person is considered as integrated in this system and not out of it. He is included in the social environment and following from this the person bears a certain social status. From the other hand the person possesses the certain subjective system of attitudes: he has some conception on himself, a certain level of self-esteem, self-consciousness and also the ideas on social environment and others. So it might be said that the person evaluates the environment and others.

In the process of self-evaluation the person makes objectivation his “self.” that forms certain attitude to himself. Though as it was mentioned above the others also play an important role in formation of a certain attitude to himself.. Others give a chance for comparing. It might be said that the person’s attitude to others, the evaluation of others are the essential component for his activity and realization. Thus the person uses the others as the existed standards. Sometimes he tries to change these standards in order to justify his own behavior and strength the self-evaluation.

In this chapter the study 2 is discussed. The study was aimed at defining how much are generally spread the positive and negative features among others according by subjects.

While on the previous stage we were interested in the issues of spreading person’s own positive or negative features as well as how much own personal features are common for others, in this case our interest was focused on distribution of positive and negative features generally i.e the features that are not related to the subjects’ personal ones.

## **Methodology**

### **Subject and Procedure**

Again the subjects were the students of Tbilisi State University and they were asked to evaluate the students of the same University. As we have already mentioned this principle of evaluation of “similar persons” makes easy the process of evaluation of others, it means that it is easier to evaluate the persons of the same status.

As it was in study 1, in this case the subjects were recruited from the students of Tbilisi State University. 279 subjects were distributed in two groups. One group was evaluating others according to positive features and the other – according to negative features. We did not mix with each other the positive and negative features; the each group was given a separate list of positive and negative features. We proposed that it would be better to conduct this study according to these principles. For one case the subjects were requested to evaluate others according to positive features and for the second – according to negative ones. Besides that the number of positive and negative features was not equal, as we relied on data of selected features from the study 1.

From the study 1 we have selected those positive and negative features that were named by more subjects and thus they were more frequently met ones. In a total 18 positive and only 11 negative features were selected; The selected features are given in Table # 1 and Table # 2.

Table # 2: Positive Features

#	<b>FEATURE</b>
1	Treating the people with respect
2	Friendliness
3	Courteous
4	Mutual support
5	self-knowledge ability
6	Emotionality
7	self-possession
8	tempered character
9	Gentleness
10	Sympathy
11	Accuracy
12	Tolerance
13	Be responsible
14	Justice
15	hardworking
16	Kindness
17	Purposeful
18	Faithful

Table # 3: Negative Features

#	FEATURE
1	laziness
2	shyness
3	stubbornness
4	impulsivity
5	egocentricity
6	lack of sense of responsibility
7	late
8	aimless
9	disorganized
10	lack of will
11	bound with complexes

The subjects were given these two lists of features and they were requested to evaluate the others “like them” according to given features (positive and negative). They were also given following instructions:

I

Bellow are listed the positive features, how do you think what percent of students of our department (of the whole University) possess each feature.

II

Bellow are listed the negative features, how do you think what percent of students of our department (of the whole University) possess each feature.

As we have mentioned above the subjects were requested to point the number of students (in percents) to each feature, for whom those features were characteristic. The percent pointed by the subjects means the level of spreading of a certain feature, so they were

not analyzing the features but they were evaluating others according to those features. Obviously, this evaluation can not be considered as objective and expresses just the subjective opinion of the subjects, their subjective attitudes. In this case it is interesting how the subjects evaluate others and whether they prefer to think that the others “like them” more possess positive or negative features. Actually, the percents pointed by them could not be considered as accurate figures.

In that case we were interested in the subjects’ opinion how much are spread the positive and negative features. If in the study 1 they were evaluating others “like them” according to their own features. In the study 2 they were requested to evaluate others (with the same status) in general, according to features given by us

In two research groups different subjects were participated. The number of female and male subjects was not equal. Their unequal distribution in the groups does not give a chance to make any conclusion about gender differences

### **Analysis of results**

In study 2 we have received following results: 61% of subjects think that less than 50% of the evaluated persons possess listed positive features and only 39% think that more than 50% of the evaluated persons possess the same positive features [ ( $\chi^2$ .=45;  $P<0,001$ )].

Results suggest, that great number of the subjects think that generally positive features are less spread and the rest part of the subjects think that more than 50% of people possess these features. ( $Z =12,1$ ;  $p<0,001$ ). However such feature as emotionality (listed as a positive feature) was an exclusion from the above mentioned tendency – it was considered that this feature was common and spread among others.

In those cases when the subjects were requested to evaluate others according to negative features (11 features) the following have been revealed:

1) The majority of subjects assume that only 5 features from the given list were mostly common (characterize to more than 50% ) these features are: laziness, lack of responsibility, inaccuracy, lack of will, egoism.



2) The majority of subjects assume that only 2 features from the given list were less common (characterize to less than 50% ) these features are: shyness and bind with complexes.

3) The subjects' opinions were different concerning three features,,: stubbornness, impulsivity and unable to make both ends meet;

4) such kind of distribution is not equal  $\chi^2=16,3$ ,  $p<0,001$ , it means that more often the negative features concern to majorities and it means that according to the subjects' opinion the general negative features are spread enough.

**The results are following:** The data revealed that the most subjects think that the positive features generally are less spread while the negative are rather spread.

### **Study III :**

While processing the data it appeared that the negative features that the subjects attributed to themselves were spread enough to their mind. It means that they think that these features are common for many other students. But it should be mentioned one interesting fact that stipulated continuing of research. Negative features from one point of view that the subjects concern to themselves do not seem so bad. Following from this was born a new idea to scale these features and see how negative they are.

In study III we aim to see how negatively the subjects evaluate themselves. When a person has to evaluate himself according to negative features (as we saw above when the subjects were given the task to evaluate themselves according to negative features), it is rather interesting what are the negative features that he attributes to himself – are these attributed negative features actually very negative?

## **Methodology**

### **Subjects and Procedure**

This research question has been tested by using the following methodology:

As it was mentioned above based on existed materials we have received the list of 11 negative features. We have chosen the five points scale. From the Turston's 11 points scale

we took negative continuums from (-5) to (-1), in order the subjects could easily range the features. Each point had appropriate adjective:

intolerance	_ 5
awful	_ 4
very bad	_ 3
bad	_ 2
bad, but acceptable	_ 1

The given above relationship between the adjectives and points scale were evaluated by 10 experts. 134 students participated in the study III. The subjects were given the following tasks:

“You are given the list of negative features. You are requested to range them according to the level of worse on the given scale, how do you think where would be placed each of them on the scale?-. ”

The subjects were given the papers with above mentioned scale and small sticking papers with features. They were requested to stick those papers on the scale in accordance with with given instruction. .

### **Analyzis of results**

Table #4

<b>Feature</b>	<b>weight ~</b>	<b>distribution</b>	<b>appropriate adjectives</b>
	average evaluation	size of changing	
egocentricity	- 4,0		<b>awful</b>
lack of responsibility	- 4,0		<b>awful</b>
lack of purposefulness	- 3,5		<b>between awful and very bad</b>

lack of will	- 3,4		<b>very bad</b>
binding with complexes	- 2,9		<b>very bad</b>
unable to make both ends meet	- 2,8		<b>very bad</b>
impulsivity	- 2,7		<b>very bad</b>
laziness	- 2,6		<b>between very bad and bad</b>
stubbornness	- 2,3		<b>bad</b>
inaccuracy	- 2,3		<b>bad</b>
shyness	- 1,8		<b>bad, but acceptable</b>

The `weight` is the average mark of the group, the mediana is also calculated, the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. The size of changing is the distance between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile.

As the table # 4 shows there was no feature evaluated with the mark “intolerance”. As for **egocentric** and **lack of sense of responsibility** they were evaluated as “awful” features. In regard with the **purposefulness**, this feature was equally shared between awful and vary bad by the subjects . Such features as **lack of will**, **unable to make both ends meet**, **impulsivity** and **binding with complexes** were evaluated as very bad. The subjects’ responses were also shared between **laziness** and this feature was placed between very bad and bad; Stubbornness and inaccuracy were considered as bad features but shyness – as bad, but acceptable.

In order to define the relation between frequency of added negative features and evaluation of features Spirman’s ranging correlation coefficient was calculated ( $r = - 0,575$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ). Results revealed statistically significant negative correlation between the variables. Thus the more the feature is considered as negative one the seldome it is considered as personal feature.

**The results are following:** the subjects do not evaluate themselves according to intolerant features and they seldome add awful features to themselves. We can say that the more the feature is considered as worse the seldome it is considered as personal feature.

## CHAPTER IV

### **The relationship between the Self-evaluation and "False Uniqueness Effect" and "False Consensus Effect"**

#### **Study IV**

In the process of self-evaluation there are acting the "False Uniqueness" and "False Consensus" effects, it means that a person prefers to think that his positive features less characteristic for others ("False Uniqueness Effect"); and the negative features are widespread enough ("False Consensus Effect"). It could be mentioned here that action of these effects is the universal regularity and they are revealed almost every time. But we should think that the mentioned effects might be revealed with different intensity in different cases.

As it is well-known all people have their own opinion on themselves and certain attitude to themselves. These very opinions and attitudes make the people different from each other and correspondingly they evaluate themselves in different way. To say it in other words, they differs from each other by the level of self-evaluation. Thus as we know significantly defines their behavior and lifestyle. The effects of "False Uniqueness" and "False Consensus", as the acting regularities in the process of self-evaluation should be depended on the existed level of self-evaluation

In the study IV we discuss the fourth series of the research, the aim of which was to determine the relation between the level of one's self-evaluation (high, average and low) and the effects of "False Uniqueness" and "False consensus". Namely, does the given level of self-evaluation make influence on these effects and does the high level of self-evaluation provide intensification of these effects. The following hypothesis has been tested: There is the relationship between the self-evaluation and the "False Uniqueness" and "False consensus" effects, and high level of self-evaluation intensifies these effects.

## Methodology

### Subjects and Procedure

159 students of Tbilisi State University participated in the study IV. At first as we aimed to define the level of self-evaluation of the subjects we used the specially developed methodology, which was based on bipolar adjective scale [1]. 50 bipolar adjectives in the methodology were placed on the scale with 11 point. The scale of self-evaluation includes 10 blocks and each of them includes 5 bipolar adjectives. Each of these blocks mean certain features that are characterized for a person, for example they are:

- 1 – Social reputation,
- 2 - Cleverness,
- 3 – General impression that makes a person on others,
- 4 – Temperament,
- 5 – Will,
- 6 – Morality,
- 7 – Physical status and health,
- 8 – Will,
- 9 - Emotion that are characterized for a person,
- 10 – Appearance.

Between the positive and negative poles of the bipolar adjectives in the 11 points range from 1 up to 5 corresponds to positive self-evaluation and from 6 up to 11 – to the negative self-evaluation. For revealing of “False Uniqueness Effect- and “False Consensus Effect- we used the questionnaire that was consisted of 20 features, 10 of them were negative and 10 – positive. These features are selected from the materials from previous research stages. These are the features that were named by many subjects, so they were widespread enough. These features were attached with the 7-points scale that was pointing out how much is characteristic this or that personal feature for the subject: (-3) \_ *absolutely is not characteristic for me*, (-2) \_ *feature is not characteristic for me*; (-1) \_ *almost not characteristic*; (0) \_ *I find difficult to answer*; (1) \_ *this feature is more or less*

*characteristic to me; (2) – the feature is characteristic to me; (3) – the feature is very close to me.*

The procedure was the following: the subjects were requested to place themselves on the scale according to certain features. They were requested to do it following from two quite different points of view – following from real and ideal «I». To say it in other words they were requested to show not only how they considered themselves, but what kind a person they desired to be.

The subjects were requested to perform the following tasks: (1) to fill in the self-evaluation scale form in accordance with their real «I»; (2) to perform the same task in accordance with ideal «I»; (3) to indicate on a scale the degree to which the listed features characterize them. 4. To indicate the number of students (in percents) that possesses the same features with the same degree.

### **Analysis of results**

The self-evaluation index was determined as the difference between evaluation of the ideal and real «I». In order to categorize the level of subjects' self-evaluation hierarchic cluster analysis was used. Three sub-groups were used: the subjects with high, middle and low level of self-evaluation. The cluster profiles are shown in the table given below:

Table # 5: *Cluster profile*

	Average value of difference	standard deviation	Self-evaluation	number of tested persons (absolute)	number of tested persons (relative)
First sub-group	0,247	0,30759	high	72	45%
Second sub-group	1,070	0,21539	medium	55	35%
Third sub-group	2,010	0,26907	low	32	20%
Total				159	100%

As the table indicates distribution between the levels of self-evaluation is not equal; the number of people with high level of self-evaluation is more than the number of subjects

with medium or low level of self-conception ( $Z > 1,96$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The difference between the subjects with medium and low levels of self-evaluation. is statistically reliable.

### Positive features

The self-evaluation of subjects and their evaluation of others were compared according to two criterion: 1. Medium (median) and 2. to percentage number of those “others” that possess these features.

While evaluating according to positive features in the sub-groups with high self-evaluation following results were received :

Table # 6 (subgroup with high self-evaluation)

Features	significant for me		significant for others		how many possess	students criteria
	median	difference range	median	difference range		
Tolerance	2,92	0,615	0,95	0,420	19%	33,18
good will	2,90	0,554	0,78	0,676	22%	30,60
purposefulness	2,88	0,745	1,18	0,360	24%	25,91
sense of responsibility	2,87	0,500	0,87	0,298	13%	43,33
hard-working	2,46	0,747	1,01	0,728	11%	17,52
kindness	2,97	0,598	0,80	0,457	25%	36,37
faithfulness	2,89	0,686	0,79	0,660	25%	27,85
self-possession	2,53	0,707	0,53	0,856	19%	22,72
openhearted	2,47	0,727	0,47	0,798	30%	23,36
friendliness	2,88	0,338	0,69	0,688	29%	36,06
<b>totally:</b>	<b>2,78</b>	<b>0,622</b>	<b>0,81</b>	<b>0,594</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>28,88</b>

*Note the difference between self-evaluation and evaluation of others is statistically reliable in all cases.* Following from this table it is clear that the subjects think that the

positive features that are characteristic for them are less common for others, it means that less than 50% of students possess these features. It is also obvious the tendency of spreading less those features among others that are more characteristic a person .

Table #7 (sub-group with average self-evaluation)

<b>Features</b>	<b>significant for me</b>		<b>significant for others</b>		how many possess	students criteria
	median	difference range	median	difference range		
Tolerance	<b>2,14</b>	0,708	<b>1,23</b>	0,600	25%	<b>12,43</b>
good will	<b>2,25</b>	0,620	<b>1,26</b>	0,410	32%	<b>16,80</b>
purposefulness	<b>2,04</b>	0,737	<b>1,37</b>	0,800	36%	<b>7,86</b>
sense of responsibility	<b>2,22</b>	0,762	<b>0,99</b>	0,480	14%	<b>17,25</b>
hard-working	<b>1,73</b>	0,852	<b>1,35</b>	0,920	18%	<b>3,85</b>
kindness	<b>2,64</b>	0,688	<b>1,01</b>	0,780	27%	<b>19,78</b>
faithfulness	<b>2,69</b>	0,611	<b>0,97</b>	0,972	40%	<b>18,89</b>
self-possession	<b>1,71</b>	1,023	<b>0,87</b>	0,953	23%	<b>7,55</b>
openhearted	<b>1,53</b>	0,697	<b>0,66</b>	1,000	35%	<b>9,05</b>
friendliness	<b>2,69</b>	0,600	<b>1,24</b>	0,840	44%	<b>17,67</b>
<b>Totally:</b>	<b>2,17</b>	0,730	<b>1,09</b>	0,776	<b>29%</b>	<b>12,68</b>

*Note: the difference between self-evaluation and evaluation of others is statistically reliable in all cases.*

Following from this table it is clear that the subjects with medium self-evaluation indicated that the strongly positive features characteristic for them are less widespread, it means that less than 50% of the evaluated persons possess these features. But it should be



mentioned that the average value (median) has been reducing in this case, but the percentage value has been inscreasing that it was in the sub-group with high self-evaluation.

Table #8: sub-group with low self-evaluation

Features	significant for me		significant for others		how many possess	students criteria	reliability
	median	difference range	Median	difference range			
Tolerance	1,67	0,613	1,49	1,256	45%	1,62	p >0.05
good will	1,72	0,699	1,80	1,185	42%	0,74	p >0.05
purposefulness	1,54	0,820	1,69	1,323	50%	1,23	p >0.05
sense of responsibility	2,03	0,765	1,73	1,856	24%	1,89	p >0.05
hard-working	1,19	0,655	1,59	0,824	21%	4,78	p =0.000
kindness	2,44	0,482	1,39	1,046	32%	11,48	p =0.000
faithfulness	2,61	0,080	1,51	1,148	45%	12,08	p =0.000
self-possession	1,27	0,577	1,09	1,274	33%	1,69	p >0.05
openhearted	1,38	0,701	1,26	0,877	43%	1,36	p >0.05
friendliness	2,55	0,453	1,81	0,625	50%	12,08	p =0.000
<b>totally:</b>	<b>1,84</b>	<b>0,584</b>	<b>1,54</b>	<b>1,141</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>3,00</b>	<b>p &lt;0.002</b>

*Note: significant are those cases when differences between the self-evaluation and evaluation of others are not reliable.*

As the results suggest , the above mentioned tendency was not supported in the sub-group with low self-evaluation; That means that in this case the features characterizing to the subjects are widespread enough. Though regarding to some features the differences appeared not reliable. These features are: *tolerance, good will, self-possession, openhearted*.

**The results are following: in sum,** the higher is the level of self-evaluation the less are spread those features that strongly characterize the subject.

### Negative features

Table # 9 (sub-group with high self-conception)

Features	significant for me		significant for others		how many possess	students criteria	reliability
	median	difference range	median	difference range			
Laziness	1,02	0,967	2,65	1,275	89%	12,79	p =0.000
Stubbornness	1,52	0,856	2,78	1,970	92%	7,40	p =0.000
Egoism	-0,11	0,715	2,04	-0,891	90%	23,68	p =0.000
Impulsivity	0,81	0,895	2,87	0,988	60%	19,46	p =0.000
unable to make both ends meet	-0,25	0,792	2,21	0,823	71%	27,13	p =0.000
Willfulness	-1,40	0,978	2,80	1,984	71%	23,92	p =0.000
Envious	-2,39	1,957	2,20	2,039	63%	20,47	p =0.000
Injustice	-2,43	0,957	1,79	1,433	75%	30,90	p =0.000
criticality	-0,47	0,987	2,18	0,737	67%	27,20	p =0.000
shyness	0,12	0,873	0,96	0,991	52%	7,97	p =0.000
<b>totally</b>	<b>-0,41</b>	<b>0,742</b>	<b>2,25</b>	<b>1,135</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>24,68</b>	<b>p =0.000</b>

In those cases when the subjects evaluate themselves according to negative features, the following tendency was revealed –the subjects showed tendency to spread more widely among others those negative features, that characterize them more. This tendency is confirmed by the persantage and average velues of spreading of features (in all cases these values are more than 50%). (See the table # 9). The received difference is statistically reliable.

Table # 10: (sub-group with medium self-conception)

<b>Features</b>	<b>significant for me</b>		<b>significant for others</b>		how many possess	students criteria
	median	difference range	median	difference range		
laziness	<b>1,94</b>	0,770	<b>2,53</b>	0,956	86%	<b>6,02</b>
stubbornness	<b>1,58</b>	0,965	<b>2,73</b>	0,774	70%	<b>11,66</b>
egoism	<b>0,12</b>	0,735	<b>2,07</b>	0,870	88%	<b>21,55</b>
impulsivity	<b>1,12</b>	0,619	<b>2,90</b>	1,846	58%	<b>11,51</b>
unable to make both ends meet	<b>-0,12</b>	0,752	<b>1,85</b>	1,395	79%	<b>15,70</b>
willfulness	<b>-1,31</b>	0,875	<b>1,92</b>	1,173	72%	<b>27,85</b>
envious	<b>-2,29</b>	0,661	<b>1,57</b>	1,097	65%	<b>38,00</b>
injustice	<b>-2,38</b>	0,802	<b>1,59</b>	1,395	74%	<b>31,09</b>
criticality	<b>-0,53</b>	0,974	<b>1,98</b>	1,236	65%	<b>20,11</b>
shyness	<b>0,17</b>	0,746	<b>0,89</b>	0,778	51%	<b>8,47</b>
<b>totally:</b>	<b>-0,15</b>	0,790	<b>2,00</b>	0,776	<b>71%</b>	<b>24,46</b>

*Note* the difference is statistically reliable

The same tendency is confirmed in the sub-group with medium self-evaluation, it means that the negative features characteristic for a person he also attributes to others. Percentage value of spreading of these features is more than 50% in all cases.

Table # 11: sub-group with low self-conception

Features	significant for me		significant for others		how many possess	students criteria	reliability
	median	difference range	median	difference range			
laziness	2,67	1,170	2,41	0,654	48%	2,45	p <0.05
stubbornness	2,86	0,727	2,46	0,745	72%	4,83	p =0.000
egoism	0,29	0,763	1,61	0,790	89%	15,14	p =0.000
impulsivity	1,00	1,204	0,77	0,975	60%	1,88	p>0.05
unable to make both ends meet	1,24	1,016	1,82	0,708	77%	5,97	p =0.000
willfulness	2,71	1,200	0,59	0,970	67%	17,32	p =0.000
envious	-2,57	0,312	0,58	0,520	65%	65,51	P=0.000
injustice	-2,33	0,615	0,62	0,563	73%	44,61	p =0.000
criticality	1,75	0,864	1,74	0,148	63%	0,06	p >0.05
shyness	2,59	1,289	-1,42	0,895	17%	32,20	p =0.000
<b>totally:</b>	1,05	0,916	1,12	0,697	63%	0,79	p >0.05

*Note:* the difference except of some cases is statistically reliable. According to the table these features are: **impulsivity, criticality.**

From the Table #11 it is obvious that the subjects in this case point out that the above-mentioned negative features are rather widespread, it means that the number of those students to whom these features are attributes are overestimated.G

**The results are following:** the level of self-evaluation does not make any influence on widespreading of negative features. In spite of the level of self-evaluation the subjects spread their characteristic negative features among others and the level of spreading is high enough. In this case is not revealed the tendency that was mentioned during evaluation according to positive features.

There was pointed out the difference between the average values of features. That gave us the ground to think that between the features there is some hierarchy, it means that there are features that the subjects attribute more to themselves. In order to determine this we used the factorial analysis. Factorizing was performed in accordance with basic component methods (Keizer “Varimax” method).

### Positive features

Table #12: factorial meanings after rotation

	I factor (dispersion 35%)	II factor (dispersion 12%)	III factor (dispersion 10%)	IV factor (dispersion 6%)	V factor (dispersion 5%)
Tolerance		0,780			
god-will		0,668			
purposefulness			0,763		
sense of responsibility			0,719		
hardworking			0,800		
kindness	0,592				
faithfulness	0,852				
self-possession				0,903	
openhearted					0,701
friendliness	0,643				

Following from the table such features as: **kindness, faithfulness, friendliness, tolerance, good-will** are considered as the most important; such features as **purposefulness, sense of responsibility, hard-working** – take the second place, and **openhearted** is considered as the less important feature.

### Negative features:

Table # 13: meanings with factorial charging (after rootatoin)

I factor (dispersion 41%)	II factor (dispersion 19%)	III factor (dispersion 5%)	IV factor (dispersion 4%)	
laziness		0,644		
stubbornness		0,511		
egoism			0,566	
impulsivity		0,472		
unable to make both ends meet		0,623		
willfulness		0,627		
envious	0,817			
injustice	0,792			
criticality			0,666	
shyness			-0,488	0,649

Following factors were evaluated as the most negative ones, such as **envious and injustice** followed by **laziness, stubbornness, impulsivity, unable to make both ends meet, lack of responsibility; egoism, criticality**, as for the **shyness** were considered as the less negative features and were placed on the third level.

One important fact can be mentioned regarding the feature **shyness. Shyness** together with other negative features, such as egoism and criticality is in negative correlation that means inconsistency between these features. Following from this point of view the shy people are not egoistic and critical.

## Positive features

Table #14 average indexes according to factors

Features	significant for me		significant for others		how many possess	student's criteria	reliability
	median	range of difference	median	range of difference			
I factor ("morality")	2,71	0,371	1,13	0,802	35%	22,45	p =0.000
II factor ("softheartness")	2,27	0,635	1,25	0,758	31%	12,93	p =0.000
III factor ("willfulness")	2,11	0,731	1,31	0,843	23%	9,03	p =0.000
IV factor ("emotions")	1,84	0,769	0,83	1,277	25%	8,53	p =0.000
V ("openhearted")	1,80	0,708	0,80	1,116	36%	9,53	p =0.000

As it is given in the table, the features were grouped in following blocks according to factors:

**morality** \_ kindness, faithfulness, friendliness; **softheartness** \_ tolerance, good-will; **willfulness** \_ purposfulness, sense of responsibility hard-workness; **politness** \_ self-possession; **openheartedness** - frankness.

## Negative features

Table #15

Features	significant for me		significant for others		how many possess	student's criteria	reliability
	median	range of difference	median	range of difference			
First factor ("morality")	<b>-2,40</b>	0,636	<b>1,39</b>	1,102	69%	<b>37,56</b>	PP+===P
second factor ("willfulness")	<b>1,03</b>	1,092	<b>2,22</b>	0,796	73%	<b>11,12</b>	P =0.000
third factor ("self confidentiality")	<b>0,53</b>	1,067	<b>1,02</b>	0,773	64%	<b>4,72</b>	p =0.000
fourth factor ("weakness")	<b>0,96</b>	1,123	<b>0,14</b>	0,718	40%	<b>7,72</b>	p =0.000

Like negative features the positive ones have integrated in the different blocks in the following way: **morality** – envous, injustice; **willfulness** – laziness, stubbornness, impulsivity, unable to make both ends meet, lack of will; **self-confidentiality** – egoism, criticality; **weakness** -shyness.

**The results are following: thus, it becomes clear that** the more importance is the (positive) feature the more attributes the subject to himself and correspondingly this feature is less spread, that is confirmed by the percentage index of spreading (the number of those students, for whom this feature is characterizing). As for the negative features we received such results: the more negative is the feature the less it is attributed to a person by himself.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Discussion (study I)

In the study I we examined the “False Uniqueness” and “False consensus” effects as the universal categories acting in the process of self-evaluation and with no , cultural character; we were also interested to find out whether there was acting the “False Consensus Effect” while evaluation of others according to own negative personal features. According to our results a person tends to think that his own positive personal features are less spread and correspondingly he less attributes them to others, thus, he thinks that the number of people that possess the same positive features are rather few. It might be said that the “False Uniqueness Effect” has been revealed; But regarding personal position (opinion), it can be said that the person tends to think that his own opinion is widespread and many others agree with him (it means than number of people that share this opinion is large enough); So in the research the effect of “false consensus” has been supported.

As we have mentioned above in this stage of research we have also discussed the items concerning wide spreading of own negative features. In this case, based on research data it can be said that the person thinks (correspondingly he prefers) that many people possess the same negative features that are characterizing to him, it means that in this respect there are many people like him.

Based on this results we can underline the person’s tendency to strengthen his personal “I” and to evaluate it positively, it means that the person tries to present himself in the better way, tries to provide positive attitude to himself. “False Uniqueness Effect” and “False Consensus Effect” discussed in our study serve for this aim.

In all three cases we can propose that the self-defending mechanisms are acting. A person tries to come closer to the ideal »I”. For this purpose he regularly evaluates himself,, others and makes comparisons. Here we can refer to Carl Roger’s theory, where defense mechanisms are discussed. He pointed out that the person applies defense mechanisms in order not to acknowledge the incongruent relation between the person’s experience and thoughts about himself. These mechanisms are following: 1) *distortion* that means inadequate perception of subjective experience; 2) *denial* that means refusal of certain subjective experience.

If we return back to our results we can say that in all three cases the subjects evaluated and perceived others in a preferred manner. The subjects evaluate others; they do not concern whether their evaluation is realistic. Actually this evaluation is lack of objectivity, but it can be considered as a way for self-evaluation. It means that a person has a tendency to change the reality in such way that provides strengthening of his personal “I”. Based on research data we can say that a person applies to the following techniques for strengthening his personal “I”:

Firstly, a person thinks that his positive features are not widespread, it means that this person refuses that there are many people possessing the same positive features like him.

Secondly, a person thinks that his opinion is widespread and thus he underlines that his opinions are socially accepted and he has social support. This understanding confirms the correctness and adequacy of his personal position. This position reduces possible tension in relation with social interactions.

Thirdly, while evaluating others according to negative features, we can say that a person has a tendency to perceive and evaluate others incorrectly when he has to concentrate on and find out his own negative features. In this case he tends to think these features are widespread enough. It can be proposed that attribution of own negative features to many others reduces the level of negativeness of these features. Wide spreading of personal negative features makes a person to think that he is not only who possess these negative features and many people are like him. To say the same in other words in regard with negative features a person tries to find the people like him as much as possible.

### **Discussion (study II, III)**

Acting of defending mechanisms in the process self-evaluation has been confirmed in the process of scaling of negative features. In the study II the list of extremely negative features (that was selected from the data of Study I) actually was not revealed. Thus, we can say that when a person has to evaluate himself according to negative features, he tries to focus on those features that are less negative and evaluate himself according to these features. With this tendency he tries to present himself better. It can be said that whilst evaluate himself according to negative features the person mainly applies two ways for presenting himself better; they are: (1) He tries to spread his personal negative features in others and (2)

he evaluates himself according to less negative features. This gives us one more ground to think that a person aims to represent himself as better as possible.

In the study III, when the subjects were evaluating others not according to personal but generally positive and negative features, the following tendencies were revealed: the subjects thought that the negative features were spread more than the positive ones. It means that the subjects think that generally the negative features are more characteristic for others. This tendency can be considered as one of the ways in which the most vital human need in self respect can be satisfied.

According to Coppersmith's (1963) definition, the self-respect is the self-evaluation that is realized and generally kept by a person. It indicates how much the person likes or dislikes himself, also expresses the degree according to which the person believes that he is competent, important, successful and valuable. Self-respect is the personal way of discussion about self-value, which is expressed through those attitudes that the person possesses towards himself.

### **Discussion (study IV)**

Following from the meaning and nature of the "False Uniqueness Effect" and "False Consensus Effect" we started thinking on those factors that might have any influence on the above-mentioned effects. As it was mentioned above we identified the level of self-evaluation as one of the factors influencing "False Uniqueness Effect" and "False Consensus Effect".

In the study IV we have studied relationships between the "false-uniqueness" and "false consensus" effects and the self-evaluation level. As a result the following has been revealed:

- 1) There is direct relationship between the "False Uniqueness Effect and the level of self-evaluation. Namely, the higher is the level of self-evaluation the more is expressed the "False Uniqueness" Effect; it means that the higher is the level of self-evaluation the less a person is trying to attribute his strong features to others (we mean positive features).
- 2) The one-sided relationship between the self-evaluation and "False-Uniqueness Effect" is not confirmed (it did not appeared statistically reliable). It means that the level of

self-evaluation (high or low) has no importance while evaluating others according to own negative personal features. In any case a person prefers to think that the negative features that he possesses are widespread enough and correspondingly he attributes these features to many other people.

According to results of the research we can see the following – a person prefers to think that he differs from others by positive features. The more intensive is the positive feature in him the less is this feature spread. The last one is the ground to think that a person can consider himself as very special and unique. But in case of negative features a person thinks that these features are widespread enough and they do not differ him from others that are active in both – high and low self-evaluation.

Following from the above-said we can assume that the low self-evaluation does not mean that a person is more likely to attribute the negative features to himself than to others but on the contrary, he differs himself from others by the positive features.

The whole research that we performed is the confirmation of the tendency, according to which a person tries to evaluate himself in positive way and out of this purpose, consciously or unconsciously he applies different ways and mechanisms.

A person tries to avoid inner discomfort that might be caused by difference between the “real” and “ideal” “I”. He constantly evaluates himself and compares himself with others. As it became clear, while evaluating himself the criterion of transmission or non-transmission of his characterizing features or spreading of his opinion among the others are highly important and we can say that these criterion are universal.

It should be mentioned that the additional interesting characteristics also have been revealed as result of this study. Specifically a person has the low self-evaluation not due to negative features but because of insufficiency of positive features. To say the same in other way when a person has low self-evaluation he is less trying to attribute positive features to himself. While comparing himself with others he underlines the circumstance, according to which he thinks that he is different from others not because of many negative features but because the positive personal features are less characteristic to him.

And at the last, we can say that all above-said serves for strengthening of “I”, Correspondingly it serves for creation of good impression about himself and generally for creation of positive attitudes in respect with himself and of course for keeping of all above-

mentioned images. As it is known, all above-mentioned is highly important and necessary for normal functioning and action of a human being; for adequate actions in different situations and for achieving a certain success.

## CONCLUSSIONS

Based on the results of the research we can make the following conclusions:

1. In case of spreading of own personal positive features among others, the “False Uniqueness effect” acts as universal phenomenon in Georgian population .as well
2. In case of spreading of negative features among others it is confirmed the action of the “False Consensus Effect”.
3. In case of estimating spreading of own important opinions among others the “False Consensus Effect” acts.
4. A person thinks that generally personal negative features (not own) are more spread among others, or the negative features are more characteristic for others than positive.
5. While evaluating himself according negative features the person perform the evaluation according to less negative features.
6. The level of self-evaluation significantly intensifies the “False Uniqueness Effect”. The higher is the level of self-evaluation the stronger is the mentioned effect.\
7. There is no relationship between the level of self-evaluation and the “False Consensus Effect”. Though the level of self-evaluation a person is more likely to think that negative features characteristic to him are spread and common to others.
8. In case of low self-evaluation a person does not attribute the negative features to himself but rather believes that he has a lack of the positive features.

**Annex I: A**

I

- a) Name the one feature that is more characteristic for you (we mean the positive feature);
- b) How do you think what is the percent of students at your department (in the University) that possess the same characteristic features?

II A

a) From those points of view that you have concerning to different items what is the only point of view that is the most peculiar and important;

b) How do you think what percent of students at your department (in the University) possess the same point of view?

III

a) From those points of view that you have concerning to different items what is the only point of view that is the most peculiar and important;

b) How do you think what percent of students at your department (in the University) will agree with your point of view?

IV

a) Name one negative characteristic feature that is more peculiar to you;

b) How do you think what is the percent of students at your department (in the University) that possess the same characteristic features?

## References

1. Baliashvili, M (2002). The role of self-objectivity in regulation of behavior. The Institute of Psychology, the Academy of Science of Georgia. Dissertation.
2. Diggory, C. J. (1996). Self-evaluation: Concepts and studies. New York, London, Sydney.
3. Festinger, L. (1964). Conflict, Decision, Dissonance. Stanford. CA: Stanford University Press.
4. Marks, G. (1989 June). *Thinking One's Abilities Are Unique and One's Opinions Are Common*. Personality and Social Psychology bulletin, Vol.10, No. 2, 203-208.
5. Marks, G., Miller N. (1987). *Ten years of research on the False-Consensus Effect: An empirical and theoretical review*. Psychological bulletin, Vol. 102, No.1, 72-90.
6. . (1999). . « » . - .
7. Ross, L., Greene, D., & House, P. (1997). *The false consensus effect: An egocentric bias in social perception and attribution processes*. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, No. 13. 279-301.
8. Suls, J., Wheel L. (2000). Handbook of social comparison: Theory and research. Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, New York.
9. Snyder, C. R., & Fromkin, H, L., (1980). Uniqueness: The human pursuit of difference. New York: Plenum.
10. Suls J. (Ed.). (1982) Psychological Perspectives on the Self. vol.1, Hillsdale, NJ:Elbaum.
11. Tesser, A. (1980). *Self-esteem maintenance in family dynamics*. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39, 77-91.