Dedicated to Prof. Emeritus Mihail Megan on the occasion of his 75th anniversary

The early developments in fixed point theory on b-metric spaces: a brief survey and some important related aspects

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ABSTRACT. A very impressive research work has been devoted in the last two decades to obtaining fixed point theorems in quasimetric spaces (also called b-metric spaces). Some incorrect and incomplete references with respect to the early developments on fixed point theory in b-metric spaces are though perpetually taking over from the existing publications to the new ones.

Starting from this fact, our main aim in this note is threefold:

(1) to briefly survey the early developments in the fixed point theory on quasimetric spaces (b-metric spaces);
(2) to collect some relevant bibliography related to this topic;
(3) to discuss some other aspects of current interest in the fixed point theory on quasimetric spaces (b-metric spaces).

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, a significant interest in fixed point theory has been directed to transposing classical or recent metric fixed point results from metric spaces to certain generalized metric spaces, see for example Van An et all [10] for a recent survey.

In most of the cases such an approach turned out to be trivial, as the fixed point theorems established in some generalized metric spaces could be obtained from the corresponding ones in the setting of metric spaces by a metrization process, see for example [58], [65], [69], [79], [84], [90], [92], [95].

There are however some generalized metric spaces, like quasimetric spaces (usually called b-metric spaces in the context of fixed point theory), for which this transposing process appears to produce in most of the situations genuine generalizations of the fixed point results from usual metric spaces.

If we want to have a better illustration of the significant interest of researchers working in fixed point theory for transposing existing metric fixed point results from metric spaces to b-metric spaces or to establishing new fixed point results in the latter setting and are searching in MathScinet or zbMATH for the terms "fixed point" and "b-metric space" appearing in the title or in the topic of the publications indexed there, we shall find a very impressive record especially in the last 10 years.

Despite the very extensive research work that has been devoted to obtaining fixed point theorems in b-metric spaces (see, for example, the recent survey [87]), most of these papers are making incorrect and / or incomplete references to the mathematical literature regarding the origins of the main notion involved in the respective research works, i.e., the notion of *quasimetric space* (b-metric space), as well as with respect to the early developments in the fixed point theory on quasimetric spaces (b-metric spaces).

Starting from this fact, our main aim in this note is threefold:

(1) to briefly survey the early developments in the fixed point theory on quasimetric spaces (b-metric spaces);
(2) to collect some relevant older and recent bibliography related to this topic;
(3) to also discuss some other aspects of current interest in the fixed point theory on quasimetric spaces (b-metric spaces) and to indicate some further developments.

2. ORIGINS OF QUASIMETRIC SPACES (b-METRIC SPACES)

A fundamental concept in analysis and topology is the notion of *metric space*, which has been introduced by Fréchet [66] (and labeled in this form by Hausdorff [71]), see for example Kantorovich and Akilov [86].

A *metric* (or *distance*) on a nonempty set X is a function $d : X \times X \to \mathbb{R}$ which satisfies the following three conditions:

(1) (*positivity*) $d(x, y) \geq 0$ and $d(x, y) = 0$ if and only if $x = y$;
(2) (*symmetry*) $d(x, y) = d(y, x)$, for all $x, y \in X$;
(3) (*triangle inequality*) $d(x, z) \leq d(x, y) + d(y, z)$, for all $x, y, z \in X$.

If d is a metric on X then the pair (X, d) is called a *metric space*.

Remark 2.1. Sometimes the metric is defined as a functional with values in $[0, +\infty)$, when the axiom of positivity is replaced by the axiom

(4) (*separability*) $d(x, y) = 0$ if and only if $x = y$.

There is a myriad of generalizations of this notion, which were obtained by various alterations of one, two or all three conditions above and / or by dropping out one or two of the axioms of the distance. Amongst these generalizations we can find the notion of *quasimetric space* (commonlly called b-metric space by researchers working in the field of fixed point theory), which is extremely important in analysis, see for example the monograph Mitrea et all [105].

Definition 2.1. A function $d : X \times X \to \mathbb{R}$ is called a *quasimetric* on X if it satisfies the positivity and symmetry conditions above and also

(QM_1) there exist a constant $K \geq 1$ such that

$$(2.1) \qquad\qquad d(x, z) \leq K \left[d(x, y) + d(y, z) \right], \text{ for all } x, y, z \in X.$$

If d is a quasimetric on X then the pair (X, d) is called a *quasimetric space*.

Obviously, in the particular case $K = 1$, a quasimetric d reduces to the usual notion of metric (distance) but, in general, a quasimetric is not a metric.

Remark 2.2. An equivalent definition of a quasimetric (see for example [41]) could be given by replacing condition (QM_1) by the following one

$(QM_1)'$ there exist a constant $K_1 \geq 1$ such that

$$(2.2) \qquad\qquad d(x, z) \leq K_1 \max\{d(x, y), d(y, z)\}, \text{ for all } x, y, z \in X.$$

Indeed, in view of the double inequality $a + b \leq 2 \max\{a, b\} \leq 2(a + b)$, $(QM_1)'$ implies (QM_1) with $K = K_1$, while (QM_1) implies $(QM_1)'$ with $K_1 = 2K$.

It is rather difficult to trace back to the origins of the notion of *quasimetric space* and one of the reasons for having such a situation appears to be the simple fact that over the time various distinct metric structures were termed as *quasimetric spaces*.

For example, in a paper from 1931, Wilson [145] called "quasimetric" the generalized metric obtained from a metric by dropping out the symmetry property, see also Cobzaş [45]. For another concept bearing the same name, see Hitzler [74].

So, throughout the present note we shall consider only the quasimetric spaces introduced by Definition 2.1 and obtained from metric spaces by replacing the triangle inequality with the relaxed triangle inequality (2.1) (called quasi-triangle inequality in [123]).

We shall call such a space a *quasimetric space* but will also accept the term *b-metric space* which is accustomed in fixed point theory. Note also that some other names appear in literature to designate a quasimetric space (*b*-metric space). For example, Khamsi and Hussain [91] used recently the term "metric type space".

One can trace back to the origins of the concept of *quasi-norm* which is closely interrelated to that of quasimetric.

Definition 2.2. Let X be a real or complex linear space. A map $\|\cdot\| : X \to [0,\infty)$ is a quasi-norm if it satisfies the following conditions:

(QN_0) $\|x\| = 0$ implies $x = 0_X$;
(QN_1) $\|x + y\| \leq Q\left[\|x\| + \|y\|\right]$, for all $x, y \in X$, where $Q \geq 1$ does not depend on x, y;
(QN_2) $\|\lambda x\| = |\lambda| \cdot \|x\|$, for all $x \in X$ and $\lambda \in \mathbb{K}$ (either $\mathbb{C}$ or $\mathbb{R}$).

According to Pietsch [123], the concept of quasi-norm has been introduced by Hyers [72] in 1938, under the name "pseudo-norm" (with (QN_1) formulated differently but in an equivalent way) and, in the above form, by Bourgin [36] in 1943, who actually proposed the label "quasi-norm".

Therefore, it is very natural to speculate that the concept of quasimetric (space) appeared in literature approximately in the same period as the quasi-norm. By searching for its origins in MathScinet we succeeded to identify only a paper from 1970 due to Coifman and Guzmán [47] which appears to be the first one that explicitly defines and uses the concept of a quasimetric in the sense of Definition 2.1.

In fact, Coifman and Guzmán [47] used the name *"distance" function* and introduced it in order to construct the so called homogenous spaces and study singular integrals on such spaces. Note also that the priority of Coifman and Guzmán is mentioned by Aimar et all [2], Cobzaş and Czerwik [46].

Anyway, if we are now turning our attention to the way in which researchers working in fixed point theory refer to the early developments of the concept of quasimetric space (*b*-metric space), it would be noted that the opinions are very different, and apparently, inaccurate.

Indeed, in some papers it is considered that this concept has been introduced by Bourbaki [35] in 1974 (see for example [87]), or that it has been introduced by Bakhtin [17] in 1989 (see for example [26], [49], [106] etc.), or by Czerwik [51] in 1993 (see [11], [3], [68], [87], [93], [136] etc.) or even by Czerwik [52] in 1998 (see [3], [14], [87], [136], [139] etc.).

In the absence of any other available reference, we shall place the origins of quasimetric spaces either simultaneously with that of quasi-norm, that is, in 1938, or in Coifman and Guzmán's paper [47] from 1970, where it is explicitly defined.

In fact, as in the case of the pair norm - metric, the notion of quasi-norm and that of quasimetric are closely interrelated, in the sense that any quasi-norm $\|\cdot\|$ on a linear space E induces a quasimetric d defined by

$$d(x, y) = \|x - y\|, x, y \in E.$$

Similarly to the way a Banach space is defined, one defines the concept of quasi-Banach space as a complete linear quasi-normed space, see Mitrea et all [105] for more details on the importance of quasi-Banach spaces. According to Pietsch [123], the first example of a quasi-Banach space has been given by Tychonoff [143] in 1935, e.g., the space $l_{\frac{1}{2}}$.

This could be also considered as the first example of quasimetric space. Indeed, on the space

$$l_{\frac{1}{2}} = \left\{ x = (x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n, \ldots) : \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \sqrt{|x_i|} < \infty \right\}$$

let us consider the functional $\rho : l_{\frac{1}{2}} \times l_{\frac{1}{2}} \to [0, \infty)$, defined by

$$(2.3) \qquad\qquad \rho(x, y) = \left(\sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \sqrt{|x_i - y_i|} \right)^2,$$

where $x = (x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n, \ldots), y = (y_1, y_2, \ldots, y_n, \ldots)$.

Then ρ is a quasimetric on $l_{\frac{1}{2}}$ (induced by the corresponding quasi-norm) which satisfies the quasi-triangle inequality (2.1) with $K = 2$, i.e.,

$$\rho(x, z) \leq 2 \left[\rho(x, y) + \rho(y, z) \right], x, y, z \in l_{\frac{1}{2}}.$$

A more general example can be given if we consider $p \in (0, 1)$ instead of $\frac{1}{2}$ in the considerations above, see Example 1.3 [87] (which is taken from [35]).

Remark 2.3. We note in passing the following important fact: when we introduced the equivalent relaxed triangle conditions (QM_1) and $(QM_1)'$, we assumed $K \geq 1$ and $K_1 \geq 1$, respectively, like all the sources we consulted ([47], [17], [11],...).

But, in the paper by Vulpe et all [144], see also Figure 1, where the constant K is denoted by c, it is shown that, in the definition of a quasimetric it is enough to assume only that $c \geq 0$, and the fact that we have always $c \geq 1$ is a consequence of the axioms of the quasimetric.

Indeed, just take $z = x \neq y$ in (2.1) to get:

$$\rho(x, y) \leq c \cdot [\rho(x, z) + \rho(z, y)] = c \cdot \rho(x, y)$$

from which we obtain $c \geq 1$, in view of the fact that $x \neq y \iff \rho(x, y) > 0$.

The same argument applies when inequality (2.2) is considered.

ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИЕ. Множество X назовем квазиметрическим простран-
ством, если каждой паре элементов $x, y \in X$ соотнесено веществен-
ное число $\rho(x, y)$, удовлетворяющее условиям
(I) $\rho(x, y) \geq 0$, $\rho(x, y) = 0$ тогда и только тогда, когда $x = y$;
(II) $\rho(x, y) = \rho(y, x)$;
(III) найдется вещественное число c такое, что
$\rho(x, y) \leq c [\rho(x, z) + \rho(z, y)]$ для любого $z \in X$.
Введенную функцию назовем квазиметрикой.
Из (III) и (I) сразу вытекает, что $c \geq 1$. Действительно, взяв
$z = x \neq y$, имеем $\rho(x, y) \leq c [\rho(x, x) + \rho(x, y)] = c\rho(x, y)$.

FIGURE 1. Excerpt from the paper by Vulpe et all [144], page 15, where the notion of quasimetric is defined (but without any reference to existing literature)

3. ON THE TOPOLOGY OF QUASIMETRIC SPACES

A quasimetric space is a natural setting in a part of harmonic analysis related to the theory of spaces of homogeneous type. For instance, in Coifman and Weiss [48] it is indicated how to construct a quasimetric space on a topological space on which there is defined a Borel measure (and, therefore, how to construct a space of homogeneous type).

The class of quasimetric spaces contains the family of all quasi-Banach spaces, which in turn includes a multitude of function spaces that are of fundamental importance in analysis: Lebesgue spaces, weak Lebesgue spaces, Lorentz spaces, Hardy spaces, weak Hardy spaces, Lorentz-based Hardy spaces, Besov spaces, Triebel-Lizorkin spaces, and weighted versions of these spaces (among many others), see Mitrea et all [105].

Since we are interested mainly to survey the early developments in the fixed point theory on quasimetric spaces, we summarize in this section some important topological properties of the quasimetric spaces from this point of view. For more details on this topic, the reader may consult [11], [23], [46], [87], [91], [139],...

We note that the label *b-metric space* will be often avoided in this section in favour of that of *quasimetric space*, because there is also a significantly different notion with the same name, i.e., B-metric space, with capital "B" coming from Boolean, see Ellis and Sprinkle [62].

In a quasimetric space one introduces the concepts of convergent and Cauchy sequences similarly to the case of usual metric spaces.

Definition 3.3. Let (X, d) be a a quasimetric space. A sequence $\{x_n\}_{n \geq 0}$ in X is called:

(1) *convergent* if and only if there exists $x \in X$ such that for any $\varepsilon > 0$ there exists $n(\varepsilon) \in \mathbb{N}$ such that for all $n \geq n(\varepsilon)$ we have $d(x_n, x) < \varepsilon$, i.e., $\lim_{n \to \infty} d(x_n, x) = 0$. In this case, we write $\lim_{n \to \infty} x_n = x$.

(2) *Cauchy* if and only if for any $\varepsilon > 0$ there exists $n(\varepsilon) \in \mathbb{N}$ such that for all $n \geq n(\varepsilon)$ we have $d(x_n, x_m) < \varepsilon$, i.e., $\lim_{n,m \to \infty} d(x_n, x_m) = 0$.

Lemma 3.1. *Let (X, d) be a quasimetric space. Then*
(i) *Any convergent sequence has a unique limit;* (ii) *Any convergent sequence is Cauchy.*

The reverse of (ii) in Lemma 3.1 is generally not true.

Definition 3.4. A quasimetric space (X, d) is said to be complete if every Cauchy sequence $\{x_n\}_{n \geq 0}$ in X is convergent.

In a quasimetric space one commonly uses the topology induced by its convergence and therefore most – but not all – of the topological concepts and results from metric spaces can be transposed to quasimetric spaces.

For example, in contrast to the case of a metric space, a quasimetric is not a continuous function of its arguments (see Example 3.1) and the open ball $B(x_0; r) := \{x \in X : d(x_0, x) < r\}$ in a quasimetric space (X, d) is not necessarily an open set, while the closed ball $\overline{B}(x_0; r) := \{x \in X : d(x_0, x) \leq r\}$ is not necessarily a closed set.

Example 3.1 (Vulpe et all [144]). Consider $X = \mathbb{R}^2$ and $d : X \times X \to \mathbb{R}_+$ defined for $x = (x_1, x_2), y = (y_1, y_2)$ by

(3.4)
$$d(x, y) = \begin{cases} |x_1 - x_2|, & \text{if } y_1 = y_2 \\ 2(|x_1 - x_2| + |y_1 - y_2|), & \text{if } y_1 \neq y_2. \end{cases}$$

Then (X, d) is a quasimetric space with constant $K = 2$, see [144]. If we take

$$x_n = \left(1, \frac{1}{n}\right); \; x = (1, 0); \; y_n = (0, 0); \; y = (0, 0),$$

then

$$x_n \to x \text{ as } n \to \infty; \ y_n \to y \text{ as } n \to \infty,$$

but

$$d(x_n, y_n) = 2 + \frac{2}{n} \to 2 \neq 1 = d(x, y),$$

which shows that, in contrast to the case of a standard metric, the quasimetric is not a continuous function of its arguments.

With the aim of providing more information regarding the topology of quasimetric spaces, we end this section by presenting a few results about the metrization of quasimetric spaces, which are mainly taken from An, Tuyen and Dung [11] and Cobzaş and Czerwik [46].

Let X be a topological space. A subset D of X is called *sequentially open* if each sequence $\{x_n\}$ in X converging to a point x in D is *eventually* in D, that is, there exists n_0 such that $x_n \in U$ for all $n \geq n_0$. A subset F of X is called *sequentially closed* if no sequence in F converges to a point not in F.

X is called a *sequential space* if each sequentially open subset of X is open or, equivalently, each sequentially closed subset of X is closed. We denote by τ the sequential topology on the quasimetric (X, d).

One can define another topology on a quasimetric space (X, d), see Khamsi and Hussain [90] (Definition 8 and Proposition 1) as follows.

A subset A of X is called *open* if for any $a \in A$, there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that $B(a, r) \subset A$, where, as in the case of a metric,

$$B(x, r) = \{y \in X : d(x, y) < r\}.$$

Then the family of all open subsets of X in the above sense, denoted by τ_d, is also a topology on X.

Another method for generating a topology on a quasimetric space (X, d) is to use a neighborhood system. Indeed, the family $\mathcal{B}$ of all finite intersections of the family

$$\mathcal{C} = \{B(x, r) : x \in X, r > 0\}$$

is a base of a certain topology τ^d on X.

Proposition 3.1 ([11], Proposition 3.3). *Let (X, d) be a quasimetric space. Then*

    (1) $\tau = \tau_d$;
    (2) $\tau_d \subset \tau^d$.

Remark 3.4. The inclusion $\tau_d \subset \tau^d$ is in general strict, as shown by the next example.

Example 3.2 ([11], Example 3.9). Let $X = \left\{0, 1, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{3}, \ldots, \frac{1}{n}, \ldots\right\}$ and $d : X \times X \to [0, \infty)$ defined by $d(x, y) = 0$, if $x = y$; $d(x, y) = 1$, if $x \neq y$, $x, y \in \{0, 1\}$; $d(x, y) = |x - y|$, if $x \neq y$, $x, y \in \{0\} \cap \left\{\frac{1}{2n} : n = 1, 2, \ldots\right\}$;   and $d(x, y) = 4$, otherwise.
    Then we have

    (1) d is a quasimetric on X with $K = 8$;
    (2) d is not a metric on X;
    (3) d is not continuous in each variable;
    (4) $B(1, 2)$ is not open in τ but it is open in τ^d.

Two (quasi-)metrics ρ_1 and ρ_2 on X are said to be *equivalent* if

$$c^{-1}\rho_2(x, y) \leq \rho_1(x, y) \leq c\rho_2(x, y), \ x, y \in X,$$

for some constant $c > 0$ independent of x, y.

A particular class of quasimetric spaces, i.e., the one obtained by taking $K = 2$ in condition (QM_1) from Definition 2.1, is very important from the point of view of their metrizability:

$$(3.5) \qquad (QM_1a) \quad d(x, z) \leq 2 \left[d(x, y) + d(y, z) \right], \text{ for all } x, y, z \in X.$$

In 1937, Frink [67] has shown (see also Schroeder [132]) that, for such a quasimetric space (X, d), there exists a metric ρ on X equivalent to d. More specifically, one has

$$(3.6) \qquad \rho(x, y) \leq d(x, y) \leq 4\rho(x, y), \ x, y \in X.$$

In other words, any quasimetric space with $K = 2$ is metrizable.

This result has been recently extended by Schroeder [132], who has shown that if (X, d) is a quasimetric space with $K \leq 2$, then there exists a metric ρ on X such that

$$(3.7) \qquad \rho(x, y) \leq d(x, y) \leq 2K\rho(x, y), \ x, y \in X.$$

For more details on the metrizability of quasimetric spaces, we refer to [2], [41], [45], [46], [60], [61], [119],...

4. Early developments in fixed point theory on quasimetric spaces

The most important metric fixed point theorem, that plays a crucial role in nonlinear analysis, is the well known *Picard-Banach contraction mapping principle*, first introduced by Banach in [18], in the case of what we call nowadays a Banach space, and then extended to complete metric spaces by Caccioppoli [38].

For a long period of time – almost one century – Banach's theorem has been and continues to be a source of inspiration and intensive research, from a theoretical point of view but also from the point of view of its diverse and important applicative capabilities.

The main efforts of scholars working in metric fixed point theory have been directed to extending the Picard-Banach contraction mapping principle in various ways, of which we mention only the following three:

- by weakening the Banach contraction condition;
- by extending the structure of the metric space (X, d);
- by combining the first two directions.

In what follows we are interested only in the second direction, i.e., when one considers a quasimetric space instead of the usual metric space.

After extensive searches in zbMATH and Mathematical Reviews, it appears that the first fixed point theorem in a quasimetric space has been established in 1981 by Vulpe et all [144], who transposed the Picard-Banach contraction mapping principle from metric spaces to the framework of a quasimetric space, in the sense of Definition 2.1.

Their result reads (see also Figure 2) as follows.

Theorem 4.1 ([144], Theorem 2.1). *Let (X, ρ) be a quasimetric space with the constant K and let A be a mapping of X onto X such that there exists a number $\alpha > 0$ for which*

$$(4.8) \qquad \rho(Ax, Ay) \leq \alpha\rho(x, y), \text{ for each } x, y \in X.$$

If the space (X, ρ) is complete and $0 < \alpha < \dfrac{1}{K}$, then the mapping A has a unique fixed point.

A similar result to Theorem 4.1, even with some of the examples from [144], has appeared in 1989 in another publication from the former Soviet Union (written in Russian, too) and authored by Bakhtin [17], who appears to not have been aware of the preceding publication [144].

This could be explained by means of at least three reasons that we often meet in many other contexts: 1) the main aim of the paper by Vulpe et all [144] has been to investigate

the topological structure of quasimetric spaces, while the fixed point results have been given as applications of those results; 2) the title itself of the paper [144] did not indicate any involvement of fixed point results and 3) the paper [144] appeared in a collection of papers [Investigations in functional analysis and differential equations, Zbl 459.0014] and not in a serial publication (journal).

However, the paper [144] has been reviewed in both zbMATH (Zbl 0502.54032) – this review is describing in detail the fixed point results established by the authors – and Mathematical Reviews (MR0630902).

The next developments in this area appear to be dated in 1993 and are due to the first author [20], who worked in "quasimetric spaces" and established a fixed point theorem for φ-contractions in this setting, and to Czerwik [51], who coined the term "b-metric space", nowadays with an almost general use in fixed point theory.

Для квазиметрического пространства X можно сформулировать следующие принципы сжатых отображений. Пусть задано отображение $A : X \xrightarrow{\text{на}} X$. Предположим, что $\exists \alpha > 0$:
$$\rho(Ax, Ay) \leqq \alpha \rho(x, y); \quad x, y \in X.$$

ТЕОРЕМА 2.1. Если X полно и $0 < \alpha < \frac{1}{c}$, где c из определения X, то отображение A имеет единственную неподвижную точку.

Доказательство проводится по известной схеме. При этом получается оценка $\rho(x_m, x_n) \leqq \rho(x_1, x_0) \frac{\alpha^n c}{1 - \alpha c}$.

ТЕОРЕМА 2.2. Если A^m удовлетворяет условиям теоремы 2.1, то A имеет единственную неподвижную точку.

ТЕОРЕМА 2.3. Пусть 1) $\Omega \subset X$ компакт; 2) квазиметрика ρ непрерывна на Ω; 3) $\rho(Ax, Ay) < \rho(x, y)$; $x, y \in \Omega$. Тогда существует единственная неподвижная точка отображения A.

(Эти теоремы доказываются как для метрического пространства.) В качестве приложения рассмотрим квазиметрическое пространство $Z_p(X)$.
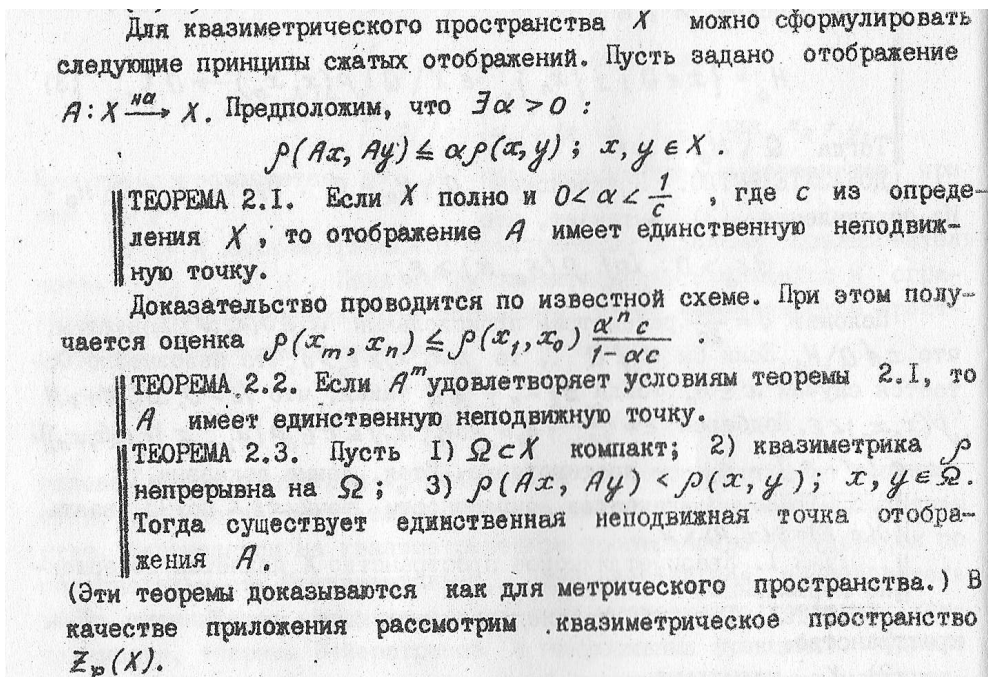
FIGURE 2. Excerpt from the paper by Vulpe et all [144], page 18.

In connection with the papers by Czerwik [51], [52], it should be mentioned that the idea of a general quasimetric space was "in the air" in the Polish mathematical community of that time, as shown by the paper of Swiatkowski [140] from 1995, where the author studied the completeness and compactness of a quasi metric space (called there b-metric space), by using the quasi-triangle inequality $(QM_1)'$.

In 1993, Berinde [20] extended the contraction mapping principle on quasimetric spaces, due to Bakhtin [17], to the class of φ-contractions, see also Berinde [21] and [22].

Theorem 1 in [20] essentially states that, if (X, d) is a complete quasimetric space and $f : X \to X$ is a φ-contraction on X, i.e., there exists a comparison function $\varphi : \mathbb{R}_+ \to \mathbb{R}_+$ such that
$$d(f(x), f(y)) \leq \varphi(d(x, y)), x, y \in X,$$
then f has a unique fixed point in X, provided that there exist $x_0 \in X$ for which the Picard iteration $\{f^n(x_0)\}$ is bounded.

Recall that $\varphi : \mathbb{R}_+ \to \mathbb{R}_+$ is a *comparison function*, if it satisfies

(i) φ is increasing;

(ii) $\varphi^n(t) \to 0$, as $n \to \infty$, for each $t \in \mathbb{R}_+$.

By additionally assuming that φ is a (c)-comparison function, Theorem 2 in [20] provides a method for approximating the unique fixed point of a φ-contraction in quasimetric spaces and also offers an error estimate.

Note that the assumption of boundedness of the orbit in [17] and [20] may be dropped, as shown by the second author [118], see also Kirk and Shahzad [93].

In the same year, 1993, Czerwik [51] obtained a similar result to Theorem 1 in [20] but by working in quasimetric spaces (X, d) with $K = 2$, which he called b-metric spaces.

His result can be stated as follows.

Theorem 4.2 ([51], Theorem 1). *Let (X, d) be a complete b-metric space (with $K = 2$) and let $T : X \to X$ satisfy*

$$(4.9) \qquad d[T(x), T(y)] \leq \varphi[d(x, y)], \ x, y \in X,$$

where $\varphi : \mathbb{R}_+ \to \mathbb{R}_+$ is an increasing function such that

$$\lim_{n \to \infty} \varphi^n(t) = 0, \ \text{for each fixed } t > 0.$$

Then T has exactly one fixed point u and

$$\lim_{n \to \infty} d[T^n(x), u] = 0,$$

for each $x \in X$.

In 1998, Czerwick [52] also established a fixed point theorem for multivalued mappings in arbitrary b-metric spaces (this time without assuming $K = 2$).

It appears that after the papers by Vulpe et all [144] (1981), Bakhtin [17] (1989), Berinde [20] and Czerwick [51] (1993), Berinde [21] (1996) and [22] (1997) and Czerwick [52] (1998), the interest for working in such a setting declined for a while.

The next paper in this series appears to be due to Singh et all [136] (2005), where the authors presented a fixed-point theorem for generalized set-valued contractions on a quasimetric space X, which actually marked the start of a new wave of interest for working in quasimetric spaces.

Starting from 2008, with the papers by Boriceanu [24]-[28], Olatinwo [111], Olatinwo and Imoru [110], Păcurar [117], [118] and Sing and Prasad [137], one records a real explosion of the research work on this topic (not all were included at References of this paper).

To give a better idea on the phenomenon, we just indicate de dynamics of the publications citing [17], [20], [51] and [52], according to zbMATH and MathScinet (if one would use Google Scholar, the figures will be significantly more impressive).

1. zbMATH

- Number of papers citing Bakhtin [17]: 251 papers [2022 (2 papers); 2021 (58); 2020 (49); 2019 (28); 2018 (41); 2017 (45); 2016 (8); 2015 (11); 2014 (2); 2013 (6); 2010 (1)]
- Number of papers citing Czerwik [51]: 420 papers [2022 (5 papers); 2021 (86); 2020 (69); 2019 (53); 2018 (59); 2017 (69); 2016 (20); 2015 (25); 2014 (18); 2013 (11); 2012 (2); 2011 (2); 2008 (1)]
- Number of papers citing Czerwik [52]: 221 papers [2022 (2 papers); 2021 (34); 2020 (19); 2019 (22); 2018 (31); 2017 (40); 2016 (14); 2015 (22); 2014 (15); 2013 (15); 2012 (2); 2011 (2); 2010 (1); 2008 (2)]
- Number of papers citing Berinde [20]: 52 papers [2022 (1 paper); 2021 (5); 2020 (8); 2019 (3); 2018 (2); 2017 (12); 2016 (1); 2015 (7); 2014 (7); 2013 (3); 2012 (1); 2011 (1); 2010 (1)]

2. MathScinet

- Number of papers citing Bakhtin [17]: 132 papers [2022 (2 papers); 2021 (25); 2020 (26); 2019 (13); 2018 (18); 2017 (17); 2016 (8); 2015 (9); 2014 (5); 2013 (7); 2011 (1); 2010 (1)]
- Number of papers citing Czerwik [51]: 184 papers [2022 (2 papers); 2021 (36); 2020 (32); 2019 (22); 2018 (25); 2017 (21); 2016 (15); 2015 (11); 2014 (14); 2013 (4); 2011 (1); 2008 (1)]
- Number of papers citing Czerwik [52]: 104 papers [2022 (1 paper); 2021 (13); 2020 (6); 2019 (10); 2018 (15); 2017 (17); 2016 (11); 2015 (10); 2014 (11); 2013 (6); 2011 (1); 2010 (1); 2008 (2)]
- Number of papers citing Berinde [20]: 40 papers [2021 (4 papers); 2020 (6); 2019 (1); 2018 (3); 2017 (7); 2016 (6); 2015 (5); 2014 (3); 2013 (3); 2011 (1); 2010 (1)]

5. More general fixed point results in b-metric spaces

Most of the fixed point results established for contractive mappings in quasimetric spaces assume a certain relation between the contraction coefficient and the constant K from the quasi-triangle inequality (2.1).

For example, in the case of the fixed point theorem established by Vulpe et all [144], the contraction coefficient α (see also Figure 2) is required to satisfy the condition

$$(5.10) \qquad \alpha < \frac{1}{K}.$$

Note that in the case $K = 1$, when the quasimetric space is in fact a metric space, one recovers the classical Banach's condition $\alpha < 1$.

The next Lemma (see for example Miculescu and Mihail [103] and Suzuki [139]) opens the possibility of obtaining more general fixed point results than Theorem 4.1.

Lemma 5.2 ([104]). *Every sequence $\{x_n\}_{n\in\mathbb{N}}$ of elements from a quasimetric space (X, d), having the property that there exists $\alpha \in [0, 1)$ such that*

$$(5.11) \qquad d(x_{n+1}, x_n) \leq \alpha d(x_n, x_{n-1}), n \in \mathbb{N},$$

is Cauchy.

As one can see, the condition (5.10) in Theorem 4.1 can be dropped without affecting the conclusion. Thus, the following general result holds.

Theorem 5.3. *Let (X, ρ) be a complete quasimetric space and let $T : X \to X$ be a mapping such that there exists a number $\alpha \in (0, 1)$ for which*

$$(5.12) \qquad \rho(Ax, Ay) \leq \alpha \rho(x, y), \text{ for each } x, y \in X.$$

Then the mapping A has a unique fixed point.

Therefore, as many fixed point results existing in literature are tributary to a superfluous condition like (5.10), it would be useful to investigate the possibility of obtaining more general fixed point results by using Lemma 5.2.

We also suggest the following

Open problem: Identify all fixed point results in quasimetric spaces (b-metric spaces) that could be obtained by means of an appropriate metrization technique (and the corresponding results in the setting of metric spaces).

6. CONCLUSIONS

1. Working in a quasimetric space (*b*-metric space) is not trivial from a topological point of view, so the interest for establishing general fixed point theorems in this setting in the last 15 years appears as well motivated in many respects.

2. The concept of quasimetric space (*b*-metric space) is much older than it is commonly considered in the papers on fixed point theory in quasimetric spaces, where it is attributed either to Bakhtin [17] or to Czerwik [51], [52].

3. According to the current bibliographical knowledge, the first fixed point theorem (the contraction mapping principle in quasimetric spaces) appears to be due to Vulpe et all [144].

4. Researchers working in fixed point theory are commonly focused on the fixed point results themselves and not particularly on the topological properties of quasimetric spaces (*b*-metric spaces). It would be of a real benefit in the future to integrate in such kind of fixed point results more topological features, as in the paper by Vulpe et all [144].

5. Such topological insights, see for example Dung and Hang [60], [61], Radenović et all [125], are warning for a careful approach to some fixed point results in quasimetric spaces and their applications (particularly, those related to integral equations), which can be obtained by using the corresponding metric spaces tools.

6. In order to avoid reference errors when considering a certain notion or result, one might better say "for the concept or for the result ... we refer to" instead of "it has been introduced by ", especially when the chronology of the notions / results is not certain.

As a final conclusion we would like to stress on the following fact: in mathematics (and in other subjects, too) it often happens that one notion or result is not attributed to the author who really introduced it, but to the one who has made it more visible to the scientific community.

Therefore, Arnold's principle *If a notion bears a personal name, then this name is not the name of the discoverer*

could be reformulated in this context as

If a notion or a result is attributed to a mathematician, then it is possible that this is not the true discoverer of it.

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