

Научная статья | Original paper

# Integration of theoretical approaches of L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner in studies of youth resilience in Russia and South Africa

A.V. Makhnach ✉, A.I. Laktionova

Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

✉ [makhnach@ipran.ru](mailto:makhnach@ipran.ru)

## Abstract

**Context and relevance.** The relevance of studying the resilience of young people, which underlies their positive adaptation, is a pressing socio-psychological and pedagogical task. Theoretical approaches to the formation and development of resilience in adolescents and young adults include Vygotsky's concept of cultural-historical development and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. **Objective.** The study aims to identify the characteristics of the resilience of young people in Russia and South Africa, the social and cultural origins of this phenomenon, and to reveal the principles of the dynamic interaction between risk factors and the protection of young people in the context of their native culture. **Hypothesis.** The resilience of young people in Russia and South Africa is socially and culturally determined. **Methods and materials.** Potential sources of resilience were analyzed using research by researchers from Russia and South Africa, conducted based on the integration of L. Vygotsky's cultural-historical concept and U. Bronfenbrenner's ecological development model. This paper presents a comparative study of the resilience of young people in Russia and South Africa, conducted within the RYSE psychological program, which includes methods for assessing risk factors, protection, and resources for young people. **Sample.** The study involved 810 young people from Russia (mean age  $18,49 \pm 1,87$  years) and 891 people from South Africa (mean age  $19,58 \pm 1,36$  years). **Results.** The hypothesis that the resilience of young people from Russia and South Africa has social and cultural determinacy was confirmed. The effectiveness of training that takes into account the sociocultural characteristics of South Africa is demonstrated. It was found that the main resources of resilience in the South African sample were contextual cultural resources, while in the Russian sample they were individual resources. **Conclusions.** The results obtained prove the importance of taking into account the multilevel dynamic determinants of resilience and its sensitivity to the sociocultural characteristics of the environment, which suggests impacts that affect many systems simultaneously, which emphasizes the relevance of the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky and Urie Bronfenbrenner.

**Keywords:** L.S. Vygotsky, Urie Bronfenbrenner, resilience, youth, Russia, South Africa, culture, context

**Funding.** This work was supported by State Contract No. 0138-2024-0017 "Professional activity and personal development in the context of organizational and technological changes."

**Acknowledgements.** The authors express their gratitude for their cooperation during the study to I.A. Gorkovaya, A.V. Miklyaeva, Yu.V. Postylyakova, N.M. Saraeva, and A.A. Sukhanov, L. Theron.

**For citation:** Makhnach, A.V., Laktionova, A.I. (2026). Integration of theoretical approaches of L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner in studies of youth resilience in Russia and South Africa. *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 22(1), 118–127. <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2026220113>

# Интеграция теоретических подходов Л.С. Выготского и Ю. Бронфенбреннера в исследованиях жизнеспособности молодежи России и ЮАР

А.В. Махнач ✉, А.И. Лактионова

Институт психологии РАН, Москва, Российская Федерация

✉ makhnach@ipran.ru

## Резюме

**Контекст и актуальность.** Изучение жизнеспособности молодежи, лежащей в основе ее позитивной адаптации, представляется актуальной социально-психологической и педагогической задачей. Теоретическими подходами к формированию и развитию жизнеспособности у подростков и молодежи являются концепция культурно-исторического развития Л.С. Выготского и экологическая теория Ю. Бронфенбреннера. **Цель.** Исследование ставит задачу выявить особенности жизнеспособности молодых людей России и ЮАР, социальные и культурные истоки этого феномена, раскрыть принципы динамического взаимодействия между факторами риска и защиты молодежи в контексте родной культуры. **Гипотеза.** Жизнеспособность молодых людей России и ЮАР имеет социальную, и культурную обусловленность. **Методы и материалы.** Потенциальные источники жизнеспособности анализировались с помощью исследований ученых России и ЮАР, выполненных на основе интеграции культурно-исторической концепции Л.С. Выготского и экологической модели развития Ю. Бронфенбреннера. Приводится сравнительное исследование жизнеспособности молодежи России и ЮАР, осуществленное по программе психологического обследования RYSE, включающей методики, позволяющие оценить факторы риска, защиты и ресурсы молодежи. **Выборка.** В исследовании приняли участие 810 молодых людей из России (средний возраст —  $18,49 \pm 1,87$  лет) и 891 человек из ЮАР (средний возраст —  $19,58 \pm 1,36$  лет). **Результаты.** Гипотеза о том, что жизнеспособность молодых людей из России и ЮАР, имеет социальную и культурную обусловленность, была подтверждена. Показана эффективность обучения, учитывающего социокультурные особенности ЮАР. Было обнаружено, что основными ресурсами жизнеспособности в южноафриканской выборке являются контекстуальные ресурсы культуры, а в российской выборке — индивидуальные. **Выводы.** Полученные результаты доказывают важность учета многоуровневых динамических детерминантов жизнеспособности и ее чувствительность к социокультурным особенностям среды, что предполагает воздействия, влияющие на множество систем одновременно, что подчеркивает актуальность идей Л.С. Выготского и Ю. Бронфенбреннера.

**Ключевые слова:** Л.С. Выготский, Ю. Бронфенбреннер, жизнеспособность, молодежь, Россия, ЮАР, культура, контекст

**Финансирование.** Работа выполнена в соответствии с государственным заданием № 0138-2024-0017 «Профессиональная деятельность и развитие личности человека в условиях организационных и техногенных изменений».

**Благодарности.** Авторы выражают благодарность за сотрудничество во время проведения исследования: И.А. Горьковой, А.В. Микляевой, Ю.В. Постыляковой, Н.М. Сараевой, А.А. Суханову, Л. Терон.

**Для цитирования:** Махнач, А.В., Лактионова, А.И. (2026). Интеграция теоретических подходов Л.С. Выготского и Ю. Бронфенбреннера в исследованиях жизнеспособности молодежи России и ЮАР. *Культурно-историческая психология*, 22(1), 118–127. <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2026220113>

## Introduction

The study of resilience has a longer history in Western psychology (since the 1970s) and a more recent one in Russia (since 2003). Early research often conceptualized “resilience” as a personality trait facilitating positive adaptation in individuals. Subsequently, researchers began to view this phenomenon as a dynamic, system-oriented construct, reflecting scholars’ efforts to inte-

grate this concept across different levels of analysis and within various disciplines (Laktionova, 2025; Makhnach, 2019; Rylskaya, 2014; Paatova, 2019; Saraeva, 2018; Masten, 2018; Theron et al., 2012; Ungar, 2011). We define human resilience as “an integrative mental formation encompassing individual psychological properties, abilities, and qualities, manifested in the processes by which a person manages their own resources: health, vitality, emotional, motivational-volitional, and cogni-

tive spheres, within the context of social and cultural norms and environmental influences” (Makhnach, 2019, pp. 174–175).

Over years of research, several definitions of human resilience have been proposed; most converge on its interpretation as a systemic phenomenon observable under conditions of high risk and adversity. Resilience is also characterized not merely by recovery from a traumatic event, but by subsequent positive adaptation and continued development. As S. Goldstein and R. Brooks observe, “This emerging field of study, which once focused upon those who confronted and overcame adversity has found universal appeal as researchers and mental health professionals examine how the qualities of resilience can be applied to all individuals regardless of life challenges or age” (Goldstein, Brooks, 2023, p. X).

The theoretical approach underpinning the formation and development of resilience in adolescents and youth in this study is L.S. Vygotsky’s cultural-historical theory. The central tenets of this theory provided the epistemological lens through which our investigation examines the characteristics of resilience among young people from Russia and South Africa, as well as the socially and culturally embedded origins of this phenomenon.

Drawing upon the propositions of U. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory, we have analyzed studies aimed at examining characteristics attributable to different systems: individual-psychological, social, and cultural. This theory facilitates the elucidation of principles governing the dynamic interrelationship between resilience, risk factors, and protective factors among youth within the context of their native culture.

Thus, the concept of “resilience” has evolved from a static personality trait to a systemic and dynamic construct, a construct crucial for positive human adaptation in challenging circumstances. This evolution underscores its significance in psychological and pedagogical research concerning youth in Russia and South Africa, serving as a foundation for their support and development.

### **The ideas of L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner in resilience research**

Researchers across numerous countries, engaging with the works of L.S. Vygotsky, emphasize the role of cultural and historical contexts in the development of resilience across a wide range of subjects: from children, adolescents, young adults, and their parents to school and university educators (Edwards, Apostolov, 2007; Mustafa, 2025; Pasqualotto et al., 2015). The development of concepts pertaining to child or adolescent resilience almost invariably incorporates core notions from Vygotsky’s theory: the social environment of develop-

ment, internalization, the mechanism of interaction between the individual and their social surroundings, social interaction and the social plane of development, cultural transmission, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and cultural signs and symbols. According to A. Edwards and A. Apostolov, examining resilience through the lens of cultural-historical theory reflects Vygotsky’s «concerns which highlights the dialectic between individual and as the social situation of development» (Edwards, Apostolov, 2007, p. 70).

Vygotsky’s ideas concerning child development and its connection to culture reflect a trend towards a deeper understanding of context in development. As Vygotsky wrote: “The word ‘social’ applied to our subject has great significance. Above all, in the broadest sense, it signifies that everything cultural is social. Culture is the product of social life and human social activity, and therefore the very formulation of the problem of the cultural development of behavior directly introduces us to the social plane of development” (Vygotsky, 1983, pp. 145–146). Vygotsky’s ideas were later developed not only by psychologists but also by philosophers and sociologists — including P.A. Florensky, E.V. Ilyenkov, A.F. Losev, D.B. Elkonin, and many others. J. Bruner stated: “the primary means of human evolution became the transmission through culture of those skills necessary for the use of previously invented techniques, tools, and instruments” (Bruner, 1977, p. 378). He also regarded cultural transmission as the quintessence of social activity, with its benefit being a fundamental educational attribute of human development (Bruner, 1997).

U. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of development serves, alongside Vygotsky’s theory, as a fundamental theoretical framework in the study of human resilience. According to P. Moen, his student and founder of the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research at Cornell University, it was Bronfenbrenner who played a key role in introducing Vygotsky’s work to Western researchers: “How many of us now know (or know better) Vygotsky ... because of those (re)introductions in Bronfenbrenner’s writings?” (Moen, 2006, p. 256).

Within Bronfenbrenner’s approach, the understanding of resilience shifts from being merely an outcome of the interplay between risk and protective factors to being a systemic characteristic. Development is conceptualized as a dynamic process influenced by nested systems — from the immediate environment (microsystem) to the broader cultural and historical context (macrosystem). This approach, congruent with Vygotsky’s ideas, underscores the mutual influence between the individual and their multi-layered environment, wherein the macrosystem (values, laws, traditions) exerts a formative influence on all other levels.

Bronfenbrenner’s theory enables the modeling and assessment of resilience across various scales, being applied both to analyze the impacts of external factors

(family, society, culture) and to develop targeted support programs. Within this framework, resilience is studied as a processual characteristic, with emphasis placed on the conditions under which a child or adolescent maintains it despite stress and adverse circumstances. Thus, the ecological model of human development provides interdisciplinary tools for explaining human socialization and resilience within real-life contexts.

Researchers of resilience, drawing upon the works of Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner, have noted that cultural differences play a significant role in all aspects of the resilience formation process. They influence interactions within the family and school, shaping expectations regarding the behavior of children and adolescents in accordance with their culture or society. M. Ungar discusses the role of social and cultural factors in shaping children's resilience: "The interaction between children's capacity to develop and the availability of ecological resources to support that development indicates broader social and cultural factors in predictions of resilience. In support of Vygotsky's hypothesis, a growing body of literature from psychology, as well as sociology, urban planning, social work, and anthropology, is showing that the environment is even more critical to child development than a child's individual traits." (Ungar, 2011, p. 4).

Consequently, the theoretical foundation for investigating youth resilience lies in the integration of L.S. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory and U. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Vygotsky's approach, emphasizing the role of social interaction, cultural context, internalization, and the ZPD, elucidates the mechanism of resilience formation through cultural influences. Bronfenbrenner's approach extends this perspective by representing development as a dynamic process within interconnected systems – from the immediate environment (microsystem) to the broader cultural-historical context (macrosystem).

### **L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner in the pedagogical practice of South African educators**

Research grounded in the theoretical works of L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner demonstrates the potential to enhance the effectiveness of the educational process and, consequently, the resilience of children and youth within the educational environment. This potential is linked to "the potential for applying cultural-historical psychology as a scientific system relevant to supporting all practices without exception where the 'human factor' must be considered" (Rubtsov et al., 2023, p. 168).

A foundational element of several studies by South African educators and psychologists is the synthe-

sis of theoretical principles from L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner in developing a sociocultural perspective within the South African context. Specifically, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, with its emphasis on the ZPD, serves as a framework for examining the social and cultural specificities of language instruction in schools, utilizing scaffolding techniques. Scaffolding is understood not merely as a passive process of support from a more knowledgeable other, but as interwoven with concepts of agency, reflection, self-directed learning, and the expansion of existing knowledge boundaries within the ZPD (Ness, 2022). Applying the ZPD concept, a balanced and age-appropriate approach to language teaching has been developed, focusing on cultivating children's contextual sensitivity (Abakah, 2023). Employing a sociocultural perspective enables investigation into how the South African context, with its diverse linguistic landscape, influences the integration of English language learning skills. Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD and Bruner's "scaffolding" underscore the importance of assistance provided to a child developing and functioning at the growing edge of their capabilities, with support from an experienced adult (Margolis, 2020; Beck, 2024).

A complex challenge is language instruction in South Africa's multilingual classrooms. "The challenges faced by beginner teachers highlight a critical disconnect between the theoretical knowledge they acquired during their initial teacher education and the practical realities of their classrooms, where the language of instruction often differs from the students' primary language" (Mpofo, 2025, p. 8). The author emphasizes that the ZPD is not merely a theoretical framework but a dynamic tool that educators utilize to create a supportive learning environment.

Thus, the theoretical principles of L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner also contribute to understanding how South African teachers conceptualize and interpret their language teaching experiences within the ZPD, embedded within social and cultural contexts. The theoretical foundation underpinning practice allows for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by South African teachers in language instruction.

Researchers in South Africa have increasingly recognized that learning is sociocultural in nature and is substantially dependent on the learning environment, context, and culture of education. Not only teachers but also learners themselves are active participants in the co-construction of knowledge within their social and cultural milieu – consistent with Vygotsky's theory (Okoye, 2023). Drawing on Vygotsky's work, a pedagogical model for South African students was developed to facilitate their comprehension of abstract concepts. Through this approach, analysis of student discourse indicates the emergence of research interest and an enrichment of speech patterns, demonstrating students' logi-

cal reasoning in discussing scientific topics and, overall, their cognitive development (Hardman, 2024).

Another aspect of applying the ZPD concept is found in the instruction of schoolchildren and university students, based on principles of Ubuntu, which cater to the diverse cultural and social needs of learners. Collaborative learning among children from different cultural and linguistic groups, grounded in the scaffolding process correlating with Vygotsky's ZPD, supports cognitive development and inclusive education. This aids in achieving the goals of fostering children's resilience through mutual support and cooperation (Matahela, 2025; Nardacchione, Peconio, 2022). For learners, significant adults become external protective factors for resilience. Research indicates that a supportive classroom environment, organized in accordance with Ubuntu principles, fosters a sense of community among students, which enhances learning outcomes (Sparks, Louw, 2023).

Importantly, such studies raise questions regarding the applicability of human development theories formulated within a different cultural tradition – that of so-called “minority world” countries. It is known that the global population of adolescents and youth is growing: 1.3 billion young people constitute one-sixth of the current global population (UNICEF, 2023). The majority of them (85%) reside in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, regions referred to as the “majority world” (Draper et al., 2022).

Consequently, researchers pose the question: should one discard the use of resilience concepts developed in other contexts and cultures, and instead advocate for a more profound understanding of resilience as a dynamic construct determined by specific context and culture? L. Theron and colleagues drew attention to how the resilience of South African youth resonates with traditional Afrocentric conceptions of life. The integration of intrapersonal and interpersonal constructs is reflected in the development of their original conceptualization of youth resilience as a culturally-mediated process with an Afrocentric emphasis on the interconnectedness of the individual and community, encompassing the social ecology (Theron et al., 2012).

The study of human development within diverse ecological and sociocultural contexts continues, informed by the theoretical contributions of scholars from “minority world” countries (L.S. Vygotsky, U. Bronfenbrenner, T.S. Weisner). Simultaneously, a striving is noted among researchers from “majority world” countries to identify fundamental and universal developmental processes derived not solely from data obtained from a limited segment of the world's population – from “minority world” countries – which can only partially explain the developmental processes of youth residing in “majority world” countries that are underrepresented in psychology (Abubakar et al., 2024). This position resonates with the contemporary interpretation of Vygotsky by

A.E. Muthivhi, who posits that his work provides “important methodological and theoretical tools for interrogating contemporary post-apartheid pedagogy and its underlying epistemological foundations. This conception ... offers new insights into possible research trajectories geared toward uncovering neocolonial and neoliberal practices and approaches that promote forms of rationality and objectivity which continue to diminish and deny the legitimacy and validity of culturally situated knowledge practices and traditions under the guise of neutrality and objectivity” (Muthivhi, 2025, p. 142).

As an illustration of enacting the legitimacy and validity of culturally situated practices and traditions within post-apartheid pedagogy and psychology, the “I am Brave” intervention program was implemented among 9–12-year-old children from a disadvantaged community in the Western Cape province. This program fostered resilience and coping skills, improved communication, and reduced anxiety among the children (Myburgh et al., 2021).

Thus, the synthesis of theoretical ideas from L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner serves in South Africa as a productive foundation for addressing pressing pedagogical and psychological challenges related to multilingualism, inclusion, and cultural diversity. The ZPD concept and the scaffolding process constitute practical tools for creating supportive learning environments and developing cognitive skills in classrooms. Concurrently, the application of these theories, originating in a different cultural context, naturally confronts South African researchers and practitioners with questions regarding their adaptation and reinterpretation. This facilitates progress towards developing genuinely inclusive and relevant pedagogy that acknowledges the legitimacy of local knowledge traditions and overcomes colonial stereotypes.

### **Empirical study of the socio-cultural conditionality of youth resilience in South Africa and Russia**

The aim of the study was to identify context-specific and universal characteristics pertaining to different systems that support the resilience of Russian and South African youth (individual, social, and cultural). The research is grounded in U. Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological approach and L.S. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory.

*Research question:* Does the structure of resilience among young people from Russia and South Africa indeed possess social and cultural conditionality? The substantial differences in the socio-cultural characteristics of the two countries allowed us to seek an answer to this question.

This study involved the parallel application of the same set of instruments in two different national con-

texts. Data were drawn from the “Resilience in Youth in Stressful Environments” (RYSE) study. The project was developed by L. Theron (South Africa) and M. Ungar (Canada) (Theron et al., 2022a; Ungar et al., 2021). The RYSE psychological assessment battery includes scales and questionnaires enabling the evaluation of risk factors, protective factors, and resources among youth residing in ecologically disadvantaged regions. Traumatic symptomatology, depression, PTSD, and adverse socioeconomic conditions were considered as risk factors.

#### *Instruments:*

1. The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) (Ungar, Liebenberg, 2011), developed within the framework of U. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model, was used to assess individual and social resources among children and youth. In Russia, the measure has been adapted (Laktionova, Makhnach, 2007) and employed in our work (Laktionova, 2025; Makhnach et al., 2022).

2. The Beck Depression Inventory (Beck et al., 1996);

3. The Child Post-Traumatic Stress Reaction Index (CPTS-RI), adapted for youth (Frederick et al., 1992);

4. The Impairment Associated with Traumatic Symptoms Scale (IATSS) (Ruchkin et al., 2004);

5. The “Parental Supervision” and “Parental Warmth” subscales from the Parenting Scale (as cited in Ruchkin et al., 2004; Makhnach et al., 2021, p. 18).

*The empirical study sample* comprised 810 Russian participants (Group 1) from St. Petersburg, Kirishi, Vyborg, Cherepovets, Chita, Krasnokamensk, and Smolensk (age range 15–24 years, mean age = 18,49 ± 1,87 years). The South African sample (Group 2) consisted of 891 participants (mean age = 19,58 ± 1,36 years) from Sasolburg and the township of Zamdela. The majority of participants (85.7%) self-identified as Black African (Makhnach et al., 2021; Theron et al., 2022).

## Results

To test the hypothesis, a comparison of the assessed indicators from the Child and Youth Resilience Measure was conducted using Student’s t-test. The obtained data indicate “significant differences between the two samples on all resilience indicators ( $p \leq 0,001$ ). With a significantly higher score for ‘Individual Resilience’ in Group 1 compared to the sample from Group 2 (45,91 ± 7,12; 28,01 ± 4,42, respectively), the values for ‘Family Resilience’ (28,73 ± 5,64; 30,07 ± 4,71), ‘Contextual Resilience’ (36,34 ± 7,9; 55,15 ± 8,02) and ‘Total Resilience’ (110,98 ± 17,32; 113,27 ± 14,43), as well as the religiosity of South African youth, are significantly higher than among Russians. Thus, ‘the primary resilience resources in the South African sample are environmental and, foremost, contextual resources of culture, religious and spiritual beliefs, and education, whereas in the Russian

sample, the primary resources are individual resources” (Makhnach et al., 2021, p. 20).

Such differences between the two samples can presumably be explained by the cultural traditions in which the young people were raised. As M. Blessin and colleagues argue, research “should also consider that different cultural contexts can lead to different stressors and may even require different resilience factors that need to be acknowledged and fostered in other, better fitting, ways” (Blessin et al., 2022, p. 2). For South African youth, social skills, education, and spirituality are closely intertwined with the traditional African culture in which they are raised (van Rensburg et al., 2019) – in the spirit of adhering to customs of interdependence and the value of Ubuntu. Interdependence signifies belonging to a community and embodies a collective understanding of education, harmony, and spirituality. Ubuntu calls for deep respect for the human community, including ancestors, which decenters the individual. Accordingly, children are raised to rely on the collective while also contributing to it. The collective extends beyond the immediate and extended family: all people are respected and represent potential social capital. The collective also includes spiritual beings (e.g., gods and/or ancestors), and traditional socialization encourages spirituality and faith-based practices. Associated with this is the concept of “family community” and the recognition of tradition: raising children is a collective responsibility. Consequently, social skills among South African youth are more strongly associated with contextual rather than individual resilience resources (van Rensburg et al., 2019). Meanwhile, Russian youth, predominantly urban, tend more towards individualistic culture (Martsinkovskaya, Poleva, 2017) and, as a result, exhibit higher levels of individual resilience.

Thus, if in Russia interventions aimed at developing social skills are targeted at enhancing individual resources, in South Africa they are targeted at supplementing contextual support encompassing educational, spiritual, and cultural resources (van Rensburg et al., 2019).

Traumatic symptomatology, depression, and PTSD (post-traumatic stress reaction) were examined as risk factors in the study. Their severity proved significantly higher among adolescents from South Africa (depression score: Group 1 9,86 ± 9,85; Group 2 15,38 ± 9,91), PTSD (Group 1 48,12 ± 11,78; Group 2 50,49 ± 11,43), and total traumatic symptoms score (Group 1 4,64 ± 2,01; Group 2 6,16 ± 2,70) ( $p \leq 0,001$ ). “Presumably, the presence of individual resources and a more favorable assessment of the safety and comfort of their place of residence make Russian young people less vulnerable in difficult situations, ensuring their psychological resilience to stress” (Makhnach et al., 2021, p. 20).

The majority of young men and women from disadvantaged South African communities lack access to psychological assistance. Accordingly, it is important

to study the specificities of family upbringing as a resource contributing to the strengthening of youth resilience and mental health. Research has identified associations between the mental health of young people and parental behavioral patterns — control and warmth. This expands prior understandings of the protective value of parental control and warmth in disadvantaged community contexts, demonstrating that moderate levels of control and below-average levels of warmth are less conducive to adolescent mental health compared to moderate control combined with elevated levels of parental warmth. The necessity for parental control is linked to concerns for safety, while their warmth is often diminished due to the stress of residing in a disadvantaged community. However, the fact that the majority of the sample participants (83.61%) reported above-average levels of parental warmth refutes the notion that warm support is unlikely in disadvantaged communities (Theron et al., 2022b).

For Russian girls, the most important resource associated with the reduction of depressive symptomatology is external support received from society (Makhnach et al., 2022). For boys, the reduction of depressive psychopathology is simultaneously associated with all components of resilience resources (individual, family, and contextual) (Makhnach et al., 2022, p. 21). This may also account for their greater emotional stability, with differences lying in the ability to utilize these resources. In both samples, a gender effect was observed — higher levels of depressive symptoms were noted among girls, and higher symptoms of behavioral problems among boys (Makhnach et al., 2022; Theron et al., 2022). Moreover, among young people from South Africa, these were exacerbated when parental control was combined with low warmth.

Thus, the collaborative research with colleagues from South Africa has once again demonstrated the necessity of considering the multi-level dynamic determinants of resilience and its sensitivity to socio-cultural particularities (A. Masten, M. Rutter, L. Theron, M. Ungar). This necessitates holistic interventions affecting multiple systems simultaneously, underscoring the relevance of the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner.

## Conclusion

The findings from research on youth resilience, grounded in the works of L.S. Vygotsky and U. Bronfenbrenner, highlight significant cultural differences between Russian and South African youth. These findings play an important role in understanding fundamental and universal developmental processes and the underlying mechanisms of resilience formation. Together, these theories enable the study of resilience not as a static trait, but as a dynamic characteristic formed in the dialectic between the activity of the adolescent or young person and the resources of their multi-level social environment, in which cultural factors play a determining role. The development of resilience cultivation models that integrate universal scientific principles with local socio-cultural realities is therefore increasingly pertinent. Common theoretical approaches enable scholars from Russia and South Africa to conduct collaborative research and engage in intellectual exchange, thereby enriching the academic discourse in both countries.

**Limitations.** When summarizing the results, qualitative data that would clarify the obtained results were not included.

## Список источников / References

1. Брунер, Дж. (1977). *Психология познания. За пределами непосредственной информации*. Пер. с англ. М.: Прогресс.  
Bruner J. (1977). *Beyond the Information Given: Studies in the Psychology of Knowing*. Trans from Eng. Moscow: Progress. (In Russ.)
2. Выготский, Л.С. (1983). Проблемы развития психики. В: *Выготский Л.С. Собрание сочинений: в 6 т. Том 3* (с. 5–368). М.: Педагогика.  
Vygotsky, L.S. (1983). Problems of mental development. In: *Collected Works: Vol. 3* (pp. 5–368). Moscow: Pedagogika. (In Russ.)
3. Лактионова, А.И., Махнач, А.В. (2007). Влияние факторов жизнеспособности на социальную адаптацию подростков. В: Л.Ф. Обухова, Е.Г. Юдина (Ред.). *Ребенок в современном обществе* (с. 184–191). М.: МГППУ.  
Laktionova, A.I., Makhnach, A.V. (2007). The influence of resilience factors on the social adaptation of adolescents. In: L.F. Obukhova, Ye.G. Yudina (Eds). *The child in Modern Society* (pp. 184–191). Moscow: MGPPU. (In Russ.)
4. Лактионова, А.И. (2025). *Жизнеспособность человека в разные возрастные периоды: Дис. ... д-ра психол. наук*. Институт психологии РАН. М.  
Laktionova, A.I. (2025). *Human resilience at different age periods: Dis. Dr. Sci. (Psychol.)*. Institute of Psychology RAS. Moscow. (In Russ.)
5. Марголис, А.А. (2020). Зона ближайшего развития, скаффолдинг и деятельность учителя. *Культурно-историческая психология*, 16(3), 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2020160303>  
Margolis, A.A. (2020). Zone of Proximal Development, Scaffolding and Teaching Practice. *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 16(3), 15–26. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2020160303>
6. Марцинковская, Т.Д., Полева, Н.С. (2017). Поколения эпохи транзитивности: ценности, идентичность, общение. *Мир психологии*, 1(89), 24–37.  
Martsinkovskaya, T.D., Poleva, N.S. (2017). Generations of the era of transitivity: values, identity, communication. *The world of Psychology*, 1(89), 24–37. (in Russ.)

7. Махнач, А.В. (2019). *Жизнеспособность замещающей семьи как малой социальной группы: Дис. ... д-ра психол. наук*. Институт психологии РАН. М.  
Makhnach, A.V. (2019). *Resilience of a foster family as a small social group: Diss. Dr. Sci. (Psychol.)*. Institute of Psychology RAS. Moscow. (In Russ.)
8. Махнач, А.В., Лактионова, А.И., Постылякова, Ю.В., Горьковская, И.А., Микляева, А.В., Сараева, Н.М., Суханов, А.А., Терон, Л., Унгар, М. (2021). Сравнительный анализ жизнеспособности молодежи из регионов с разными культурно-социальными и экологическими условиями жизни. *Психологический журнал*, 42(4). 16–27. <https://doi.org/10.31857/S020595920016005-1>  
Makhnach, A.V., Laktionova, A.I., Postylyakova, Yu.V., Gorkovskaya, I.A., Miklyaeva, A.V., Saraeva, N.M., Sukhanov, A.A., Theron, L., Ungar, M. (2021). Comparative analysis of youth resilience from regions with different cultural, social and environmental conditions of life. *Psychological Journal*, 42(4). 16–27. (in Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.31857/S020595920016005-1>
9. Махнач, А.В., Лактионова, А.И., Постылякова, Ю.В., Горьковская, И.А., Микляева, А.В., Сараева, Н.М., Суханов, А.А. (2022). Половые различия жизнеспособности и психопатологической симптоматики у молодежи из регионов с разными экологическими условиями жизни. *Институт психологии Российской академии наук. Организационная психология и психология труда*, 7(3), 4–33. [https://doi.org/10.38098/ipran.opwp\\_2022\\_24\\_3\\_001](https://doi.org/10.38098/ipran.opwp_2022_24_3_001)  
Makhnach, A.V., Laktionova, A.I., Postylykova, Ju.V., Gorkovskaya, I.A., Miklyaeva, A.V., Saraeva, N.M., Sukhanov, A.A. (2022). The basic features of modern conceptual representations about material human nature and his evolution. *Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Organizational Psychology and Psychology of Labor*, 7(3), 4–33. (in Russ.) [https://doi.org/10.38098/ipran.opwp\\_2022\\_24\\_3\\_001](https://doi.org/10.38098/ipran.opwp_2022_24_3_001)
10. Паагова, М.Э. (2019). *Концепция формирования социально-личностной жизнеспособности подростков с девиантным поведением в специальных образовательных организациях закрытого типа: Дис. ... д-ра пед. наук*. Адыгейский государственный университет. Майкоп.  
Paatova, M.E. (2019). *The formation of the concept of social and personal resilience of adolescents with deviant behavior in special educational closed-type organizations: Diss. Dr. Sci. (Pedagogy)*. Adyge State University. Maykop. (In Russ.)
11. Постылякова, Ю.В. (2024). Факторы жизнеспособности и факторы риска в образовательном пространстве вуза у студентов с разным уровнем индивидуальной жизнеспособности. *Институт психологии Российской академии наук. Организационная психология и психология труда*, 9(1), 49–69. [https://doi.org/10.38098/ipran.opwp\\_2024\\_30\\_1\\_003](https://doi.org/10.38098/ipran.opwp_2024_30_1_003)  
Postylyakova, Yu.V. (2024). Resilience factors and risk factors in the educational space of a university for students with different level of individual resilience. *Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Organizational Psychology and Psychology of Labor*, 9(1), 49–69. (In Russ.) [https://doi.org/10.38098/ipran.opwp\\_2024\\_30\\_1\\_003](https://doi.org/10.38098/ipran.opwp_2024_30_1_003)
12. Рубцов, В.В., Зарецкий, В.К., Майданский, А.Д. (2023). Культурно-историческая психология: современное состояние и направления развития научной школы. В: А.Л. Журавлев, Е.А. Сергиенко, Г.А. Виленская (Ред.). *Научные подходы в современной отечественной психологии* (с. 144–169). М.: Изд-во «Институт психологии РАН».  
Rubtsov, V.V., Zaretsky, V.K., Maidansky, A.D. (2023). Cultural-historical psychology: current state and directions of development of the scientific school. In: A.L. Zhuravlev, E.A. Sergienko, G.A. Vilenskaya (Eds.). *Scientific approaches in modern Russian psychology* (pp. 144–169). Moscow: Institute of Psychology RAS Publ.
13. Рыльская, Е.А. (2014). *Психология жизнеспособности человека: Дис. ... д-ра психол. наук*. Ярославский гос. пед. ун-т. Ярославль.  
Rylskaya, E.A. (2014). *Psychology of human resilience: Diss. Dr. Sci. (Psychol.)*. Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University. Yaroslavl. (In Russ.)
14. Сараева, Н.М. (2018). Обоснование модели жизнеспособности человека: экопсихологический подход. *Сибирский педагогический журнал*, 5, 161–169. <https://doi.org/10.15293/1813-4718.1805.16>  
Saraeva, N.M. (2018). Justification of the human resilience model: an ecopsychological approach. *Siberian Pedagogical Journal*, 5, 161–169. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.15293/1813-4718.1805.16>
15. Abakah, E. (2023). Teacher learning from Continuing Professional Development (CPD) participation: A sociocultural perspective. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 4, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2023.100242>
16. Abubakar, A., Brandelli Costa, A., Cui, L., Koller, S.H., Nwafor, C.E., Raval, V.V. (2024). Towards a decolonial developmental science: Adolescent development in the Majority World taking center stage. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 34, 246–256. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12956>
17. Beck, A.T., Steer, R.A., Brown, G. (1996). *Manual for the Beck Depression Inventory-II*. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corporation.
18. Beck, R.J. (2024). Evolutionary development of mother-child scaffolding for moral comprehension. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1397547. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1397547>
19. Blessin, M., Lehmann, S., Kunzler, A.M., van Dick, R., Lieb, K. (2022). Resilience interventions conducted in Western and Eastern countries – a systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(11), 6913. <https://doi.org/10.3390/IJERPH19116913>
20. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
21. Bruner, J. (1997). Celebrating divergence: Piaget and Vygotsky. *Human Development*, 40(2), 63–73. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000278705>
22. Draper, C.E., Barnett, L.M., Cook, C.J., Cuartas, J.A., Howard, S.J., McCoy, D.C., Merkley, R., Molano, A., Maldonado-Carreño, C., Obradovic, J., Scerif, G., Valentini, N.C., Venetsanou, F., Yousafzai, A.K. (2022). Publishing child development research from around the world: An unfair playing field resulting in most of the world's child population under-represented in research. *Infant and Child Development*, 32(6), e2375. <https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.2375>
23. Edwards, A., Apostolov, A. (2007). A cultural-historical interpretation of resilience: the implications for practice. *Outlines. Critical Practice Studies*, 9(1), 70–84. <https://doi.org/10.7146/ocps.v9i1.2087>

24. Frederick, C.J., Pynoos, R.S., Nader, K.O. (1992). *Childhood Post traumatic Stress Reaction Index (CPTSS-RI)*. Los Angeles, CA.
25. Goldstein, S., Brooks, R.B. (2023). Preface. In: Goldstein S., Brooks R.B. (Eds.). *Handbook of Resilience in Children*, 3rd Ed. (pp. IX–XI). Cham: Springer <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-14728-9>
26. Hardman, J. (2024). Teach Assess Teach (TAT) pedagogical model for cognitive change: A Cultural Historical Approach to teaching/learning. *Currents in Teaching & Learning*, 15(2), 31–44.
27. Masten, A.S. (2018). Resilience theory and research on children and families: Past, present, and promise. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, 10(1), 12–31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12255>
28. Matahela, V.E. (2025). Ubuntu as a humanising pedagogy in nursing education: A meta-synthesis. *Nursing Forum*, 6184745. <https://doi.org/10.1155/nuf/6184745>
29. Moen, P. (2006). Bronfenbrenner in Context and in Motion. *ZSE: Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation*, 26(3), 247–261 <https://doi.org/10.25656/01:5651>
30. Mpofo, N. (2025). Language teaching in content subjects: Post initial teacher education narratives of South African beginner teachers. *TESOL Journal*, 16(4), e70070. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.70070>
31. Mustafa, M.C. (2025). Cultivating resilience and self-regulation in Malaysian early childhood education: Bridging cultural insights and educational practices. *Acta Psychologica*, 261, 105941. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105941>
32. Muthivhi, A.E. (2025). Decolonising pedagogy in post-apartheid South Africa: the expanded understanding of Vygotsky's theory and new postulates. *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 21(3), 136–144. <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2025210312>
33. Myburgh, N., Muris, P., Loxton, H. (2021). Promoting braveness in children: A pilot study on the effects of a brief, intensive CBT-based anxiety prevention programme conducted in the South African context. *Child Care in Practice*, 30(4), 655–677. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13575279.2021.1902785>
34. Nardacchione, G., Peconio, G. (2022). Peer tutoring and scaffolding principle for inclusive teaching. *Elementa: Intersections between Philosophy, Epistemology and Empirical Perspectives*, 1(1–2), 181–200. <https://doi.org/10.7358/elem-2021-0102-nape>
35. Ness, I.J. (2022). In: V.P. Glăveanu (Ed.) *Zone of Proximal Development. The Palgrave Encyclopedia of the Possible* (p. 1781–1786). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90913-0\\_60](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90913-0_60)
36. Okoye, F.I. (2023). Barriers to learning linger into post-pandemic for multi-campus institutions in developing nations: A case of the University of The Free State. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 7(1), 100438. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssa.2023.100438>
37. Pasqualotto, R.A., Löhr, S.S., Stoltz, T. (2015). Skinner and Vygotsky's Understanding of resilience in the school environment. *Creative Education*, 6, 1841–1851. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ce.2015.617188>
38. Ruchkin, V., Schwab-Stone, M., Vermeiren, R. (2004). *Social and Health Assessment (SAHA): Psychometric development summary*. New Haven: Yale University.
39. Sparks, L., Louw, L. (2023). Ubuntu in the academic literacy class: Establishing a sense of community for inclusivity and effective learning. *Perspectives in Education*, 41(3), 107–123. <https://doi.org/10.38140/pie.v41i3.6779>
40. Theron, L., Rothmann, S., Höltge, J., Ungar, M. (2022). Differential adaptation to adversity: A latent profile analysis of youth engagement with resilience-enabling cultural resources and mental health outcomes in a stressed Canadian and South African community. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 53(3–4), 403–425. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220221221077353> (a)
41. Theron, L., Rothmann, S., Makhnach, A., Ungar, M. (2022). Adolescent mental health resilience and combinations of caregiver monitoring and warmth: A person-centred perspective. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 31, 2860–2870. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-022-02287-0> (b)
42. Theron, L.C., Theron, A.M.C., Malindi, M.J. (2012). Toward an African definition of resilience. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 39(1), 63–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798412454675>
43. Ungar, M. (2011). The social ecology of resilience: Addressing contextual and cultural ambiguity of a nascent construct. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 81(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01067.x>
44. Ungar, M., Liebenberg, L. (2011). Assessing resilience across cultures using mixed methods: construction of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 5(2), 126–149. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689811400607>
45. Ungar, M., Theron, L., Murphy, K., Jefferies, P. (2021). Researching multisystemic resilience: A sample methodology. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 607994. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.607994>
46. UNICEF. (2023). Adolescents. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/adolescents/overview/>
47. van Rensburg, A.C., Theron, L.C., Ungar, M. (2017). Using the CYRM-28 with South African young people: A factor structure analysis. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 29(1), 93–102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731517710326>

### Information about the authors

Alexander V. Makhnach, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Education, Doctor of Sciences (Psychology), Deputy Director for Research, Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IP RAS), Moscow, Russian Federation, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2231-1788>, e-mail: [makhnach@ipran.ru](mailto:makhnach@ipran.ru)

Anna I. Laktionova, Doctor of Sciences (Psychology), Leading Researcher, Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IP RAS), Moscow, Russian Federation, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9682-2142>, e-mail: [laktionovai@ipran.ru](mailto:laktionovai@ipran.ru)

### Информация об авторах

Александр Валентинович Махнач, член-корреспондент РАО, доктор психологических наук, заместитель директора по научной работе, Институт психологии РАН (ФГБУН ИП РАН), Москва, Российская Федерация, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2231-1788>, e-mail: [makhnach@ipran.ru](mailto:makhnach@ipran.ru)

*Анна Игоревна Лактионова*, доктор психологических наук, ведущий научный сотрудник, Институт психологии РАН (ФГБУН ИП РАН), Москва, Российская Федерация, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9682-2142>, e-mail: [laktionovaai@ipran.ru](mailto:laktionovaai@ipran.ru)

***Contribution of the authors***

All authors participated in the discussion of the results and approved the final text of the manuscript.

***Вклад авторов***

Все авторы приняли участие в обсуждении результатов и согласовали окончательный текст рукописи.

***Conflict of interest***

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

***Конфликт интересов***

Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

***Ethics statement***

The study was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (report no 2, 2026/19/01).

***Декларация об этике***

Исследование было рассмотрено и одобрено Этическим комитетом ФГБУН «Институт психологии РАН» (протокол № 2 от 19.01.2026 г.).

Поступила в редакцию 10.02.2026

Received 2026.02.10

Поступила после рецензирования 20.02.2026

Revised 2026.02.20

Принята к публикации 01.03.2026

Accepted 2026.03.01

Опубликована 30.03.2026

Published 2026.03.30