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# Interparental Interference and conflict in children's psychological adjustment after divorce: a bibliometric study

*Interferencia y conflicto interparental en el ajuste psicológico infantil tras el divorcio: estudio bibliométrico*

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## Abstract

Comprehensive child development rests on multiple factors that interact across the various stages of life. Within this process, the family—as the first environment of socialization—exerts both direct and indirect biopsychosocial influence, which means that conflict within the family can carry adverse consequences for children's mental health. Against this backdrop, the present study set out to examine the scholarly literature on parental interference, interparental conflict, and children's psychological adjustment in divorce contexts over the 2021–2026 period. A bibliometric study was carried out, drawing on indicators of scientific production and on keyword co-occurrence analysis, using articles indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and SciELO. The search yielded 29 publications from a range of countries, with output concentrated largely in the United States and Europe. Thematic analysis showed that interparental conflict constitutes the principal line of inquiry, alongside children's mental health and shared custody. The findings further indicate that conflict between parents following divorce represents a risk factor for children's psychological well-being, particularly when it takes the form of triangulation, loyalty conflicts, and parental interference.

**Keywords:** interparental conflict, parental interference, divorce, child psychological adjustment.

## Resumen

El desarrollo integral infantil depende de múltiples factores que interactúan a lo largo de las distintas etapas de la vida. En este proceso, la familia, como primer entorno de socialización, ejerce una influencia biopsicosocial directa e indirecta; por ello, los conflictos intrafamiliares pueden generar consecuencias adversas para la salud mental de los niños. En este contexto, la presente investigación tuvo como objetivo analizar la producción científica sobre la interferencia parental, el conflicto interparental y el ajuste psicológico infantil en contextos de divorcio durante el período 2021-2026. Se realizó un estudio bibliométrico, basado en indicadores de producción científica y en el análisis de coocurrencia de palabras clave, a partir de artículos indexados en Scopus, Web of Science y SciELO. Los resultados identificaron 29 publicaciones procedentes de diversos países, con una concentración predominante en Estados Unidos y Europa. El análisis temático evidenció que el conflicto interparental constituye el principal eje de investigación, junto con la salud mental infantil y la custodia compartida. Asimismo, los conflictos entre los progenitores después del divorcio representan un factor de riesgo para el bienestar psicológico de los hijos, especialmente cuando se manifiestan mediante la triangulación, los conflictos de lealtad y la interferencia parental.

**Palabras clave:** conflicto interparental, interferencia parental, divorcio, ajuste psicológico infantil.

## Introduction

The formation of a couple may give rise to the gradual establishment of a family structure; when the relationship ceases to be sustainable, however, separation or divorce can follow. Both phenomena have grown

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more salient in recent years. According to CEPAL (2022), separation rates across Latin America range between 25% and 45%, particularly in South American countries. The consequences for children, however, do not stem from separation alone, but from the conditions that accompany it, above all the level, frequency, and intensity of interparental conflict (Amato, 2010; Davies et al., 2023; O'Hara et al., 2024).

Interparental conflict and parental interference help account for part of the dynamics that unfold after divorce. Interparental conflict encompasses hostile exchanges between parents, ranging from verbal aggression to violent behavior, which can leave children feeling threatened and struggling to adapt (Cummings & Davies, 2010; Schrodt, 2025). Parental interference, for its part, involves conduct aimed at obstructing or weakening the child's relationship with the other parent, whether through direct actions, blocking visits or disparaging the other parent, or indirect ones, such as encouraging shifts in loyalty and drawing the child into adult disputes (Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Mateo-Fernández & Osa-Subtil, 2024).

Parental interference should be distinguished from parental alienation (PA). Although the latter concept has gained traction in the literature, it does not constitute an independent diagnosis in the major classification systems. The WHO declined to include PA as a health care term in ICD-11, and the DSM-5-TR likewise does not recognize it as a distinct disorder (APA, 2022). Parental interference, by contrast, describes observable behaviors and finds support in contemporary scholarship, particularly within forensic and child development settings (Bernet et al., 2022; Portilla-Saavedra et al., 2021). While PA carries theoretical gaps and lacks consensus, examining it can still shed light on the deterioration of the parent-child bond and remains pertinent to forensic evaluation and to decisions regarding custody, visitation, and parental authority (Meier, 2020).

Two theoretical perspectives help explain the consequences of interparental conflict. Emotional Security Theory holds that children seek to preserve safety and protection within the family system; separation and exposure to conflict can therefore breed insecurity, especially once daily life with one parent comes to an end (Davies & Cummings, 1994). The Cognitive-Contextual Framework, in turn, proposes that the impact of conflict depends on how the child construes it, whether as a threat or as a situation for which they feel responsible. Such interpretations are shaped by family communication and developmental stage, factors that can foster intrusive thoughts and self-blame attributions (Grych & Fincham, 1990; O'Hara et al., 2024).

Although both theories account for relevant mechanisms of interparental conflict, gaps persist regarding its connection to parental interference and children's psychological well-being, particularly in Latin America and, more specifically, in Ecuador. Examining the available evidence and updating the state of scientific knowledge is therefore warranted (Donthu et al., 2021; Montazeri et al., 2023).

In response to this need, the present study examines global scientific output on parental interference, interparental conflict, and children's psychological adjustment in divorce contexts over the 2021–2026 period. To this end, it draws on bibliometric indicators and keyword co-occurrence analysis in order to identify the principal trends, core themes, and trajectory of published research. The question guiding the study is accordingly the following: what is the state and evolution of global scientific production on parental interference, interparental conflict, and children's psychological adjustment in divorce contexts during the 2021–2026 period?

## Methodology

This research constitutes a bibliometric study, quantitative in approach and descriptive-analytical in scope, aimed at characterizing scientific output on parental interference, interparental conflict, and children's psychological adjustment in divorce contexts over the 2021–2026 period. Indicators of scientific production were used alongside keyword co-occurrence analysis carried out with specialized software (Donthu et al., 2021).

The literature search was conducted on June 29, 2026, in the Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, and SciELO databases. A search strategy was designed around the Boolean operators *AND* and *OR*, applied to the title, abstract, and keyword fields. Terms relating to interparental conflict, parental interference, parental alienation, children's psychological adjustment, divorce, separation, and custody were used. The strategy was adapted to the specific syntax of each database and run in English, Spanish, and Portuguese in order to broaden the retrieval of both international and Latin American literature. The terms used were as follows: ("*interparental conflict*" *OR* "*parental interference*" *OR* "*parental alienation*" *OR* "*coparenting conflict*") *AND* ("*child adjustment*" *OR* "*children psychological adjustment*" *OR* "*child well-being*" *OR* "*child mental health*") *AND* ("*divorce*" *OR* "*separation*" *OR* "*custody*").

Original articles, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses published between January 2021 and June 2026 were included, provided they were indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, or SciELO and bore directly on the study's objective. Theses, books, book chapters, editorials, letters to the editor, duplicate documents, and non-peer-reviewed publications were excluded. Retrieved records were exported in BibTeX and CSV formats and subsequently imported into the Bibliometrix package, run through RStudio. At this stage, author, journal, and

keyword names were normalized, and duplicate records were removed through automated and manual procedures based on DOI, title, and other bibliographic metadata.

The bibliometric indicators considered were annual output, the most productive authors, the most relevant journals (following Bradford's Law), author productivity (based on Lotka's Law), the geographic distribution of publications, keyword frequency, and the highest-impact articles, gauged by the number of citations indexed in Scopus. A keyword co-occurrence analysis was also performed using VOSviewer in order to identify the principal thematic clusters and the relationships among the concepts under study.

Finally, the study drew exclusively on publicly accessible scientific documents; it involved no human participants and used no personal data. Obtaining informed consent or submitting the research to procedures specific to studies with human participants was therefore unnecessary. Even so, the information gathered was handled according to scientific and ethical criteria, with an eye to ensuring transparency throughout the process, minimizing potential bias, and avoiding conflicts of interest.

## Results

The search across the selected databases yielded 69 records. After applying the eligibility criteria and removing duplicates, a final collection of 29 scientific publications remained. These documents formed the basis for all the bibliometric analyses presented below:

**Table 1**

*Overview of the data obtained in the bibliometric analysis (Scopus, WoS, SciELO)*

| Bibliometric indicator | Result |
|---|---|
| Analysis period | 2021–2026 (cutoff: June 29, 2026) |
| Databases searched | Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, and SciELO |
| Records initially retrieved | 69 |
| Records after removing duplicates | 29 |
| Documents analyzed | 29 scientific articles |
| Total authors | 155 |
| Average authors per document | 5.34 |
| Scientific journals | 23 |
| Languages | English, Spanish, and Portuguese |
| Total citations in the corpus | 197 |
| Average citations per document | 6.79 |
| Software used | Bibliometrix (RStudio) and VOSviewer |

**Note.** Author's own elaboration using the Bibliometrix package, based on records exported in BibTeX format from Web of Science and in CSV format from Scopus and SciELO, with a search date of June 29, 2026. Deduplication was carried out by comparing DOIs and normalized titles

Annual scientific output over the study period was examined next. As Table 2 shows, production rose between 2021 and 2022 before declining in subsequent years. Given the modest size of the corpus analyzed (n = 29), however, these results should be read as a descriptive trend rather than as conclusive evidence of a shift in the field's trajectory.

**Table 2**

*Annual scientific output, 2021–2026 period*

| Year | No. of articles | Total citations | TC per article | Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2021 | 5 | 62 | 12.40 | WoS, Scopus, SciELO |
| 2022 | 8 | 93 | 11.63 | WoS, Scopus |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2023 | 7 | 22 | 3.14 | WoS, Scopus |
| 2024 | 6 | 20 | 3.33 | WoS, Scopus |
| 2025 | 0 | — | — | — |
| 2026 | 3 | 0 | 0.00 | Scopus, SciELO |
| **TOTAL** | **29** | **197** | **6.79** | |

**Note.** TC = total citations recorded as of the search cutoff date (06/29/2026). No articles from 2025 appear in the retrieved collection. The 2026 figure covers only those publications available as of the cutoff date
**Sources.** Web of Science, Scopus, and SciELO.

The most relevant sources were then identified through Bradford's Law, which made it possible to pinpoint those with the highest concentration of publications on the topic. A total of 23 distinct sources were recorded; the corresponding data appear in Table 3. These span fields such as family law, developmental psychology, and family studies, attesting to the interdisciplinary breadth and relevance of the publications consulted.

**Table 3**
*Journals with the highest number of publications*

| Source / Journal | No. of articles | No. of citations |
|---|---|---|
| Family Court Review | 9 | 38 |
| Journal of Family Psychology | 5 | 33 |
| Journal of Divorce and Remarriage | 5 | 71 |
| Journal of Child and Family Studies | 2 | 23 |
| Children (MDPI) | 2 | 29 |
| Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review | 1 | 25 |
| Social Sciences – Basel | 1 | 8 |
| Family Process | 2 | 18 |
| Mental Health & Prevention | 1 | 5 |
| Current Psychology | 1 | 0 |
| Development and Psychopathology | 1 | 7 |
| Journal of Comparative Family Studies | 1 | 2 |

**Note.** No. of articles = number of publications included in the retrieved collection; this figure does not necessarily correspond exclusively to documents published between 2021 and 2026 in every case | **Sources.** Scopus, Web of Science, and SciELO. Journal names were normalized to eliminate duplicates arising from differences in capitalization

Lotka's Law was likewise applied to analyze the distribution of author productivity within the collection under study. This law holds that most authors publish a small number of works, while a smaller group accounts for a larger share of scientific output. The results revealed a low proportion of highly productive authors in the area analyzed. Among the authors identified, several were affiliated with Arizona State University in the United States. Table 4 presents the number of articles published by each author during the period studied, along with total accumulated citations.

**Table 4**
*Most productive authors in the 2021–2026 period*

| Author | No. of articles (period) | Primary affiliation | TC |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sandler, Irwin N. | 7 | Arizona State University, USA | 290 |
| Wolchik, Sharlene A. | 5 | Arizona State University, USA | 248 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| O'Hara, Karey L. | 5 | Arizona State University, USA | 40 |
| Steinbach, Anja | 4 | University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany | 28 |
| Augustijn, Lara | 3 | Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz, Germany | 10 |
| Holt, Tonje | 3 | Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Norway | 9 |
| Corral, Susana | 2 | Universidad de Deusto, Spain | 0 |
| Tein, Jenn-Yun | 2 | Arizona State University, USA | 52 |
| Cormenzana, Susana | 2 | Universidad de Deusto, Spain | 0 |
| van Dijk, Rianne | 2 | Utrecht University, Netherlands | 176 |

**Note.** TC = total citations accumulated by the author across all their articles within the collection (Scopus). No. of articles = publications in the 2021–2026 collection. Sandler, Irwin appears with minor name variations depending on the database; these were normalized as a single author

Building on the institutional affiliations presented in the preceding table, it was worth examining the geographic origin of scientific output. In this regard, the United States accounts for the largest number of articles, followed by several European and Asian countries, while the Latin American region registers a single article.

**Table 5**

*Scientific output by country according to the corresponding author's affiliation*

| Country | Estimated articles | Citations in period | International collaboration |
|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 14 | 148 | High |
| Germany | 5 | 38 | High |
| Spain | 4 | 25 | Medium |
| Netherlands | 3 | 176 | High |
| Norway | 3 | 9 | High |
| Portugal | 2 | 29 | Medium |
| China | 1 | 19 | Low |
| Malaysia | 1 | 3 | Low |
| Lebanon | 1 | 3 | Medium |
| Venezuela/Ecuador | 1 | 0 | — |

**Note.** Country assigned by the affiliation of the first or corresponding author. Number of documents assigned to the country of the corresponding author's affiliation. TC = citations in Scopus as of the search cutoff.
International collaboration: High = MCP ≥ 2 co-authoring countries

With the preceding results in hand, the keywords most frequently used by authors were examined, since they constitute the collection's dominant thematic structures. Given its prominence, the term "*interparental conflict*" stands as the predominant term, alongside other concepts closely tied to the subject under study. Table 6 presents the terms identified in English (the predominant language in the data) together with the thematic axis corresponding to each.

**Table 6**

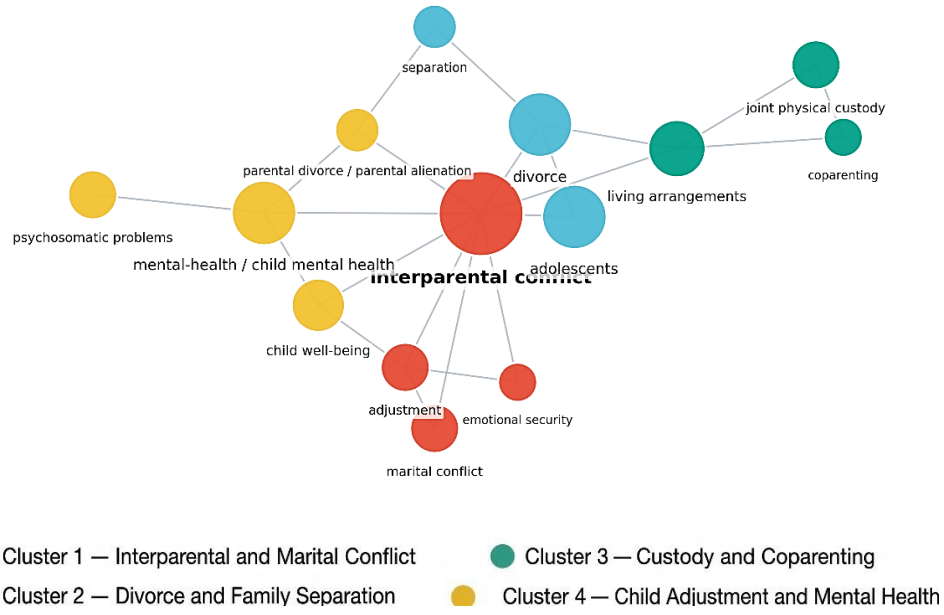
*Most frequent keywords in the collection (Author Keywords + Keywords Plus)*

| Keyword (Author Keywords / Keywords Plus) | Frequency | Thematic axis |
|---|---|---|
| interparental conflict | 15 | Interparental conflict |
| divorce | 8 | Family context |
| adolescents | 8 | Study population |
| living arrangements | 6 | Physical custody |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| child well-being | 5 | Psychological adjustment |
| joint physical custody | 4 | Shared custody |
| mental-health / child mental health | 8 | Child mental health |
| marital conflict | 4 | Marital conflict |
| psychosomatic problems | 4 | Somatic symptomatology |
| separation | 3 | Family context |
| coparenting | 2 | Coparenting |
| emotional security | 2 | Emotional Security Theory |
| adjustment | 4 | Behavioral adjustment |
| parental divorce / parental alienation | 3 | Parental alienation / interference |

**Note.** Frequency corresponding to *Author Keywords* and *Keywords Plus* analyzed using VOSviewer applying the *full counting* method and a minimum threshold of two occurrences

**Figure 1**
*Keyword co-occurrence network (VOSviewer)*




**Note.** Author's own elaboration based on *Author Keywords* and *Keywords Plus*, processed in VOSviewer, using the *full counting*, with a minimum threshold of two occurrences

The size of each node in Figure 1 is proportional to its frequency of appearance, while the thickness of the links reflects the strength of co-occurrence between terms. Four thematic clusters were identified: the first, in red, groups interparental and marital conflict as the field's central axis; the second, in light blue, corresponds to divorce and family separation; the third, in green, brings together terms tied to custody and coparenting; and the fourth, in yellow, concentrates indicators of child adjustment and mental health. The term *interparental conflict* stands as the node with the greatest centrality, connecting directly to all four clusters and confirming its organizing role within the body of research analyzed.

Scopus was used to identify the most highly cited articles at the global level, which makes it possible to recognize the field's original contributions as well as those references that have become obligatory citations. Table 7 presents the most cited authors within the dataset analyzed.

**Table 7**
*Documents with the highest number of citations*

| Authors | Year | Title (abbreviated) | TC (Scopus) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lansford, J.E. | 2009 | Parental Divorce and Children's Adjustment | 294 |
| van Dijk et al. | 2020 | Meta-analysis on interparental conflict, parenting, and child adjustment in divorced families | 163 |
| Amato, P.R. | 1994 | Life-span adjustment of children to their parents' divorce | 128 |
| Sandler et al. | 2008 | Effects of Father and Mother Parenting on Children's Mental Health in High- and Low-Conflict Divorces | 113 |
| Grych, J.H. | 2005 | Interparental Conflict as a Risk Factor for Child Maladjustment: Implications for Prevention | 109 |
| Cookston et al. | 2007 | Effects of the Dads for Life Intervention on Interparental Conflict and Coparenting | 99 |
| Kalmijn, M. | 2016 | Father-child contact, interparental conflict, and depressive symptoms among children of divorced parents | 56 |
| Elam et al. | 2016 | Non-Residential Father–Child Involvement, Interparental Conflict and Mental Health of Children Following Divorce | 55 |
| O'Hara et al. | 2019 | Coping in context: Long-term relations between interparental conflict and coping on child psychopathology | 50 |
| Mahrer et al. | 2018 | Does Shared Parenting Help or Hurt Children in High-Conflict Divorced Families? | 43 |

**Note.** TC = total citations in Scopus as of 06/29/2026. Titles abbreviated for ease of reading

## Discussion

The results suggest that the field maintains an active, though still limited, stream of scientific production. The 29 documents analyzed reflect a degree of consensus regarding the relationship between parental conflict and child adjustment, but they also expose theoretical and empirical gaps. Because the records were retrieved using specific search criteria, these findings represent an approximation of the state of knowledge rather than the totality of existing scientific output.

The year 2022 accounted for the largest number of publications (n = 8), followed by a decline in subsequent years. This variation warrants cautious interpretation, since the COVID-19 pandemic may have delayed the publication of some studies. Scientific output was also concentrated largely in North America and Europe, a pattern that may relate to cultural and institutional differences as well as to the availability of support networks for families. Divorce, in this sense, can amount to a stressful event for children, particularly when accompanied by persistent conflict (Cao et al., 2022).

These findings align with the review by Lansford (2009), identified as the most cited article in the collection according to Scopus. Lansford argues that child adjustment does not hinge on divorce alone, but on the interaction among factors such as post-divorce conflict, parental interference, parenting quality, extended family dynamics, and socioeconomic standing. That perspective still holds, as recent research likewise shows that family conditions before and after separation account for much of the variation in children's adaptation.

Interparental conflict proved the most studied concept in the collection. The work of van Dijk et al. (2020), with 163 citations, stands out in particular for its international and methodological reach. The results reviewed indicate that the relationship among interparental conflict, parental interference, and difficulties in children's psychological well-being is mediated by the quality of the parent–child bond and by post-divorce parenting practices. Conflict, then, does not necessarily affect the child directly, but rather through a range of relational and individual processes. This reading is consistent with Emotional Security Theory (Davies & Cummings, 1994), according to which exposure to conflict can generate family insecurity and dysfunctional emotion-regulation responses.

Along these lines, O'Hara et al. (2021) found that post-divorce conflict is associated with children's mental health problems, both internalizing and externalizing. Their results also underscore the importance of parenting quality, which can attenuate some negative effects. Longitudinal evidence indicates, however, that conflict can heighten fear of abandonment, which is subsequently linked to mental health problems; the quality of the parent-child bond should not, therefore, be treated as a universal protective factor.

The literature also examines the impact of conflict according to post-divorce living arrangements. Morbech et al. (2024) identified a relationship between living arrangements and child resilience, while Sun et al. (2021) found that parental alienation significantly predicts depression among children in rural Chinese families affected by parental out-migration. These results extend the analysis beyond the Western context and point to the importance of accounting for cultural and family particularities.

The terms *joint physical custody* (n = 4) and *living arrangements* (n = 6) also featured prominently, especially in European studies. Steinbach and Augustijn (2022) observed differences in child well-being between sole and joint custody, though they emphasized that the quality of family relationships matters more than the custody arrangement on its own. In a similar vein, Steinbach (2024) found comparable levels of mental health among children under sole and joint custody, particularly with respect to internalizing and externalizing problems, although prosocial behavior was not included. Augustijn et al. (2023) caution that the effects of living arrangements must be interpreted in light of the legal, cultural, and relational context in which they are implemented.

Parental interference also takes on particular relevance in forensic settings. The analysis of court rulings conducted by Lavadera et al. (2012) identified parental interference or possible parental alienation in 29% of the custody cases reviewed. Although no diagnostic consensus exists, parental alienation surfaces in proceedings concerning custody and visitation. Arcidiacono et al. (2026) accordingly argue for establishing valid, contextualized criteria for assessing its possible presence, so as to avoid turning the concept into an automatic explanation for every instance of a child's rejection of a parent.

This caution also follows from the study by Rowen and Emery (2019), who found that parental denigration does not invariably produce alienation. In some cases it can trigger a boomerang effect that strengthens the child's bond with the denigrated parent, depending on the prior quality and reciprocity of the relationship. Linear models thus prove insufficient and should give way to dynamic accounts that take into consideration the history of the bond, the child's characteristics, and the family context.

Parental triangulation, understood as the child's involvement in conflict between the parents, constitutes another relevant mechanism. van Dijk et al. (2022) noted that triangulation can increase internalizing problems through loyalty conflicts and diminished self-esteem. Children's empathy, moreover, appears to act as a moderator, such that children with greater empathic capacity may be more sensitive to the consequences of this process.

The United States emerged as the leading producer of knowledge identified in the review, reflecting both the salience accorded to the problem and the existence of targeted intervention programs. These include NBP and the Family Transitions Guide, developed in collaboration with the Maricopa Family Court to support families involved in parental conflict and custody proceedings. Online parent education programs have also been proposed, whose effectiveness must be assessed through systematic criteria relating to their objectives, target population, and available evidence (O'Hara et al., 2021). No equivalent initiatives in Ecuador were identified within the collection analyzed.

Another noteworthy program is Egokitzen, developed in Spain for parents going through divorce (Martínez-Pampliega et al., 2015). Its results show improvements in family communication and coparenting, variables that mediate children's post-divorce adjustment. Corral et al. (2026) extended this line of work by identifying three adaptation profiles: high conflict and low coparenting, associated with greater psychological symptomatology; progressive adaptation; and consolidated adaptation, linked to better outcomes for children.

The scarce Latin American representation constitutes a significant limitation of the field. Only one article related to the region was identified, and it drew principally on North American literature while centering on Emotional Security Theory and the Cognitive-Contextual Framework. This state of affairs points to the need for research in Ecuador that takes into account the regulations of the Council of the Judiciary, the country's sociocultural characteristics, and the development of specific programs and protocols. In forensic settings, it is likewise necessary that psychological expert witnesses use instruments validated for the Ecuadorian population (Alcántara et al., 2026).

Finally, it bears noting that the research carries certain limitations. First, only Scopus, Web of Science, and SciELO were consulted, so publications indexed in other databases may have been left out. Second, the analysis centered on bibliometric indicators, which are useful for describing trends but insufficient for directly appraising methodological quality, the consistency of results, or the risk of bias in the studies included. Finally, the modest size

of the collection (n = 29) requires that the findings be read as descriptive trends rather than as definitive conclusions about the field's evolution.

## Conclusions

Interparental conflict constitutes a central risk factor for children's psychological adjustment in contexts of separation. This finding, reinforced by the present bibliometric review, carries direct implications for forensic evaluation and for the design of public policy, particularly in cases involving custody and visitation arrangements.

Parental interference, in both its direct and indirect manifestations, among them denigration of the other parent, triangulation, the imposition of loyalty conflicts, and obstruction of the parent-child bond, operates through specific psychological mechanisms documented in the literature, such as the erosion of the child's emotional security, the activation of loyalty conflicts, and diminished self-esteem, all of which mediate behavioral adjustment. Depressive symptomatology associated with these mechanisms is also in evidence.

Coparenting, grounded in a sound relationship between parents, constitutes the most robust predictor of children's post-divorce psychological adjustment, outweighing the formal custody arrangement. The evidence reviewed nonetheless shows that various intervention programs can likewise contribute to child well-being and improve how parents manage the custody relationship.

No articles corresponding to the Ecuadorian context were found, which points to the need for mental health professionals and expert witnesses to strengthen the research framework on this topic, so that such knowledge can be applied in clinical and forensic settings, particularly in forensic evaluation and in weighing the appropriateness of judicial recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of available interventions.

Future research is encouraged to broaden the period of analysis, incorporate additional international databases, and develop empirical studies in Latin American contexts, particularly in Ecuador, in order to strengthen the available scientific evidence.

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