

Predicting Intergenerational Cultural Conflict in Ecuadorian Immigrant Families Based on Acculturation Gaps, Language Brokering, Perceived Discrimination, Parenting Styles, and Family Communication Patterns

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to predict intergenerational cultural conflict in Ecuadorian immigrant families based on parent–adolescent acculturation gaps, adolescent language-brokering burden, perceived discrimination, parenting styles, and family communication patterns.

Methods and Materials: This cross-sectional correlational study included 312 Ecuadorian immigrant parent–adolescent dyads residing in the New York metropolitan area. Participants were recruited through schools, community centers, cultural associations, religious organizations, and immigrant-support programs. Data were collected using the Intergenerational Conflict Inventory, Vancouver Index of Acculturation, Adolescent Language Brokering Questionnaire, Everyday Discrimination Scale, Parental Authority Questionnaire, Revised Family Communication Patterns Questionnaire, and a demographic form. Parent and adolescent questionnaires were completed separately in Spanish or English. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficients, hierarchical multiple regression, and moderation analysis in SPSS version 29.

Findings: The final hierarchical regression model significantly predicted intergenerational cultural conflict and explained 70.9% of its variance, $F(17, 294) = 42.13$, $p < .001$. Heritage-culture acculturation gaps, mainstream-culture acculturation gaps, language-brokering burden, perceived discrimination, authoritarian parenting, permissive parenting, and conformity orientation significantly predicted greater conflict. Authoritative parenting and conversation orientation significantly predicted lower conflict. Conversation orientation was the strongest protective predictor, whereas the heritage-culture acculturation gap was the strongest positive predictor. Conversation orientation significantly weakened the association between acculturation gaps and conflict, while authoritarian parenting significantly strengthened the relationship between perceived discrimination and conflict. Interactions involving adolescent birthplace and gender were not statistically significant.

Conclusion: Intergenerational cultural conflict in Ecuadorian immigrant families is shaped by the combined effects of cultural distance, adolescent translation responsibilities, discriminatory experiences, parenting practices, and

communication processes. Open family communication and authoritative parenting may protect families from conflict, whereas rigid parental control, conformity-oriented communication, and burdensome language brokering may increase vulnerability. Culturally responsive family interventions should therefore emphasize dialogue, flexible parental authority, recognition of adolescents' bicultural experiences, and reduced dependence on children for complex interpretation responsibilities.

Keywords: *Acculturation gap; Ecuadorian immigrant families; intergenerational cultural conflict; language brokering; perceived discrimination; parenting styles; family communication.*

1 Introduction

International migration transforms family life at multiple and interdependent levels, affecting cultural identity, parenting practices, communication, language use, social belonging, and the distribution of responsibilities between generations. Immigrant families must adapt to the institutions and expectations of the receiving society while simultaneously maintaining relationships, values, and practices associated with their country of origin. This process is rarely uniform across family members because parents and adolescents occupy different developmental positions and encounter the host society through different social contexts. Parents often experience adaptation through employment, economic responsibilities, immigration-related pressures, and the need to preserve family continuity, whereas adolescents are more directly exposed to schools, peer groups, media, and youth culture. These unequal experiences can produce different rates and forms of cultural adaptation within the same household. Acculturation should therefore be understood not merely as an individual transition but as a family-level and life-course process through which cultural orientations, relational expectations, and intergenerational responsibilities are continuously renegotiated (Childress et al., 2025). Immigrant parents frequently describe family well-being as dependent on their ability to protect children, maintain cultural continuity, secure social and economic stability, and respond to mental health concerns within unfamiliar institutional systems (Peddigrew et al., 2026). At the same time, the broader acculturation literature indicates that cultural adaptation can be associated with both resilience and psychological vulnerability, depending on the interaction between personal resources, family relationships, discrimination, and the social conditions of settlement (Ferguson et al., 2023). Consequently, intergenerational cultural conflict cannot be reduced to ordinary parent–adolescent disagreement; rather, it reflects the intersection of normative developmental

tensions with migration-related differences in cultural orientation, authority, identity, and belonging.

One of the most influential explanations for conflict in immigrant families is the acculturation-gap perspective, which proposes that parents and children may adapt to the receiving culture at different rates or maintain unequal attachments to their heritage culture. Adolescents commonly acquire the language, norms, and interpersonal styles of the host society more rapidly than their parents because of intensive participation in educational and peer environments. Parents, by contrast, may retain stronger commitments to cultural values emphasizing family obligation, respect for authority, interdependence, and continuity with the country of origin. A national investigation of immigrant families demonstrated that differences in parent–child acculturation were meaningfully associated with the quality of intergenerational relationships, although the effects varied according to the form of the gap and the relational context in which it occurred (Harris & Chen, 2022). Recent profile-based research has further shown that acculturation gaps are multidimensional and cannot be adequately represented by a single linear contrast between “traditional” parents and “assimilated” children. Families may display distinct combinations of heritage-culture retention, host-culture participation, and within-family differences across several members (Li et al., 2026). This distinction is important because conflict may emerge when adolescents become more oriented toward the receiving society, when parents and children differ in heritage-cultural commitment, or when family members pursue incompatible strategies of integration, separation, assimilation, or biculturalism. Acculturation-related cultural dissonance has been associated with psychological distress and strained intergenerational relationships, suggesting that the emotional consequences of cultural difference depend partly on whether family members can negotiate these differences constructively (Jehangir & Farooqi, 2022). Research on immigrant and refugee youth has also emphasized that young people often aim for integration

rather than complete rejection of either culture, attempting to combine cultural belonging with social participation and personal autonomy (Giles et al., 2025). Similarly, variations in acculturation orientations among immigrant youth show that attachment to heritage culture and engagement with the receiving society can coexist, although the balance between them may remain unstable across settings and developmental periods (Stašulāne & Wilska, 2023). These findings suggest that acculturation gaps are most consequential when cultural differences become interpreted as disloyalty, parental inflexibility, loss of authority, or rejection of the family.

The identity development of immigrant adolescents further complicates intergenerational relationships because cultural identity is formed through simultaneous participation in family, school, community, and transnational social worlds. Second-generation immigrants often construct identities in response to competing expectations regarding language, behavior, appearance, gender roles, educational success, family loyalty, and social belonging (Omole, 2024). For adolescents who migrated during childhood, commonly described as the 1.5 generation, identity development may involve memories of the country of origin alongside intensive socialization in the receiving society. Qualitative research with 1.5-generation immigrants indicates that ethnic self-understanding develops through reflection on migration experiences, cultural continuity, perceived difference, and changing relationships with both heritage and mainstream communities (Park & Scott, 2022). Young immigrants may behave differently across home and school environments, not necessarily because they reject parental culture, but because each context imposes distinct linguistic and behavioral expectations. Research with young Iranian immigrant women, for example, illustrates how adolescents and emerging adults actively navigate differences between domestic cultural expectations and the norms encountered in educational settings (Sharifi, 2021). African immigrant youth have likewise described schools as culturally distinct worlds in which they must exercise agency, negotiate stereotypes, and develop adaptive strategies that may not be fully visible or understandable to parents (Kiramba et al., 2022). Cultural expression through music, peer activities, and creative practices can also provide immigrant children with a means of sustaining heritage ties while participating in the receiving culture (Ripani, 2022). Despite such adaptation, many immigrant youth continue to value intergenerational solidarity, emotional reciprocity, and a

sense of obligation toward parents and extended family (Viola, 2021). Therefore, apparent cultural distancing may coexist with strong family attachment, and conflict may emerge not from the absence of solidarity but from disagreement over how solidarity should be expressed under changing cultural conditions.

Language is a central mechanism through which these intergenerational differences are produced, maintained, or reduced. Heritage-language competence facilitates communication with parents and relatives, access to cultural narratives, and participation in family and community life, whereas proficiency in the dominant language enables adolescents to function effectively in schools and public institutions. Longitudinal evidence suggests that trajectories of heritage- and host-language proficiency are associated with adolescent adjustment, indicating that language development is closely connected to social integration, identity, and emotional well-being (Park & Han, 2023). When parents have limited proficiency in the dominant language, adolescents may assume language-brokering responsibilities by translating conversations, documents, school communications, medical information, employment materials, financial transactions, and interactions with public institutions. Language brokering can strengthen competence, maturity, family contribution, and bicultural self-efficacy, but it can also expose adolescents to information and responsibilities that exceed their developmental role. The burden becomes particularly salient when adolescents must interpret emotionally charged, legal, medical, or financially consequential information, or when parents become highly dependent on them for access to essential services. Such responsibilities can alter conventional family hierarchies by placing adolescents in positions of informational power while parents remain responsible for decision-making. Immigrant youth may consequently experience tension between pride in helping the family and frustration regarding excessive responsibility. The child-welfare literature similarly demonstrates that immigrant children's language, cultural positioning, and family roles must be understood within broader systems that may misunderstand or inadequately respond to the realities of immigrant households (Huynh-Hohnbaum, 2024). Language brokering may therefore contribute to conflict not simply because translation occurs, but because repeated brokering can generate role reversal, emotional strain, embarrassment, and disagreement over the adolescent's responsibilities.

Perceived discrimination represents another important source of pressure that may intensify intergenerational cultural conflict. Immigrant adolescents may encounter exclusion, stereotyping, racialization, accent-based judgment, and assumptions regarding intelligence, legal status, or cultural compatibility. These experiences can influence how adolescents evaluate both the receiving society and their heritage identity. Discrimination may strengthen ethnic solidarity in some cases, but it may also produce shame, anger, vigilance, withdrawal, or efforts to distance oneself from visible cultural markers. Longitudinal research has shown that parents' experiences of discrimination and cultural orientation can influence children's adjustment, demonstrating that discrimination is transmitted through family emotional climates as well as experienced directly by young people (Kim, 2026). Parenting within a racialized environment also requires parents to interpret social threats, prepare children for bias, and decide how strongly to emphasize cultural protection, obedience, or vigilance (Wang et al., 2023). Cultural values and intergenerational acculturation differences may additionally affect how immigrant families understand behavioral or mental health concerns and whether they seek formal services (Wang & He, 2023). Adolescents who interpret discrimination as evidence that parents do not understand their social reality may feel emotionally isolated, while parents may respond to external threats by increasing supervision and restricting autonomy. Research with at-risk immigrant youth has shown that family relationships can function simultaneously as sources of protection and sites of tension under conditions of marginalization and social risk (Walsh et al., 2023). In this context, perceived discrimination may increase family conflict indirectly by heightening adolescent distress and directly by creating disagreements about identity, safety, peer relationships, and acceptable participation in the host society.

Parenting style is likely to determine whether cultural differences and external stressors become manageable disagreements or persistent intergenerational conflict. Migration frequently requires parents to adapt child-rearing practices developed in one cultural context to the legal, educational, and social expectations of another. An integrative review of immigrant parenting has shown that parents often attempt to preserve valued cultural practices while modifying discipline, communication, and expectations in response to the receiving society (Lee, 2026). Bilinear models of acculturation indicate that parenting practices are shaped independently by parents' heritage-

cultural orientation and engagement with mainstream culture rather than by a single movement from one cultural system to another (Yoon et al., 2021). Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, consistent boundaries, and developmentally appropriate autonomy, may help adolescents discuss cultural disagreements without perceiving family expectations as wholly coercive. Authoritarian parenting, characterized by strict obedience, unilateral decision-making, and punitive control, may intensify conflict when adolescents seek greater independence or question cultural expectations. Permissive parenting may also contribute to conflict by producing unclear boundaries and inconsistent responses to culturally sensitive behavior. Research on immigrant families suggests that parenting can facilitate complex forms of identity development when parents provide cultural guidance while recognizing adolescents' participation in multiple cultural worlds (Ferguson et al., 2024). At the same time, reviews of parenting and youth mental health indicate that the consequences of parental control, warmth, and cultural socialization depend on the relational and sociocultural context in which they are experienced (Yu et al., 2025). Among Latinx immigrant parents, acculturation and parenting stress have been associated with children's behavioral difficulties, underscoring the importance of examining both maternal and paternal adaptation processes (McWhirter & Donovan, 2022). Parenting style may therefore serve as a proximal mechanism through which migration-related stress, cultural values, and intergenerational differences are translated into everyday family interaction.

Family communication patterns provide the relational context within which acculturation gaps, language brokering, discrimination, and parenting practices acquire meaning. Families with a strong conversation orientation encourage members to discuss experiences, emotions, disagreements, and decisions openly. Such communication may allow parents to understand adolescents' exposure to the host society and enable adolescents to appreciate the migration-related concerns underlying parental expectations. In contrast, families with a strong conformity orientation emphasize agreement, respect for hierarchy, and avoidance of open disagreement. Conformity can support cohesion and cultural continuity, but it may also inhibit the discussion of discrimination, identity uncertainty, role strain, and changing developmental needs. A relational-ethics perspective emphasizes that immigrant family functioning is shaped by fairness, trust, loyalty, entitlement, and the

balance of reciprocal obligations across generations (Glebova et al., 2024). From this perspective, conflict may intensify when adolescents perceive that their contributions, including language brokering and adaptation to institutional demands, are not acknowledged, or when parents perceive that their sacrifices and authority are insufficiently respected. Immigrant parents' accounts of family well-being similarly indicate that communication, cultural continuity, and mutual understanding are central to their interpretation of healthy family functioning (Peddigrew et al., 2026). Family communication may thus have both a direct and a moderating role: open communication may reduce conflict in general and may also weaken the association between acculturation gaps and conflict by making cultural differences discussable rather than threatening. Conversely, conformity-oriented communication may magnify the effects of authoritarian parenting and discrimination by limiting adolescents' ability to articulate their experiences.

Although existing research has examined acculturation gaps, identity formation, parenting, language adaptation, discrimination, and family relationships across several immigrant populations, these factors have often been investigated separately. The literature increasingly indicates that immigrant family conflict is multidetermined and that no single variable adequately explains why some families experience severe cultural tension while others maintain cohesion despite substantial cultural differences. Acculturation gaps may create the potential for disagreement, but their effects are likely to depend on whether adolescents experience excessive language-brokering burdens, whether discrimination heightens emotional stress, whether parents rely on rigid or responsive forms of authority, and whether family communication permits open negotiation. This integrated perspective is especially relevant to Ecuadorian immigrant families in the United States, whose experiences are shaped by Latin American cultural traditions, Spanish-English language dynamics, racialized social environments, economic adaptation, transnational family ties, and intergenerational differences in exposure to American institutions. Yet Ecuadorian families remain comparatively underrepresented in research that simultaneously evaluates cultural, linguistic, social, parenting, and communication predictors of intergenerational conflict. A comprehensive predictive model can clarify the relative contribution of each factor while also identifying protective processes that may inform culturally responsive family interventions, school-based support, and immigrant community services. Accordingly,

this study aimed to predict intergenerational cultural conflict in Ecuadorian immigrant families based on acculturation gaps, language brokering, perceived discrimination, parenting styles, and family communication patterns.

2 Methods and Materials

2.1 Study Design and Participants

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational design to predict intergenerational cultural conflict in Ecuadorian immigrant families based on acculturation gaps, adolescent language brokering, perceived discrimination, parenting styles, and family communication patterns. The target population consisted of Ecuadorian immigrant families residing in the New York metropolitan area in the United States. The unit of analysis was the immigrant family, represented by one adolescent and one primary caregiving parent from each household. A total of 312 parent-adolescent dyads participated in the study, resulting in data from 624 individuals. The adolescent sample included 174 girls and 138 boys between 12 and 18 years of age, with a mean age of 15.24 years and a standard deviation of 1.71 years. The parent sample consisted of 219 mothers and 93 fathers between 29 and 61 years of age, with a mean age of 43.67 years and a standard deviation of 6.48 years. All participating parents had been born in Ecuador, whereas 128 adolescents had been born in Ecuador and subsequently migrated to the United States and 184 adolescents had been born in the United States to Ecuadorian immigrant parents. The average length of parental residence in the United States was 12.36 years, with a standard deviation of 6.14 years, while Ecuador-born adolescents had lived in the United States for an average of 7.82 years, with a standard deviation of 3.45 years.

Participants were recruited through Ecuadorian cultural associations, community centers, public schools, religious organizations, immigrant support programs, and Spanish-language social media groups serving Ecuadorian families in New York City, Long Island, Westchester County, and northern New Jersey. A multistage community-based sampling procedure was used to obtain participants from different neighborhoods and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the first stage, organizations and schools with substantial Ecuadorian immigrant populations were identified. In the second stage, eligible families were informed about the study through bilingual announcements, community meetings, school newsletters, and direct referrals from community coordinators. In the final stage, families who

expressed interest were screened according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria and enrolled until the required sample size was reached. Although participation was voluntary, recruitment was monitored to maintain reasonable diversity in relation to adolescent gender, parental gender, adolescent birthplace, length of residence in the United States, household income, and parental educational level.

The inclusion criteria required that the participating parent had been born in Ecuador, had lived in the United States for at least one year, and was currently living with and assuming primary caregiving responsibility for an adolescent between 12 and 18 years of age. Adolescents were required to identify as members of an Ecuadorian immigrant family, live in the same household as the participating parent, and have sufficient proficiency in either Spanish or English to understand and complete the study questionnaires. Both first-generation immigrant adolescents and second-generation adolescents born in the United States were eligible. Families were excluded when the parent or adolescent reported a severe cognitive impairment, active psychotic disorder, developmental condition, or language limitation that prevented independent comprehension of the questionnaires. Families were also excluded when the adolescent had lived separately from the participating parent for most of the previous year, when more than 20% of questionnaire responses were missing, or when either member of the dyad withdrew consent or assent.

The minimum required sample size was determined before data collection through an a priori statistical power analysis for hierarchical multiple regression. Assuming a medium overall effect size, a significance level of .05, statistical power of .95, and the inclusion of the principal predictors and relevant demographic control variables, the analysis indicated that at least 220 family units were required. The final sample of 312 families exceeded this minimum requirement and provided adequate statistical power for estimating the independent contribution of each predictor, examining the incremental variance explained by successive blocks of variables, and conducting sensitivity analyses across adolescent generation status and gender. To prevent statistical dependence caused by the inclusion of multiple children or caregivers from the same family, only one parent and one adolescent were selected from each household. When more than one adolescent met the inclusion criteria, the adolescent whose birthday was closest to the date of recruitment was invited to participate.

Data collection was conducted in private rooms at participating schools, community organizations, and

immigrant support centers. Families who could not attend an in-person session were provided access to a secure electronic version of the questionnaires. Parent and adolescent questionnaires were completed separately to reduce social desirability, parental influence, and shared-response bias. Participants could choose either the Spanish or English version of the assessment package. Before completing the questionnaires, parents received a written explanation of the study and provided informed consent, while adolescents provided written assent. Participants were informed that involvement was voluntary, that they could discontinue participation at any time without penalty, and that their responses would remain confidential. Parent and adolescent questionnaires were linked through anonymous identification codes rather than names. The average completion time was approximately 35 minutes for adolescents and 30 minutes for parents. The study procedures were implemented in accordance with established ethical principles for research involving human participants and immigrant populations, with particular attention to confidentiality, voluntary participation, cultural sensitivity, and the protection of minors.

2.2 Measures

A demographic and migration-related information form was developed to collect background data from both members of each parent–adolescent dyad. The parent form assessed age, gender, marital status, educational level, employment status, household income, region of origin in Ecuador, age at migration, length of residence in the United States, English-language proficiency, documentation-related concerns, and frequency of contact with relatives in Ecuador. The adolescent form collected information concerning age, gender, birthplace, age at migration when applicable, school grade, preferred language, English- and Spanish-language proficiency, number of siblings, and frequency of participation in Ecuadorian cultural and community activities. These variables were used to characterize the sample and identify demographic factors that might need to be statistically controlled when predicting intergenerational cultural conflict.

Intergenerational cultural conflict was assessed using a culturally adapted version of the Intergenerational Conflict Inventory. Parallel parent and adolescent forms were administered to capture disagreements involving cultural values, behavioral expectations, family obligations, independence, friendship choices, dating, education, career

decisions, clothing, religious practices, use of language, participation in Ecuadorian traditions, and adherence to mainstream American norms. Respondents indicated how frequently each source of disagreement had occurred during the previous six months on a five-point scale ranging from 1, representing never, to 5, representing very often. Higher scores indicated more frequent and intense intergenerational cultural conflict. In addition to the total score, the instrument represented conflict concerning autonomy, family obligations, cultural identity, social relationships, and everyday behavioral expectations. Parent and adolescent scores were standardized and averaged to create a family-level measure that incorporated the perspectives of both generations. Before the main study, the Spanish and English versions were reviewed by specialists in immigrant family psychology and tested with 25 Ecuadorian parent-adolescent dyads who were not included in the final sample. Minor linguistic adjustments were made to ensure that the items were understandable and relevant to Ecuadorian families. Internal consistency in the main sample was satisfactory for both the parent and adolescent forms.

Acculturation orientations were measured separately for parents and adolescents using the Vancouver Index of Acculturation. This 20-item instrument assesses two relatively independent dimensions of acculturation: orientation toward the heritage culture and orientation toward the mainstream culture. Ten items evaluate attachment to and participation in the individual's heritage culture, whereas ten items assess involvement in the dominant culture of the receiving society. Items address cultural traditions, social relationships, entertainment preferences, values, behavioral practices, and comfort participating in each cultural context. Responses are recorded on a nine-point scale, with higher scores indicating stronger identification with the relevant cultural orientation. In this study, heritage-culture items referred specifically to Ecuadorian culture, and mainstream-culture items referred to the culture of the United States. The instrument was completed independently by both parents and adolescents. Two acculturation-gap scores were calculated by obtaining the absolute difference between the parent and adolescent scores for heritage-cultural orientation and mainstream-cultural orientation. A higher absolute difference indicated a larger acculturation gap within the family, regardless of which generation reported the stronger orientation. A combined acculturation-gap index was also calculated by averaging the standardized heritage-orientation and mainstream-orientation gap scores. This procedure allowed

the analysis to represent differences in cultural adaptation rather than treating adolescent acculturation alone as evidence of family cultural distance.

Adolescent language brokering was assessed using the Adolescent Language Brokering Questionnaire, a culturally adapted measure designed to evaluate the frequency, context, complexity, and emotional consequences of translating or interpreting for family members. The questionnaire contained items addressing translation in medical settings, schools, workplaces, banks, government offices, legal or immigration-related situations, stores, transportation systems, and everyday interactions. Adolescents reported how frequently they translated spoken conversations, written documents, electronic messages, and institutional information from English into Spanish or from Spanish into English. Responses were provided on a five-point scale ranging from 1, representing never, to 5, representing very frequently. The measure also included items assessing perceived burden, role reversal, embarrassment, pressure, family appreciation, personal competence, and pride associated with language brokering. Frequency and burden scores were calculated separately because frequent language brokering does not necessarily produce negative consequences when adolescents experience the role as manageable or meaningful. For the principal regression analysis, the total language-brokering burden score was used because the theoretical model proposed that conflict would be more strongly associated with coercive responsibility, emotional strain, and inappropriate role expectations than with translation frequency alone.

Perceived discrimination was evaluated using the Everyday Discrimination Scale. Adolescents indicated how often they had experienced routine forms of unfair or disrespectful treatment, including being treated with less courtesy, receiving poorer service, being perceived as unintelligent or untrustworthy, being threatened, being insulted, or being treated as though they did not belong. Responses were scored on a six-point frequency scale, with higher total scores representing more frequent perceived discrimination. Following each endorsed experience, adolescents were asked whether they attributed the treatment to their ethnicity, immigrant background, language or accent, skin color, socioeconomic position, age, gender, or another personal characteristic. The primary analysis used the total frequency score, while attribution data were used descriptively to identify the most commonly perceived bases of discriminatory treatment. The Spanish-language version

was examined for conceptual equivalence and understandable wording among Ecuadorian adolescents. The measure demonstrated adequate internal consistency in the present sample.

Parenting styles were assessed through the Parental Authority Questionnaire. The adolescent-report version was used as the principal measure because adolescents' perceptions of parental behavior were expected to be most directly associated with their experience of family conflict. The questionnaire evaluates authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. Authoritative parenting is characterized by warmth, responsiveness, clear expectations, and developmentally appropriate autonomy. Authoritarian parenting reflects high behavioral control, strict obedience demands, punitive discipline, and limited responsiveness. Permissive parenting is characterized by warmth combined with limited rule enforcement, inconsistent boundaries, and relatively low behavioral control. Adolescents rated each item on a five-point agreement scale. Separate mean scores were calculated for the three parenting styles, and no global parenting score was produced because the dimensions represent conceptually distinct approaches to parental authority. Parents completed a corresponding self-report form for descriptive comparison; however, adolescent-rated parenting styles were entered into the principal predictive model. The Spanish version was reviewed to ensure that references to obedience, respect, parental authority, and autonomy were interpreted appropriately within Ecuadorian cultural norms.

Family communication patterns were measured using the Revised Family Communication Patterns Questionnaire. The instrument assesses conversation orientation and conformity orientation as two independent dimensions of family communication. Conversation orientation reflects the extent to which family members are encouraged to participate in open, frequent, and spontaneous discussions about emotions, decisions, disagreements, social issues, and daily experiences. Conformity orientation reflects the degree to which family communication emphasizes homogeneity of attitudes, parental authority, obedience, conflict avoidance, and adherence to established family beliefs. Both parents and adolescents rated statements on a five-point scale ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement. Higher scores represented stronger conversation or conformity orientation. Parent and adolescent scores were initially analyzed separately, after which standardized scores were averaged to form dyadic family-level indices. Higher conversation-orientation scores indicated a more open

communicative environment, whereas higher conformity-orientation scores represented stronger expectations for agreement and deference to parental authority. The use of both dimensions made it possible to distinguish families that maintained strong parental expectations while permitting open discussion from families in which conformity was accompanied by restricted communication.

All instruments were available in Spanish and English. For measures without an established Ecuadorian Spanish version, a translation and cultural-adaptation procedure was employed. Two bilingual psychologists independently translated the original English items into Spanish, and two additional bilingual specialists who had not seen the original questionnaires translated the Spanish versions back into English. Differences were discussed by a panel consisting of psychologists, migration researchers, family counselors, and Ecuadorian community representatives. The panel evaluated semantic equivalence, cultural relevance, readability, and the possibility that particular terms could be interpreted differently by parents and adolescents. Cognitive interviews with members of the pilot sample were used to identify unclear or culturally inappropriate wording. The final assessment package maintained the conceptual meaning of the original instruments while using terminology familiar to Ecuadorian immigrant families.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 29. Data from parent and adolescent questionnaires were first matched through anonymous family identification codes and screened for entry errors, duplicate cases, inconsistent response patterns, and missing values. Cases with more than 20% missing responses on any principal instrument were excluded before analysis. When fewer than 5% of responses were missing within a scale and the pattern of missingness was judged to be random, missing values were replaced using the individual respondent's mean for the remaining items of that subscale. The distributions of all continuous variables were examined using means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, skewness, kurtosis, histograms, normal probability plots, and standardized residuals. Potential univariate outliers were evaluated using standardized scores, while multivariate outliers were examined through Mahalanobis distance. Cases were removed only when extreme values were accompanied by evidence of invalid, careless, or inconsistent responding.

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all demographic characteristics and study variables. Frequencies and percentages were reported for categorical variables, whereas means, standard deviations, and observed ranges were calculated for continuous variables. Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega. Reliability coefficients of .70 or higher were regarded as acceptable, although coefficients were interpreted in relation to the number of items and the conceptual breadth of each scale. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine bivariate relationships among intergenerational cultural conflict, acculturation-gap scores, language-brokering frequency and burden, perceived discrimination, parenting styles, conversation orientation, conformity orientation, and relevant demographic characteristics. Independent-samples comparisons were additionally conducted to determine whether the principal variables differed according to adolescent gender, adolescent birthplace, or immigrant-generation status.

The principal hypotheses were evaluated through hierarchical multiple linear regression, with the combined parent-adolescent intergenerational cultural conflict score entered as the dependent variable. Demographic and migration-related control variables that demonstrated theoretically meaningful or statistically significant associations with the outcome were entered in the first block. These variables included adolescent age, adolescent gender, adolescent birthplace, parental educational level, household income, family structure, parental length of residence in the United States, and adolescent English-language proficiency. The heritage-culture and mainstream-culture acculturation-gap scores were entered in the second block. Language-brokering burden and perceived discrimination were entered in the third block. Authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting scores were entered in the fourth block, and conversation orientation and conformity orientation were entered in the final block. This hierarchical order allowed examination of the additional proportion of variance explained by each conceptual group of predictors after accounting for demographic characteristics and variables entered in previous steps.

The statistical significance of each regression model was evaluated using the F statistic, while the contribution of each block was examined through the change in the coefficient of determination. Unstandardized regression coefficients, standard errors, standardized beta coefficients, confidence intervals, and significance levels were calculated for each predictor. The relative strength of the predictors was

interpreted primarily through standardized coefficients and the unique proportion of outcome variance associated with each variable. Regression assumptions were evaluated before interpretation of the final model. Linearity and homoscedasticity were assessed through scatterplots of standardized predicted values and residuals. Normality of residuals was examined using histograms and normal probability plots. Multicollinearity was assessed through tolerance values, variance inflation factors, and correlations among predictors. Independence of residuals was examined using the Durbin-Watson statistic, while influential observations were evaluated using Cook's distance, leverage values, and standardized deleted residuals.

Supplementary analyses were performed to examine whether the predictive pattern differed according to adolescent birthplace and gender. Separate regression models were estimated for Ecuador-born and United States-born adolescents, and interaction terms were constructed between immigrant-generation status and the principal predictor variables. Continuous predictors were mean-centered before the interaction terms were calculated to reduce nonessential multicollinearity. Additional analyses examined whether open family communication weakened the association between acculturation gaps and intergenerational cultural conflict and whether authoritarian parenting strengthened the relationship between perceived discrimination and family conflict. Significant interactions were interpreted through simple-slope analyses at one standard deviation below and above the mean of the moderating variable. All statistical tests were two-tailed, and the level of statistical significance was set at .05. Confidence intervals of 95% were reported for the principal estimates, and effect sizes were considered alongside statistical significance to support a substantively meaningful interpretation of the findings.

3 Findings and Results

Complete and valid data were obtained from 312 Ecuadorian immigrant parent-adolescent dyads, representing 624 individual participants. The adolescent sample comprised 174 girls (55.8%) and 138 boys (44.2%), with ages ranging from 12 to 18 years and a mean age of 15.24 years ($SD = 1.71$). A total of 128 adolescents (41.0%) had been born in Ecuador and subsequently migrated to the United States, whereas 184 adolescents (59.0%) had been born in the United States to Ecuadorian immigrant parents. Among the Ecuador-born adolescents, the mean age at

migration was 7.42 years ($SD = 3.18$), and their average length of residence in the United States was 7.82 years ($SD = 3.45$). Regarding school level, 79 adolescents (25.3%) were enrolled in grades 7–8, 149 (47.8%) were enrolled in grades 9–10, and 84 (26.9%) were enrolled in grades 11–12. Spanish was identified as the principal language used at home by 154 families (49.4%), 131 families (42.0%) reported using Spanish and English with approximately equal frequency, and 27 families (8.7%) reported that English was the predominant household language. The parent sample included 219 mothers (70.2%) and 93 fathers (29.8%), with ages ranging from 29 to 61 years and a mean age of 43.67 years ($SD = 6.48$). All participating parents had been born in Ecuador and had lived in the United States for an average of 12.36 years ($SD = 6.14$). In relation to marital status, 226 parents (72.4%) were married or cohabiting, 52 (16.7%) were divorced or separated, 22 (7.1%) were single, and 12 (3.8%) were widowed. A total of 61 parents (19.6%) had completed primary education or less, 129 (41.3%) had completed secondary education, 78 (25.0%) had received technical or college-level education, and 44 (14.1%) held a university or postgraduate qualification. Most parents were employed either full-time or part-time at the time of data collection ($n = 238$, 76.3%), while 74 parents (23.7%) were unemployed, engaged in unpaid domestic work, studying, or

temporarily outside the labor force. Ninety-six families (30.8%) reported an annual household income below US\$35,000, 104 families (33.3%) reported an income between US\$35,000 and US\$59,999, 71 families (22.8%) reported an income between US\$60,000 and US\$84,999, and 41 families (13.1%) reported an income of US\$85,000 or more. Household composition data indicated that 226 adolescents (72.4%) lived with two parental figures, 63 (20.2%) lived in a single-parent household, and 23 (7.4%) lived in a multigenerational or extended-family household. Preliminary comparisons showed that adolescents born in Ecuador reported more frequent language brokering than those born in the United States, whereas United States-born adolescents reported slightly greater mainstream-culture orientation. No statistically significant differences in overall intergenerational cultural conflict were found between girls and boys before the multivariable analyses. The proportion of missing responses across the principal study variables was 2.7%. Missing values were distributed randomly and were managed according to the procedures described in the data-analysis section. No case exceeded the predetermined threshold for exclusion due to missing data, and no multivariate observation was removed because Cook's distance, leverage values, and standardized residuals remained within acceptable limits.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, Internal Consistency Coefficients, and Correlations Among the Principal Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	Observed range	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Intergenerational cultural conflict	2.74	0.63	1.18–4.53	.91	—									
2. Heritage-culture acculturation gap	1.62	0.94	0.00–4.90	.86	.49**	—								
3. Mainstream-culture acculturation gap	1.48	0.88	0.00–4.70	.84	.44**	.38**	—							
4. Language-brokering burden	2.91	0.71	1.08–4.85	.89	.42**	.28**	.33**	—						
5. Perceived discrimination	2.36	0.82	1.00–5.33	.90	.39**	.21**	.27**	.36**	—					
6. Authoritative parenting	3.57	0.61	1.73–4.87	.88	-.46**	-.18**	-.20**	-.24**	-.19**	—				
7. Authoritarian parenting	2.88	0.67	1.20–4.73	.87	.52**	.30**	.28**	.32**	.22**	-.41**	—			
8. Permissive parenting	2.51	0.58	1.07–4.20	.80	.25**	.11	.14*	.20**	.13*	-.18**	.29**	—		
9. Conversation orientation	3.42	0.64	1.53–4.87	.92	-.55**	-.31**	-.29**	-.30**	-.21**	.52**	-.44**	-.20**	—	
10. Conformity orientation	3.06	0.66	1.27–4.80	.88	.47**	.29**	.25**	.31**	.18**	-.31**	.56**	.21**	-.48**	—

As shown in Table 1, all principal study measures demonstrated satisfactory to excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .80 for permissive parenting to .92 for conversation orientation. The mean score for intergenerational cultural conflict was 2.74 ($SD = 0.63$), indicating a moderate overall level of culturally based disagreement within the participating families. The observed range of conflict scores also showed considerable between-family variability, supporting the use of regression analysis to explain individual differences in the outcome. The heritage-culture acculturation gap was slightly larger than the mainstream-culture acculturation gap, suggesting that parent-adolescent differences were somewhat more pronounced in relation to the maintenance of Ecuadorian values, customs, and cultural practices than in relation to adaptation to mainstream American culture. Language-brokering burden had a mean of 2.91 ($SD = 0.71$), indicating that many adolescents experienced translation responsibilities as more than an occasional neutral family task. The mean perceived-discrimination score of 2.36 ($SD = 0.82$) reflected relatively infrequent to occasional experiences at the sample level, although the broad observed range indicated that a subgroup of adolescents experienced substantially more frequent discriminatory treatment. Authoritative parenting had the highest mean among the three parenting dimensions, followed by authoritarian and permissive parenting. Conversation orientation was also moderately high, while conformity orientation remained near the midpoint of the scale, indicating that many families simultaneously emphasized open discussion and respect for family authority. Intergenerational cultural conflict was positively and significantly correlated with the heritage-culture acculturation gap ($r = .49, p < .01$), the mainstream-culture acculturation gap ($r = .44, p < .01$), language-brokering burden ($r = .42, p < .01$), perceived discrimination

($r = .39, p < .01$), authoritarian parenting ($r = .52, p < .01$), permissive parenting ($r = .25, p < .01$), and conformity orientation ($r = .47, p < .01$). These relationships indicated that greater cultural distance between parents and adolescents, more burdensome translation responsibilities, more frequent discriminatory experiences, stricter obedience-oriented parenting, and stronger expectations for family agreement were each associated with greater intergenerational conflict. In contrast, authoritative parenting was negatively related to cultural conflict ($r = -.46, p < .01$), as was conversation orientation ($r = -.55, p < .01$). The strongest bivariate association with cultural conflict was observed for conversation orientation, followed by authoritarian parenting and the heritage-culture acculturation gap. The negative relationship between conversation orientation and conflict suggested that families characterized by open discussion, emotional expression, and reciprocal participation in decision-making experienced fewer culturally based disagreements. The correlations among the predictor variables were generally moderate and remained below levels indicative of serious multicollinearity. The largest association among the predictors was between authoritarian parenting and conformity orientation ($r = .56, p < .01$), which was theoretically consistent because both constructs reflected expectations for obedience, agreement, and parental authority. Authoritative parenting was positively related to conversation orientation ($r = .52, p < .01$), whereas authoritarian parenting was negatively associated with conversation orientation ($r = -.44, p < .01$). These patterns supported the conceptual distinction between parenting characterized by warmth and negotiated structure and parenting characterized primarily by control and unilateral authority.

Table 2

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Intergenerational Cultural Conflict

Model and variables entered	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	ΔR^2	Overall F	ΔF	df for ΔF	p
Model 1: Demographic and migration-related controls	.344	.118	.095	.118	5.07	5.07	8, 303	<.001
Model 2: Acculturation gaps	.529	.280	.256	.162	11.70	33.86	2, 301	<.001
Model 3: Language-brokering burden and perceived discrimination	.655	.429	.406	.149	18.72	39.00	2, 299	<.001
Model 4: Parenting styles	.762	.581	.560	.152	27.36	35.79	3, 296	<.001
Model 5: Family communication patterns	.842	.709	.692	.128	42.13	64.65	2, 294	<.001

Table 2 presents the results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the incremental contribution of each group of predictors to intergenerational cultural conflict. The demographic and migration-related

variables entered in the first model jointly explained 11.8% of the variance in cultural conflict, and this model was statistically significant, $F(8, 303) = 5.07, p < .001$. Although the contribution of the background variables was modest,

their collective significance indicated that family conflict was partly embedded in developmental, migration, socioeconomic, and household conditions. The addition of the heritage-culture and mainstream-culture acculturation gaps in Model 2 produced a substantial increase of 16.2 percentage points in explained variance, $\Delta F(2, 301) = 33.86$, $p < .001$, raising the cumulative R^2 to .280. Thus, differences between parents and adolescents in their orientation toward Ecuadorian heritage culture and mainstream American culture explained meaningful variation in conflict beyond the effects of demographic and migration-related characteristics. When language-brokering burden and perceived discrimination were added in Model 3, the model explained an additional 14.9% of the variance, $\Delta F(2, 299) = 39.00$, $p < .001$, and the total explained variance increased to 42.9%. This result showed that adolescents' stressful translation responsibilities and experiences of unfair treatment contributed independently to conflict after differences in cultural orientation had been considered. The addition of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles in Model 4 yielded a further increase of 15.2% in explained variance, $\Delta F(3, 296) = 35.79$, $p < .001$. At this stage, the model accounted for 58.1% of the variance in intergenerational cultural conflict. The introduction of conversation orientation and conformity orientation in the final block explained an additional 12.8% of the variance,

$\Delta F(2, 294) = 64.65$, $p < .001$. The final model was statistically significant, $F(17, 294) = 42.13$, $p < .001$, and accounted for 70.9% of the observed variance in cultural conflict, with an adjusted R^2 of .692. The relatively small difference between R^2 and adjusted R^2 indicated that the explanatory strength of the model was not primarily a consequence of including a large number of predictors. The progressive increases in R^2 supported the proposed multidimensional model, showing that intergenerational cultural conflict could not be explained solely by acculturation differences. Instead, conflict reflected the combined influence of cultural distance, adolescents' intermediary language roles, discriminatory experiences, parental authority practices, and the quality and structure of family communication. Diagnostic analyses supported the adequacy of the regression model. Variance inflation factors ranged from 1.18 to 2.31, and tolerance values ranged from .43 to .85, indicating that multicollinearity did not compromise the coefficient estimates. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.96, supporting the independence of residuals. The residual distribution was approximately normal, and examination of scatterplots did not reveal substantial heteroscedasticity or nonlinearity. Cook's distance values were below .20 for all cases, and no observation exerted an excessive influence on the final regression solution.

Table 3

Final Regression Coefficients and Supplementary Interaction Effects for Intergenerational Cultural Conflict

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	1.280	0.210	—	6.10	<.001	[0.867, 1.693]
Adolescent age	0.018	0.010	.049	1.80	.073	[-0.002, 0.038]
Adolescent gender, female = 1	0.041	0.041	.028	1.00	.319	[-0.039, 0.121]
United States-born adolescent = 1	0.067	0.044	.046	1.52	.129	[-0.019, 0.153]
Parental educational level	-0.022	0.017	-.037	-1.29	.198	[-0.055, 0.011]
Household income	-0.028	0.019	-.043	-1.47	.142	[-0.065, 0.009]
Two-parent household = 1	0.052	0.044	.034	1.18	.239	[-0.034, 0.138]
Parental length of residence	-0.004	0.003	-.039	-1.33	.185	[-0.010, 0.002]
Adolescent English proficiency	0.026	0.021	.036	1.24	.216	[-0.015, 0.067]
Heritage-culture acculturation gap	0.154	0.028	.229	5.50	<.001	[0.099, 0.209]
Mainstream-culture acculturation gap	0.127	0.029	.177	4.38	<.001	[0.070, 0.184]
Language-brokering burden	0.171	0.036	.194	4.75	<.001	[0.100, 0.242]
Perceived discrimination	0.132	0.030	.173	4.40	<.001	[0.073, 0.191]
Authoritative parenting	-0.142	0.041	-.137	-3.46	.001	[-0.222, -0.062]
Authoritarian parenting	0.198	0.037	.211	5.35	<.001	[0.125, 0.271]
Permissive parenting	0.072	0.034	.067	2.12	.035	[0.005, 0.139]
Conversation orientation	-0.231	0.040	-.231	-5.78	<.001	[-0.309, -0.153]
Conformity orientation	0.164	0.038	.172	4.32	<.001	[0.090, 0.238]
Acculturation gap $\times$ conversation orientation	-0.082	0.028	-.091	-2.93	.004	[-0.137, -0.027]
Perceived discrimination $\times$ authoritarian parenting	0.071	0.027	.079	2.63	.009	[0.018, 0.124]
Birthplace $\times$ heritage-culture gap	0.061	0.032	.055	1.91	.057	[-0.002, 0.124]
Birthplace $\times$ mainstream-culture gap	0.048	0.031	.044	1.55	.122	[-0.013, 0.109]
Gender $\times$ language-brokering burden	0.029	0.026	.031	1.12	.265	[-0.022, 0.080]

The final regression coefficients presented in Table 3 showed that the heritage-culture acculturation gap was a significant positive predictor of intergenerational cultural conflict, $B = 0.154$, $SE = 0.028$, $\beta = .229$, $t = 5.50$, $p < .001$. Holding all other predictors constant, a one-unit increase in the parent–adolescent difference in heritage-cultural orientation was associated with a 0.154-unit increase in the predicted cultural-conflict score. The mainstream-culture acculturation gap also independently predicted greater conflict, $B = 0.127$, $SE = 0.029$, $\beta = .177$, $t = 4.38$, $p < .001$. These findings demonstrated that disagreement was associated both with unequal retention of Ecuadorian cultural orientations and with unequal adaptation to mainstream American cultural practices. Language-brokering burden was a significant positive predictor, $B = 0.171$, $SE = 0.036$, $\beta = .194$, $t = 4.75$, $p < .001$, indicating that adolescents who experienced translating and interpreting as emotionally stressful, developmentally inappropriate, or excessively demanding reported more cultural conflict with their parents. Perceived discrimination also remained significant after adjustment for all other variables, $B = 0.132$, $SE = 0.030$, $\beta = .173$, $t = 4.40$, $p < .001$. This result indicated that discriminatory experiences outside the family were associated with intensified conflict inside the family, independently of acculturation differences and parenting characteristics. Among the parenting variables, authoritarian parenting was a strong positive predictor of conflict, $B = 0.198$, $SE = 0.037$, $\beta = .211$, $t = 5.35$, $p < .001$, whereas authoritative parenting was a significant negative predictor, $B = -0.142$, $SE = 0.041$, $\beta = -.137$, $t = -3.46$, $p = .001$. Permissive parenting made a smaller but statistically significant positive contribution, $B = 0.072$, $SE = 0.034$, $\beta = .067$, $t = 2.12$, $p = .035$. These results indicated that both highly controlling and insufficiently structured parenting were associated with greater conflict, whereas parenting characterized by warmth, explanation, responsiveness, and consistent boundaries was associated with lower conflict. Family communication patterns contributed strongly to the final model. Conversation orientation was the strongest protective predictor, $B = -0.231$, $SE = 0.040$, $\beta = -.231$, $t = -5.78$, $p < .001$, while conformity orientation predicted

greater conflict, $B = 0.164$, $SE = 0.038$, $\beta = .172$, $t = 4.32$, $p < .001$. Once the principal psychosocial variables were included, adolescent age, gender, birthplace, parental education, household income, household structure, parental length of residence, and adolescent English proficiency were no longer statistically significant. This pattern suggested that the mechanisms represented by cultural gaps, family roles, parenting, and communication were more proximal predictors of conflict than demographic characteristics alone. Supplementary moderation analyses showed that conversation orientation significantly weakened the relationship between the combined acculturation-gap index and intergenerational conflict, $B = -0.082$, $SE = 0.028$, $\beta = -.091$, $p = .004$. Simple-slope analysis indicated that the association between acculturation gaps and conflict was stronger in families with low conversation orientation, $B = 0.241$, $SE = 0.033$, $p < .001$, than in families with high conversation orientation, $B = 0.103$, $SE = 0.032$, $p = .002$. Authoritarian parenting significantly intensified the association between perceived discrimination and cultural conflict, $B = 0.071$, $SE = 0.027$, $\beta = .079$, $p = .009$. The effect of discrimination on conflict was comparatively modest at low levels of authoritarian parenting, $B = 0.079$, $SE = 0.031$, $p = .011$, but substantially stronger at high levels of authoritarian parenting, $B = 0.191$, $SE = 0.034$, $p < .001$. Interactions involving adolescent birthplace and the acculturation-gap variables did not reach statistical significance, nor did the interaction between adolescent gender and language-brokering burden. Therefore, the main predictive pattern was broadly similar for Ecuador-born and United States-born adolescents and for girls and boys. Separate subgroup regressions supported this conclusion. In Ecuador-born adolescents, the most prominent predictors were the heritage-culture gap, language-brokering burden, authoritarian parenting, and low conversation orientation. Among United States-born adolescents, perceived discrimination, conversation orientation, authoritarian parenting, and the heritage-culture gap were the strongest predictors. Although the relative magnitude of individual coefficients differed slightly across the subgroups, the direction of the associations remained consistent.

Figure 1

Standardized Predictive Model of Intergenerational Cultural Conflict in Ecuadorian Immigrant Families

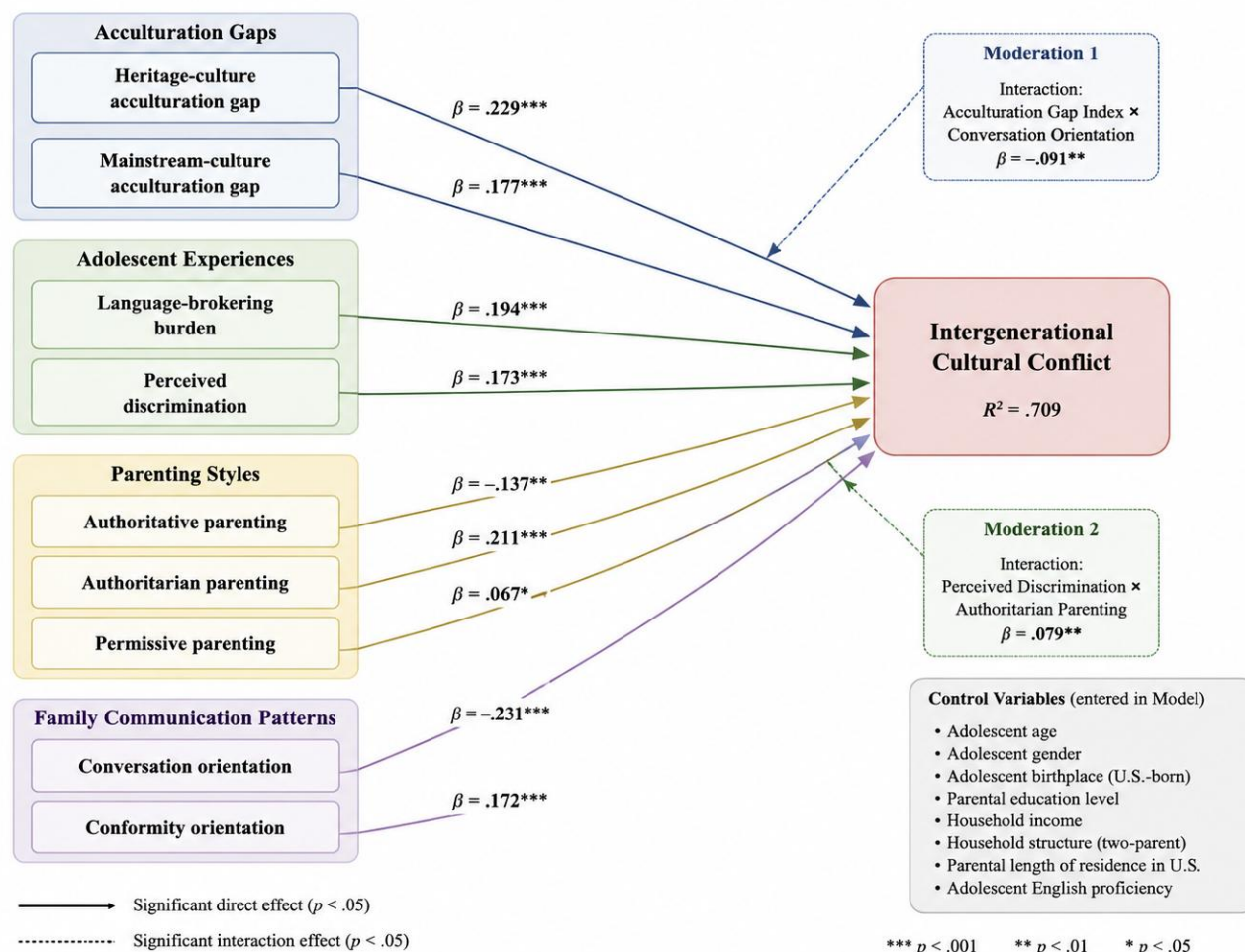


Figure 1 summarizes the statistically significant standardized relationships identified in the final predictive model. The model accounted for 70.9% of the variance in intergenerational cultural conflict. Conversation orientation had the largest negative standardized association with conflict ($\beta = -.231$), indicating that open and participatory family communication represented the most substantial protective factor in the model. The heritage-culture acculturation gap had an equally strong but positive contribution in absolute magnitude ($\beta = .229$), followed by authoritarian parenting ($\beta = .211$), language-brokering burden ($\beta = .194$), the mainstream-culture acculturation gap ($\beta = .177$), perceived discrimination ($\beta = .173$), and conformity orientation ($\beta = .172$). Authoritative parenting had an additional protective association with conflict ($\beta = -.137$), while permissive parenting had a smaller positive relationship ($\beta = .067$). The pattern represented in the figure indicates that cultural differences between parents and adolescents were most likely to result in conflict when they

occurred within a family environment characterized by rigid parental control, strong expectations for agreement, limited opportunities for reciprocal discussion, and emotionally burdensome translation responsibilities. Conversely, acculturation differences were less strongly associated with conflict when adolescents and parents communicated openly and were able to discuss cultural disagreements without automatically framing them as disobedience or rejection of the family. The significant interaction between the acculturation-gap index and conversation orientation further supported this interpretation by showing that open communication reduced the strength of the association between cultural distance and conflict. The second interaction represented in the model showed that perceived discrimination was especially likely to be associated with family conflict when adolescents also experienced authoritarian parenting. Thus, experiences of discrimination did not operate only as an external stressor; their relationship with family conflict depended partly on whether adolescents

encountered understanding and dialogue at home or were met with inflexible control and restricted emotional expression. Overall, the model supported the conclusion that intergenerational cultural conflict in Ecuadorian immigrant families emerged through the interaction of cultural adaptation processes, adolescents' family responsibilities, social exclusion experiences, parental behavior, and communication structures rather than through immigrant-generation status or demographic background alone.

4 Discussion

The present study examined the combined predictive contributions of acculturation gaps, language-brokering burden, perceived discrimination, parenting styles, and family communication patterns to intergenerational cultural conflict among Ecuadorian immigrant families. The findings supported the proposed multidimensional model and demonstrated that cultural conflict was associated not only with differences in cultural orientation between parents and adolescents but also with the relational and social conditions under which those differences were experienced. The final model explained 70.9% of the variance in intergenerational cultural conflict, indicating that the selected variables captured a substantial proportion of the family processes involved in culturally based disagreement. Conversation orientation emerged as the strongest protective predictor, while the heritage-culture acculturation gap was the strongest positive predictor. Authoritarian parenting, language-brokering burden, the mainstream-culture acculturation gap, perceived discrimination, and conformity orientation also predicted higher conflict, whereas authoritative parenting predicted lower conflict. Permissive parenting had a smaller positive association with conflict. Moreover, open family communication weakened the relationship between acculturation gaps and conflict, while authoritarian parenting intensified the relationship between perceived discrimination and conflict. These findings are consistent with contemporary approaches that conceptualize immigrant-family adjustment as a dynamic interaction among cultural adaptation, identity development, external social pressures, parenting practices, and family relationships rather than as a simple consequence of migration or generational status (Childress et al., 2025; Ferguson et al., 2023).

The positive association between the heritage-culture acculturation gap and intergenerational cultural conflict indicated that disagreement was particularly likely when

parents and adolescents differed in their commitment to Ecuadorian values, traditions, behavioral expectations, and forms of family obligation. Parents who retained a strong orientation toward Ecuadorian culture may have expected adolescents to demonstrate obedience, family loyalty, linguistic continuity, and participation in cultural practices, while adolescents who were less strongly oriented toward the heritage culture may have interpreted these expectations as restrictions on autonomy or social integration. The finding is consistent with national evidence showing that parent-child acculturation gaps are associated with the quality of relationships in immigrant families, although their consequences vary according to the particular cultural dimensions involved (Harris & Chen, 2022). It also aligns with research demonstrating that acculturation gaps are not unitary phenomena but may involve different combinations of heritage-culture maintenance and host-culture involvement among family members (Li et al., 2026). The comparatively strong effect of the heritage-culture gap suggests that conflict in Ecuadorian immigrant families may be especially sensitive to disagreement about what should be preserved from the family's cultural background. This interpretation is consistent with studies showing that immigrant youth frequently develop culturally complex identities rather than simply abandoning their family culture (Omole, 2024; Park & Scott, 2022). Adolescents may continue to value family solidarity while redefining how cultural loyalty should be expressed, which can create tension when parents equate adaptation with cultural loss (Viola, 2021).

The mainstream-culture acculturation gap also independently predicted conflict, showing that differences in adaptation to American cultural norms were consequential even after heritage-cultural differences had been considered. Adolescents often become familiar with the receiving society through schools, peers, digital media, and extracurricular activities, whereas parents' contact with mainstream institutions may be more restricted by employment conditions, language limitations, or immigrant-community networks. Similar patterns have been reported among immigrant youth who describe school as a culturally distinct environment requiring forms of adaptation that their parents may not fully observe or understand (Kiramba et al., 2022). Research on young immigrants navigating differences between home and school likewise shows that behavioral flexibility across contexts may be necessary for adaptation but can be interpreted by parents as inconsistency or rejection of family values (Sharifi, 2021). Acculturation

orientations among immigrant youth also vary substantially, with many adolescents attempting to integrate elements of both cultures rather than exclusively adopting one cultural system (Giles et al., 2025; Stašulāne & Wilska, 2023). Accordingly, the observed mainstream-culture gap may reflect disagreement over autonomy, friendship, dating, clothing, education, gender expectations, and communication style rather than a straightforward difference in cultural identification. The result supports evidence that intergenerational cultural dissonance is associated with psychological distress and relational strain when cultural differences are experienced as incompatible or threatening (Jehangir & Farooqi, 2022).

Language-brokering burden was another significant predictor of intergenerational conflict. This result indicates that translating for parents was not inherently problematic; rather, conflict increased when adolescents experienced language brokering as stressful, excessive, emotionally demanding, or developmentally inappropriate. Adolescents who interpret medical, financial, legal, educational, or immigration-related information may be exposed to adult responsibilities while still being expected to comply with conventional parental authority. Such circumstances can create an ambiguous family hierarchy in which adolescents possess linguistic and institutional competence but have limited decision-making power. This imbalance may produce frustration among adolescents and dependency-related discomfort among parents. The result is compatible with research emphasizing the importance of language proficiency for immigrant adolescents' adjustment and family relationships (Park & Han, 2023). When heritage-language proficiency declines or parent and adolescent language competencies diverge, the quality of emotional communication may also deteriorate, even when adolescents remain capable of practical translation. Cultural and creative activities, including music, may help immigrant children maintain symbolic and emotional connections with their heritage, but such forms of cultural continuity do not necessarily resolve the structural burden of acting as the family's linguistic intermediary (Ripani, 2022). The finding also supports the broader view that immigrant children's family roles must be understood in relation to institutional systems that frequently rely on children to bridge linguistic and cultural barriers (Huynh-Hohnbaum, 2024).

Perceived discrimination significantly predicted greater intergenerational cultural conflict after controlling for acculturation gaps, parenting, communication, and demographic characteristics. This finding suggests that

experiences of exclusion outside the home can affect relationships within the family. Adolescents who encounter ethnic stereotyping, accent-based ridicule, racialization, or treatment as socially inferior may respond with anger, withdrawal, heightened sensitivity, or efforts to conceal cultural markers. Parents may respond to the same social risks by increasing supervision, emphasizing cultural protection, or discouraging activities perceived as unsafe. These contrasting responses can transform discrimination into disagreement over identity, behavior, friendships, and participation in mainstream institutions. The result is consistent with longitudinal evidence that parents' discrimination experiences and cultural orientations can influence children's adjustment across time (Kim, 2026). It also corresponds with the argument that parenting occurs within racialized ideological environments that shape how immigrant parents understand protection, obedience, and cultural socialization (Wang et al., 2023). Discrimination may additionally affect whether families recognize psychological distress and seek appropriate services, especially when cultural values and intergenerational differences influence interpretations of behavioral problems (Wang & He, 2023). Research with vulnerable immigrant youth similarly indicates that family relationships may operate as both sources of resilience and sites of tension under conditions of marginalization (Walsh et al., 2023).

The parenting findings further clarified why similar cultural differences may produce different levels of conflict across families. Authoritarian parenting was a strong positive predictor of conflict, indicating that rigid control, unilateral decision-making, punitive discipline, and strong obedience demands intensified cultural disagreement. When adolescents sought autonomy or attempted to explain the social expectations they encountered outside the home, authoritarian responses may have framed such negotiation as disrespect. This interpretation is consistent with reviews showing that immigrant parents often struggle to adapt parenting practices developed in one cultural environment to the expectations of another (Lee, 2026). Bilinear acculturation research also suggests that parenting practices are shaped by the simultaneous influence of heritage and mainstream cultural orientations rather than by a simple replacement of one system by another (Yoon et al., 2021). Authoritative parenting, by contrast, predicted lower conflict. Warmth, explanation, responsiveness, and consistent boundaries may enable parents to preserve important cultural expectations while allowing adolescents to participate in decisions and express disagreement. This

result is aligned with evidence that supportive parenting can facilitate adolescents' development of culturally complex identities (Ferguson et al., 2024). It also agrees with literature indicating that parental warmth and appropriately calibrated control are important for immigrant youths' mental health (Yu et al., 2025). The smaller positive effect of permissive parenting suggests that the absence of consistent boundaries may also contribute to conflict by creating ambiguity regarding responsibilities, autonomy, and acceptable behavior. Thus, both excessive rigidity and insufficient structure appear less adaptive than responsive but clearly organized parenting.

Family communication patterns made a particularly substantial contribution to the model. Conversation orientation was the strongest protective factor, indicating that families characterized by open discussion, emotional expression, and reciprocal participation experienced less cultural conflict. Open communication may enable adolescents to describe discrimination, language-brokering stress, school pressures, and identity concerns without immediately challenging parental authority. It may also allow parents to explain the migration experiences, safety concerns, sacrifices, and cultural values underlying their expectations. The finding is consistent with immigrant parents' accounts that family well-being depends on communication, cultural continuity, and mutual understanding (Peddigrew et al., 2026). It is also compatible with relational-ethics perspectives, which emphasize fairness, trust, loyalty, mutual recognition, and balanced obligations across generations (Glebova et al., 2024). In contrast, conformity orientation predicted higher conflict. Although conformity may support cohesion and the preservation of shared values, excessive emphasis on agreement can suppress discussion of genuine cultural differences. Adolescents may outwardly comply while accumulating frustration, and parents may interpret disagreement as a threat to family unity. The negative correlation between conversation orientation and authoritarian parenting, together with the positive association between conformity orientation and authoritarian parenting, suggests that communication and parenting constitute mutually reinforcing family systems rather than isolated behaviors.

The significant interaction between acculturation gaps and conversation orientation provided further evidence that cultural difference does not inevitably lead to conflict. The association between acculturation gaps and conflict was substantially stronger in families with low conversation

orientation and weaker in families with high conversation orientation. This means that open communication functioned as a relational buffer, allowing parents and adolescents to negotiate differences in cultural identification without transforming them into chronic opposition. The finding helps reconcile mixed results in the acculturation-gap literature by showing that the effects of cultural distance depend on how families discuss and interpret that distance. Profile-based research has demonstrated that families can exhibit multiple patterns of acculturation difference, not all of which are equally maladaptive (Li et al., 2026). Likewise, resilience-oriented research indicates that immigrant youth can integrate cultural systems successfully when they have relational and contextual resources that support negotiation (Giles et al., 2025). Therefore, the critical issue may be less the existence of an acculturation gap than whether family members possess a communicative framework for managing it.

The second interaction showed that authoritarian parenting strengthened the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergenerational conflict. Adolescents who experienced discrimination reported especially high conflict when they also perceived their parents as rigid and controlling. A possible explanation is that discrimination produces a need for emotional validation and contextual understanding, while authoritarian parenting limits adolescents' opportunities to communicate vulnerability, anger, or confusion. Parents may intend strictness as protection against a threatening external environment, but adolescents may experience it as an additional source of invalidation. This pattern is consistent with research showing that parenting stress and acculturation are linked with children's behavioral difficulties in immigrant Latinx families (McWhirter & Donovick, 2022). It also extends evidence concerning parenting in racialized contexts by suggesting that protective control can become counterproductive when it restricts communication about discrimination (Wang et al., 2023). The nonsignificant interactions involving birthplace and gender indicate that the central processes were broadly similar across Ecuador-born and United States-born adolescents and among girls and boys. Although subgroup differences may exist in the relative strength of individual predictors, the findings suggest that family communication, parenting, cultural distance, and external stressors are relevant across demographic subgroups.

5 Conclusion

Overall, the findings support a systemic interpretation of intergenerational cultural conflict. Acculturation gaps established cultural distance, but parenting and communication determined how that distance was managed. Language-brokering burden altered family roles, while perceived discrimination transferred external social stress into family interaction. The predictive importance of these proximal variables, together with the nonsignificance of most demographic controls in the final model, suggests that conflict is not an inevitable product of immigrant generation, income, family structure, or length of residence. Instead, it emerges from modifiable relational processes. This interpretation is consistent with life-course approaches that emphasize the changing interaction of migration, development, family roles, and social context (Childress et al., 2025). It also accords with clinical perspectives identifying both risk and resilience within acculturation processes (Ferguson et al., 2023). The study therefore contributes to the literature by integrating cultural, linguistic, social, parenting, and communication variables within a single predictive framework focused specifically on Ecuadorian immigrant families.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. The cross-sectional design prevents causal conclusions, and the direction of some relationships may be reciprocal; for example, authoritarian parenting may increase conflict, while persistent conflict may also lead parents to become more controlling. The use of self-report measures may have introduced social-desirability, recall, and shared-method biases, although information was collected separately from parents and adolescents where possible. The community-based sample was drawn from one metropolitan region and may not represent Ecuadorian immigrant families living in rural areas, other countries, or communities with different migration histories and institutional resources. Families willing to participate may also have differed from more isolated or highly distressed households. The model did not directly assess legal status, migration trauma, parental mental health, neighborhood characteristics, or the quality of transnational family relationships. In addition, combining parent and adolescent conflict reports into a family-level score may have obscured meaningful discrepancies between their perceptions.

Future research should employ longitudinal and prospective designs to determine how acculturation gaps,

discrimination, parenting, communication, and conflict influence one another across adolescence. Studies should recruit Ecuadorian families from multiple cities, regions, and destination countries and include families with diverse socioeconomic, legal, and migration backgrounds. Dyadic and multilevel analytical methods could examine parent and adolescent reports separately while modeling their interdependence. Future investigations should distinguish between the frequency, context, perceived burden, and positive developmental meaning of language brokering. Qualitative interviews and observational methods could clarify how families discuss cultural disagreements and how parental control is interpreted as either protection or restriction. Researchers should also examine potential mediators, including adolescent emotional distress, parental acculturative stress, family cohesion, ethnic identity, and perceived parental sacrifice. Intervention studies are needed to test whether improvements in open communication and culturally responsive parenting reduce conflict over time.

Practitioners should assess intergenerational cultural conflict as a systemic family issue rather than locating the problem solely in adolescent behavior or parental traditionalism. Family-based services should help parents and adolescents discuss differences in cultural values, autonomy, language use, discrimination, and family obligations without framing disagreement as disloyalty. Parenting programs should support a shift from rigid or inconsistent control toward warm, responsive, and clearly structured parenting. Schools, health services, and public agencies should avoid relying on adolescents as interpreters in complex or sensitive situations and should provide qualified bilingual assistance whenever possible. Counselors should explore whether external discrimination is contributing to internal family tension and create opportunities for adolescents to describe these experiences safely. Community organizations can provide culturally grounded workshops that acknowledge parental sacrifice while validating adolescents' bicultural challenges. Strengthening conversation-oriented communication should be a central objective because open dialogue may reduce conflict directly and protect families from the adverse effects of acculturation differences.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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