



Domestic Openness And Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Married Couples In Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined domestic openness and conflict resolution strategies among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study specifically investigated the relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy as well as compromise strategy among married couples. Two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised married couples in selected communities within Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area. A sample size of 150 respondents was selected using simple random sampling technique, while 146 copies of the questionnaire were validly retrieved and used for analysis. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Domestic Openness and Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (DOCRSQ). The instrument was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation, and its reliability was established using the test-retest method. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and Chi-square statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that a majority of respondents agreed that domestic openness enhances negotiation and compromise strategies among married couples. The Chi-square analysis showed a significant relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy ($\chi^2 = 170.493$, $p = .000$), and also a significant relationship between domestic openness and compromise strategy ($\chi^2 = 205.611$, $p = .000$). The study concluded that domestic openness plays a crucial role in promoting effective conflict resolution among married couples by enhancing their ability to negotiate and compromise during disagreements. However, findings also indicated that openness alone may not always guarantee compromise, as other socio-cultural and personal factors may influence conflict resolution behaviour. The study recommended that married couples should be encouraged to maintain open communication in their relationships, while marriage counsellors and religious leaders should organize programs aimed at improving communication and conflict management skills among couples.

Keywords: Domestic openness, conflict resolution, negotiation strategy, compromise strategy, married couples, Ikot Ekpene, marital communication

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Introduction

Marriage is one of the oldest and most universal social institutions, designed to provide emotional

companionship, procreation, economic cooperation, and social stability. Across the world, however, marital

relationships are increasingly confronted with interpersonal tensions arising from financial stress, role expectations, communication breakdown, infidelity, childrearing disagreements, and work-family pressures. These tensions often manifest as marital conflict, which, if poorly managed, can undermine family stability and psychological well-being. One factor increasingly recognized in relationship studies as central to healthy marital functioning is domestic openness—the willingness of spouses to communicate honestly, share feelings, discuss concerns transparently, and engage in mutual decision-making within the home. Domestic openness promotes trust, intimacy, emotional security, and collaborative problem-solving, thereby strengthening couples' ability to manage disagreements constructively.

Globally, family scholars have argued that open communication is one of the strongest predictors of marital satisfaction and longevity. In many high-income countries, increasing dual-career households, changing gender roles, and digital distractions have created new communication challenges among couples. The World Health Organization has noted that family conflict and poor intimate relationships are associated with mental health burdens such as anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders. Studies in relationship psychology show that couples who openly discuss problems and emotions are more likely to resolve conflicts peacefully than those who

suppress issues or rely on hostility (Gottman & Silver, 2015). In the United States, about 40–50% of first marriages have historically been estimated to end in divorce, with communication problems consistently listed among major causes of marital breakdown (Cherlin, 2017). Similarly, in United Kingdom, official statistics have linked unresolved domestic disagreements and relationship dissatisfaction to rising separations in recent decades. Empirical evidence further supports the importance of openness in conflict management. McGonagle et. al (1993), using data from 691 married couples, found that negative disagreement styles and unresolved conflicts significantly predicted marital disruption over a three-year period. Their findings suggest that the quality of domestic interactions matters as much as the frequency of disagreements. More recent scholarship has emphasized that couples who practice openness, empathy, and validation during disagreements report stronger relationship resilience and lower divorce intentions. Thus, globally, domestic openness is increasingly viewed not merely as a communication style, but as a preventive strategy against marital instability. In the African context, marriage remains highly valued as a communal and cultural institution that extends beyond two individuals to include families and kinship networks.

African marriages often emphasize collective identity, respect for elders, fertility expectations, and

gendered role performance. While these cultural values can strengthen family cohesion, they may also complicate openness between spouses where one partner is discouraged from expressing dissatisfaction or challenging traditional authority structures. In some societies, women may be socialized to remain silent during conflict, while men may interpret emotional vulnerability as weakness. Such norms can hinder transparent communication and delay conflict resolution. Rapid urbanization, unemployment, migration, and economic hardship across Africa have intensified pressures on marriages. According to the African Development Bank, youth unemployment and rising living costs continue to strain households in many African countries, indirectly affecting marital harmony. Financial insecurity often triggers arguments over budgeting, responsibilities, and unmet expectations. In addition, migration for work has increased long-distance marriages across the continent, creating emotional distance and mistrust. In such contexts, domestic openness becomes essential for maintaining connection and resolving misunderstandings (Ogbonna, et.al. 2025).

Research from African countries has shown that communication remains a major determinant of marital adjustment. In Nigeria, Adegboyega (2021) found among 210 married adults in Ilorin that effective spousal communication positively influenced marital conflict resolution, while ineffective communication led to

perceptual errors and persistent disagreements. Likewise, Olanrewaju et al. (2021) reported in Ogun State that communication skills and conflict resolution abilities were significant correlates of marital health among 390 married participants. These findings indicate that openness in discussing issues, expectations, and emotions contributes substantially to stable unions in African settings.

Across many African societies, however, conflict resolution often relies on external mediation by elders, religious leaders, or extended family members. While such mechanisms may preserve communal harmony, they sometimes suppress private dialogue between spouses. Overdependence on third-party mediation may prevent couples from developing internal communication skills necessary for long-term problem-solving. Consequently, many couples remain together formally while experiencing unresolved emotional conflict, silent resentment, or relational detachment. Furthermore, changing educational attainment and women's economic participation across Africa are transforming expectations within marriage. Educated spouses increasingly desire companionship, equality, and shared decision-making rather than purely traditional role arrangements.

Where domestic openness is absent, these shifting expectations may produce recurring tensions. Where openness exists, however, couples may negotiate roles flexibly and resolve disagreements with mutual respect.

Domestic Openness And Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Married Couples In Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Despite growing awareness of communication in marriage, studies specifically examining domestic openness and conflict resolution strategies among married couples remain limited in many African contexts. Much existing research focuses broadly on marital satisfaction, domestic violence, or divorce without isolating how openness within the household shapes strategies such as compromise, negotiation, avoidance, accommodation, or collaborative problem-solving. This gap creates the need for further empirical investigation.

Marriage is a fundamental social institution in Nigeria, serving as the foundation for family life, procreation, emotional support, and social continuity. In Nigerian society, marriage is highly valued not only as a union between two individuals but also as an alliance between families and communities. However, despite its cultural significance, many marriages in the country experience recurring tensions arising from economic hardship, infidelity, poor communication, interference from extended family members, gender-role expectations, and parenting disagreements. These tensions often result in marital conflict, making the study of domestic openness and conflict resolution strategies among married couples increasingly important. In many Nigerian homes, however, cultural norms often discourage direct emotional expression, particularly where one spouse is expected to remain submissive or silent during disagreements (Ogbonna, et.al. 2025).

This can weaken communication and intensify marital tensions. Marital conflict is a notable social issue in Nigeria. Data from the National Population Commission and ICF International through the 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) showed that 31% of ever-married women aged 15–49 had experienced physical, emotional, or sexual violence from a spouse or partner at some point in their lives, indicating the prevalence of unhealthy conflict management patterns in many homes.

This suggests that a substantial number of Nigerian marriages experience conflicts that may not be effectively resolved through constructive communication. Research evidence in Nigeria further emphasizes the importance of openness in marriage. A study by Uye, Ehondor, & Sholarin (2024) conducted among 250 married participants in Lagos found that spousal communication significantly predicted domestic violence, income-related conflict, and relationship instability. The researchers recommended that married couples should create quality time for communication and mutual understanding. This finding implies that communication openness is a critical variable in promoting peaceful homes and reducing marital aggression.

In many Nigerian communities, conflict resolution among couples often involves informal mediation by elders, religious leaders, or family members. While these traditional mechanisms may help preserve marriages, they may

also discourage direct dialogue between spouses. Some couples rely heavily on third-party intervention rather than developing personal skills such as negotiation, compromise, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving. Consequently, disputes may be temporarily settled without addressing the underlying causes. In Akwa Ibom State, marital relationships are influenced by strong family ties, communal living patterns, religious values, and indigenous cultural expectations. While these values can support family stability, they may also create pressures related to finances, fertility, gender roles, and in-law involvement. A study conducted in rural areas of Akwa Ibom State found that household income, alcohol use, smoking, and socio-economic stress significantly correlated with spousal violence among married couples. This indicates that beyond communication, environmental and economic pressures also shape marital conflict outcomes in the state. Specifically, Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area—popularly known as the “Raffia City”—is an urbanizing area with a growing population estimated at over 180,000 people in recent years. As a commercial and cultural center of the Annang people, the area experiences rapid socio-economic transitions, modernization, and changing marital expectations. These changes may affect marital dynamics, especially where traditional authority patterns intersect with modern values of companionship, equality, and shared decision-making.

Marriage is expected to provide emotional companionship, mutual support, social stability, and a conducive environment for child development. However, marital relationships are often confronted with disagreements arising from finances, parenting responsibilities, communication breakdown, role expectations, infidelity, and interference from extended family members. Conflict in itself is not abnormal in marriage; rather, the major concern lies in how such conflicts are managed. Where conflicts are handled constructively through dialogue, compromise, and mutual understanding, marriages are likely to remain stable. Conversely, where conflicts are poorly managed through silence, hostility, aggression, avoidance, or domination, marital dissatisfaction, separation, and domestic violence may occur.

Empirical studies have examined related marital issues, but notable gaps remain. For example, Usoroh, Akpan, & Ofonime (2025) investigated marital disputes resolution strategies and spousal attachment among couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State using 136 married individuals. Their findings showed that conflict resolution strategies significantly influenced spousal attachment among married couples. Although the study was conducted in the same geographical area, it focused on spousal attachment as the outcome variable and did not examine domestic openness as a predictor of how couples

resolve conflict. Similarly, Uye, Ehondor, & Sholarin (2024) studied spousal communication and socio-demographic variables as predictors of domestic violence among married couples in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study found that communication significantly predicted domestic violence among couples. While this study established the importance of communication in marital outcomes, it focused on domestic violence rather than specific conflict resolution strategies, and it was conducted outside Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, the findings may not fully reflect the socio-cultural realities of couples in Ikot Ekpene. From the reviewed studies, it is evident that previous scholars have examined marital communication, domestic violence, attachment, and dispute resolution separately. However, limited empirical attention has been given to the direct relationship between domestic openness and conflict resolution strategies among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. This creates a contextual and conceptual gap in literature.

The problem of this study, therefore, is that despite increasing marital conflicts and the recognized importance of communication in sustaining marriage, little is known about how domestic openness influences the strategies couples in Ikot Ekpene use to manage disagreements. Without such knowledge, counsellors, religious leaders, marriage therapists, and policymakers may lack adequate

evidence-based interventions for promoting peaceful and stable homes. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate domestic openness and conflict resolution strategies among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The major aim of this study is to examine Domestic Openness and Conflict Resolution Strategies among Married Couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- I. investigate the relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.
- II. examine the relationship between domestic openness and compromise strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

- I. What is the relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State?
- II. What is the relationship between domestic openness and compromise strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene

Domestic Openness And Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Married Couples In Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

- I. There is no significant relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.
- II. There is no significant relationship between domestic openness and compromise strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Methodology

The study area for this research is Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Ikot Ekpene is one of the prominent Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State and is popularly known as the "Raffia City" because of its traditional raffia craft industry. It is located in the north-western part of Akwa Ibom State and serves as a major commercial and administrative centre for the Annang ethnic group. Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area has an estimated land area of about 125 square kilometres and had a population of 172,856 persons according to the 2006 National Population Census (National Population Commission, 2006). The area is characterized by urban and semi-urban settlements, active trading activities, civil service employment,

farming, and small-scale businesses. The choice of Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area was based on its growing population, increasing socio-economic transitions, and the need to understand marital relationships within the area.

The population for the study comprised all married couples residing in selected communities in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. For the purpose of the study, five communities were selected, namely: Abiakpo, Uruk Uso, Nto Edino, Amanyam, and Ikot Osurua. These communities were selected because they are among the major populated communities in the Local Government Area and contain a significant number of married residents.

A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting respondents for the study.

In each of the selected communities, thirty (30) married couples were chosen, giving a total sample size of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents. The use of random sampling ensured that every married couple in the selected communities had an equal chance of being selected for participation.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled *Domestic Openness and Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (DOCRSQ)*. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A contained on respondents' socio-demographic

characteristics such as age, sex, educational qualification, occupation, and years of marriage. Section B contained items measuring domestic openness and conflict resolution strategies among married couples. The questionnaire items were structured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher with the assistance of trained field assistants. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Out of the 150 copies of questionnaire distributed, 146 copies were correctly filled and returned, while 4 copies were either not returned or improperly completed. Therefore, 146 copies were used for the final analysis.

The validity of the instrument was ensured through face and content validity by submitting the draft questionnaire to the researcher's supervisor and experts in Sociology and Measurement/Evaluation for necessary corrections and suggestions. Their observations were used to improve the final version of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test-retest method, and a reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation were used to analyze

respondents' demographic data and answer the research questions. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical technique was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Options	Number
Sex	Male	88
	Female	58
Age	20-30 years	49
	30-40 years	61
	Above 40 years	36
Numbers of years in the area of study	1 – 10 years	22
	10 – 20years	40
	20 – 30 years	50
	Above 40 years	34
Occupation	Farming/Hunting	45
	Civil Servant	43
	Business	48
	Others	10
Level of Education	SSCE	45
	BSc	23
	MSc & PhD	10
	No formal education	68

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 indicates that 88 respondents were male, while 58 respondents were female, showing that males constituted the majority of the participants in the study. With respect to age, 49 respondents were between 20–30 years, 61 respondents were between 30–40 years, while 36 respondents were above 40 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were within the active middle-age category of 30–40 years.

Regarding the number of years' respondents had lived in the area of study, 22 respondents had stayed for 1–10 years, 40 respondents had stayed for 10–20 years, 50 respondents had stayed for 20–30 years, while 34 respondents had stayed for above 40 years. This shows that most respondents had resided in the area long enough to possess adequate knowledge of the locality.

In terms of occupation, 45 respondents were engaged in farming/hunting, 43 respondents were civil servants, 48 respondents were involved in business, while 10 respondents engaged in other occupations. This indicates that respondents came from diverse occupational backgrounds, with business having the highest frequency. Concerning educational qualification, 45 respondents possessed SSCE certificates, 23 respondents had B.Sc degrees, 10 respondents had MSc/PhD qualifications, while 68 respondents had no formal education. This reveals that a large proportion of the respondents had no formal education, followed by those with SSCE qualifications.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State?

Table 2: My spouse and I openly discuss our differences in order to reach a mutual agreement during conflicts. (Item 1)

Responses	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
time	71 48 27	48.6 33 19
Total	146	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 3: Honest communication between my spouse and I help us negotiate solutions whenever disagreements arise. (Item 2)

Responses	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	61	42
Agree	45	30
Disagree	40	28
Total	146	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

For Item 1, a majority of respondents, 71 (48.6%), strongly agreed that they openly discuss their differences to reach mutual agreement during conflicts, while 48 (33%) agreed and 27 (19%) disagreed. This shows that most respondents acknowledge the role of openness in facilitating mutual agreement during disagreements. Similarly, for Item 2, 61 respondents (42%) strongly agreed that honest communication helps them negotiate solutions during disagreements, 45 respondents (30%) agreed, while 40 respondents (28%) disagreed. This also suggests that a larger proportion of respondents believe that open and honest communication enhances negotiation between spouses.

Overall, the findings from both items indicate that domestic openness is positively associated with negotiation strategies among married couples, as most respondents affirmed that open

communication improves their ability to negotiate and resolve conflicts constructively.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between domestic openness and compromise strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State?

Table 4: Open communication between my spouse and I make it easier for us to compromise during disagreements.
(Item 3)

Responses	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	60	41.2
Agree	43	29.4
Disagree	43	29.4
Total	146	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 5: My spouse and I willingly make adjustments for each other when we openly discuss household issues.
(Item 4)

Responses	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	48	32.9
Agree	38	26.0
Disagree	60	41.1
Total	146	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

For Item 3, 60 respondents (41.2%) strongly agreed that open communication between spouses makes it easier to compromise during disagreements, while 43 respondents (29.4%) agreed and 43 respondents (29.4%) disagreed. This indicates that a higher proportion of respondents recognize that openness facilitates compromise in marital relationships. For Item 4, 48 respondents (32.9%) strongly agreed that they willingly

make adjustments for each other when household issues are openly discussed, 38 respondents (26.0%) agreed, while 60 respondents (41.1%) disagreed. This shows a more divided response, with a slightly higher proportion of respondents indicating disagreement. Overall, the results suggest that while many married couples believe that domestic openness supports compromise, a notable proportion still struggle with making mutual adjustments even when communication is open, indicating that openness alone may not always translate into willingness to compromise without other relational factors.

Figure 1: Summary of Chi-square computation to show if there is a significant relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Test Statistics

	domestic openness and negotiation strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State
Chi-Square	170.493 ^a
Df	14
Asymp.sig.	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The result shows a Chi-square value of 170.493 with 14 degrees of freedom and an Asymp. Sig. (p-value) of 0.000. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the result is statistically significant.

This implies that there is a significant relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy among married couples in the study area. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that domestic openness plays a meaningful role in how couples engage in negotiation during marital conflicts.

Figure 2: Summary of Chi-square computation to show if there is a significant relationship between domestic openness and compromise strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Test Statistics

	domestic openness and compromise strategy among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.
Chi-Square	205.611 ^a
Df	12
Asymp.sig.	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The result reveals a Chi-square value of 205.611, with 12 degrees of freedom, and an Asymp. Sig. (p-value) of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the result is statistically significant.

This indicates that there is a significant relationship between domestic openness and compromise strategy among married couples in the study area. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that domestic openness significantly influences the extent to which married couples adopt

compromise as a conflict resolution strategy.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined domestic openness and conflict resolution strategies among married couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, with particular focus on negotiation and compromise strategies. The findings revealed that domestic openness has a significant relationship with both negotiation and compromise strategies among married couples. Specifically, the Chi-square results showed a significant relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy ($\chi^2 = 170.493$, $df = 14$, $p = .000$), as well as between domestic openness and compromise strategy ($\chi^2 = 205.611$, $df = 12$, $p = .000$). These findings suggest that couples who engage in open communication are more likely to adopt constructive approaches such as negotiation and compromise when resolving marital disagreements.

The finding that domestic openness significantly enhances negotiation strategies aligns with the work of Gottman & Silver (2015), who emphasized that couples who communicate openly and express their concerns respectfully are more likely to resolve conflicts through dialogue rather than hostility or avoidance. Their research on marital stability shows that openness facilitates “positive sentiment override,” where couples interpret disagreements more constructively and seek mutual understanding rather than domination. Similarly, the present study

supports this position by demonstrating that couples in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area who openly discuss differences are more inclined toward negotiation as a conflict resolution approach.

This finding is also consistent with Uye, Ehondor, & Sholarin (2024), who found that effective spousal communication significantly predicts healthier marital outcomes and reduces domestic violence among married couples in Nigeria. Their study highlighted that communication openness enables couples to articulate grievances and negotiate solutions, thereby preventing escalation of conflicts. In the same vein, the current study establishes that domestic openness is not only related to reduced conflict intensity but also enhances the use of negotiation strategies in marital relationships.

Furthermore, the result showing a significant relationship between domestic openness and compromise strategy is in line with Rahim's conflict management theory, which posits that collaboration and compromise are most effective when parties are willing to openly share information and consider each other's interests (Rahim, 2002). In this study, couples who reported higher levels of openness were more likely to adjust their positions and make concessions during disagreements. This supports the idea that openness creates psychological safety, which encourages flexibility and willingness to compromise.

However, the findings also reveal that while many respondents acknowledged the importance of openness, a notable proportion still disagreed that they willingly make adjustments even when communication is open. This suggests that domestic openness alone may not always guarantee compromise, as other factors such as personality differences, cultural expectations, power dynamics, and financial stress may also influence conflict resolution behaviour. This observation is consistent with McGonagle, Kessler, & Gotlib (1993), who found that marital disagreement outcomes are influenced not only by communication style but also by the intensity and frequency of conflicts, as well as external stressors affecting the relationship.

In the Nigerian context, the findings align with Usoroh, Akpan, & Ofonime (2025), who reported that conflict resolution strategies significantly affect marital relationships in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area. Their study emphasized that couples who adopt constructive strategies experience stronger marital attachment. However, while their study focused on attachment outcomes, the present study extends the literature by specifically showing that domestic openness is a key factor influencing the choice of negotiation and compromise strategies among couples in the same geographical area. Overall, the findings of this study reinforce the central role of domestic openness in promoting effective conflict resolution in marriage. Couples who communicate openly are more likely to

engage in negotiation and compromise, thereby enhancing marital stability. The study contributes to existing literature by providing empirical evidence from Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, showing that openness within the home is a significant predictor of how couples manage marital disagreements.

Conclusion

The study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between domestic openness and negotiation strategy among married couples. Couples who engage in honest and open communication are more likely to discuss their differences and reach mutual agreements during conflicts. This indicates that domestic openness enhances the use of negotiation as an effective conflict resolution strategy. The study also concluded that there is a significant relationship between domestic openness and compromise strategy among married couples. Although some couples demonstrated willingness to adjust for each other, the findings show that openness in communication generally promotes greater flexibility and willingness to compromise during marital disagreements. However, other factors may still influence the extent to which couples are willing to make concessions.

Recommendations

- i. Married couples should be encouraged to cultivate open and honest communication, where both partners feel safe to express their feelings, concerns, and expectations

without fear of criticism or punishment.

- ii. Marriage counsellors, religious leaders, and family support institutions should organize communication skill training and marital workshops to help couples improve dialogue-based conflict resolution and strengthen negotiation skills within marriage.

- iii. Couples should be guided to develop a culture of mutual respect and emotional flexibility, where both partners are willing to make adjustments for the stability of the marriage during disagreements.

- iv. Family counselling services and community-based marriage programs should emphasize the importance of empathy, understanding, and shared responsibility, in order to enhance couples' ability to compromise effectively when resolving marital conflicts.

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Domestic Openness And Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Married Couples In Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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