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Restoring Interpersonal Trust Relationship Between Buyers and Sellers in Nigeria's Real Estate Sector

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Abstract

Trust is fundamental to transactional relationships, particularly in high-value markets such as real estate, where information asymmetries and competing interests expose buyers-sellers to significant risks. Mayer trust dimension advanced understanding of perceived trustworthiness through ability, benevolence and integrity, Kim further demonstrated that trust-repair effectiveness depends on the nature of the violation. Subsequently, Bachmann developed an integrated conceptual model of organisational and institutional trust repair. Nevertheless, how interpersonal trust is violated and restored within real estate transactions in emerging markets remains insufficiently understood.

This study addresses two related research gaps. First, existing trust theory insufficiently explains how trust is violated and restored in high value buyer-seller relationships under weak regulatory environments. Second, Real Estate trust research lacks an integrated framework that considers buyers, sellers, and regulators simultaneously in the trust restoration process. Accordingly, the study aims to develop a contextually grounded framework explaining how interpersonal trust between buyers and sellers is violated and restored within Lagos's real estate sector, with particular attention to institutional influences.

The study adopts an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative research design. Semi-structured interview will be conducted through snowball sampling with buyers, sellers and regulatory actors in Lagos. Data will be analysed through thematic analysis. The theoretical framing integrates Social Exchange Theory, Attribution Theory and Institutional Theory to examine relational exchanges of trust violations and restoration.

As the study is ongoing, empirical findings are not yet reported. The anticipated contribution is a process-oriented framework explaining the interaction between interpersonal trust-repair strategies and institutional influences in an emerging real estate market. The study seeks to extend trust-repair scholarship and inform context-sensitive approaches to transaction transparency, professional accountability and dispute resolution.

Keywords: Interpersonal trust; Trust repair; Real estate transactions; Buyer–seller relationships; Regulatory institutions; Nigeria.