

Research Paper

Linking Process Integration and Employee Commitment: A Study of SMEs in South West Region of Nigeria

OLUWAYOMI OMOTAYO OLOTA 

Department of Financial Intelligence, College of Accounting Sciences, University of South Africa. South Africa.
olotaoluwayomi@gmail.com

Received: 9 April 2026**Accepted:** 21 July 2026**Online Publication Date:** 30 July 2026

How to cite

O. O. Olota. "Linking Process Integration and Employee Commitment: A Study of SMEs in South West Region of Nigeria", *International Journal of Engineering and Management Sciences*, pp. 1–19, July 2026. doi: 10.21791/IJEMS.2026.11



Abstract. *The South-West region of Nigeria presents inherent challenges and opportunities that are peculiar to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and shape their operational dynamics and employee behavior. Hence, this paper aims to investigate the linkage between process integration and employee engagement: a study of SMEs in South-West region of Nigeria. Specifically, it examined the effects of career development workshops, effective communication, and leadership competence on employee commitment. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, with a total of 253 selected registered electrical and electronics stores across the six South-Western states of Nigeria (Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti). 155 participants were administered a structured questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed using PLS-SEM. Findings revealed that effective communication has the strongest effect on employee commitment ($\beta = 0.391$, $t = 3.837$, $p < 0.000$), followed by leadership competence ($\beta = 0.292$, $t = 3.165$, $p < 0.002$), and career development workshop ($\beta = 0.201$, $t = 2.993$, $p = 0.003$). It concluded that process integration is significantly vital for driving employee commitment in selected electrical and electronics SMEs stores in South-West region of Nigeria. It is therefore strongly recommended that, to increase employee commitment among Electronic SMEs, their managers should focus on ensuring that the essential features of process integration, such as leadership competence, effective communication, and career development, are adequately implemented and practiced within the organization.*

Keywords: *Process Integration, Employee Commitment, Career Development Workshop, Effective Communication, Leadership Competence.*

Introduction

Several SMEs are riding high on growth and innovation and need to take steps to ensure employee engagement and productivity amid a competitive business environment. To create a supportive work environment, it is essential to promote some facets of job satisfaction and organizational climate that have been shown to have a profound impact on employee productivity and the firm's overall

performance [1; 2]. These are intended to create an atmosphere in which employees feel valued and motivated, a crucial element for SMEs to compete effectively in rapidly evolving markets.

To improve operations and employee involvement, SMEs need to coordinate multiple organizational tasks. It has been proven that internal departmental communication improves problem-solving, resource sharing, and communication, all of which are beneficial to organizational performance [3; 4]. This bond not only makes the workers productive but also makes them feel like they belong and focus on the company. This synchronization is crucial in SMEs, as cooperation and a common goal are necessary to deploy limited resources and human resources efficiently.

Commitment is also influenced by what employees feel about their job within the broader organisational structure. Empirical studies among Nigerian SMEs have shown that employees are more loyal to the company when they feel involved in decision-making and when management practices are fair [5; 6]. Higher levels of commitment, a desire to leave and a stronger desire to participate in extra-curricular activities are caused by this commitment. Thus, SMEs with inclusive cultures and open channels of communication are better placed to maximize employee potential and maintain long-term competitiveness.

The purpose of career development workshops is to make employees more skilled and motivated, but poorly designed or executed workshops can often lead to lower employee engagement. If these workshops do not align with employees' real career goals or offer a path for professional development, they may demotivate or be ignored [7; 8]. Moreover, little support or infrequent follow-up after such programs may lead employees to become disenchanted and to lose trust in an organization's commitment to their professional development [9]. These problems illustrate the importance of tailoring the career development programs to the organization's goal of supporting focused labour and to the expectations of its workforce.

Communication is key in keeping employees highly engaged, but if it's not communicated properly, it can seriously damage the relationship. Employees are often misinterpreted, feel less trusted, and feel alienated due to a lack of openness or misunderstanding [10; 11]. Additionally, a lack of communication strategies that create a feedback loop and allow workers to express their concerns or recommendations can affect employee engagement and a sense of belonging [12]. Therefore, companies should always prioritize an extensive, coherent, and communicative strategy to keep employees committed and not distracted from their duties.

The competency of the leadership also affects employee commitment, but this can become a problem if the leadership doesn't have the required skills or doesn't show motivating behaviours. Ineffective leadership is linked to poor decision-making, unclear expectations, and a lack of appreciation for workers' efforts, and this can result in the erosion of trust and motivation [13; 14]. In addition, CEOs who do not communicate the purpose or provide opportunities for progress risk the loss of employees and increased turnover intentions [15]. Establishing such a dedicated team would be critical in hiring workers who feel valued and have the requisite leadership skills.

The retail electronic and electrical sector in South West Nigeria operates in a highly competitive, cutting-edge environment. These businesses range in size from small sole proprietorships to medium-sized chains with well-organized departments, and they employ between 10 and 199 people. Given the direct

client engagement that employees must provide and the rapid pace of product change, consistent staff dedication is particularly crucial for service quality, customer retention, and organizational survival. Studying this industry is therefore crucial because it represents a portion of the Nigerian economy that combines a high degree of transactional intensity with a substantial reliance on human capital, making process integration techniques applicable and quantifiable.

To be specific, therefore, the following objectives of the study will be realized: To determine the effect of career development workshop on employee commitment, to investigate the influence of effective communication on employee commitment, and to examine the influence of leadership competence on employee commitment.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Conceptual Review

1.1.1. Concept of Process Integration

Process integration is the systematic coordination and synchronization of numerous operations and functions of an organization to make those work and to maintain effective operation. This leads to integrating different processes within the organization to reduce duplication, improve communication, and optimize resource use [4]. Such integration is a key factor in a complex environment where multiple departments and units must work together to achieve organizational goals. Organizations can enhance performance and become more responsive to market requirements [16] through the implementation of interconnectivity across operations. Process integration is generally taken strategically and represents the firm's combined vision to link all business activities with each other and with information that crosses borders [17].

Furthermore, process integration comprises internal cooperation and external linkages with suppliers and customers, thus providing a comprehensive network for value creation [4; 16]. A wider view means increased collaboration and transparency throughout the supply chain, which is critical to remaining competitive in a changing market environment. Successful process integration has been proven to improve operations and create a culture of innovation and continuous improvement in companies [17]. Therefore, the ability to integrate organizational processes enables companies to grow sustainably and adapt to new business challenges.

In SMEs where formal supply chains and interdepartmental integration systems are often in their infancy, process integration is largely conceptualized as people-oriented organizational practices. This study operationalizes process integration through three HRM-oriented dimensions of career development, effective communication, and leadership competency [4; 16]. These features relate to the idea of internal process integration, defined as the synchronization of organizational activities based on common knowledge, competence development, and communication [3; 17]. Career development is the organization's investment in the skill development of its employees. It is an essential process alignment tool. Effective communication is transparent and has feedback systems that facilitate cross-functional cooperation. The leadership competence of managers reflects their ability to align employees' activities with business goals at both strategic and interpersonal levels. Collectively, these components capture

the human-process layer of integration, which is salient in labor-intensive SME contexts. These three factors operationalize exactly what Meyer et al. [18] further support by finding organizational commitment to be a consequence of perceived organizational investment.

1.1.2. Concept of Employee Commitment

Employee commitment is an individual's psychological attachment and loyalty to the organization that determines the extent of his/her willingness to perform at his/her best, even in the absence of any obligation from the employer. It is part of an employee's identification with the company's goals and values, promoting continued organizational involvement and discretionary behaviour [18]. Employee commitment plays a vital role in improving employee stability, turnover intentions, and organizational performance [19]. This level of commitment generally influences employee reactions to organizational problems and changes, which in turn influences morale and output [20]. Therefore, it is of strategic importance for companies to foster high employee commitment to succeed in the long term.

In their seminal work, Meyer and Allen [35] identified three different dimensions of organizational commitment: affective, continuance, and normative. They found that emotional attachment, perceived cost of leaving, and felt obligation impact employees' relationships with their organizations differently [35]. This three-component model remains one of the most popular frameworks in the field of organizational commitment research worldwide, and it is well suited to the present study's focus on commitment as emotional attachment and loyalty. The importance of the link between process integration and commitment, which we have explored in this study, is also underscored by Flynn and coauthor [36], who demonstrated at a global level that internal process integration enhances organizational performance directly through better coordination and staff alignment.

Emotional connection is also one of the aspects of employee commitment, as it helps retain a person in a company when he/she has other employment options [18; 19]. The emotional component of commitment is associated with increased motivation, job satisfaction, and "adherence" to the goals of the organization. As per research [20], committed workers tend to exhibit positive behaviours that support creativity and improve quality. This will benefit human capital management in competitive environments through an understanding of employee commitment dynamics.

1.1.3. Effect of Process Integration on Employee Commitment

One of the areas identified as important for enhancing organizational performance is the effect of process integration on employee commitment. Integrated processes offer clarity and work environments where employees can see how they fit into the larger system, rather than the traditional channels of communication that lead to uncertainty and a lack of teamwork [4]. This transparency will increase employees' emotional attachment to the organization and make them feel purposeful and a part of it [16]. It has been found that the more the process integration is internalized, the less employees' organizational integration in terms of internal working cohesiveness and role ambiguity [17].

It can also help the company to achieve employee engagement as it will enable effective communication with other functional areas of the organization and reduce workplace conflicts, which will enhance job satisfaction [16; 4]. Higher staff retention and performance are related to processes and employees' commitment. Organizations that focus on internal integration [17] have higher employee engagement as the employees are more committed to the common goal. Thus, process integration is also a structural

process and a cultural facilitator for the development of loyal employees that contribute to the success of firms.

1.1.4. Effect of Career Development on Employee Commitment

Professional development is an important factor in employee commitment because it provides a sense of possibility and future career advancement within the organization, which positively influences employees' emotional attachment and loyalty. Workers who perceive that their employer is investing in their professional development are more likely to become more committed, as this shows that their potential is recognized and appreciated [21]. Empirical research shows that career development programs increase motivation and job satisfaction, which decreases the intention to leave the company and positively affects organizational commitment [13]. Moreover, Ilwanti et al. [14] demonstrated that the career development concept can be used to control the correlation between competence and commitment and that career advancement opportunities can increase employees' psychological attachment to their employers. The importance of a structured career progression in creating a motivated workforce in the organization signifies the achievement of organizational success [22]. Therefore, we proposed the first hypothesis as follows:

H1: *Career development has a positive influence on employee commitment*

1.1.5. Effect of Effective Communication on Employee Commitment

Effective communication is also important in building commitment among employees because it creates transparency, trust, and understanding within the organization. If there is clear, open communication, employees feel more emotionally committed and are more likely to stay with the firm, helping them relate to the company's goals and feel appreciated and involved [23]. Students demonstrate the positive effect of communication on organizational commitment through reducing ambiguity and establishing an inclusive culture where employees are heard and motivated [9]. Also, communication is an important aspect of establishing strong interpersonal relationships in a job that builds commitment and engagement over time [15]. As a result, organizations that focus on effective communication tend to have more engaged workers and better results [23]. We therefore proposed the following second hypothesis:

H2: *Effective communication has a positive influence on employee commitment*

1.1.6. Effect of Leadership Competence on Employee Commitment

A leader's ability greatly impacts employees' commitment, as they feel guided, inspired and fairly treated at work. Good decision-makers with strong interpersonal skills are not only effective leaders but also build respect and trust among their employees and foster a stronger emotional connection with the organization [13]. Since previous studies have found that leadership competence indirectly affects employee performance due to positive impacts on organisational commitment and so on, leaders play an important role in motivating and retaining talents [22] Also, the capacity of leadership is related to the creation of an environment that favours the professional development and free communication that are the main sources of commitment and increase its impact on employee loyalty [14]. Thus, companies should invest in developing their leaders to attract highly committed workers who can drive long-term success. Hence, we propose the third hypothesis as follows:

H3: *Leadership competence has a positive influence on employee commitment*

1.2. Theoretical Review

1.2.1. Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a useful tool to explain how process integration enhances employee loyalty to the employer in SMEs, especially in Southwest Nigeria. The concept was introduced by Homans (1958) and Blau (1964) as they explored the importance of reciprocal employer-employee exchanges [24; 25]. This theory suggests that employees would work better if they feel that the organization trusts, treats them fairly, and supports them [26; 27]. This ignores the importance of cultures and emotions and is very simplistic, critics argue [28; 29]. Research shows that high-performance work systems and participative management are correlated with increased engagement [31]. The notion that process integration, in the form of efficiency-enhancing procedures and participative decision-making, can enhance commitment in Nigerian SMEs by increasing perceived support [30] SET is fundamental [32] in the study of SME dynamics, where informal interactions are more relevant than formal structures despite their disadvantages.

1.3. Empirical Review

The studies below are drawn from supply chain, TQM, and HRM change-management contexts because each directly links process/organizational integration mechanisms to employee commitment, providing the closest available empirical parallels to the process-integration–commitment relationship tested in this study.

Aljumah, Shahroor, Nuseir, and El Refae [17] have done the quantitative analysis on the UAE auto industry, which is as follows: Supply chain integration as a mediator of employee commitment and environmental uncertainty. Using a sample of 481 workers, their study applied structural equation modelling and reported that in the context of environmental unpredictability, the relationship between home commitment to employees and product quality is mediated by supply chain integration. They discovered that in uncomfortable circumstances, supply chain procedures needed to be linked to harness employee commitment to improve product quality.

Basnet [19] analyzed the association between employee organizational commitment and quality outcomes using multivariate correlation analysis and regression analysis on survey data obtained from a sample in a manufacturing company in Nepal. According to the study, organizational commitment of employees was found to be highly influenced by total quality management (TQM) practices such as teamwork, training, and organizational culture. These findings indicate that the people-oriented approach of TQM enhances employee involvement and commitment, both of which are crucial to ensure such quality improvement in the industrial sector.

Alqudah, Carballo-Penela, and Ruzo-Sanmartin [20] examined adaptation and high-performance HRM practices among 510 bank employees in Jordan. Their quantitative research showed that high-performance HRM practices facilitate change readiness and affective commitment, which in turn lead to better employee performance. They also demonstrated how organizational culture moderates

relationships and how HRM practices must be congruent with the culture to secure commitment to transformation efforts.

Ahmad and Cheng [33] use regression analysis on survey data from 147 employees of Iraqi public companies to study the effects of change content, environment, process, and leadership on employees' commitment to change. They found that effective change management practices and transformational leadership enhance affective commitment to change. In their conclusion, they emphasize the importance of process integration and leadership in maintaining employee engagement during organizational change.

1.4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework proposed in Figure 1 shows the relationship among the three aspects of process integration and employee commitment. The strategy is based on Social Exchange Theory [24; 25] and argues that when organizations provide skilled leadership (H3), foster open communication (H2), and implement structured career paths (H1), employees exhibit heightened organizational commitment (H3). The three assumptions empirically tested in this study are based on the treatment of every dimension as an independent construct that directly increases employee commitment.

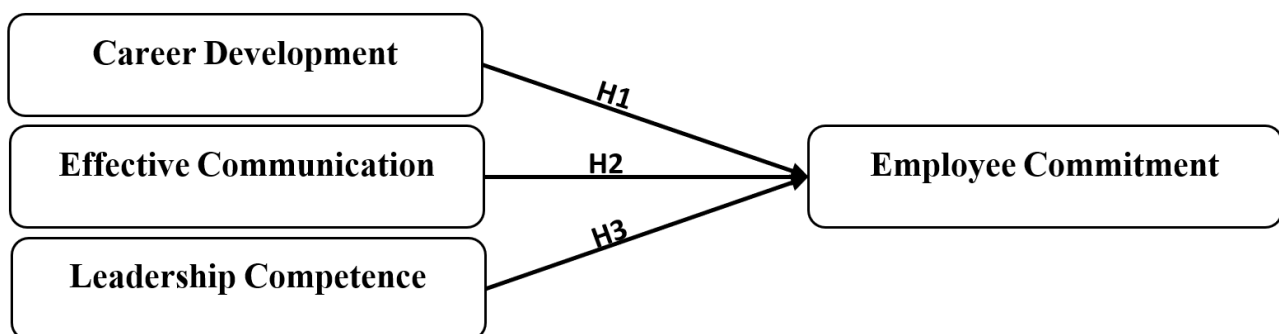


Figure 1: Conceptual model showing hypothesized relationships between Process Integration dimensions and employee commitment

Source: Researchers' Design, (2025)

2. Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey method to collect relevant data from a population of interest and describe the phenomenon under investigation with regard to the process measurement impact on employee engagement. The study adopted retail electronic and electrical stores as a case study of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the South-Western area of Nigeria. The target audience consists of 253 registered electrical and electronics shops located in the six south-western states of Nigeria, which are Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti. According to the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN) of Nigeria, such businesses are classified as SMEs if the number of people they employ is less than 200 and/or the assets are below ₦500 million, excluding buildings and land. In the present study it was attempted to select large electronic stores from the SMEs in the southwest of the country. Large-scale SME electronic stores are more likely to have structured operations, formal process measurement systems, and a larger workforce than other stores. All these

are key elements in measuring SME employee engagement. Further, SMEDAN's classification covers a wide range of SMEs in terms of size and competence, including relatively larger enterprises that are important to the local economy, without necessarily excluding them from the SME group.

A simple random selection process was used to ensure that each employee in the approved electronic stores had an equal chance of being selected. This method improves the objective representation of the participants, especially those with relevant work experience and domain-specific knowledge.

The sample size of 155 electronic and electrical retailers was calculated from the total population of 253 enterprises using Taro Yamane's sample size determination formula.

The respondents were senior supervisors, department heads, and store managers of some SME electrical and electronics companies. Moreover, these people have the experience and organizational knowledge to be able to assess their own levels of commitment and to assess processes of process integration.

The main tool for data collection was an 18-item structured questionnaire divided into 4 sections. The first section was career development, which included two items about skill development programs and opportunities for professional advancement. The second section focused on effective communication, including two items on open feedback channels and transparent information flow. The third section was on leadership competence and consisted of two items: visionary strategic thinking and results-driven approach. The fourth section, employee commitment, included three items. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The items were created from established and validated instruments in the HRM and organisational behaviour literature. Prior to full deployment, a pilot study was conducted with 15 respondents from similar SMEs outside the target demographic to test internal consistency and clarity. Trained research assistants distributed the surveys physically and electronically (using Google Forms) across the six South Western states for a period of six weeks.

The analytical technique used in this study was the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method to analyze the relationship between the independent variables related to measuring process aspects and the dependent variables, such as employee engagement. Path analysis using SEM was employed to test the theoretical model and assess its robustness, examining the complex relationships among variables.

2.1. Model Specification

Employees' commitment is the dependent variable, and process integration is the independent variable in this study report. The use of let's say structural equation modelling (SEM) means that the following model is used in the report:

$$EC = f (\text{Career Development Workshop } [SEP + PAO] + \text{Effective Communication } [OFC + TIF] + \text{Leadership Competence } [VST + RDA]) \quad (1)$$

Where:

EC= Employee Commitment

SEP= Skill Enhancement Programs

PAO= Professional Advancement Opportunities

OFC= Open Feedback Channels

TIF= Transparent Information Flow

VST= Visionary Strategic Thinking

RDA= Results Driven Approach

There are four reasons why PLS-SEM was chosen over covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM). First, the sample size ($n = 137$) is acceptable for PLS-SEM but insufficient for reliable parameter estimation in CB-SEM, which typically requires larger samples [37]. Secondly, PLS-SEM is a prediction-oriented approach and is suitable for the study as it is exploratory and there is no existing model for these process integration aspects in Nigerian SMEs [38]. Third, PLS-SEM is robust to non-normality. Table 1 presents skewness and kurtosis values that indicate non-normal distributions, violating CB-SEM assumptions. Fourth, the authors acknowledge this as a weakness, but the reflecting measurement model with two indicators per independent concept meets PLS-SEM minimum requirements.

3. Results

3.1. Response Rate

In this work, the necessary data were collected using a questionnaire. A total of 155 responses were received, with an 88.3% return rate. When surveyed, all the respondents who returned were used for this research, and 137 responses are needed to complete the estimated sample size.

3.2. Descriptive Analysis of Responses and Normality Test

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness	Number of Observations Used
Career development 1	2.983	1.210	-0.967	-0.084	137.000
Career development 2	3.339	1.293	-1.015	-0.268	137.000
Effective communication 1	3.511	1.433	-1.010	-0.608	137.000
Effective communication 2	3.603	1.178	-0.446	-0.569	137.000
Employees commitment 1	3.816	1.365	-0.183	-1.031	137.000
Employees commitment 2	3.718	1.271	-0.481	-0.744	137.000
Employees commitment 3	3.420	1.265	-0.897	-0.367	137.000
Leadership competence 1	3.305	1.177	-0.551	-0.506	137.000
Leadership competence 2	3.534	1.253	-0.543	-0.653	137.000

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis and Normality Test

Note: Numerical suffixes (1, 2, 3) denote individual indicator items per construct. "Career development 1" = Skill Enhancement Programs; "Career development 2" = Professional Advancement Opportunities; "Effective communication 1" = Open Feedback Channels; "Effective communication 2" = Transparent Information Flow; "Leadership competence 1" = Visionary Strategic Thinking; "Leadership competence 2" = Results-Driven Approach; "Employees commitment 1–3" = three items measuring employee commitment.

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

The means and standard deviations of the variables and indicators used in this study, based on the questionnaire responses, are given in Table 1 as follows: In order to understand the correlation between process integration and employee commitment, the study considered employee commitment as well as other critical pillars, which stand for various aspects of integration. The report highlights the importance of reported mean values, standard deviation, and value numbers for academics and practitioners. The mean scores of the respondents indicated a strong belief that there is a significant relationship between process integration and staff commitment (both > 3). All mean scores are moderately high (all > 3), indicating a high overall level of agreement. The low standard deviations also suggest that the respondents' answers were consistent and not significantly different from the mean. In summary, these descriptive statistics illustrate the complex process of process integration and its effect on employee commitment, and how important process integration is in order to increase employee commitment.

Tests for normal distribution were used to analyze the data distribution. For sample sizes >100, skewness values should be within ± 1.0 to suggest a normal distribution. Likewise, the kurtosis should be between +3.0 and -3.0 to be considered suitable. If the reading is outside this range, there could be a problem. The analysis indicated that the values for skewness and kurtosis were within the threshold, and all variables were within the acceptable limits. This suggests that the data is normally distributed, and this allows for further statistical analysis and interpretation. The process integration measures are appropriate for testing the causal relationship between employee commitment and process integration because of their normal distribution, low standard deviation, and moderate central tendency.

3.3. Assessment of Measurement Model

For the analysis on the effect of process integration on employee commitment, the key variables related to the process integration, such as career development, effective communication, and leadership competence, were analyzed.

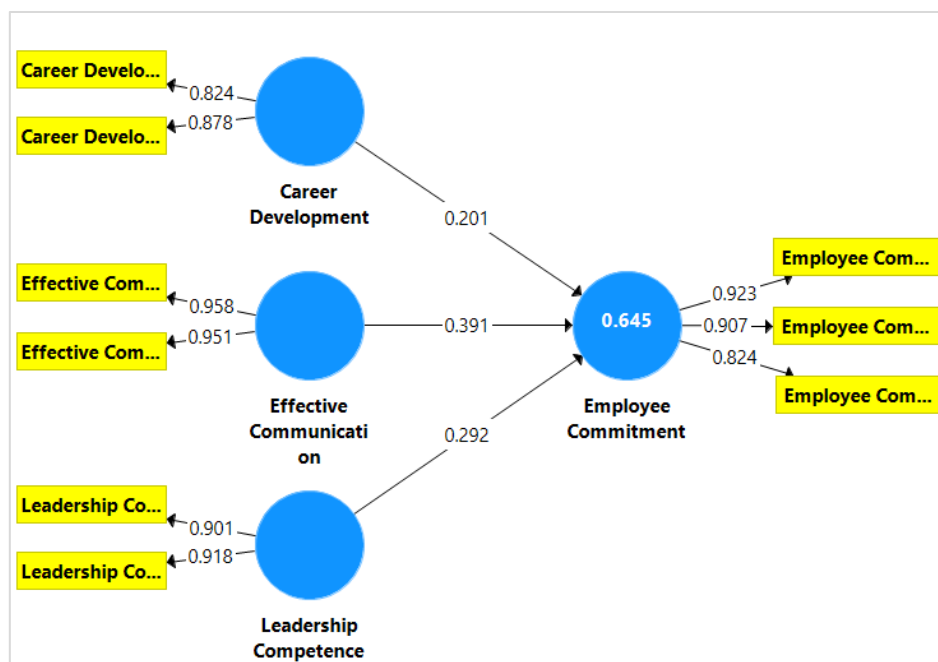


Figure 2: A path model of process integration and employees commitment

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

Figure 2 shows the structural path model for studying the relationship between employee commitment and process integration. The model can be described by one dependent variable (employee commitment) and three independent variables (career development, effective communication, and leadership competence). The model can be described as one dependent variable, employee commitment, and three independent variables, career development, effective communication, and leadership competence. The results show that the two independent variables (personal and work) have a positive, significant effect on employee commitment. Therefore, integrating processes is one of the most important factors in increasing employee commitment in a business. Therefore, process integration techniques are suggested as useful ways to enhance employees' commitment to companies.

Table 2 shows the validity and reliability indices of the concept. All constructs met the suggested thresholds for Cronbach's Alpha (>0.70), Composite Reliability (>0.70), and Average Variance Extracted (>0.50), demonstrating acceptable internal consistency and convergent validity prior to the model proceeding to the discriminant validity assessment.

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Career development	0.722	0.840	0.725
Effective communication	0.902	0.953	0.910
Employees commitment	0.863	0.916	0.785
Leadership competence	0.790	0.905	0.826

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

Source: Authors Compilation (SmartPLS 3.3.3 Output) 2026

Table 2 presents the main validity and reliability indices for the four latent variables investigated. These criteria are important for judging how well they convey the concepts they are supposed to convey. Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability are two important indices of construct reliability. Cronbach's Alpha is used to measure the internal consistency of the latent variables by examining the associations within the latent variable. Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.7 for all four latent variables suggest excellent internal consistency. Greater values than 0.7 are generally considered to be very reliable indexes of the constructs they measure. All reliability indices were above 0.7 for each variable, including the Composite Reliability, another index that includes item-internal consistency and content, so the instrumentation was sound. The high values confirm that the latent variables are reliable indicators for the constructs they represent.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is also shown in the table to assess the convergent validity of each latent variable. Convergent validity: It is the degree to which items of a variable are related and the same latent variable is measured. The AVE values for all items were greater than 0.5, suggesting good convergent validity and that the items represent the relevant construct well. Generally, the results demonstrate that the latent variables in this study have very good construct validity and reliability. This is evidenced by the fulfillment of convergent validity, high internal consistency, and high composite reliability. The study indices are at an appropriate level of fidelity and accuracy.

The discriminant validity results based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion are shown in Table 3. Discriminant validity is established when the square root of AVE (bold on the diagonal) of each construct is greater than its correlations with all other constructs.

	Career development	Effective communication	Employees commitment	Leadership competence
Career development	0.851			
Effective communication	0.700	0.954		
Employees commitment	0.657	0.766	0.886	
Leadership competence	0.624	0.802	0.731	0.909

*Table 3. Discriminant Validity**Source: Authors Compilation (SmartPLS 3.3.3 Output) 2026*

The results of discriminant validity analysis in Table 3 clearly indicate that the latent variables of effective communication, career development, employee commitment, and leadership competency are not the same. In order to assess the discriminative validity, these notions should be unique and not unduly correlated. The matrix is a few kilos good. The diagonal (correlation of each variable with itself) is always greater than the off-diagonal entries. These patterns suggest that the latent variables encode different aspects of the concept, since they are more similar to the other elements of the same concept than to each other. Leadership competency is more consistent with itself than career development, employee commitment, and effective communication. Similarly, the employees' development process has a higher self-correlation with the other factors (teachers' behaviour, learners attitudes, and employees commitment). Similarly, the correlation of each variable with the process of employee growth was lower than the self-correlation of the other variables (teachers' behaviour and students' attitudes). These results support that the latent constructs measured in this study are different constructs rather than a mixture of the same underlying construct. The results suggest that the measuring paradigm is appropriate for the study as it successfully separates the important constructs of effective communication, career development, employee commitment, and leadership competency.

Especially noticeable are the relatively high correlations between independent constructs: leadership competence and career development (0.624), effective communication and career growth (0.700), and effective communication and leadership competence (0.802). The high inter-construct correlations are mainly due to the integrated nature of the process integration construct, although these values remain below the threshold for discriminant validity. Because these correlations could reflect shared variation between predictors, they are retained in the model but should be interpreted with caution.

3.4. Multicollinearity

This demonstrates the importance of examining the relationship between independent variables to determine whether two variables are highly correlated and generate redundant data. In this study, we use the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to test for multicollinearity among the independent variables.

	Employees commitment
Career development	2.004
Effective communication	3.426
Leadership competence	2.859

*Table 4. Inner VIF Values**Note: Only the paths directed toward "Employees commitment" are relevant in this model.**Source: Authors Compilation (SmartPLS 3.3.3 Output) 2026*

Table 4 displays the inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values of the predictors of employee commitment in the structural model.

Table 4 shows the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) result for the latent variables of the employee's commitment. The value of the latent variables for the employee's commitment variable is presented as the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) in Table 4. The VIF of leadership, career development, and effective communication are all far below the critical value of 10, which means that there is no obvious multicollinearity between the three competencies. This means that the factors are not overcorrelated and can be considered in the analysis without multicollinearity concerns.

3.5. Test of Hypothesis

The null hypothesis is that the process integration operationalized through career development, effective communication, and leadership competence has no significant effect on employee commitment ($H_0: \beta = 0$). The alternative hypothesis is that each of the factors has a significant positive effect on employee commitment. Bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) was performed to evaluate path coefficients and significance using SmartPLS. Tables 6 and 7 present the effect sizes and path coefficients, respectively. Table 5 presents the R2 values.

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employees commitment	0.645	0.638

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination Score

Source: Authors Compilation (SmartPLS 3.3.3 Output) 2026

Table 5 presents the coefficient of determination (R-squared) which shows the goodness of fit of the model. The R-square of the intention to quit model is 0.645, that is, 64.5% variance of the intention to quit of employees is explained by the independent latent variables. This illustrates the model's effectiveness and the variations in employee commitment. The more conservative measure of model goodness of fit, the adjusted R-squared score, is 0.638. There is no sign of overfitting or unnecessary complexity in the model with multiple predictors, as the adjusted R2 is very close to the R-squared. These figures jointly indicate the extent to which the model can explain variation in employee involvement, despite the presence of a few unobserved characteristics.

	Employees commitment
Career development	0.057
Effective communication	0.126
Leadership competence	0.084

Table 6. Assessment of the Effect Size (f2)

Note: Only the paths directed toward "Employees commitment" are relevant in this model.

Source: Authors Compilation (SmartPLS 3.3.3 Output) 2026

In terms of statistics, Table 6 shows the effect size (often denoted by f-square), which indicates the extent to which the independent variables affect the dependent variable. The effect sizes of latent variables that were found to influence "employee's commitment" were quantified. All independent variables have effect sizes greater than 0.02, which is considered a small effect size. Thus, the results

suggest that each variable has a moderate effect, and the changes in any variable can partially explain the changes in employee commitment.

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Career development -> Employees commitment	0.201	0.202	0.067	2.993	0.003
Effective communication -> Employees commitment	0.391	0.392	0.102	3.837	0.000
Leadership competence -> Employees commitment	0.292	0.293	0.092	3.165	0.002

Table 7. Bootstrapping Results Showing Path Coefficient for Structural Model

Source: Authors Compilation (SmartPLS 3.3.3 Output) 2026

The remaining components of the model were evaluated by the bootstrap path coefficient analysis described in Table 7. As can be seen in Table 7, the bootstrapped hypotheses of the other model components were evaluated using Bootstrap path coefficient analysis. Results indicate a strong relationship between three components of leadership competence, career development and effective communication, and employees' commitment to process integration. The ways in which these variables relate to employees' commitment, and the statistically significant relations along each path, are analyzed. The null hypothesis is strongly rejected, in particular because the t-statistics exceed 1.96 and the p-values are below the conventional 0.05 threshold. So, the leader's competence, professional development and effective communication have a big influence on the employees' commitment to the process integration.

3.6. Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between process integration and employee commitment, testing the null hypothesis that process integration has no effect on employee commitment. The results reject the null hypothesis by showing that career development ($\beta = 0.201$, $p = 0.003$), effective communication ($\beta = 0.391$, $p < 0.001$), and leadership competency ($\beta = 0.292$, $p = 0.002$) have a statistically significant positive effect on employee commitment. Effective communication was the strongest predictor, in line with the findings of Sawaludin et al. [23], who claimed that transparent information flow and open avenues for feedback are crucial prerequisites for employee engagement. This also aligns with Social Exchange Theory [24; 25], which posits that employees reciprocate higher commitment in exchange for perceived organizational support, which in this paper is operationalized as transparent communication. This finding is consistent with the conclusion reached by Ahmad and Cheng [33] that effective change procedures with clear communication significantly improve affective commitment in the Nigerian SME context.

The second was leadership competency ($\beta = 0.292$), which is consistent with the results of Mudzakir et al. [13] and Spector et al. [34] that authentic and capable leadership directly improves employee trust and organizational commitment. These global findings corroborate the current findings, indicating that the quality of leadership is an almost universal driver of commitment, irrespective of country context.

Ilwanti et al. [14] and Hosen et al. [8] found that opportunities for professional advancement were important antecedents of commitment. Career growth has the least but significant effect ($\beta = 0.201$). The relatively lower coefficient could be due to the early structured career paths of Nigerian electronic SMEs, which are still largely dependent on informal learning.

However, unlike Aljumah et al. [17], who found that supply chain integration mediates the commitment-quality link under environmental uncertainty, the current analysis extends the integration-commitment discourse to SME-level HRM characteristics. Basnet [19] found that the impact of TQM procedures, training, teamwork, and culture is highly significant for commitment, which is consistent with the career development and leadership constructs in this study. The R^2 value of 0.645 implies that 64.5% of the variance in employee commitment is accounted for by the three process integration factors, and therefore, the practical importance of integrated people-centered processes in the South West Nigerian SME setting is important to emphasize.

4. Conclusion

The study found that process integration, which is mostly driven by leadership skills, career advancement opportunities and good communication, has a positive effect on employee engagement in Electronic SMEs. Strong leadership and open communication foster trust and alignment with the organization's objectives. When workers think their leaders are able and supportive, they are more committed to the organization's goals and mission.

4.1. Recommendation

Managers can secure commitment to the Electronic SMEs by emphasizing the proper application and practice of the critical elements of process integration, such as effective leadership, effective communication, and career development. This can be achieved through continuous training in leadership skills, particularly communication. If well-thought-out career development initiatives are put in place, employees will also be able to see how far they have come in their careers, which will boost their commitment to the organization.

4.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study contributes conceptually to the literature on process integration by empirically demonstrating that HRM-oriented features are valuable proxies of process integration in the SME context, where typical supply-chain metrics are less useful. The results support the Social Exchange Theory, showing that the organization's investments in human processes generate a reciprocal commitment from the workers [24; 25; 26]. Moreover, the study extends the geographical scope of process integration research by applying existing models [4; 16] to a sub-Saharan African SME context. This provides additional theoretical support to the consistency of the results with the affective commitment component of the three-component model by Meyer and Allen [35].

Managers of electronic SMEs should promote effective communication, especially clear information flow and open feedback strategies, to enhance employee loyalty. This should be matched by more funding for

prearranged career paths and organised leadership development. Because SMEs usually have limited resources, incorporating these elements into the regular management routine (e.g. weekly team briefings, performance coaching, visible promotion criteria) is a low-cost way to retain committed staff.

4.3. Limitations

The present study has limitations that should be noted. The first is that the sample was restricted to a specific geopolitical region of Nigeria, limiting its applicability to other Nigerian industries or regions. Second, the cross-sectional design of this study does not allow for strong causal inferences about the relationship between process integration techniques and employee commitment outcomes. Third, the study used self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias and/or common method variance. Fourth, the geographical concentration of the firms studied did not reflect regional variations in the adoption of process integration among Nigerian firms. The banking or manufacturing industries, or both, survey-based and objective performance metrics with longitudinal designs for future study, may be used to resolve these disadvantages.

Funding

The author has no funding disclosure to make.

Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to disclose. The author read the published manuscript and agrees with it in its current form.

References

- [1] E. Ernest and E. Vincent, "Employee commitment and organizational performance of SMEs in Delta State," *Int. Res. J. Multidiscip. Scope*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2025, doi: 10.47857/irjms.2025.v06i01.02233.
- [2] M. Mapuranga, E. Maziriri, T. Rukuni, and T. Lose, "Employee organisational commitment and the mediating role of work locus of control and employee job satisfaction: The perspective of SME workers," *J. Risk Financial Manag.*, vol. 14, no. 7, art. 306, 2021, doi: 10.3390/jrfm14070306.
- [3] H. Chen, T. Amoako, C. Quansah, S. Danso, and D. Jidda, "Assessment of the impact of management commitment and supply chain integration on SMEs' innovation performance: Moderation role of government support," *Heliyon*, vol. 9, 2023, doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e15914.
- [4] R. Alfalla-Luque, J. Marin-Garcia, and C. Medina-López, "An analysis of the direct and mediated effects of employee commitment and supply chain integration on organisational performance," *Int. J. Prod. Econ.*, vol. 162, pp. 242–257, 2015, doi: 10.1016/j.ijpe.2014.07.004.
- [5] B. Oginni, "A study of human resource management policies and practices and employee commitment: Evidence from Nigerian small and medium enterprises (SMEs)," *Ann. Spiru Haret Univ. Econ. Ser.*, 2023, doi: 10.26458/23214.

- [6] O. Kelvin and A. Odunayo, "Social integration and employee commitment in Nigerian manufacturing firms: A review of literature," *Int. J. Hum. Resour. Stud.*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 1–15, 2019, doi: 10.5296/ijhrs.v9i2.14527.
- [7] P. Davis, "Implementing an employee career-development strategy: How to build commitment and retain employees," *Hum. Resour. Manag. Int. Dig.*, vol. 23, pp. 28–32, 2015, doi: 10.1108/hrmid-05-2015-0066.
- [8] S. Hosen, S. Hamzah, I. Ismail, S. NoormiAlias, M. Aziz, and M. Rahman, "Training & development, career development, and organizational commitment as the predictor of work performance," *Heliyon*, vol. 10, 2023, doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e23903.
- [9] P. Poude and A. Khana, "Impact of career development program, commitment and communication on employee productivity in Nepalese commercial banks," *Int. J. Res. Publ. Rev.*, 2024, doi: 10.55248/gengpi.5.0624.1439.
- [10] M. Adik, P. Pulate, and P. Brahman, "The role of effective communication in career building," *Int. J. Multidiscip. Res.*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2025, doi: 10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i03.49411.
- [11] P. Jha and S. Dahal, "HRD factors and employee commitment in Nepalese organizations: An empirical analysis," *GS WOW: Wisdom of Worthy Madhesh Province*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2023, doi: 10.62078/grks.2023.v01i01.003.
- [12] S. Okeke and T. Elegbede, "The effects of human capital development, employee coaching and career support on organisational commitment among employees in Lagos, Nigeria," *Int. J. Bus. Technopreneurship*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2024, doi: 10.58915/ijbt.v14i1.285.
- [13] A. Mudzakir, F. Fatimah, and F. Yamaly, "Effect of leadership and career development on organizational commitment and employee performance," *Int. J. Community Serv. Engagem.*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2025, doi: 10.47747/ijcse.v6i2.2743.
- [14] Y. Ilwanti, M. Asnawi, and S. Adji, "The influence of competence and career development on employee performance with commitment as a mediating variable," *J. Humanit. Soc. Sci. Bus.*, vol. 3, no. 4, 2024, doi: 10.55047/jhssb.v3i4.1401.
- [15] T. Afrianty, H. Utami, E. Sasmita, F. Putra, and T. Wulandari, "Linking servant leadership and career development to employee voice behaviour through engagement and commitment: Evidence from state polytechnics in East Java, Indonesia," *Cogent Bus. Manag.*, vol. 12, 2025, doi: 10.1080/23311975.2025.2460628.
- [16] M. Hooshangi, J. Sadaghiani, M. Astaneh, and Z. Afshar, "The mediation role of supply chain integration in relationship between employee commitment with organisational performance," *Int. J. Bus. Inf. Syst.*, vol. 24, pp. 210–226, 2017, doi: 10.1504/ijbis.2017.10001674.
- [17] A. Aljumah, H. Shahroor, M. Nuseir, and G. Refae, "The effects of employee commitment and environment uncertainty on product quality: The mediating role of supply chain integration," *Uncertain Supply Chain Manag.*, 2022, doi: 10.5267/j.uscm.2022.7.001.

- [18] J. P. Meyer, T. E. Becker, and C. Vandenberghe, "Employee commitment and motivation: A conceptual analysis and integrative model," *J. Appl. Psychol.*, vol. 89, no. 6, pp. 991–1007, 2004, doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.89.6.991.
- [19] B. Basnet, "Employee organizational commitment towards quality outcomes: A study in manufacturing organization of Nepal," *Pravaha*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 33-42. 2020, doi: 10.3126/pravaha.v25i1.31931.
- [20] I. Alqudah, A. Carballo-Penela, and E. Ruzo-Sanmartín, "High-performance human resource management practices and readiness for change: An integrative model including affective commitment, employees' performance, and the moderating role of hierarchy culture," *Eur. Res. Manag. Bus. Econ.*, 2022, doi: 10.1016/j.iemeen.2021.100177.
- [21] S. Suprayitno and D. Handini, "Effect of competence on career development and implication for organizational commitment," *J. Manag. Res. Stud.*, 2023, doi: 10.61665/jmrs.v1i2.37.
- [22] N. Sampe, N. Brasit, and N. Hamid, "Leadership and career development on organizational commitment and its impact on the performance of employees PT. Bank Mandiri (Persero) Tbk Area Makassar Kartini," *PINISI Discretion Rev.*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2023, doi: 10.26858/pdr.v6i2.50969.
- [23] S. Sawaludin, I. Indrayani, and M. Khaddafi, "The influence of leadership, career development, work discipline, and work environment with job satisfaction as intervening variable on work motivation," *Int. J. Soc. Sci. Educ. Econ. Agric. Res. Technol.*, vol. 1, no. 12, 2022, doi: 10.54443/ijset.v1i12.80.
- [24] G. C. Homans, "Social behavior as exchange," *Am. J. Sociol.*, vol. 63, no. 6, pp. 597–606, 1958, doi: 10.1086/222355.
- [25] P. M. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York, NY, USA: Wiley, 1964.
- [26] A. M. Saks, "Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement," *J. Manag. Psychol.*, vol. 21, no. 7, pp. 600–619, 2006, doi: 10.1108/02683940610690169.
- [27] K. T. Dirks and D. L. Ferrin, "Trust in leadership: Meta-analytic findings and implications for research and practice," *J. Appl. Psychol.*, vol. 87, no. 4, pp. 611–628, 2002, doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.87.4.611.
- [28] L. D. Molm, "The structure of reciprocity," *Soc. Psychol. Q.*, vol. 73, no. 2, pp. 119–131, 2010, doi: 10.1177/0190272510369079.
- [29] R. Cropanzano, E. L. Anthony, S. R. Daniels, and A. V. Hall, "Social exchange theory: A critical review with theoretical remedies," *Acad. Manag. Ann.*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 479–516, 2017, doi: 10.5465/annals.2015.0099.
- [30] C. Ogbonnaya and D. Valizade, "High-performance work practices, employee outcomes, and organizational performance: A social exchange perspective," *Hum. Resour. Manag. J.*, vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 577–593, 2018, doi: 10.1111/1748-8583.12203.
- [31] P. Kloutsiniotis and D. Mihail, "The effects of high performance work systems in employees' service-oriented OCB," *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.*, vol. 90, art. 102610, 2020, doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102610.

- [32] K. Cook and E. Rice, "Social exchange theory," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 2020, doi: 10.1007/0-387-36921-x_3.
- [33] A. Ahmad and Z. Cheng, "The role of change content, context, process, and leadership in understanding employees' commitment to change," *Public Pers. Manag.*, vol. 47, pp. 195–216, 2018, doi: 10.1177/0091026017753645.
- [34] P. Spector, D. Howard, E. Eisenberg, J. Couris, and J. Quinn, "The impact of authentic leadership behavior on employee trust, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment," *Hum. Perform.*, vol. 38, pp. 196–220, 2025, doi: 10.1080/08959285.2025.2522437.
- [35] J. P. Meyer and N. J. Allen, "A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment," *Hum. Resour. Manag. Rev.*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 61–89, 1991, doi: 10.1016/1053-4822(91)90011-Z.
- [36] B. B. Flynn, B. Huo, and X. Zhao, "The impact of supply chain integration on performance: A contingency and configuration approach," *J. Oper. Manag.*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 58–71, 2010, doi: 10.1016/j.jom.2009.06.001.
- [37] J. F. Hair, J. J. Risher, M. Sarstedt, and C. M. Ringle, "When to use and how to report results of PLS-SEM," *Eur. Bus. Rev.*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 2–24, 2019, doi: 10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203.
- [38] C. M. Ringle, M. Sarstedt, R. Mitchell, and S. P. Gudergan, "Partial least squares structural equation modeling in HRM research," *Int. J. Hum. Resour. Manag.*, vol. 31, no. 12, pp. 1617–1643, 2020, doi: 10.1080/09585192.2017.1416655.



© 2026 by the authors. Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).