

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Goal commitment as a mediator of laissez-faire leadership and adaptive performance: The moderating effect of coworker support climate

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Received: 20 March 2025**Accepted:** 30 June 2025**Published:** 23 December 2025**Abstract**

The impact of the laissez-faire leadership on team performance has been studied through the lens of two leadership theories: Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and Goal Setting Theory (GST). With this in mind, the current research aims to provide empirical support for a moderated mediation model of the relationship between laissez-faire leadership, team goal commitment, coworkers' support climate, and team adaptive performance. The data used to test the hypotheses came from a survey of 304 team members and 68 team leaders in Kenya across seven high-tech companies, five Research and Development (R&D) organisations, and six manufacturing organisations. The proposed model was assessed using SmartPLS. Results of the study indicate that the proposed laissez-faire leadership model is valid and supported: laissez-faire leadership had a direct effect on team goal commitment, which in turn had a positive effect on team adaptive performance, demonstrating that team goal commitment significantly mediates the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and team adaptive performance. Furthermore, the results also demonstrated that under high levels of coworker support climate, the relationship between team goal commitment and team adaptive performance was strengthened through a significant moderation effect. Theoretical implications of these findings indicate that laissez-faire leadership should be redefined as a contingent resource that necessitates the ability of the team to translate the autonomy given to them into a commitment to the goal.

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INTRODUCTION

Recent decades have necessitated a need for individuals and organisations alike to adapt to complex and, at times, ambiguous situations (Tung & Shih, 2025). Team-level responses are typically used by today's businesses to respond to the dynamic and increasingly complex nature of the globalised external environment. Very little consideration has often been given to team-level adaptive performance (Steege et al., 2025). This adaptability reflects how well team members perform in dealing with routine and non-routine tasks, and the degree of adaptability demonstrated when responding to environmental demands. Adaptability is heavily reliant upon the participation of team members in order to enable quick and effective responses to external factors Setiyadi et al. (2024) and, in today's environ-

ment, team members do not only have to rely on a traditional, hierarchical leader who leads from the top-down; rather, many teams also rely upon shared leadership, which allows team members to provide support to each other through communication, and joint accountability, to reach their goals (Roling et al., 2024). This creates a substantial amount of informal leadership that has rapidly become important to many teams in adapting to external factors (Bonini et al., 2024; Iskandar et al., 2023). An important question that has arisen from this change to shared leadership teams is the role of a traditional, vertical leader within shared leadership teams.

Laissez-faire leadership is a type of leadership that allows for minimal interference Tung and Shih (2025) and a 'hands-off' approach, as a leader enables employees to make decisions

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without many guidelines from them. Therefore, because of the association between laissez-faire leadership and negative leadership characteristics, professionals and researchers alike have researched laissez-faire leadership (Hundie & Habtewold, 2024), as it agrees with the theory that 'bad is stronger than good' (Zheng & Li, 2024). In addition to this, most of the research has concentrated on the negative effects of laissez-faire leadership on followers, such as decreased performance and increased uncertainty (Hamze & Sadiq, 2025; López-Cabarcos et al., 2024). Despite this, other researchers have published work to support the positive aspects of laissez-faire leadership in some cases, notably with self-managing and self-organising teams (Ali & Ullah, 2023; Kamal, Kesuma, et al., 2024). The lack of active supervision, direction, and follow-up characterises laissez-faire leadership; it is a non-involvement or avoidance style of providing leadership that keeps leaders from being involved in any part of the team's work and provides the team's members the freedom to choose their way to accomplish the task and resolve any problems (Desgourdes et al., 2024).

A team's commitment to their goals is the level of commitment towards achieving the same goals (Steegh et al., 2025). Team goal commitment reflects how serious members are about achieving their team goal and how determined and persistent they are in their efforts to accomplish a common team's goal, regardless of any obstacles that might present themselves along the way (Zhang et al., 2023). Team goal commitment serves as a motivational mechanism in linking both the initial goal assignment and development, and then the ongoing motivation required to accomplish that goal. In a fast-paced organisational environment, if a team has committed to their goal(s), the team will be able to stay aligned with their focus, and the team will be able to achieve success (Chang et al., 2022). When a team's leader adopts an autocratic, hands-off approach to leading and managing his/her team, team members will be able to channel their creative energy into focused, thought-out, purposeful actions, all of which are vital for a team's ongoing adaptation. Goal setting theory was originally developed to look specifically at the performance of the individual; however, at a later time in its development the goal setting theory was developed to account for collective/group level performance, recognizing that when members of a team are committed to a common purpose they will perform better as a group when working together (Ozer & Yukselir, 2023). Goal setting theory stipulates that when a group of individuals collectively establishes and commits to challenging, yet realistic goals, those goals will lead to improved performance due to the focus of effort, increasing the level of perseverance for a successful outcome and allowing for the development of more effective ways to gain success

(Locke & Latham, 2015; Scott & Boyd, 2023).

Additionally, contextual factors have also been studied in relation to improving behaviours via the organisational atmosphere (Man et al., 2025). The idea of coworker support climate (the common perception among coworkers that other coworkers are willing to assist them in both the practical and emotional aspects of their jobs) serves as an important social resource for buffering teams against change pressures (Bradley et al., 2023). Coworker support climate provides team members with the needed social resources to utilise that motivation. When working in a high-support environment, the connection between commitment and adaptive behaviour will be markedly strengthened because team members will feel confident in taking risks, learning from mistakes, and coordinating complex change processes (Fu & Charoensukmongkol, 2023). Utilising the COR theory (Holmgreen et al., 2017), coworker support has been established as an essential job resource within an organisation. Therefore, based on this COR theory, this study will explore the moderating effects of coworker support on the relationship between team goal commitment and team adaptive performance. For many years, researchers interested in understanding how employees perform their jobs, which is referred to as "task performance", have studied different aspects of the work environment (e.g., type of work, job characteristics) that influence their ability to complete tasks successfully (Man et al., 2025). This research is important; however, it does not extensively consider the role that leadership practices play in influencing job/task performance. As organisations have evolved over time, the complexity and dynamism of the work environments to which employees work have increased. Therefore, one of the most significant contributions to the field of work psychology is understanding how Laissez-Faire leadership influences team adaptive performance through team goal commitment as a primary mediating variable (Tung & Shih, 2025). In addition to identifying Laissez-Faire leadership's effects on team performance, understanding how Laissez-Faire leadership contributes to developing team motivation and how delegation and trust inherent in Laissez-Faire leadership affect teams in a developing economy provides researchers with ample opportunity for future research.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: Section 2 outlines the conceptual framework; Section 3 describes the methodology; Section 4 presents the results and analysis; Section 4 discusses the findings and implications of the research, and Section 5 describes the practical applications of the research and suggests areas for further investigation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The conservation of resources theory provides a theoretical framework through which to understand how laissez-faire leadership influences employees' constructive challenging behaviour (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Holmgreen et al. (2017), people's motivation to obtain, maintain and enhance both tangible (e.g., monetary, equipment) and intangible (e.g., social support, information) resources for improving quality of life and achieving their objectives. Researchers have established that leadership greatly influences leaders' level of support in both the provision and management of resources within an organisation, as the leader's leadership behaviour influences the leader's actions in the workplace (Ahsan & Khalid, 2023).

An illustration of this is shown in Figure 1, where laissez-faire

leadership has an indirect effect on team commitment through supporting team members' performance expectations and goals, based on the Theory of Goal Setting and the CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES THEORY. According to Hobfoll et al. (2018), both theories suggest that Laissez-Faire leadership would have an indirect relationship with team members committing to a team goal from a Resource-related perspective, as far as Laissez-Faire leadership is concerned., the leaders' role as a passive style of leadership can be interpreted as leaders being passive in providing access to, as well as the leader's ability to provide, the availability of, valuable resources for their employees (Tung & Shih, 2025). Further, we propose that the relationships are moderated by the presence or absence of coworker support.

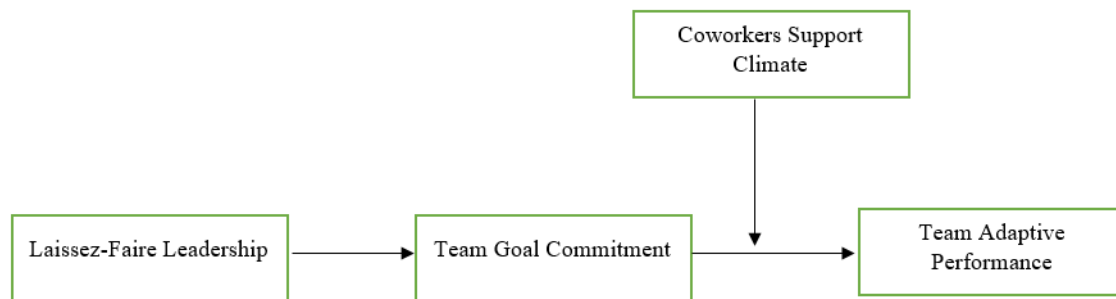


FIGURE 1. Conceptual model

Laissez Faire Leadership and Team Goal Commitment

Laissez-Faire leadership was referred to as “non-leadership” or as leaders relinquishing their responsibilities, leading to mostly negative outcomes in organisations (Tung & Shih, 2025). The passive or avoidant nature of this leadership approach includes the absence of structures, feedback, and/or clear directions, increasing the likelihood of the team members' negative emotional states, which will result in low levels of motivation for work within the organisation. Laissez-Faire leadership can increase role confusion and ambiguity for employees (Ali & Ullah, 2023). An employee's understanding of their role within the organisation is important for commitment to achieving the organisation's goals, as they need clarity on their responsibilities and what to work towards (Desgourdes et al., 2024; Hundie & Habtewold, 2024).

Kamal, Kesuma, et al. (2024) stated, “Laissez-faire leadership is a lack of leadership, a lack of intervention, or both”. Because of its lack of leadership, laissez-faire has been viewed as an entirely different form of leadership from transformational leadership. Laissez-faire leaders are usually absent when they should be present, usually do not make decisions, and are viewed as not taking responsibility for leading (López-Cabarcos et al., 2024;

NOUHI et al., 2024). Zheng and Li (2024) said, “Laissez-faire leadership is poor leadership, ineffective leadership, and extremely dissatisfying for followers”. It has been said that laissez-faire leadership consists of ineffective leadership practices (Ahsan & Khalid, 2023; Ndububa & Ugoala, 2025). This has resulted in negative outcomes for employees, such as lower levels of happiness, increased conflict between employees, and lower levels of employee performance (Desgourdes et al., 2024; Gulzar, 2025; Jam et al., 2025).

A growing body of evidence supports the view that while there may be strong evidence for the detrimental effects of laissez-faire leadership, new and more nuanced views show that leadership can actually produce positive outcomes, under specific conditions, and for certain types of teams or environments (Chang et al., 2022). In other words, laissez-faire leadership can be seen as empowering and building trust for teams with highly-skilled, experienced, self-motivated members rather than simply avoiding (Zhang et al., 2023). The Laissez-Faire leader delegates goal ownership by giving maximum autonomy to the team. This perceived increase in empowerment and the lack of micromanagement enhance the team's beliefs in their collective self-efficacy and their sense of control over their work processes. This re-

search has shown a negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership and affective organisational commitment Scott and Boyd (2023), while some studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between Laissez-faire leaders and motivation and affective organisational commitment for professional service sector populations (Ozer & Yukselir, 2023). The inconsistency in results suggests there needs to be further exploration into what moderators and mediators exist within the relationship between non-intervention by a leader and team commitment to goals (Steeh et al., 2025).

H1: Laissez-faire leadership has a direct impact on team goal commitment.

Team Goal Commitment and Team Adaptive Performance

The concept of teamwork is theoretically and scientifically validated as a motivational condition that converts the intention and efforts of a team into ongoing, strategic behaviours necessary for adaptability (Steeh et al., 2025). Goal-setting theory, Locke and Latham (2015), identifies commitment as an indispensable mechanism for pursuing challenging objectives with the requisite passion and effort. Highly committed teams will be less likely to abandon their goals when faced with hardship, disappointment, or unexpected changes in context (Ozer & Yukselir, 2023). Adaptive performance will always require a team to respond positively to, and overcome, both the new and challenging aspects of their work Scott and Boyd (2023), and commitment focuses the immediate motivational resources needed to create more complicated behavioural modifications or adaptations such as modifying how people think about or approach their work, acquiring new expertise and skills, or identifying what caused an unexpected outcome.

For example, empirical evidence has indicated that dedicated teams utilise proactive behaviour and provide higher levels of cognitive flexibility when faced with unforeseen situations (Zhang et al., 2023). In addition, Steeh et al. (2025) found there is a strong relationship between team commitment and the team's ability to change their approach while executing dynamic tasks, which is one of the key elements of being adaptable. Goal commitment also creates a shared mental map and develops collective efficacy for the team, so when a crisis arises necessitating them to change their focus, team members are able to work more closely together to optimise resource utilisation (Roling et al., 2024). By having this level of coordination and support from team members, these teams can effectively change course and implement new strategies with less resistance, thereby providing a competitive advantage compared to teams that do not provide this level of commitment (Setiyadi et al., 2024).

The complexity of team goals creates a continual requirement for specialised knowledge and increased learning throughout the process of accomplishing them (Iskandar et al., 2023). It will be difficult to navigate through the many uncertainties and distractions involved in group innovation without having a unifying goal. Roling et al. (2024) reported a strengthened positive relationship between team commitment and innovation (i.e., adaptive behaviour) in the case of very complex tasks, whereby increased levels of commitment assist in decreasing uncertainty and focusing the group's collective effort on generating solutions to the adaptive challenges that arise. By establishing a stable common goal that provides clarity and continuity of purpose, the team's dedication to the goal helps to maintain an anchor for the group, preventing fragmentation and overwhelming the group with adaptation requirements (Iskandar et al., 2023; Setiyadi et al., 2024). Therefore, the committed team views the adaptation requirement not as a threat, but rather as an integral part of the overall achievement of the group's valued collective achievement, thereby enhancing overall adaptive performance.

H2: Team goal commitment has a direct impact on team adaptive performance.

Team Goal Commitment as Mediating

Kamal, Kesuma, et al. (2024), laissez-faire leadership, which is conceptualised through trust and positive interpretation, the success of both types of leadership is significantly influenced by psychological empowerment and team efficacy. With regards to the negative effects of passive leadership, López-Cabarcos et al. (2024) have shown that when leaders do not provide guidance, teams will depend on their own internal motivational and commitment resources to achieve positive results. Moreover, goal-setting theory provides a basis for believing that commitment is the condition that serves as a link between simply setting a goal and driving performance. Hence, laissez-faire Leadership begins the process by transferring responsibility to team members (Setiyadi et al., 2024) Team goal commitment is the cognitive and motivational condition that facilitates performance adaptability, thereby accounting for the effect of leadership style on team adaptability (Zheng & Li, 2024).

According to Hamze and Sadiq (2025), achieving goals takes a great deal of effort and tenacity to develop strategies related to task completion, which is greater than that of individuals who are not very committed to goal achievement. Highly committed individuals also develop greater task-related strategies than those who are only somewhat committed to goal achievement, unless they have an expectation of successfully achieving the goals they set. Steeh et al. (2025), identified the two main an-

tecedents (prior causes) of goal commitment as the expectancy of achieving the goal and the attractiveness of achieving the goal; in other words, if a person perceives that they can achieve the goal, then their level of commitment is significantly higher than when they perceive the goal as impossible. Goals that are perceived as difficult create focus and direction, subsequently driving adaptive performance. As with specific goals, when a team has a difficult goal, it is critical that all members align their efforts and resources towards achieving the goal so that they do not waste their time and energy on unrelated and irrelevant tasks (Albrecht et al., 2024). Therefore, challenging (difficult) goals act as motivators to provide agile team members with a collective and collaborative mindset, create stronger urgency to prioritise their work, and create an environment that reduces distractions (Bonini et al., 2024).

Leaders in laissez-faire leadership settings are responsible for delegation of authority to their teams in order to foster creativity and collaboration, but effective leadership requires the establishment of a firm internal system of regulation (Albrecht et al., 2024). Ågotnes et al. (2024) and Zhang et al. (2023) regarding the functioning of self-directed teams. The effectiveness of self-directed teams depends on the level of team commitment and the degree of alignment of team goals. In the absence of an active leader, a team goal commitment that is strong enough will ensure that the opportunities for freedom created by laissez-faire leadership do not subsequently lead to chaos or low effort. Instead, team goal commitment will continue to direct the self-governance of the team into adaptive behaviours necessary for achieving the lofty goals of the team (Desgourdes et al., 2024; López-Cabarcos et al., 2024; Scott & Boyd, 2023).

H3: Team goal commitment mediates the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and team adaptive performance.

Coworkers Support Climate as a Moderating

Climate for coworker support surrounding climate reflects the shared expectations by team members of the extent to which the members of their workgroup are supportive and helpful to one another in a variety of situations through the following behaviours (Bako & Mashi, 2023): providing timely and appropriate assistance, gaining access to subject-specific information, encouragement, and providing each other with emotional support (Darke et al., 2024). An environment designed to provide psychological safety is required to support adaptive behaviours, and such environments provide the necessary framework for developing the capacity for adaptation. Teams' requirements for adaptation can be highly uncertain; therefore, taking risks, making mistakes, and engaging in behaviours that have not

previously been practised can create additional uncertainty for members of a team that may be faced with these requirements (Albrecht et al., 2024). A high degree of coworker support enables a team to feel less concerned about the risk of failure and is likely to provide individuals with confidence that there will be the resources to cope with the challenges of both (Albrecht et al., 2024).

When workplace commitment levels are high, and coworker support levels are also high, the connection between the two is maximised in terms of how much adaptive performance is increased (Man et al., 2025). The team has both the desire (commitment) and the necessary support (support) in order to be able to successfully implement the adaptive strategy (Syed-Yahya et al., 2022). Because members of the team feel psychologically safe enough to raise issues and propose ideas regarding what to do differently and how to coordinate the interdependencies between each other and with others to accomplish the adaptive task, there is less expenditure of energy required in sharing knowledge and resolving conflicts (Bradley et al., 2023). When employees have high levels of commitment but low levels of support, the relationship between their level of commitment and their adaptive performance is weakened. Even though a work team may have a very high level of commitment to their work goal, that commitment will be impeded if the team members do not have access to the appropriate resources and the perception that they are in a psychologically safe working environment (Fu & Charoensukmongkol, 2023). Committed employees may not say anything innovative about potential solutions to the work challenge if they fear criticism, lack trust in their colleagues, or believe that their employer will not support them during challenging times (Syed-Yahya et al., 2022). Consequently, according to Shin et al. (2022), the potential to leverage committed employees' motivation to produce a positive outcome will be negated.

Previous studies have shown that a work situational factor known as "coworker-support climate" can have an effect on the effectiveness of a manager's leadership (Albrecht et al., 2024; Fu & Charoensukmongkol, 2023). The coworker-support climate is defined as the degree to which employees view their coworkers as being helpful, cooperative, and supportive (Bako & Mashi, 2023). The authors suggest that with a coworker-support climate, the detrimental effects of a manager using a "laissez-faire" style of leadership can be buffered by the manager's coworkers, who have provided alternative sources of guidance and support (Chang et al., 2022). Employees who work in a supportive coworker-support climate may be more inclined to rely on the coworker-support climate for assistance and guidance rather than receiving guidance and feedback from

their manager under a laissez-faire style of leadership (Qurrahtulain et al., 2022). In the absence of effective leadership, an encouraging workplace environment created by supportive coworkers may be able to provide the needed social support and motivation for employees to remain invested and engaged at work, as a positive workplace environment has the potential to replace some of these resources (Ali & Ullah, 2023; Shin et al., 2022). Therefore, coworkers serve as substitutes for leaders who are absent in providing direction, advice and assistance. For example, when employees have a strong sense of community and support among other employees, this can provide an offsetting effect to reduce the feelings of disconnection caused by a lack of direction from leadership (Bradley et al., 2023). The relationship between motivation and performance outcomes has consistently shown that the impact of motivational factors is increased when they are supported through a positive team-based working environment (Iskandar et al., 2023; Ozer & Yukselir, 2023).

H4: Coworkers support the climate moderating relationship on team goal commitment and team adaptive performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research was conducted using a cross-sectional, multi-source survey to determine the relationship among laissez-faire leadership, team commitment to goals, coworkers' support level, and adaptive performance of teams. This design was chosen for its ability to test a complex moderated mediation model. Additionally, to eliminate or reduce the potential effects of Common Method Variance (CMV) due to a single source of information (Hair et al., 2024), the data collected for the primary variables came from three unique sources (team members, managers of teams, and through social network methods). The focus of this research was operational teams that operate within Knowledge-Intensive and Production-Focused organisations that regularly make adjustments to behaviour in order to meet the needs of internal and external customers.

Data Collection and Participants

The data for this study were collected using a Multi-Source Cross-Sectional Survey that targeted organisations from three key sectors in Kenya: High-Tech, Research & Development (R&D), and Manufacturing. The overall sample was hoped to consist of participants from 18 different organisations in these fast-paced industries. The Research process started with contacting the HR personnel through established networks to solicit participation from their organizations, as well as clearly establishing the purpose of the study (the exploration of lead-

ership, and team performance) and the confidentiality of both the Multi-Source data collected and the integrity of the survey the research team was conducting, in order to encourage the cooperation of the organizations in participating in the study. HR departments provided a list of identification numbers for each member on their team (i.e., R&D, Quality Assurance, etc.) who participated in this research, after agreeing to participate. The research focused specifically on asking questions of smaller teams, between 4 and 8 people, because of the need for sufficient reliability for measurement on some of the variables, including coworkers' support climate, using a social network analytic approach. To assure the protection of participants' identity and to aid in the association of responses to individuals, every questionnaire and return envelope was assigned a unique code prior to making it available for distribution. The HR departments assisted with the administration of the survey with a goal of achieving at least a 60% response rate from each team, in order to provide adequate aggregate team-level data and sufficient statistical strength of results.

Using sealed envelopes to submit completed questionnaires to respondents helped establish confidentiality for all participants. To counteract a possible bias introduced by the format used for some of the questionnaire items, a number of items were presented in reverse order to decrease the likelihood of providing a constant set of responses. After a significant amount of contact had occurred with various groups, the final sample included 7 high-tech corporations, 5 R&D entities, and 6 manufacturers in Kenya, resulting in a total of 304 team member surveys and 68 team leader surveys that could be paired; thus, this provided a very sound foundation for examining the proposed moderated and mediation analysis.

Research Measures

The researchers used previously validated scales for all variables and collected data using five-point Likert-type scales (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Multiple data sources were used to avoid common method variance. Laissez-faire leadership on a four-item scale, which was adapted from Tung and Shih (2025). For team goal commitment, each team member responded to a nine-item scale (Tung & Shih, 2025). The coworkers' support climate was defined with six items, based on social exchange or perceived organisational support literature, and focused on relationships among team members (Man et al., 2025). Team adaptive performance was rated by the team leader/manager on a seven-item scale that assessed the team's ability to adapt its collective strategies and behaviours in response to unexpected or non-routine events (Tung & Shih, 2025).

Analysis and Results

The data analysis using SmartPLS was completed in two steps: (i) measuring the model and (ii) measuring the structural model.

Measurement Model

The purpose of measuring the model was to determine the level of convergent validity, discriminant validity and internal consistency of reliability. In order to test the models, however, a full collinearity test was performed, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used as a full collinearity test for all latent variables (Hair et al., 2024). Based on information from Table 1, it is clear that all constructs within the model had VIF values of less than the cut-off score of five. Therefore, according to Hair et al. (2024), collinearity was not an issue, and the results were not at risk of being misleading.

Validity and Internal Consistency

The research used the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) as measurement criteria for establishing convergent validity. The research examined four variables,

and the results are provided in the table below (Table 1). According to Hair et al. (2024), convergent validity is achieved if the composite reliability is greater than 0.7, and the average variance extracted is greater than 0.5. From Table 1, we see that all composite reliability scores exceed the minimum requirement (0.7), and all average variance extracted scores exceed the minimum requirement (0.5). Therefore, it can be concluded that the current questionnaire is acceptable for establishing convergent validity. Reliability was also established for the questionnaire using the Cronbach alpha method. The quality of reliability is deemed acceptable if the Cronbach alpha score exceeds the value of 0.7. As shown in the table below, all items in the questionnaire have a reliability exceeding the recommended minimum score of 0.70, which supports the high reliability of the questionnaire. The results from Table 1 confirm that the questionnaire has established reliability. Additionally, Reliability is established using factor loadings from each index of a construct and the correlation of all the indices of the construct. For the examination of factor loadings, only one item was eliminated from the adaptive performance construct.

TABLE 1. Assessment of measurement model

Variables	Items	Factor Loading	α	CR	AVE	VIF
Laissez-Faire Leadership	LFL1	0.835	0.789	0.864	0.615	1.863
Laissez-Faire Leadership	LFL2	0.703				
Laissez-Faire Leadership	LFL3	0.772				
Laissez-Faire Leadership	LFL4	0.819				
Team Goal Commitment	TGC1	0.817	0.926	0.938	0.629	2.966
Team Goal Commitment	TGC2	0.788				
Team Goal Commitment	TGC3	0.742				
Team Goal Commitment	TGC4	0.779				
Team Goal Commitment	TGC5	0.783				
Team Goal Commitment	TGC6	0.807				
Team Goal Commitment	TGC7	0.832				
Team Goal Commitment	TGC8	0.721				
Team Goal Commitment	TGC9	0.860				
Coworkers Support Climate	CSC1	0.723	0.912	0.932	0.696	3.034
Coworkers Support Climate	CSC2	0.823				
Coworkers Support Climate	CSC3	0.863				
Coworkers Support Climate	CSC4	0.853				
Coworkers Support Climate	CSC5	0.869				
Coworkers Support Climate	CSC6	0.864				
Team Adaptive Performance	TAP1	0.823	0.879	0.906	0.583	2.853
Team Adaptive Performance	TAP2	0.857				
Team Adaptive Performance	TAP3	0.865				
Team Adaptive Performance	TAP4	0.766				
Team Adaptive Performance	TAP5	0.707				
Team Adaptive Performance	TAP6	0.700				

Mean, SD and Correlation

Table 2 presents the Mean, SD, and the correlation of the constructs of this study, along with the means obtained using a

5-point Likert scale. The mean score of coworker support climate was 5.65, laissez-faire leadership was 3.87, team adaptive performance was 4.77 and team goal commitment was 5.54.

TABLE 2. Mean, SD and correlation

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Coworkers Support Climate	5.65	0.71	0.834			
Laissez-Faire Leadership	3.87	0.54	0.529	0.784		
Team Adaptive Performance	4.77	0.63	0.639	0.606	0.763	
Team Goal Commitment	5.54	0.81	0.759	0.508	0.708	0.793

Discriminant Validity

To evaluate discriminant validity, an analysis of the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio was performed as a statistical test. Two cutoff points for determining HTMT discriminant validity are

HTMT0.85 = <0.85 and HTMT0.90 = <0.90 as a way to mitigate issues of discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 3 provides the results; all constructs demonstrate discriminant validity, i.e., HTMT Validity was confirmed.

TABLE 3. HTMT

	1	2	3	4
Coworkers Support Climate				
Laissez-Faire Leadership	0.629			
Team Adaptive Performance	0.817	0.732		
Team Goal Commitment	0.832	0.581	0.772	

Structural Model

Consequently, the next phase in developing the structural model assessment was carried out after an adequate level of completion was made on all aspects of the measurement model assessment. The next phase of the analysis, bootstrapping, was done with 5,000 resamples and consisted of an analysis of collinearity, path coefficients (between the variables), coefficient of determination (R^2), and hypothesis testing. All VIFs

associated with those constructs studied by researchers were below five, meaning that there were no problems associated with collinearity (Hair et al., 2024).

Coefficient of Determination R^2

For instance, in Table 4, the R^2 measures the accuracy of any model developed using it. Using Hair et al. (2024) range of R^2 (0.75 = high; 0.50 = medium; 0.25 = low), we can conclude that the data used in developing this model are accurate.

TABLE 4. Coefficient of Determination R^2

	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Team Adaptive Performance	0.716	0.715
Team Goal Commitment	0.258	0.256

Direct Effect

The final phase to be completed in creating the structure model assessment was to take an assessment of path coefficients among the studied variables. The t -test was conducted to test

whether there was a significant impact from each independent (exogenous) variable on the dependent (endogenous) variable when examined individually.

TABLE 5. Direct analysis

Paths	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	p Values
Laissez-Faire Leadership -> Team Goal Commitment	-0.508	11.258	0.000
Team Goal Commitment -> Team Adaptive Performance	-0.146	2.361	0.019

Indirect Effect

Table 6 include the results for path analysis. The results of the hypothesis testing showed the path coefficients (beta), *t*-

statistics, and *p*-values in Table 6.

TABLE 6. Indirect analysis

Paths	Original Sample (O)	<i>T</i> Statistics	<i>p</i> Values
Laissez-Faire Leadership -> Team Goal Commitment -> Team Adaptive Performance	0.074	2.227	0.026
Coworkers Support Climate * Team Goal Commitment -> Team Adaptive Performance	0.072	2.069	0.039

DISCUSSION

This research assessed a multifaceted mediation-modulation framework to study the progression of team adaptive performance through team goal commitment via the behavioural motivation of laissez-faire leadership, and moderated by the support received from their teams' environment within 18 organisations operating in Kenya. If proven correct, the results will provide important academic and real-world knowledge concerning how a 'hands off' or Laissez-Faire' approach to leading others within an intensive knowledge creating enterprise translates into advantageous behaviour of Teams operating with a high degree of flexibility over time.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) predicted that there would be a direct relationship between laissez-faire leadership and team goal commitment. While laissez-faire leadership is often viewed in an unfavourable light because of the inherent lack of structure, in some circumstances, such as mature teams operating in rapidly evolving Industries (i.e., Technology, R&D, etc.), the 'hands off' approach could be seen as a positive reinforcement of empowerment and trust on behalf of the leader (Kamal, Kesuma, et al., 2024; Tung & Shih, 2025). This view is consistent with conservation of resources theory, which postulates that individuals will strive to build resources and protect what they currently have. Therefore, when a leader provides a valuable resource, a team member may feel constrained or obligated to reciprocate that support through total acceptance, commitment, and internalisation of the team goal (i.e., motivation resource) to prevent the loss of individual autonomy if they perform poorly.

Goal-setting theory provides an understanding of the link between team goal commitment and team adaptive performance. Goal setting theory argues that when a team possesses great team goal commitment, they are committed to achieving their goals and demonstrate an unwavering commitment through commitment, effort and persistence/resilience techniques, and appropriate use of team members (Desgourdes et al., 2024; Tung & Shih, 2025). As a result, both team goal commitment

and team adaptive performance include behaviours and strategies that allow teams to respond appropriately to the novel situation(s) presented to them, essentially redirecting their energy/efforts towards the development of solutions/promises to reach their goal(s) in the face of an unexpected occurrence/occurrence. The strength of team goal commitment is what enables teams to effectively adjust their behaviours/strategies/processes when unexpected occurrences happen, to continue working towards their goal(s) regardless of any ambiguity in those occurrences.

The research indicates that team goal commitment functions as a mediator in the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and team adaptive performance. The mediation mechanism that is provided by team adaptive performance explains how a lack of intervention from a leader may lead to higher levels of adaptability by teams. The laissez-faire leadership provides team members with the autonomy to define what they will accomplish, thus allowing the team the opportunity to develop a climate where they create and solidify their goals through teamwork. The team goal commitment promotes the motivation for a team to execute the difficult behaviours required for team adaptive performance (Steegh et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2023). Without team goal commitment, the laissez-faire leadership leader's autonomy would have likely resulted in unclear roles for the team and dispersed efforts across the organisation, causing the team to be unable to adapt to new situations in the workplace. Therefore, the model demonstrates that the influence of laissez-faire leadership is only effective when the team is able to self-regulate their behaviours and commit to their goals.

According to the moderation hypothesis, team goal commitment links to team adaptive performance, but is enhanced by a coworker's support climate. The motivations for team goal commitment are drawn from the goal-setting theory, whereas the environmental factors supporting team goal commitment and team adaptive performance are related to the conservation

of resources theory. Team goal commitment is a motivator to perform well; however, a strong coworker's support climate provides the means to provide other social resources required to perform well (Dijkshoorn-Albrecht et al., 2024; Man et al., 2025). As per COR theory, employees receive a form of social support that mitigates their stress levels and helps them corral their stress into actions needed to succeed. Team adaptive performance is naturally stressful due to the need for learning and risk; a high coworker's support climate provides teams with less potential loss regarding their social or emotional resources while they are adapting, making it easier for teams to take risks, learn from mistakes, and ultimately "fail forward." For teams with high team goal commitment and a strong coworker's support climate, the motivation to achieve will be compounded by the confidence that coworkers will support them with social and emotional resources, thus maximising the value of their motivated efforts towards creating effective results.

Theoretical Implications

The findings also provide an understanding of how motivational and contextual factors are combined with leadership style to determine team productivity and adaptability. This was accomplished by testing a complex moderated-mediation model rather than a simplistic main-effect model and has provided researchers, practitioners and policymakers with insight into the types of resources that drive team adaptability and productivity. For example, leaders may not always intervene in a team member's activities, but in the case of high-tech and R&D teams, leaders may provide team members with autonomy and trust. According to COR Theory, the receipt of these types of resources creates motivation for team members to protect their resource (control/freedom) and subsequently creates a motivation for team goal commitment, which is a critical motivational resource (Holmgreen et al., 2017). This also indicates that laissez-faire leadership can function only when the lease of autonomy can be converted into the motivational resource of team goal commitment and thus creates the first link in the resource-gain chain that leads to performance and bridges gaps in the knowledge of the indirect positive effects of this passive leadership style on team member adaptability.

Secondly, the present research refines goal-setting theory by identifying team goal commitment as an important mediating factor between laissez-faire leadership and team adaptive performance. While laissez-faire leadership does not directly influence a team's agility, it does provide the necessary environmental factors for the team to reach the motivational state necessary to adapt. This supports the existing principle of Goal Setting Theory, whereby goal attainment requires commitment,

and extends this principle to non-routine, complex adaptive tasks. The findings demonstrate that adaptation is not an unplanned, reactive process, but rather is goal-oriented and is the result of a team's continued, self-governing commitment to its primary goals. Additionally, in accordance with conservation of resources theory, Collective Sense of community serves as a key resource buffer for social support, as adaptive performance tends to be resource demanding and associated with financial and reputational risks; a higher level of CSC creates greater psychological support and resources for mitigating potential threats to resource loss. It shows that the effectiveness of commitment is conditional, meaning that high team goal commitment alone is not enough to inspire TAP; a strong commitment must also be supported by high social support, in order to get the most value from the commitment made. Additionally, it also helps to prevent the internal friction or fear that drains the team's motivation, allowing them to focus on the risk-taking and coordination needed to adapt effectively.

Practical Implications

This research provides significant implications for managers of organisations operating in Kenya's high-tech, R&D, and manufacturing industries regarding how to leverage motivation and team performance in constantly changing environments. By determining how team goal commitment serves as an intermediary between laissez-faire leadership and team adaptive performance, and how coworkers support climate enhances team goal commitment, the research provides managers and human resource practitioners with direction for leading teams. Managers should understand that laissez-faire leadership does not only mean avoiding involvement and decision-making; rather, laissez-faire leadership is a tool for strategic delegation. In the industries studied, rather than considering laissez-faire as a negative form of leadership, leaders should use laissez-faire to allow competent and mature teams to operate autonomously and as a means of demonstrating trust to their teams. By providing teams the opportunity to self-govern and commit to their own goals, leaders create a motivation chain: when a leader grants freedom through passive leadership, it increases team goal commitment. However, laissez-faire leadership should be utilised cautiously; a team must already have the skills and organisational structure in place to take advantage of the freedom. For teams that do not have this level of experience, laissez-faire leadership likely impedes rather than enhances team goal commitment.

A major aspect of motivation is group commitment because it links different types of leadership styles to agility. Because of this, organisations should prioritise the practice of reinforcing

ing commitment within their teams so that people can work together towards achieving goals defined by a shared vision. Managers have the responsibility to set specific goals, create challenging goals, and communicate clearly defined goals to their employees, as defined in goal-setting theory. Additionally, the goal-setting process should be collaborative in nature because when team members agree to the goals, they will be more likely to internally accept the goal (Tung & Shih, 2025). By creating a culture where commitment is the primary focus of managers, the organisation will ensure that all necessary efforts of staff are directed toward adapting, as opposed to being diffused by vagueness. Therefore, managers should actively foster a workplace environment where there is a high level of importance placed upon peer-to-peer support and psychological safety. Managers can create this important climate using intentional managerial behaviours, supporting the non-hierarchical transfer of knowledge and resources, especially during times of organisational change or crisis. Organisations should review their reward systems to incorporate not only rewards for collaborative practices, but also for the individual success of team members. Lastly, training team members how to provide both constructive feedback and needed emotional support will assist in developing the working group into an effective social resource buffer.

Limitations and Future Research

Aside from several limitations of this study that indicate opportunities for future research, the first limitation is the cross-sectional design of the research. Therefore, future studies should utilise a longitudinal design to accurately depict how these variables develop and confirm the temporal order of the

causal paths. Another limitation is the final sample being comprised of a variety of organisations located in Kenya, which limits the interpretation of the laissez-faire leadership findings to the context of complex organisations primarily operating in highly complex industries. Studies can test this model through diverse industries such as the service industry (i.e. interactive entertainment, information technology, and/or complex professional service industries), that, like the high-tech sector, require a high level of professional capability and adaptive performance.

Because of the methodology used, the sample of teams analysed has specific restrictions. The study was designed to use a social network approach to examine the teams (e.g., assessing shared leadership or collaborative team leadership). In order to use the social network approach with the sample, the requirement was that the number of team members would have to be between 4 and 8. Teams that exceed 8 members would be excluded from this study since using this methodology with larger teams will become very complicated and extremely difficult to administrate. Future studies should therefore seek to address the logistical barriers associated with expanding the sample to larger teams, as the dynamics of leadership, commitment and support will likely vary for larger-sized teams. Additionally, due to the cross-sectional nature of this study's data collection and the use of a referent consensus model to assess the formal leader's leadership, it was assumed that the formal leader displayed a consistent leadership style. However, previous studies indicate significant variance in leader behaviour and function across the various stages of team development. Examples of team development stages are forming, storming, norming and performing (Steeh et al., 2025).

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