Comparing Servant and Transformational Leadership and Their Relationship to Organizational Effectiveness in the Sport for Development and Peace Context

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Introduction
Much of the research to date in sport for development and peace (SDP) has examined the efficacy of interventions on achieving a variety of outcomes, such as facilitating social inclusion of marginalized individuals (Sherry, 2010; Sherry & Strybosch, 2012; Welty Peachey, Lyras, Borland, & Cohen, 2013); building social capital (Burnett, 2006; Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008); and contributing to cross-cultural understanding and peacebuilding (Schulenkor, Thomson, & Schlenker, 2011; Sugden, 2010). What has not been examined to date, however, is the nature of leadership in SDP organizations and leadership’s role in facilitating organizational effectiveness. One of the challenges in the SDP field is achieving organizational effectiveness (Coalter, 2010; Welty Peachey & Cohen, 2016), as many SDP organizations struggle to develop long-term effectiveness of their programs. As such, leadership could be vital in facilitating effective organizations. It has been argued that servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), with its emphasis on service to followers, stewardship, and follower development (van Dierendonck, 2011), could be critical to the long-term viability and success of SDP organizations due to the care and nurture needed in working with clientele who are often marginalized and disadvantaged (Welty Peachey & Burton, 2015). However, limited empirical research has tested this supposition in the SDP context, and no research has compared the effectiveness of servant leadership versus the often-studied transformational leadership (Bass, 1985) in this context. This includes a lack of understanding of how employee needs’ influence the relationships among servant and transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore and compare the role of servant versus transformational leadership in facilitating organizational effectiveness within the SDP context.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review
To guide the current study, we are drawing from servant (Greenleaf, 1977) and transformational (Bass, 1985) leadership theories, as well as the literature on non-profit organizational effectiveness (Lecy, Schmitz, & Swedlund, 2012; Willem, Jegers, & Faulk, 2016). Greenleaf, credited with the development of servant leadership, states “the servant-leader is servant first” (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 13). Van Dierendonck (2011) advanced six characteristics of servant leadership: empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is the process of influencing change in organizational members’ attitudes and assumptions to accomplish organizational objectives (Yukl, 1989). Transformational leaders use commitment and optimism to inspire and motivate followers (Duehr & Bono, 2006) to problem solve. Servant leadership shares many similarities with transformational leadership, yet it is distinct. Transformational leadership and servant leadership focus on followers by extending leadership beyond task goals to emphasize a vision for followers. However, a shift in focus from the organization to followers differentiates a servant leader from a transformational leader (Stone, Russel, & Patterson, 2004). In one recent study on servant leadership in SDP, Wells and Welty Peachey (in press) found that the founder and regional leaders of a US-based SDP non-profit were servant leaders, as perceived by their followers. This work did not, however, examine servant leadership or transformational leadership of top leaders in relation to organizational effectiveness as an outcome of leadership.

Measuring organizational effectiveness has been debated for decades because of the challenges of capturing a concise definition of effectiveness. Scholars have used outcome assessments, performance evaluations, leadership, stakeholder perceptions, organizational accountability, and financial responsibility (Brown, 2008; Herman & Renz, 1999). For the purpose of this research, employees’ organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) toward individuals (OCB-I) and their organizations (OCB-O) will be used to measure SDP organizational effectiveness. While
researchers have begun to contribute to our understanding of the relationship between leadership and OCB (see Hu & Liden, 2011; Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011), little is known about the mediating links between these concepts (Liden, Panaccio, Meuser, Hu, & Wayne, 2014), especially in the unique environment of SDP organizations.

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a way to understand how servant and transformational leadership influence organizational outcomes, including employees’ task performance and OCBs towards individuals and the organizations (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Additionally, van Dierendonck et al. (2014) found an indirect effect of basic needs on work engagement and commitments for servant leaders when compared to transformational leaders. To serve the call for future research, mediators such as work-related basic needs satisfaction (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, Soenens, & Lens, 2010), trust (Willems et al., 2016), and the need for meaning, which refers to an individual’s feelings of purpose, growth, and connectedness (McGregor & Little, 1998), will be investigated. Due to the inevitable subjectivity of nonprofit organizational effectiveness (DiMaggio, 2001), and the limited research on SDP leadership and employee needs, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Work-related basic needs satisfaction (autonomy, competency, relatedness) will indirectly influence the relationship between servant leadership and a) OCB –I and b) OCB-O.
H2: Work-related basic needs satisfaction (autonomy, competency, relatedness) will indirectly influence the relationship between transformational leadership and a) OCB –I and b) OCB-O.
H3: Need for meaning will indirectly influence the relationship between servant leadership and a) OCB –I and b) OCB-O.
H4: Need for meaning will indirectly influence the relationship between transformational leadership and a) OCB –I and b) OCB-O.
H5: Trust will indirectly influence the relationship between servant leadership and a) OCB –I and b) OCB-O.
H6: Trust will indirectly influence the relationship between transformational leadership and a) OCB –I and b) OCB-O.

Method
A survey is being distributed by email to the top leader and employees in 200 SDP organizations around the world. These organizations are being drawn from the International Sport for Development Platform and Beyond Sport websites. To be included, an organization must have at least 5 and not more than 25 employees, to assure that the employees work in close proximity to the top leader and can accurately comment on his/her leadership style and organizational effectiveness. The top leader and all employees in the organization will be invited to complete the survey which measures servant and transformational leadership of the top leader, employee needs, and OCB. Likert-type scales include servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), transformational leadership (MLQ; Bass & Avolio, 1995), work-related basic need satisfaction (Van den Broeck et al., 2010), need for meaning (McGregor & Little, 1998), and OCB (Williams & Anderson, 1991). All data will be collected by March 2017.

Findings and Discussion
Data will be analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) and the Hayes (2012) PROCESS model will be used to evaluate the indirect relationships proposed. Theoretically, this study is important because it compares the collective emphasis of transformational leadership to the individual focus in servant leadership. Additionally, comparing numerous mediators that have potential differential effects of servant leadership and transformational leadership is of theoretical value. The practical implications suggest that employees included in organizational decision-making processes may substantially improve trust, satisfaction, and meaning, while positively influencing the assessment of organizational effectiveness. Future research directions will also be explored.