# Hector: Loser Leader in Iliad

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## Abstract

This qualitative study aimed to examine Hectors leader attributes for the conformity with contemporary leadership theories and to explore the factors or flaws which caused him to become a loser leader in Homers The Iliad. The study was conducted through narratives describing Hectors actions and thoughts and conversation between Hector and other characters. The data was analysed in form of descriptive analysis based on the qualifications of leader scoped by ethical leadership theories namely authentic leadership, servant leadership, spiritual leadership, and transformational leadership. The result showed that Hectors actions and thoughts reflected ethical leader qualifications specified in ethical leadership theories but mostly authentic leadership, servant leadership and spiritual leadership, respectively. The flaws obviously seen throughout the story were his obstinateness in his idealistic self-sacrifice and pride of kingly power. These two flaws led him to his firmness to heroism and fame and this brought him to failure and death. The findings revealed that to be a successful leader, ethic solely is not enough but open-mindedness, flexibility in leadership and wisdom in exercising of power are more powerful and beneficial to leaders' success.

*Keywords*: Hector, Ethical Leadership, The Iliad

## Introduction

In all kinds of assembly and organization, leaders are needed. They are directly responsible for the success or the failure of that certain assembly; hence, no matter what they do more or less affect themselves and their followers. Not just the present time that leaders play important role in directing people of their societies, in the old days or even ancient time their functions were not different. As reflected through the story of an epic named The Iliad, leaders were also important gears driving their troops.

In The Iliad, there were two main leader characters, Agamemnon—the King of Achaean—and Hector—the king-to-be prince of Troy. Agamemnon was a tricky and, through some actions, selfish leader but with his strength and support from Achilles, he became the winner of the Trojan War. For Hector, he was created ethical and brave. He was a king-to-be Trojan prince. He dedicated his time and strength for his people and his city; however, he was not successful in terms of bringing victory and peace to his hometown, Troy. Even worse, he was killed by Achilles without any hand putting for help. This is a doubt that why he was not successful. Therefore, to examine what his flaws in his leadership or characteristics were is a focus of this study.

Up to the present, there have been a great number of leadership theories and concepts developed with a hope to examine leader's attributes or to give guidelines to leaders-to-be. Among them, ethical leadership seems to be the most highlighted theory employed to examine the leader qualifications and to predict leader success. Because this study also explain what type(s) of ethical leadership he used while functioning as a leader, the result of this study will show the conformity of ancient leaders to that specified in ethical leadership theories of today's world.

Finally, this study will reveal the overlapping parts of ethical leader in the ancient world portrayed by a leader character in an epical and classic work of a famous and immortal novelist, Homer with those attributes of ethical leader described by scholars of modern world. Moreover, the flaws found in Hector's actions and qualifications will provide a precautious guideline for leaders in the present days, so that they will be able to exercise their leadership preferably and perhaps successfully.

## Objectives
1. To examine the conformity of Hector's leader attributes to those specified in contemporary ethical leadership theories
2. To explore the factors or flaws in Hector's leadership causing him to fail in the Trajan War

## Research questions
This study is guided by two research questions:
1. What leadership theories does Hector use in exercising his power?
2. What make Hector fail in leading his troop in Trojan War?

## Theories
This study was relied upon 4 ethical leadership theories namely authentic leadership, servant leadership, spiritual leadership and transformational leadership.

## Methodology
This study followed qualitative research methodology. The studied character is Hector, a king-to-be prince of Troy, and the data was collected from the narratives of Hector's actions and thoughts, and Hector's conversation with other characters. The quoted actions, thoughts, and conversation were compared to the ethical leadership theories and those actions, thoughts, and conversation were analyzed for the flaws causing his failure. Finally, the findings, the discussion and the conclusion were presented in descriptive form.

## Literature Review
**Ethical Leadership theories**

Leader's ethical qualifications are often brought to discussion during these current decades. This is because, in many societies, leaders with high ethical degree are also preferable concurrently with intelligent and skillful leaders. Therefore, ethical values and how they influence the society are examined by many scholars. And, when ethical leadership is mentioned in the works of many scholars, four leadership theories are commonly found namely authentic leadership, servant leadership, spiritual leadership, and transformational leadership.

**Authentic leadership theory.** Authentic leadership may be defined in deontological concept as doing the right thing (Roe 149). Authentic leadership theory is based on self-regulation and it emphasizes the consistency in the leaders' words, actions, and values (Yukl, 2002, p. 340; Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 2002, p. 166). Authentic leaders know who they are and what they do; in other words, they are honest to their values, beliefs, emotions, self-identities, and abilities. Their core values including honesty, altruism, kindness, fairness, accountability, and optimism make their followers trust them.

Avolio and Gardner (qtd. in Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 2002, p. 167) proposed 3 ways authentic leaders do to build positive ethical climate in organizations. They were 1) enhancing self-awareness, 2) promoting transparency and openness, and 3) fostering inclusive structures and practices. Like Avolio and Gardner, Yukl stated that authentic

leaders motivated their followers and enhanced the commitment and optimism to the set goals by 3 main means: 1) articulating an appealing vision, 2) modeling appropriate behaviors, and 3) expressing encouragement at the time of difficulties and setbacks (Yukl, 2002, pp. 339-40).

From the above statements, it can be concluded that authentic leaders are honest, altruistic, kind, fair, accountable, and optimistic.

**Servant leadership theory.** Robert Greenleaf introduced Servant Leadership in his book *Servant Leadership* (as cited in Daft, 2011, p. 230). As its name explicates, this paradoxical leadership places its core on the belief that leaders are by nature servants. Daft inclusively specified the duties of servant leaders stating, "servant leaders transcend self-interest to serve the needs of others, help others grow and develop, and provide opportunity for others to gain materially and emotionally" (2011, p. 230). They treat and serve followers what they need. Followers are nurtured and well taken care of. In addition, leaders help the followers to become freer, more knowledgeable, and more autonomous (Daft, 2011, p. 230). Greenleaf thoroughly identified the qualifications of servant leaders that servant leaders listen to and empathize with others and unconditionally accept others' needs. With those rather broad qualifications, Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy (2002, pp. 168-169) specified 10 characteristics of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship and utilitarianism, commitment to others' growth, and building community.

**Spiritual leadership theory.** Although spirituality is somewhat related to religion, it does not exactly mean religious spirituality. Lussier and Achua provided a definition of religious spirituality as "the awareness of connections between human and supernatural phenomena, which provide faith explanations of past and present experiences and, for some, predict future experiences" (Lussier and Achua, 2007, p. 433). But, in terms of leadership, spirituality is a sense of shared destiny and close relationship.

Yukl's conclusion about spiritual leadership that even though the theories emphasize that spirituality is distinct from religious beliefs, some religious beliefs and cultural values may encourage spiritual leadership, especially for individuals in organization, community, or nation with strong cultural values and religious traditions (Yukl, 2002, p. 339). Fry (as cited in Yukl, 2002, p. 338) extended that spirituality, for leadership, included transcendence of self and fellowship. It is the belief that every activity of an individual has meaning and value beyond economic benefits and need for power, achievement, and esteem. Fellowship is the need for meaningful relationship and feeling of wholeness. The two elements of spirituality involve altruistic love and faith or hope, and each element involves some ethical values. Altruistic love includes values such as compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, honesty, humility, kindness, loyalty, patience, trust, and understanding. Faith is associated with confidence, courage, endurance, optimism, persistence, resilience, and serenity.

**Transformational leadership theory.** Transformational leadership theory was firstly introduced in 1978 by James MacGregor Burns, a political sociologist, in his book entitled *Leadership*. Initially, Burns named this theory transforming leadership and then in 1985 Bernard M. Bass, a distinguished professor emeritus in the School of Management at Binghamton University, expanded Burn's idea in the aspects of cultural influences and then renamed to transformational leadership (Bass, 1998, p. ix).

Burns and Bass stated that, during transforming process, leaders and followers mutually raise morality and motivation of each to higher levels through four strategies or 4 I's including 1) idealized influence or charisma, 2) individualized consideration, 3) intellectual stimulation, and 4) inspirational motivation (Bass, 1998, pp. 5-6; Yukl, 2002, pp. 335-336).

Idealized influence or charisma (II): Leaders act as role models for the followers. The leaders perform self-sacrifice and demonstrate high standards of ethical conduct which are being honest, just, and responsible for their actions. In other words, the success in attracting the followers depends highly on the degree of ethic or morality the leaders possess (Bass, 1998, p. 5; Daft, 2011, p. 154).

Individualized consideration (IC): Leaders nurture followers in becoming aware of their own needs, values, and purposes and assist them in integrating these with that of the leaders. Hence, transformational leaders must be extroverted and intelligent enough to select and to implement the most effective method for each follower (Bass, 1998, p. 6; Daft, 2011, p. 154).

Intellectual stimulation (IS): Transformational leaders function as coaches encouraging their followers to be innovative and creative and the leaders discard any old practice if it is found ineffective. For being capable in doing so, the leaders must be more innovative and creative than the followers. Moreover, transformational leaders must also be knowledgeable and skillful in stimulating their followers to think out of the box (Bass, 1998, pp. 5-6; Daft, 2011, p. 154).

Inspirational motivation (IM): Transformational leaders foster spirit of teamwork and commitment to the group; in other words, the leaders mentally and physically support the followers, promote vision, mission, and a set of values to the followers by inspiring and challenging the followers. In becoming able to do so, the leaders must be firm in their goals, decisive, and venturesome (Bass, 1998, p. 5; Daft, 2011, p. 154).

From the above 4 I's, functions of transformational leaders are 1) setting goals for the group, 2) being moral and ethical role model for the followers, 3) inspiring and challenging the followers to be utilitarian, 4) coaching the followers to be creative and innovative, 5) negotiating mutual needs, values, and purposes between the leaders and the followers.

In addition, it can be concluded the attributes or characteristics of transformational leaders include self-sacrifice and utilitarianism, ethic and morality, firmness in the set goals, decisiveness, venturesomeness, support and service to followers, knowledge and skill, open-mindedness, consideration or thoughtfulness, and extroversion and intelligence.

Apart from ethical leadership theories, some leadership specialists have been trying to specify ethical characteristics required for leaders. Two outstanding leadership people are Donald G. Zauderer and Peter G. Northouse.

Donald G. Zauderer, a Professor Emeritus at American University and a specialist in leadership development, has integrated the moral ideas from many sources, from ancient philosophy to modern concepts, including *The Old Testament*, *The New Testament*, Aristotelian happiness, Kantian logic, Mark Halfin's definition of integrity, and Nancy Adler and Frederick Bird's work, and Zauderer has also proposed 12 ethical qualifications required for leaders, especially in business, in his work *Integrity: An Essential Executive Quality*. Those qualifications include humility, utilitarianism, truthfulness, fulfillment of commitment, justice, responsibility, respect for others, promotion, developing others, reprimanding for unjust actions, forgiveness, and devotion (1992, 13-16).

According to Zauderer, if any leader fails the above ethical qualifications meanwhile performs contrarily, the followers or the subordinates will possibly resent or even retaliate the leader. The positive leader-follower relationship will be degenerated into suspicion, betrayal, and lack of dedication. The followers' performance will be ineffective; at the same time, it reflects the failure of the leader's functions and leadership. Finally, of course, the organization's set goals are impossible to be achieved.

Relied mostly upon Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, in his book *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Peter G. Northouse, a Professor Emeritus at Western Michigan University, stated, "ethics is concerned with the kinds of values and morals an individual or society finds

desirable or appropriate" (2004, p. 302). For leader's ethical values, he synthesized ethical principles from a variety of disciplines including biomedical ethic, business ethic, counseling psychology, leadership education, for instance.

**Some previous related studies**

Porter (2000) conducted a study entitled *Parable, Paradeigma, and Moral Responsibility in the Iliad: the Presbeia and Its Significance for the Whole Epic Action*, and he concluded that the plot of The Iliad revolved around a moral dilemma. The priest (presbeia) functioned as the moderator bringing the question of moral responsibility to the main characters: Agamemnon and Achilles. The findings of Porter's study reflected that morality was an element to be aware of, and moral guidance from those who had higher degree of morality was needed when one was neither aware nor was considerate of morality by himself. The result of this study implied that listening to good guidance was a need for one to become successful in every matter.

In Clark's study (2007) named Poulydamas and Hektor (Hector), the two characters Poulydamas and Hector were comparatively analyzed, and the conclusion was that Poulydamas was an important character which was depicted as the projective double of Hector. He revealed important aspects of Hector's character and he could do what Hector might think but could neither do nor say. Moreover, he was an important character showing the variation of formulaic composition and Homeric view of complex self. In the same year, Pandya (2007) compared ethics in The Iliad to those in Mahabharata, and concluded that Hector represented spiritual hero in terms of virtue and morality rather than anything else.

Pattana (2016) composed his dissertation comparing transformational leadership qualifications between Agamemnon and Hector, and the result of his study revealed that both Agamemnon and Hector possessed all qualifications of transformational leader but in different degrees. Agamemnon's degree of transformational leadership was less than Hector's, but interestingly he could lead his troop effectively and win over the enemy. In addition, he could transform his followers better than Hector. Again in 2017, Pattana conducted a research based on transformational leadership theory but through two characters, Napoleon and Snowball, in a newer novel, Animal Farm of George Orwell. The result of his latter study indicated that transformational leader qualifications solely were not adequate to bring success to the leader. It had to have good supporter and be good at taking opportunity, and these influential factors were surrounding Napoleon who was not a transformational but rather authoritative leader.

## Findings

The analysis affirmed that Hector possesses almost every attributes required for becoming an ethical leader. His actions, thoughts, and conversations reflected his altruism, heroism, and self-sacrifice obviously. However, when doing his function as leader of the troop, he was more or less authentic, servant, and spiritual leader but not transformational leader. In other words, to answer the first research question "what leadership theories did Hector use in exercising his power?," the answer is that he used authentic leadership, servant leadership, and spiritual leadership in exercising his power.

Hector used his power and ordered his men to fight, but when his men were not ready for the fight; he neither considered nor examined the reason behind their ignorance. This might be seen authoritative, but he at the same time served his men and his people by bravely going for the fight alone frequently during the war. Although this could be seen as self-sacrifice, it could also be interpreted as pride or self-glorification. He sacrificed himself protecting his city, Troy, and could be seen as maintaining his kingly fame. He tried hard to raise the spirit of the troop as what a spiritual leader should do, but he could not convince his

followers to agree upon his value and he did not possess an adequate degree of transformational leader.

To answer the second research question "what makes Hector fail in leading his troop in the Trojan War?," the answer can be his firmness to heroism and kingly fame which obstructed him from being open-minded. The content of the story portrays clearly that Hector was a king-to-be price, and he did not want to show his weakness. With excessive degree of firmness to heroism and kingly fame, he neglected useful guidance from others who were more experienced. This is the biggest flaw in his leadership. Apart from guidance neglect, his ways to persuade others especially Paris, his brother who was the cause of the war, could hurt Paris's feeling. He did not make use of rhetorical skill he possessed; on the other hand, he always blamed and insulted Paris comparing him to others or even to himself. This was also the result of his firmness to the fame and pride.

## Discussion

As aforementioned in the findings that Hector possessed ethical leader qualifications specified in authentic leadership, servant leadership and spiritual leadership, he however could not bring victory to his troop. Even worse, he was killed by Achilles. Although many people who have read or conducted research works based on this epical work such as Pandya (2007) and Pattana (2016) agree upon that Hector was a spiritual hero in terms of virtue and morality rather than anything else. But, he was too strict to ethics not being flexible in exercising his power through various types of leadership; meanwhile, he did not care much about good relationship with his followers. This rewarded him with defeat and death.

Leadership styles which Hector used in the story are not preferable or suitable for the situation in the story. Honesty, altruism, kindness, fairness, accountability, and optimism that are at the core of authentic leadership, servant leadership, and spiritual leadership did not work. Moreover, his obstinacy was an accelerating factor for his failure. This agrees with a study by Pattana (2016 and 2017) that to become a successful leader, being ethical solely was not enough. Flexibility of leadership styles and supporting factors were also important in facilitating leader success.

In addition, Hector's flaws obviously seen throughout the story were his obstinacy in his idealistic self-sacrifice and pride of kingly power. These two flaws led him to his firmness to heroism and fame and this brought him to failure and death. The findings revealed that to be a successful leader, open-mindedness which allowed leaders to listen to useful guidance from those who were more ethical and experience. This also agreed with the finding of Porter's study (2000) that listening to moral guidance and support was important.

## Limitation

Some limitations which can possibly cause some flaws in generalization of the result of this study were that this study was relied upon only one main character, Hector, who was a king-to-be prince; therefore, the result might not be able to generalize to other leader characters or even to human being in reality.

## Recommendation

This study was conducted to only one main leader character, Hector; therefore, for those who are interested in The Iliad and leadership may extend the knowledge by examining other leader characters or other characters to see if there are any other significant differences which can be useful for people in the fields of literature and management. In addition, for those who are interested in the development of literature, the framework of this study may be useful for them to apply into examining literary works of newer ages to see the manoeuvre of leadership when the situation has changed.

## Conclusion

Hector possessed almost all qualifications specified authentic leadership, servant leadership, and spiritual leadership. He was very good at applying ethical principles into his leader's power, but his pride of his kingly fame and his firmness to heroic thought led him and his land to disaster. He was too strict to his kingly leadership so that he could not see the good points of leadership compromise or flexibility. In conclusion, although ethical leadership is preferable for most people in the present world, it might not be effective in some context as it was shown in the story of The Iliad. However, this study exemplified ways for leaders to exercise their power when functioning and it also revealed that leader's intelligence and leadership flexibility were significant factors facilitating leader's success.

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