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Reflection No. 5: Theories of Understanding

Last October 2, 2025, Group 5 from BET-CPET 3B presented their report about Motivation, Leadership, and Decision-Making in our Engineering Management class. In all honesty, this topic caught my attention because it focused more on people and their psychology. It's one of those lessons that makes you realize that being an engineer manager is not just about technical and mathematical prowess, but it is all about handling and understanding others through various lenses as well. One could see how the group members interacted with the audience as they started with a fun activity called "What Your Choices Say About You." At first, I thought it was just a game, but later on they connected it to the topic their main subjects and topics.

The first topic the group discussed was all about motivation. The group presented that motivation is what influences a person to act and reach their aspirations. In engineering and engineering management, motivation is actually crucial because projects can take long and can be very stressful in a lot of ways. The group discussed about the different categories of motivation being intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation comes from one's self. It is about the various internal factors that lead to one being motivated to do a given work derived from passion. Extrinsic motivation comes from external rewards and rationales like money and even recognitions. I realized that intrinsic motivation is more significant because it's something that comes naturally and has an internal reason for it to push one further. For instance, there are times I would be awake for late hours just to finish a project. At times, I do not even think about grades because my passion tells me to just simply make it work.

The group then discussed the different theories when it comes to motivation such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Goal Setting Theory. I have already known of Maslow's theory before, but in this report, I had a better grasp of it more deeply. You can't expect people to be productive if their basic needs are not met which tells us the significance of this theory in handling one's own employees. Herzberg's theory explained that the things that make people happy at work are not always the same as the things that prevent them from being unhappy. Expectancy Theory said that people work harder if they believe that their effort will actually be rewarded, and Goal Setting Theory explained that clear goals help people perform better. Personally, this made me understand how crucial it is to know the motivations of the people I am handling with. Everyone is actually different in a lot of aspects, and with that, I realize that these various frameworks exist in order to know what to use to handle them.

The next part was about techniques with regards to motivation. The group talked about job rotation, job enlargement, and job enrichment. These are what companies do to make jobs

feel more significant. Job rotation refers to making employees do different tasks and rotating them upon those tasks, job enlargement is giving them more work that is within their job description, while job enrichment means giving them more responsibilities. They also explained how rewards and employee participation can make people more motivated, connecting them with extrinsic motivational frameworks. What caught my attention was when they gave examples from companies like Google and Toyota. I learned that Google allows employees to work on their own ideas during company time. That really helps creativity. It made me realize that when workers are trusted, they perform better.

Then they talked about leadership, which I think was the most inspiring part of their report. They explained that a leader is different from a manager. A manager focuses on organizing things and maintaining control, while a leader inspires and motivates others. They talked about the four leadership styles which are authoritarian, democratic, delegative, and visionary. I liked the democratic and visionary styles because they let people share their ideas. I can say that's the kind of leader I want to be which is someone who listens. They also mentioned the Behavioral Theory which said that leaders are made, not born. That gave me hope because it means leadership is something we can all learn and develop through time.

They also explained the Contingency Theory and the Path-Goal Theory. The Contingency Theory says that how effective a leader is depends on the situation, while Path-Goal Theory is about guiding the team to reach their goals using different leadership styles. There's directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. I found this part interesting because it shows that a good leader is flexible. Sometimes you have to be strict, sometimes you have to be friendly, it depends on the situation and the people you're with.

Lastly, they discussed decision-making. This was where their opening activity really connected. They talked about different models of decision-making like the Rational Model, Bounded Rationality, Intuitive, and Vroom-Yetton Model. These show how people make choices in different ways. Some depend on logic and data, while others rely on experience and instinct. I realized that in real life, especially in engineering, one decision can affect many things, the project, the team, and even the company's reputation. That's why good decision-making is such an important skill.

Overall, I really enjoyed Group 5's report. I learned that motivation, leadership, and decision-making are all connected. A good leader knows how to motivate others, and a motivated team can make smart and effective decisions. This lesson made me reflect on what kind of leader I want to be in the future, someone who understands others, values teamwork, and makes decisions not only with logic but also with empathy.