NEW APPROACHES TO SOLVE COMPLEX MANAGEMENT CASE STUDIES

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Abstract: The paper presents a new approach to solve real life complex management case studies, tested within ProCESS project, that takes into consideration the development of students' SES (sensorial, emotional and spiritual) skills and their implication in solving four complex management cases prepared by a group of four companies. During the first round of solving the cases, different activities were organized, from enterprise meetings, videoconferences, and visits to tailored workshops on developing SES skills. The contribution of this paper consists in presenting the experience and results gained at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca during the first year of the Erasmus + ProCESS project implementation, focusing on the development of students' SES skills and on the use of these capacities for finding innovative solutions to complex management problems.

Keywords: skills, sensorial, emotional, spiritual, ProCESS, Erasmus+

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, in a more complex and challenging business world than ever before, in addition to the technical skills required in the field of engineering, there has been an increasing emphasis on the usefulness of other abilities, namely sensorial, emotional, and spiritual (SES) skills.

In this context, ProCESS project (Processing Complexity with Emotional, Sensorial and Spiritual capacities) (https://processproject.eu/) is an EU Erasmus+ project that aims to explore new ways of training students on how to address complex management case studies through the development of SES skills.

The project advances an innovative method for solving complex problems in the organizational context, the ProCESS method, by employing both rational and non-rational perspectives, relying in this regard on sensorial, emotional and spiritual skills (SESS) workshops. This mobilization entails "training students (future managers) to better feel and sense complex situations and not only to understand them" (Eskola, 2021, p.4; "Processing Complexity with Emotional, Sensorial and Spiritual capacities", 2021).

The project was launched in January 2021 and involves nine partners – four higher education institutions (HEIs) and five companies – from four European countries: France (project coordinator), Finland, Latvia and Romania. The four universities involved in the project are UCLy Lyon Catholic University (France), JAMK University of Applied Sciences (Finland), RISEBA University of Business, Arts and Technology (Latvia) and the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (TUCN) (Romania). The five companies that take part in the project are PerformanSe and SANOFI (France), De KLAUSEN (Romania), Mediatalo Keskisuomalainen (Finland) and Latvijas Pasts (Latvia) ("About ProCESS", 2021).

Two of the project's main objectives consist in developing the innovative methodology for dealing complex management cases by "alternating sequences of mobilization of sensory, emotional and spiritual intelligences", in addition to rational capacities and in testing this methodology with students, on business cases from the real business life, in cooperation with the partner companies ("About ProCESS", 2021).

In close relation with these two objectives, over a three year time-period (between 2021-2023), the project will involve 192 students from the four countries (64 students per year, namely 16 students per year from each university), that will analyze 12 complex management cases developed by four partner companies (four company cases per year). Students will be assisted in this process by company coaches from the four partner companies, by academic coaches from the four universities, as well as by SESS trainers that will host workshops for developing students' sensorial, emotional and spiritual skills ("Processing Complexity with Emotional, Sensorial and Spiritual capacities", 2021).

As the first year in the project's implementation has just come to an end, this paper will focus mainly on the experience and the results gathered in the TUCN from the first round of analyzing complex management company cases by students, during the fall semester of 2021.

The article is structured in five sections. After the introduction, the main coordinates of the ProCESS method are presented. The third section draws an overview of the six SESS workshops that were organized in the TUCN within the first round of the project. The fourth section highlights the use of SES skills by the Romanian students for solving the four complex management cases they were working on, while the last part of the paper concludes the study.

2 MAIN COORDINATES OF THE PROCESS METHOD

In the summer of 2021 four of the partner companies (SANOFI, De KLAUSEN, Mediatalo Keskisoumalainen and Latvijas Pasts) developed four complex management company cases to be analyzed by students, based on their real business life challenges.

By the end of September 2021, each of the four HEIs selected 16 students to take part to the first round of the project, resulting a total of 64 students. The 16 students selected in the TUCN were all students of the Faculty of Industrial Engineering, Robotics and Production Management. Eleven students out of the 16 ones were registered in the 3rd or 4th year of study in the "Industrial Economic Engineering" bachelor program, while the other five students were enrolled in the second year of studies in one of the two master programs, "Business Management and Engineering" and "Entrepreneurship".

The selected 16 students from each country were distributed in four teams of four students and each of the four teams was assigned to analyze one of the four company cases developed by the partner companies.

In the process of analyzing the complex company cases, the students were assisted by both academic coaches and company coaches. There was an academic coach in each HEI, in charge of the 16 students from his university, which formed four teams, each team working on a different company case. At the same time, there was a company coach from each partner company in charge of 16 students as well, but this time these were the students analyzing the same company case, namely a team of four students from each of the four countries (Eskola, 2021, p.4).

The ProCESS method tested on the company cases entailed the following major phases: firstly to understand the company case, with its specific challenges and context, then to implement sequences that mobilize emotional, sensorial, spiritual and rational capacities, and finally, to develop recommendations for solving the company case (Eskola, 2021, p.4).

The main components of the ProCESS method for analyzing complex management cases by students are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. ProCESS method

Students working on each company case were introduced to the company case in early October 2021, through an enterprise meeting, at which one student of each team traveled to the company abroad and attended the meeting onsite, whereas the other three team members attended the meeting from their home country by videoconference. This enterprise meeting provided the students the opportunity to collect information they considered necessary for solving the company case. Following the enterprise meeting, students were asked to prepare a summary report about the company and the challenges of its case (Eskola, 2021).

A set of six workshops was next organized in each HEI, between October and December 2021, with the support of local SES skills trainers and with the aim of guiding the students to develop their SES skills. Two workshops were focused on the development of sensorial skills, two on emotional capacities and two on the spiritual ones. After each workshop, students worked on their case resolution.

After the first three workshops were carried out (one focusing on sensorial skills, one on emotional and one on spiritual), students prepared a mid-term report, which they

presented during a videoconference in November 2021, attended by all the four teams analyzing the same company case.

As the next three workshops took place, student teams started developing their final reports and another videoconference was organized in December 2021, between the same four student teams analyzing the same company case. Both company coaches and academic coaches provided feedback on students' development of the company case analysis during both videoconferences.

Student teams presented their final plans for actions and recommendations for the companies during the winter school organized by JAMK University in Jyvaskyla, Finland, in January 2022. Students were encouraged to identify and explore connections between the SESS workshops they have attended and the company cases and to come up with original, innovative, out of the box ideas for solving the company cases.

In addition to the steps above, the fifth company partner, PerformanSe, periodically assessed students' SES skills and management capacities.

3 SENSORIAL, EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL WORKSHOPS ORGANIZED AT THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA

The six SESS workshops that were organized at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (two focusing on sensorial, two on emotional and two on spiritual skills) had the following aims:
- ➢ development of visual perception abilities, light, and color influence and, not at least, visual nonverbal communication;
- ➢ development of auditory perception ability, sound and music influence, and contribution of the other senses – smell, taste, and touch;
- ➢ identifying students' emotions and express them through music and images;

- ➢ discovering students' hidden talents (voice, music, dance, painting or other) by focusing on the individual and team performance;
- ➢ understanding the spiritual nature of human beings and the varieties of spiritual awareness;
- ➢ gaining familiarity with spiritual intelligence, its benefits and measurement tools and exploring the ways of increasing them.

Before presenting the main coordinates of the six SESS workshops, a tribute should be paid to the revolutionary approach of Howard Gardner (Gardner, 1983), who "broke the monopoly" of logical-mathematical intelligence that has been used until then, by formulating the new paradigm of multiple intelligences, initially with seven types (linguistic, musical, logical – mathematical, corporal – kinesthetic, personal - interpersonal and intrapersonal, spatial), a list that he later completed with the naturalistic and existential intelligences (Gardner, 1983, 2006). Other scientists, such as Mayer & Salovey (1993), Goleman (1995), Riemer (2003) etc. discussed about other types of intelligences and developed different theories for how to increase the soft skills.

3.1 Sensorial Workshops

The perception of the surrounding reality is a process that is not carried out directly, but it is based on a model built at the level of our brain by means of the senses. The sense organs are constantly receiving various stimuli that are transmitted in the form of nervous signals to the brain. In sync with the external reality, at its level, a mental model is being built through which the individual can interact with the outside world. (Bridger, 2018)

In relation to the surrounding reality, through natural selection consisting in repeating positive experiences and avoiding negative ones, the human being was able both to survive in the hostile environment he lived in and to thrive and evolve. Natural selection thus helped shape the

human being's perceptions of the surrounding world. (Hedge, 2017)

Living in a diverse and fascinating universe of things, people can perceive them differently, with subjective ways of sensing and interpreting them. In relation to what is around us, things are ugly or beautiful, pleasant or unpleasant, depending on how each of the individuals has formed a mental model based on both ancestral patterns and during individual training. Regardless of how reality is perceived, in its absence human life would be inconceivable because it creates for every individual the certainty of his existence and his being among the other objects. (Mullins & Hicks, 2005)

As the underlying elements of various operations, actions, activities and thoughts, perceptions are cognitively organized and structured, and when they are reinforced, they are transformed into essential skills or behaviors, leading to different levels of performance of people. (Bridger, 2018)

The two sensorial workshops intended to explore successively all the five senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Since the sight is the main sense that connects a human being to the environment, the first sensorial workshop was entirely dedicated to it. The use of the other four senses was explored in the second sensorial workshop, with a focus on the hearing sense.

In the first workshop, entitled "Sight – the main sensorial perception channel", the difference between sensation and visual perception has been clarified, the phases of the perceptive process have been identified, and a number of examples of perception errors have been analyzed. The subject of the colors and of their psychological effects was then addressed. The students attending the workshop conducted two personality tests, in order to reveal a person's innermost suppressed traits and the psychological condition of the person based on his or her color preference.

Further on, the workshop addressed the theme of light, discussing the physicals that characterize the phenomenon (luminous flux, luminous intensity, illuminance), insisting on its color temperature (warm, neutral or cold light), with applications in business and industrial lighting (Bridger, 2018). The last part of the workshop focused on the nonverbal communication. Numerous examples have been given to interpret gestures and mimics (Pease & Pease, 2004), including examples from well-known motion pictures.

The first part of the second sensorial workshop, entitled "Hearing and the other senses – auxiliary sensorial perception channels", addressed the sense of hearing. The classification of the acoustic waves, sound-specific sizes (frequency, acoustic pressure, sound intensity) was presented. Participants performed a hearing assessment test and listened to several special sounds (white sound, pink sound, etc.). A special and at the same time controversial category of sounds includes the healing sounds (solfeggio frequencies) which the participants had the opportunity to listen to (Hedge, 2017; Trotta, 2020; Bruscia, 2014; Korczynski et al., 2013). The issue of noise has also been discussed, with its negative effects and the limitations imposed in this context by the European Union.

The subject of music was addressed as well, the participants were able to listen to five different songs, and after each one they had to identify the types of emotions or mood they felt. Environmental (background) music and workplace music were also addressed, with their positive potential effects. Finally, the participants watched motion picture snippets with no sound, original audio, and other sound variation, analyzing to what extent the soundtrack can amplify the effects of the images.

Regarding the sense of smell, the classification of basic odors and fragrances was presented. Scenting the workplace and its positive effects have also been discussed (Bridger, 2018).

For the taste sense, the basic tastes were presented. At the end of the workshop, the sense of touch was addressed in connection with old social habits such as handshaking and embracing, gestures that were also discussed in the current business context (Pease & Pease, 2004).

3.2   Emotional Workshops

The researchers have studied how emotions change people performance. In his doctoral thesis, Payne (1985) discussed emotions and how society has historically suppressed them. Five years later, Salovey & Mayer (1990) published a paper using the term "Emotional Intelligence" where they discussed the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings, to control emotions, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Mayer et al., 2001). There are numerous studies about how people can be in touch with their feelings, how they can control their impulses, how they are aware of how others see them, and how they can weed out distractions, all these aspects were developed by Goleman (1995). Other scientists, such as Gardner (2006), Moon & Hur (2011), Riemer (2003) and Tekerek & Tekerek (2017), discussed the ways in which emotional intelligence can help us anticipate our own and others' behavior quicker, more practically and spontaneously than through thought or spoken language.

Emotional intelligence, according to Mayer-Salovey model, refers to the ability of identifying emotions and to ask yourself questions such as: "how do I feel?", "how does the other person feel?". This model also teaches how to use emotions to improve thinking: "is this useful?", „does it help me, motivate me, give me energy or not?". On the other hand, Mayer-Salovey model helps to understand emotions and how to manage them. This can be done through addressing questions such as: "why do I feel, what I feel?", "why does the other person feel this

way?", "how will I feel?" and "do the resulting decision and actions include emotion and logic to ensure a desired result?" (Cândea & Cândea, 2005).

The purpose of the first emotional workshop, entitled "Music and image", was to identify emotions and to improve them through music and images, in order to develop creativity. When people listen to music, their limbic and paralimbic systems are activated, triggering intensive emotional responses and the body and brain react in interesting ways (Cook et al., 2019).

To achieve the goal, three general objectives were set: to develop the skills in order to identify one's emotions and their type; to develop the ability to describe emotions; to develop the skills of identifying the emotions of others. Basically, it was intended to develop skills in perceiving and describing emotions in order to act effectively, regardless of emotional states (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Steps followed during the first emotional workshop

For identifying their own emotions or those of the others, the participants used Plutchik's "Emotions Circle" (Kelley, 2006), which starts from eight basic emotions and eight complex emotions. The eight basic emotions are joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, anticipation, anger, and disgust. Also, the basic emotions can be understood by opposite pairs: surprise is the opposite of anticipation. Complex emotions are composed of two fundamental emotions. For example, "trust" and "joy" give "love". Also, each basic emotion has two intensities; for example, "joy" can lead to "serenity" and "ecstasy".

Another instrument that students used to identify feelings and emotions was the "Feeling Wheel" (Kelley, 2006). This instrument is very useful in identifying the specific feelings and emotions that people are experiencing at any given point in time so that they can be addressed and resolved. The wheel has three rings and six primary feelings: mad, scared, joyful, powerful, peaceful, and sad. A secondary ring of words helps narrow those feelings down. A third, outer ring gets even more specific. In all, there are 72 words to link to your feelings. For instance, one's first thought when perusing the wheel is that they are feeling "hopeful". Once they find "hopeful" on the middle band of the wheel, they can see that the associated core feeling (nearer the center) is "joyful", and the more specific, nuanced feeling (on the outer ring) is "optimistic".

In order to identify and describe emotions, the participants listened to music, they examined Plutchik 's "Emotions Circle" and Willcox's "Feeling Wheel" and they analyzed theirs and their colleagues' emotions and feelings.

The participants could simply identify what they were currently feeling when they were listening to different types of music, and also "drill down" further to discover associated feelings, so they could better describe their emotions.

At the end of the first workshop, the participants worked in teams (formed according to the company case study that was assigned to them in the ProCESS project) and created a first SWOT analysis about each team member's role in the team.

The aim of the second emotional workshop, entitled "Hidden Artistic Talents", was to manage emotions in order to develop creativity and team spirit. To achieve the goal, three general objectives were set: to develop emotion management skills; to develop the ability of regulating emotions; to increase the creativity.

These goals enable people to be creative, regardless of emotional states (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Steps followed during the second emotional workshop

Goleman's model with four domains (Goleman, 1995) was chosen for the activities planned during the second emotional workshop. The four domains of the model are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. *Self-awareness* involves emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. *Self-management* includes emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative and optimism. *Social awareness* refers to empathy, organizational awareness and service orientation. *Relationship management* includes influence, inspirational leadership, developing others, change catalyst, building bonds, conflict management, teamwork and collaboration.

If we are aware of our feelings, we could manage and establish how we might respond to others. The participants carried out an activity called "Self-presentation in an artistic way", which asked each of them to present himself in an artistic way, with the use of drawing, dancing, singing a song, painting, saying poetry etc.

Davidson & Begley (2021) studied how brain patterns could change our lives and what we could do to improve our emotional responses. Taking into consideration their results, the participants analyzed how they and their colleagues feel and could regulate their emotions in the context of several case studies.

At the end of the second emotional workshop, each student team of four participants had to prepare an informal presentation about their team. This allowed the participants to manage the relationships among team members and they updated the SWOT analysis about their roles in the team for analyzing the company case study.

3.3 Spiritual Workshops

In the last decades many researchers focused on integrating spirituality in several management realms like organizational life, leadership, decision-making, business ethics, etc., covering both conceptual and empirical approaches (Lungu & Lungu, 2012) undoubtedly proving a growing interest in reconsidering the neglected spiritual facet of both managers and employees in pursuing organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

With the paradigm shift generated by Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983, 2006), studies and research have elaborated new insights covering emotional intelligence (Goleman et al., 2007; Goleman, 2008) and more recently spiritual intelligence (Torralba, 2012; Zohar & Marshal, 2009; Wigglesworth, 2014).

The emergence of works on spiritual intelligence, besides the management studies and research related to the integration of spirituality in the life of organizations, has strengthened the attention to the neglected problem of the spiritual dimension of the human being, which did not go unnoticed by academia. In this context, the awareness and development of spiritual skills in future managers facing the complex challenges of a globalized and multicultural economy seems at least promising for achieving the desired goals of companies in a postmodern world.

The two spiritual workshops within the ProCESS project gradually addressed the issue of spiritual abilities. Thus, the first workshop aimed to make students aware of the reality of spiritual

experiences even in a postmodern world. The second workshop aimed to discuss the characteristics of spiritual intelligence from the perspective of solving complex managerial problems.

The first workshop, labeled as "Spiritual awareness in a postmodern world", had the following objectives: acquaintance with the notion of spirituality; acquiring knowledge of various theories on the nature of the human being; the ability to differentiate between the postmodern acceptance of spirituality and religion from a corporate perspective; knowledge of the fields of integration of the elements of spirituality in organizations; self-assessment of spirituality based on standardized tests.

A first question that arises in covering the above topic is certainly "why should modern management take into account spiritual issues?" According to the bibliographic account in Lungu & Lungu (2012), the motivational impetus is manifold: the necessary support employees are looking for to overcoming the changes both in the corporate environment and in the traditional support given by the family and community, the aging population that becomes more sensitive for life-death questions, and not the least the possible benefits companies could attain by integrating spiritual issues in their organizational life.

If distinguishing spirituality from religion from an organizational perspective is relatively well defined in the corporate environment, the problem of defining spirituality is much more difficult. In the synthesis made by Lungu & Lungu (2012), religion is perceived as being organized, institutionalized, communal, ritualistic, and dogmatic, while spirituality is individualized and personal, informal, does not take into account a certain confession based on a specific doctrinal teaching, and therefore universal.

The discussion on the subject of spirituality, even from the perspective of the management of organizations cannot naturally avoid the

question related to the nature of the human being: physical, spiritual, or both.

Going further on the issue of convergence between management and spirituality, it is crucial to review elements of spiritual-religious inspiration that can be identified in the management of organizations. A short list in this regard would include at least spirituality in the workplace, theories of spiritual-religious-inspired leadership (servant leadership, spiritual leadership, legacy leadership), decision-making and work ethic, corporate social responsibility, and so on (Lungu, 2021).

At the end of the first workshop dedicated to the development of spiritual skills, students were provided with a self-assessment instrument on their spiritual experience.

For the second spiritual workshop, labeled as "How to increase our Spiritual Intelligence (SI)", the following objectives were set: acquiring knowledge of the multiple intelligences approach proposed by various authors; acquiring the ability to define the notion of spiritual intelligence; acquaintance with the notions of power, benefits, and atrophy of spiritual intelligence; gaining knowledge on the generic stages for the development of spiritual intelligence; self-assessment of the level of spiritual intelligence based on a standardized questionnaire.

The reason why the second spiritual workshop was dedicated to understanding and developing spiritual abilities related to spiritual intelligence is based on the findings of the bibliographic study undertaken (Zohar & Marshal, 2009; Torralba, 2012; Wigglesworth, 2014). From the point of view of multiple intelligences models incorporating spiritual intelligence, Zohar & Marshal (2009) took as a premise the functioning of the brain for the three types of intelligence they propose (intellectual intelligence (rational) for serial thinking; emotional intelligence for associative thinking; spiritual intelligence for unitary thinking). Wigglesworth (2006; 2011; 2014)

proposed a simplified hierarchy, in the form of a pyramid model of multiple intelligences, in which she considers four types of intelligence (physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual), which appear and develop throughout the life of each person, from the stage of small child. On the other hand, Torralba (2011) was not so concerned with providing his own classification, accepting Gardner's model, but broadly developing the type of spiritual intelligence in terms of power, benefits and atrophy of spiritual intelligence.

Going further, a second issue of interest is how to assess the spiritual intelligence. In this respect, Zohar & Marshall (2009, pp. 29-30) offer a list of self-evaluation that includes: the ability to be flexible; high degree of self-awareness; the ability to endure and use suffering; the ability to bear and transcend pain; the quality of being inspired by visions and values; the repulsion to accuse unnecessarily; the tendency to see the connections between various things (to be "holistic"); the tendency to ask "Why?" or "What if?" and to look for "fundamental" answers; the ability to work against conventions ("to be independent of context").

A third concern on the topic obviously covers how to increase one's spiritual abilities. The cited works offer a good deal of hints in this respect. Torralba (2011, pp. 157-193) provides a set of 12 ways of cultivating spiritual intelligence: assiduous practice of loneliness; pleasure for peace; contemplation; exercise in philosophizing; spiritual through art; Socratic dialogue; physical exercise; the pleasure of doing nothing; the experience of fragility; the enjoyment of music; the practice of meditation; the exercise of solidarity.

On their part, Zohar & Marshal (2009, pp. 275-321) proposed, on one hand, a set of six ways to develop spiritual intelligence depending on our personality type and personal motivation (the path of duty; the path of protective love; the path of knowledge; the path of personal transformation; the path of brotherhood; the

path of the leader in the service of others), and on the other hand, a number of seven practical steps to raise the SQ level (the awareness of where we are now; a strong desire to change; reflecting on our center and our deepest motivations; discovering and dissolution of obstacles; exploring more opportunities to move forward; dedicating ourselves to a certain path; awareness of the existence of several paths).

Finally, Wigglesworth (2014, pp. 132-133) proposed a very elaborate model, containing a list of 21 abilities of spiritual intelligence, grouped into 4 categories (quadrants: a. Self/ Self-awareness; b. Universal awareness; c. Self/ Self Mastery d. Social mastery/ Spiritual Presence), and as a practical exercise, formulated "nine steps to move to the Higher Self": "Stop; Breathe; Ask for help; Observe yourself; Identify and Embrace Ego-concerns; Look deeply into the root causes of ego-concerns; Reframe the situation-see with your eyes; Focus on something to be Grateful for; Choose a spiritually intelligent response."

The second spiritual workshop, dedicated to the issue of students' development of spiritual skills via enhancing their spiritual intelligence ended by administrating King's Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (King, 2008, pp. 206-207).

4   USING SES SKILLS IN SOLVING COMPLEX MANAGEMENT CASES

4.1   First round of four complex management cases

As presented in the second section of the paper, the ProCESS method tested by students for analyzing a complex management case is based on understanding the company case, next implementing sequences to mobilize sensorial, emotional, spiritual capacities, but also rational ones, and finally formulating recommendations that could solve the case (Eskola, 2021, p.4).

The four company cases proposed by the partner companies for the project's first year are briefly presented below.

The case study proposed by SANOFI, the French company partner and one of the global leaders in the pharmaceutical market, focused on the challenge of improving flu vaccination coverage rate, by stimulating the various health care professionals that can be involved in the vaccination process (doctors, nurses, pharmacists) to work more closely together, for patient's benefit. Students working on this company case were asked to find solutions that would lead to a better cooperation between stakeholders (Eskola et al., 2021, pp.17-19; "Press release – First round of complex management case studies", 2021).

De KLAUSEN is a Romanian business growth consulting company, focusing on the use of intensive consulting, training and coaching techniques, having as clients both multinational companies and Romanian entrepreneurial enterprises, particularly of medium size. The case study proposed by De KLAUSEN refers to one of their clients, the Romanian company KLAUS-ELGEX, which is one of the national leaders for solutions and electrical equipments for industrial automation systems, electrical drives and lighting systems. The challenge for students was to identify solutions that can lead to increasing sales with 25% per year, by focusing especially on the digitization of the sales processes (Eskola et al., 2021, pp.12-16; "Press release – First round of complex management case studies", 2021).

Mediatalo Keskisoumalainen is a communications and media corporation in Finland, representing a major player on the Finnish market for providing printed and digital newspapers, digital advertising, marketing and communications services, graphic production, as well as printing and distribution services. The case study proposed by the company asked students to explore the options the company could employ for creating a whole new learning

culture and for developing competences that will enable the company to reach its target of increasing sales and revenue, given the major challenges faced by the company, among which are the changing consumer buying behavior and media usage, as well as the various regulations on privacy and targeting (Eskola et al., 2021, pp.4-12; "Press release – First round of complex management case studies", 2021).

Latvijas Pasts is the largest postal service provider in Latvia, providing traditional postal services, express mail, delivery of subscribed publications and unaddressed advertising, retail of goods and press, among others. During the last five years, the company saw a transition from bureaucratic management style to a result-oriented one, which also included a complex process for creating company's values. The main questions raised by this case for students were how to bring the company values to life and to stimulate their contribution for organizational performance (Eskola et al., 2021, pp.19-27; "Press release – First round of complex management case studies", 2021).

4.2 TUCN students' opinions on using SES skills for solving complex management case studies

The next part of this section highlights the main coordinates of the experience the 16 Romanian students had in the process of analyzing the four company cases by using the ProCESS method and it is based on the final reports developed by the four Romanian student teams (Ciulean, Cotora, Lazăr, Oros, 2022; Piciu, Mocan, Andrei, Dăngulea, 2022; Imre, Ciortea, Sabău, Hangea, 2022; Baltag, Faja, Mătieș, Tomoioagă, 2022).

Student teams' final reports were required to follow a proposed structure: summary of the company's main characteristics and of the proposed complex case, presentation of the six SESS workshops, highlighting the manner in which the workshops contributed to the company case analysis, and lastly, final plans for action, consisting of students' solutions and recommendations for the company.

For the section presenting workshops' contribution to the company case treatment, the academic coaches offered students a set of questions to take into account when analyzing these aspects: What were their experiences about themselves during the SESS workshops? Which SES skills have they started to apply on a daily basis? What insights did they generate for their case as a result of the SESS workshops? How are emotional, sensorial and spiritual skills related to business? What can leaders learn from such types of workshops? How can organizations and leaders use SES skills? Therefore the remainder of this section is structured according to students' opinions on these aspects.

4.2.1 Students' own experiences during the workshops

Most students felt that the SESS workshops not only generated valuable insights for them to analyze the complex management cases, but had an impact for their lives as well, as the workshops enabled them to explore areas that could help them grow both in their personal and professional lives.

In students' opinion, the workshops helped them first and foremost to know themselves better, by discovering new aspects about themselves and then about the others.

In relation to others, students learned how important perception is, that everybody is entitled to have a different perspective on the same aspect and that more empathy is needed with those around us. It is important to not just expose one's point of view on a certain topic, but to also listen the other's perspective.

Students perceived the workshops as being quite different one from another, but stressed out that they were able to find something new and helpful from each of them. Students felt that the sensorial workshops made them better

understand the importance of senses, of how everything that surrounds us, everything that we see, hear, smell or touch has a huge impact on our lives, both at personal and professional levels. Students became even more aware of the huge role music and images play in our lives. In their turn, they felt that the emotional workshops helped them to develop their abilities of better identifying and understanding not only their own emotions, but also the emotions of others. On the spiritual side, the workshops helped students to discern the different spiritual practices and to understand that spirituality can provide them with more courage and confidence.

One student team noted that one of the most important things they learned from the workshops was that spending time on oneself should be seen as an investment, not a waste of time.

Another team perceived the workshops as raising beautiful challenges for them, that helped them develop "a sixth sense" of self-knowledge and self-awareness, which in turn made them believe that SES skills could provide a solution for every negative emotion one can experience in his life.

In addition to the new aspects they discovered about themselves, in some cases students also noted that the workshops provided them confirmation for things they already knew about themselves. For example, one student noted that although she already knew before that she enjoys more practical aspects, like numbers or graphics, rather than emotional ones, it was important for her that after attending the workshops she was provided with a confirmation in this respect.

Among the experiences noted with the workshops at an individual level, one student noted that she thought she had a well-developed spiritual side, but the workshops made her realize that she does not allocate enough time and attention in her life to it. Another student discovered that she is a colder person than she

thought in her relationships with others and this made her start paying more attention to friendships. Another student experienced feelings like contemplation, peace in solitude or the desire to redefine during the workshops, and also other emotions and feelings that he feels he had been suppressing for years.

4.2.2 SES skills applied by students on a daily basis

Students identified various SES skills related aspects they started to apply in their everyday lives. As a general remark, it could be said that following the workshops, students believe they became more aware of themselves and of the others and started to pay much more attention to details they did not observe before, related to themselves, to the ones around them and to their surrounding environment as well.

Students started to pay more attention to their own thoughts and to have more confidence in their own senses when analyzing a specific situation.

In their opinion, they also developed the skill of being more attentive to what the others say, but also to their nonverbal language. They understood that each person is entitled to see things from a different perspective than their own and they now listen more carefully to what the other has to say. One student noted that before the workshops, she was used to not having enough patience to wait for the other to finish his idea, but she was already speculating on what the other was actually intending to transmit. Students noted that they are now more observant of the posture, gestures or facial expressions of the person they are talking to and this helps them to better understand the other's reactions, emotions and moods.

Students also started paying greater attention to details from their environment – visual details, ambient lighting, sounds, colors and others – and to use them to their advantage, in their everyday lives, both in professional and personal areas of activity. At a professional level,

they use these elements for improving their work productivity. One student noted that she started listening to music while she's at work and has to perform mechanical tasks that she does not particularly enjoy, as music helps her relax and makes time pass faster, while doing the required task. On a personal level, some of the students noted that when they experience negative feelings or simply have a bad day, they begin listening to their favorite music for about 10 minutes, which puts them in a much better mood for resuming their daily activities. They also started to use images or videos for dealing with their emotions.

In current times filled with so many negative news everyday, students feel that contemplation can be a solution for developing their spiritual side and for coping with stress and fear of the unknown. They think that their willing power, as well as their concentration power, can benefit if they allocate a specific time to connect with their inner thoughts.

4.2.3 Insights generated for analyzing the complex management cases as results of the SESS workshops

Students considered the SESS workshops to be rich in information, providing them various information they were not aware of before and felt that each workshop inspired them with ideas for approaching their company case.

Students also believe that their participation at the workshops enabled them to analyze the complex cases not from just one point of view, but from various perspectives, some of these even more unusual. It was also underlined, in some cases, that as the workshops progressed and students were able to find more about the emotional, spiritual and sensorial dimensions of human beings' lives, they started to change their initial perspective and approach of the company case and identified new dimensions they have not considered in the beginning of the company case analysis. Therefore the analysis of the

complex management cases, based on the SESS workshops, was an evolving process.

A significant part of the insights generated by the SESS workshops to all four company cases, in students' opinion, took into consideration how employees feel at work, the conditions of their working environment, how motivated they are, what motivates them, the influence of their leaders and managers on others.

The final recommendations developed by the four Romanian student teams for the partner companies covered a wide range of interesting and innovative solutions, reflecting the specific context of each company. On a more general note, these recommendations included, among others, organizing different events for the stakeholders, improving employees' wellbeing at work, motivating the employees and supporting their development, as well as using the most appropriate technologies that can help the company achieve its goals.

Students also noted that attending the workshops made them step out of their comfort zone at some moments, as the approach was different that the one they were used to. Based on their previous experience, they were more accustomed to doing research, obtaining the needed information and organizing it in an easier way, often following in this process various predetermined paths. During the SESS workshops, students were not provided with exact information on how to solve the cases, but they were rather stimulated to dare to think "out of the box" and to rely on their SES skills for identifying innovative solutions.

4.2.4 Students' opinion on the connection between SES skills and business

Students believe that emotional, sensorial and spiritual skills are strongly connected to the business world and that leaders have what to learn by attending this type of SESS workshops.

As business involves working with and for people and they should be placed at the center

of the business, leaders could learn from SESS workshops that for achieving organizational performance technical and rational skills are not sufficient, but SES skills are needed as well, as these capacities will connect leaders with other people in the organization.

Students believe that SES skills are very important for leaders, both for their own development and for the development of their teams and eventually, for the growth of the entire organization. SES skills help leaders know themselves better, enabling them to assess their strengths and weaknesses and to have a more clear view of what they should aim to improve about themselves. At the same time, SES skills support leaders to develop better abilities for knowing and understanding the employees, for better cooperating with them, for knowing what makes their employees happier and more productive and for motivating them in the right direction, for encouraging them and for helping them, when needed.

Students noted that SES skills can also assist leaders in creating teams for teamwork projects, especially ones that involve complex tasks, by selecting in the same team employees with different abilities that complement each other.

Students believe that SES skills could also be used in organizations for gaining a better understanding of what a familiar and pleasant working environment for the employees would imply.

Students suggested that leaders should use SES skills to support their employees to reach their full potential within the organization and to guide them on the direction of achieving the desired organizational performance and goals.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Soft skills like the sensorial, emotional or spiritual capacities prove to be nowadays more important than ever, both for individuals' personal lives and in the organizational and business context.

This paper presented the main results and experience gathered at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, as a partner in the Erasmus+ ProCESS project, after the first year in the project's implementation, focusing on the activities related to complex management cases analysis by the 16 Romanian students from TUCN that took part to the first round of the project, especially on the six SESS workshops organized within TUCN in this context.

These first results are promising, showing that the Romanian students involved in the project considered that attending the six SESS workshops had a significant contribution for generating ideas to solve the complex management cases they analyzed, supporting them to analyze the case from various perspectives and to think out of the box. In addition, students underlined the impact these workshops had on their personal lives as well, by enabling them to better understand themselves and the ones around them, at emotional, sensorial and spiritual levels.

A limitation of the workshops in the first round was the fact that they took place online, due to the COVID-19 situation in Romania during the time the workshops had to be organized (October-December 2021). However, face-to-face SESS workshops will be organized in the future, during the next two years of project's implementation.

These preliminary results also set expectations for the next two rounds of the project, as the activity of analyzing complex management cases by employing students' SES skills will continue in the next two years, involving other 128 students from the four countries, while 32 of them will be students of TUCN. The students involved in the project will become more aware of their SES skills and of the ways in which they can use these skills for tackling real life business challenges.

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