

# **Service-Learning, Spiritual Orientation, and Social Entrepreneurship: A exploration of the Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka**

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## **Abstract**

*The primary goal of this research is to explore the impact of a student's service-learning experience gained through working on social entrepreneurship projects and participating in corporate social responsibility activities (CSR) on a student's change in their spiritual orientation as a change in attitude towards social and community development. This exploratory study analyzed 20 transformational stories from Viking Club students at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) using snowballing to select the suitable respondents. The Viking Club is a student-led club at the USJ that promotes social entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka along with the active engagement in CSR activities. In-depth questionnaire was based on the author's personal experiences, autoethnography as the instrument to comprehend and capture the participants' real experiences of transformative change using a qualitative research approach. According to the findings, active participation in the Viking Club's social entrepreneurship and CSR activities boosted empathetic behavior and developed a more empathic attitude that was socially responsible, happy, as well as sustainable. The students appeared to be more inspired to work collaboratively and to put forth more effort in sharing love with others, which represents the evolution of spiritual orientation and how it has combined with social entrepreneurship to achieve the club's*

*ultimate vision of “Solving social problems in Sri Lanka through Entrepreneurship”. The paper thereby gives theoretical and practical implications.*

**Keywords:** *Service-Learning, Social Entrepreneurship, Spiritual Orientation, Student clubs*

## **1. Introduction**

As the digital age changes the nature of work and restructures our communities, educators are faced with the dual challenge of teaching students how to be the best performers in today's highly competitive economy while also instilling spiritual values that will help us create a more humane society for all. Service-learning is seen as a form of moral development and appreciation of the connections between civic engagement and spirituality. Civic participation is critical to many higher educational establishments around the world, according to Dalton (2006), who regarded service learning as a chance for moral development and appreciating the links between civic engagement and spirituality. As a result, service-learning is a course-related educational strategy that employs experiential learning to teach students about citizenship, academic subjects, and skills, as well as values.

Even though there are multiple scholars who have researched the impact of social entrepreneurship clubs on college campuses (Johanna & Martí, 2006; Johanna & Noboa, 2006) there is a lack in knowledge about the value of student-led social entrepreneurial clubs that develop the individuals' spiritual orientation through service learning. There is currently limited research on the role of student-led social entrepreneurial clubs in fostering service learning and transforming members internally for the betterment of the world which demands an exploration in order to solve the existing research problem. Several universities in Sri Lanka have student-led clubs and associations that aim to improve entrepreneurial learning, but only the University of Sri Jayewardenepura's Vikings club and the University of Colombo's Vikings club support social entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka (Jpura Vikings, 2019). The club is driven towards *solving social problems in Sri Lanka through Entrepreneurship* with active engagement in social entrepreneurship projects that address human and community needs. Furthermore, since service-learning is primarily an experiential learning, the lessons

are derived from the experience of conducting a service activity that addresses the needs of the community. The impact of the Viking club on a student's level of service learning thus would be critical to unearth. Thus, the primary purpose of this paper is to address the existing gap in the research studies conducted in understanding the value of the student-led social entrepreneurial clubs that develop the individuals' spiritual orientation through service learning. Therefore, two Research Objectives (RO) were established initially.

RO01: To explore the contribution of the Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in enhancing the students' spiritual orientation as a change in attitude towards social and community development of a potential social entrepreneur through service-learning aspects.

RO02: To understand how effective service learning is in improving the students' vital aspects of social entrepreneurial learning.

RO03: To recommend the ways through which the Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura can further improve student-learning for a better way forward.

As one of the first detailed research studies on social entrepreneurship clubs in Sri Lanka, the paper also reports on the steering vision and objectives, the various club activities, the role of club in the paper's literature review and the students' motives for participating in the activities of the club under the findings. Thus, the final outcome of the discussion will facilitate answers to the research questions below.

RQ01: What is the contribution of the Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in enhancing the students' spiritual orientation as a change in attitude towards social and community development of a potential social entrepreneur through service-learning aspects?

RQ02: How effective is service learning in improving the vital aspects of social entrepreneurial learning for the student?

RQ03: What are the ways through which the Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura can further improve the students' experience for a better way forward?

This paper is divided into six sections: literature review, methodology, findings, discussion of findings, conclusion, and summary. The literature section will cover significant research areas; the methodology section will explain the in-depth interview process and autoethnography; the findings section will provide an organized report of the in-depth interviews and autoethnography, the discussion of findings section will provide an analysis of the key findings of the study, followed by the conclusion of the paper and suggestions for future research directions.

The literature review covers six different domains, each of which, are believed to be interconnected: Service-learning, Spiritual Orientation, Dimension of Spiritual Orientation, Social Entrepreneurship, Student Clubs, and the Viking Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Service-Learning (SL)***

According to Jacoby (1996) SL is defined as “A form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning” (p.5). Accordingly, it is clear that service-learning includes a service experience followed by critical reflection upon the experience as a means to facilitate learning. Service-learning also delivers a chance to feel the interconnectedness, an opportunity for “opening your heart,” and the enlargement of self-inquiry as well as self-knowledge (Louie-Badua and Wolf, 2008).

Service learning has bloomed in the arena of education, evidencing its usefulness concerning academic results and relative to social commitment which was further supported by their findings that confirmed that the SL approach has an impact on students’ evaluations of their own learning processes (Gomez-Estern et al., 2021). The tasks led by students must be motivated by community-defined needs with the aim of building reciprocal connections in the process. Attention in this paper is on a service-learning experience that strives to incorporate the following concepts: (1) Spiritual Orientation, (2) Social Entrepreneurship.

## ***2.2 Spiritual Orientation***

An additional outcome of service-learning is the dependence of spirituality for a given spiritual orientation. Spirituality means diverse things to individuals depending upon their spiritual orientation. Being spiritual is all about being human in full, and about connecting all the energies that are integral parts of us. It is also about linking with the life force that defines us and integrate us together (Moxley, 1999).

Similarly, Hamilton and Jackson (1998) argued that spirituality consists of three key themes: the further growth of self-awareness; the sense of interconnectedness of all; and the association between the “higher power” or the “higher purpose.”

The third theme does not essentially suggest a deity, even though it definitely could. Either way, for Hamilton and Jackson (1998) spirituality means the connection to something greater than oneself, such as, a higher purpose to serve a local community or a global community as well as a deity.

According to Singh and Premarajan, (2007), Spiritual Orientation (SO) has been conceptualized as the self-perceived spiritual knowledge, skills, and attitude that affect one's capacity to stem meaning and purpose, from both work and life. Thus, SO is facilitating a strengthening belief system that consist of Spiritual attitude: is having a positive opinion, thinking outside the apparent and having a feeling of inner peace. Spiritual knowledge: is being close to oneself, knowing the various needs of others and understanding that everything is influenced by everything else. Spiritual skill: is the capacity to exercise spirituality well, the capacity to live in the present moment and the capability to get responsibilities (Singh & Premarajan, 2007).

## ***2.3 Dimensions of Spiritual Orientation***

Built on the theories and definitions of spirituality specified by numerous authors the following dimensions of spiritual orientation are from Singh and Premarajan (2007) and are used as the basis for coding the interviews (if this is true) for the present study:

### **(1) Self-awareness**

Self-awareness is knowing oneself, what he or she believes in or for what matters they will fight.

### **(2) Inter-connectedness**

Inter-connectedness is viewed as an expression of oneness where everything is a part of everything else (Singh & Premarajan, 2007).

### **(3) Respect for others**

Respect for others consists of the personal privacy, physical space along with the belongingness, religious beliefs, gender and lifestyles (Singh & Premarajan, 2007).

### **(4) Feeling of inner peace**

One must feel happy with self, environment, work and others while having no complaint with life, and feel positive about life in order to live with peace of mind (Singh & Premarajan, 2007).

### **(5) Service towards humankind**

The service towards humankind accounts for caring, being hopeful, kind, considerate, compassionate and empathetic for other beings, along with the ability to walk in the neighbour's shoes (Singh & Premarajan, 2007).

### **(6) Being vision and value led**

It is the attainment beyond or partaking a sense that things could be well and better (Singh & Premarajan, 2007).

## ***2.4 Social Entrepreneurship***

Social Entrepreneurship (SE) is an emerging field of investigation within the entrepreneurship and not-for-profit marketing literatures (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006). Social Entrepreneurship is an innovative and a social value creating action that occurs within or across the non-profit, profit oriented, and the public sectors (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006). The first main component to highlight is innovation. Entrepreneurship is a creative process that searches for opportunities to generate something new. The second major aspect is the social value creation which is a basic dimension differentiating SE from commercial entrepreneurship.

## ***2.5 Student Clubs***

A student club is defined as an independent group of students that gather on a regular basis with the goal of enhancing their own learning on a specific topic or theme (Cox

& Goff 1996). Professional honor societies, subject-specific clubs (e.g., investment), and expert interests are only some of the possibilities for student groups (e.g., Chinese business). They also participate in a variety of events that are dependent on the club's specific objective, such as guest lectures, seminar series, panel discussions, network meetings, and competitions (Cox & Goff 1996).

## ***2.6 The Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura***

The Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura is a student club established by a group of undergraduates in the year of 2018 with the primary idea developed by Dulaj Udayanga (Jpura Vikings, 2019) with the steering vision “Solving Social Problems in Sri Lanka through Entrepreneurship”. It is a student club that focuses on fostering social entrepreneurs and corporate social responsibility with the application of service learning.

“E.S. Wickramasekara, one of the authors of the current paper was a founder member of the club and was also a former Vice President who was involved in the recruitment process along with the ideation and implementation of major social movements that were undertaken by the club whose autoethnography is used in the data collection.

Table 1: The Vision, Mission and the Objectives of the Club

<b>Vision</b>	<b>“Solving Social Problems in Sri Lanka through Entrepreneurship”</b>
<b>Mission</b>	“Creating the best 100 Social Entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka whilst fostering their benevolence and innovative spirit hence promoting Social Entrepreneurship globally”
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To nurture confident and responsible social entrepreneurs with a positive mind-set.</li> <li>• To provide continuous mutual assistance to those interested in starting their own business.</li> </ul>

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- To give members exposure to the practical business world and consequently developing their business insights.
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*Source: (Jpura Vikings, 2019)*

## ***2.7 Expanding Beyond Social Entrepreneurship to CSR***

In addition to the efforts the club shares in enhancing social entrepreneurship multiple corporate social responsibility movements that address human and community needs are also organized by the club and conducts them with the participation of the members of the club as reviewed under Table 2.

Table 2: The Corporate Social Responsibility movements of the Club

The event	Description
Walk of Mercy	Walk of Mercy is organized to teaches fellow Vikings well about the importance of humanity over material possessions in life, and as privileged members of the society, to educate and give them better opportunities to engage in community service to help the underprivileged. The Vikings continued visiting them following this first movement.
Medical Camp (Kruthaguna)	Vikings were able to undertake a health campaign for the sanitary workers at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Nutrition, and Indigenous Medicine. The University's sanitary staff members were able to have their physical diseases diagnosed, as well as their blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol levels checked, by general practitioner doctors and nurses. With the second installment of the Kruthaguna series the Vikings were able to undertake an eye check-up campaign for the sanitary workers at the University of Sri



	Jayewardenepura thanks to a collaboration with the Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society. The Vikings continued Kruthaguna following these first two movements.
Christmas with Kind souls	The Vikings spent the 24th of December celebrating Christmas with the patients and staff at Apeksha Hospital in Maharagama. Vikings managed to teach the world the true essence of Christmas. Vikings spent the day entertaining the residents of Apeksha Hospital, making it a cheerful Christmas evening. The Vikings continued visiting them following this first movement.

*Source: (Jpura Vikings, 2019)*

### **3. Methodology**

The methodology is based on the philosophical assumption within the interpretive research paradigm as explained by Denzin & Lincoln (2011); both the interviewer and the respondents co-created knowledge, as well as an ontological belief that emphasizes reality as socially constructed. According to Creswell (2012), the interpretivism paradigm requires the researcher to inductively generate a theory based on the observations collected from the primary data. As a result, the current study is an exploratory study using an inductive methodology.

In this study, the snowballing sample approach was applied, which requires selecting a large number of "information-rich" respondents (Patton, 2002). The snowball sampling was used in the current study to select members who are actively involved in the activities club and thereby have been influenced by the club and who also possessed an open-minded understanding of it, as well as who had both the willingness and capability to articulate their own experience.

Twenty present and past members of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura's Vikings Club were selected to be interviewed. The first five respondents were contacted using the researcher's personal network and the remaining respondents were suggested by a few of the interviewed respondents and the founder of the club. It was significant since

the researcher, as a former vice president and active member of the club, had participated in a number of social activities and knew the respondents personally therefore the researcher had the capability of probing effectively during the interviews with the respondents and to get more sensitive and personal data on how both positively and negatively the club has influenced them.

To interpret the respondents' personal narratives about their experiences and motivation to participate in the club's activities one of the researcher's own autoethnographies were also used in the current study. Autoethnographies cover a wide range of topics, from personal experiences and reflections of the research process to parallel explorations of the researcher's and respondents' involvements, as well as the researcher's experience while doing precise research along with his/her subjective experience and perspective (Carolyn & Arthur., 2000). The researcher's personal narrative inspired the team of researchers to consider the changes she underwent as a result of her active participation in the club.

The identification of the primary themes (see Appendix 1), grounded in the authors' personal experiences, helped clarify respondents' narratives as one of the researchers reflected on her own evolving engagement with the Vikings Club. To minimize bias, all interviews were conducted by two of the researchers, with the analysis supervised by the senior authors. As Ritchie and Lewis (2003) note, qualitative studies typically employ two main forms of data collection: in-depth interviews and group discussions. For this study, only in-depth interviews were used, as they allow participants to provide detailed accounts of complex experiences (Bowling, 2002). Semi-structured interviews were selected for their flexibility, enabling the researchers to follow a prepared guide while also probing further to enrich the data (Bryman, 2018). The interview guide, prepared in advance, contained core questions that were addressed in each session. The interviews were conducted jointly by the two researchers, who used probing techniques to capture more nuanced insights. Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, interviews were held via Zoom with video enabled. Each session lasted no longer than sixty minutes, and participants were informed of both the time limit and the fact that the interviews

would be recorded. No participants objected. To avoid language barriers, interviews were conducted in both Sinhala and English.

Recording the interviews ensured systematic analysis and reduced the limitations of human recall, while also allowing researchers to focus on the interaction and observe participants' facial expressions. The twenty interviews were recorded on two smartphones and transcribed verbatim. All respondents were Buddhists and either current or former members of the club, each of whom already owned or aspired to own a business. The profiles of the twenty respondents are provided below.

Table 3: The Respondents' Profile

<i>Pseudonyms</i>	Age	Gender	Religion	Membership	Business
Respondent 01	24	Female	Buddhist	Former Executive Board Member	Wishes to become a lecturer
Respondent 02	23	Male	Buddhist	Director of Entrepreneurship	Organic fruits and vegetable delivery
Respondent 03	23	Male	Buddhist	Director Marketing, junior director board	Online and physical tuition classes on Geography
Respondent 04	24	Female	Buddhist	A member of the junior director board and assistant treasurer	Have started a business in designer ladies' shoes but now inactive
Respondent 05	24	Female	Buddhist	Director of Events	Wishes to do a job first

Respondent 06	27	Male	Buddhist	A member of the junior director board	Wishes to become a lawyer
Respondent 07	22	Male	Buddhist	A member of the junior director board	Undergraduate
Respondent 08	23	Male	Buddhist	President 2020-21	Haven't yet started a business
Respondent 09	26	Female	Buddhist	Former vice president and an initiative member	Lecturer
Respondent 10	25	Female	Buddhist	A member of the director board	A clothing line
Respondent 11	24	Female	Buddhist	Former executive board member	Has two businesses, cards and cakes.
Respondent 12	24	Male	Buddhist	A member of the director board and a former Webmaster	Wishes to start a business in the future
Respondent 13	23	Male	Buddhist	Webmaster 2020-21	Wishes to start a business in the future

Respondent 14	24	Female	Buddhist	Former Director of members relations	Wishes to start a business in the future
Respondent 15	27	Male	Buddhist	Founder	Owner of a few businesses
Respondent 16	24	Female	Hinduist	Former executive board member	Wishes to start a business in the future
Respondent 17	24	Male	Buddhist	Former Director of members relations	Sells electronic appliances as a business with a partnership with suppliers from China
Respondent 18	24	Male	Buddhist	Former Director of members relations	Wishes to start a business in the future
Respondent 19	22	Male	Buddhist	Current member	Undergraduate
Respondent 20	25	Male	Buddhist	Former webmaster	Wishes to start a business in the future

*Source: Author Compiled*

### ***3.1 Data Analysis: Constant Comparative Method and Thematic Analysis***

Tesch (1990) considers comparison the main intellectual process that underpins all grounded theory analysis, where she is adopting this viewpoint:

“Comparison is the most important intellectual tool. During analysis, the approach of comparing and contrasting is employed for virtually all intellectual tasks: constructing categories, defining category boundaries, assigning segments to categories, evaluating the content of each category, and discovering negative evidence. The purpose is to find conceptual connections, improve the discriminative ability of categories, and find patterns.” (Tesch,1990).

The method to the constant comparative method (CCM) was used for analysing the interview data. It was helpful as a purposeful way and in reporting the researchers’ own experiences which assured the traceability and credibility of data analysis (Tesch,1990). The responses were compared with each respondent in entering into conclusions. The comparisons were conducted with collective contribution of all the four authors through a meeting. Thus, the researchers knew beforehand the comparative steps needed in the analysis with respect to the aims, the questions asked and the responses. The difficulties and ambiguities of analysing qualitative data, the interview responses were re-writing, and revising, therefore, to reduce any means of bias the interviews were re-written, translated, and read again and again until meanings were clear.

The patterning of the collected data provided the answers to the research questions that were examined in the study. Also, initial results were needed, such as codes, conceptual profiles, summaries, and field notes. Accordingly, thematic analysis was used for the development of codes and themes.

### ***3.2 Thematic Analysis***

Clarke and Braun's (2013) six-step data analysis technique were used to analyze the data for this study, which included familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, looking for themes, reviewing themes, defining and labeling the themes, and lastly producing the report. To begin, all of the transcribes were read several times to familiarize themselves with the data, which was straightforward because the data had been acquired by the researchers themselves.

Then, first and foremost, codes were generated. Code is a word or a brief phrase that is used to identify the parts of a data collection that are related to the research issue (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The initial round of code development and assignment yielded a total of 100 codes on the list which is attached in appendix 1. The questions were organized in a way that adhered to the interview guide. For ease of reference, all of the codes were manually recorded on a single sheet. The manual editing made the revision process go more smoothly. Because they all fell under the same code, several sentences were broken down into subcodes under a single parental code. Following the initial sifting of data, the search for themes began. A theme should be able to explain something relevant about the data and respond to research inquiries (Clarke & Braun, 2013). After the prospective themes were established, the final evaluation of the themes was completed, accompanied by the defining and naming of the themes, and they have been reported under the findings.

The data collection was done by two researchers and out of those two researchers one was the former vice president of the club and whose autoethnography was used as primary data of the study. All the four researchers were involved in the data analysis.

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

The research objectives of the study were to explore the contribution of the Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in enhancing the spiritual orientation as a change in attitude towards social and community development of a potential social entrepreneur through service-learning aspects, understand how effective service learning is in improving the vital aspects of social entrepreneurial learning and thereby recommend the ways through which the Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura can further improve for a better way forward. The results of the thematic analysis of the interviews with the twenty members are shown in detail below, and they give evidence for the themes and sub-themes that arose from the data. As a result, it was discovered that active engagement in the club mirrored significant spiritual growth. During the data collection, the participants gave many insightful descriptions that helped to understand how the recognized characteristics of spiritual orientation evolved and were influenced throughout their time at the club. Purpose of life, self-

awareness, interconnectedness, respect for others, feeling of inner peace, service to humanity, being vision and value led, and social entrepreneurship were recognized themes through the six steps of the thematic analysis.

#### **4.1 Spiritual Orientation**

##### *4.1.1 Purpose of life, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation*

In order to understand how the respondents have changed their understanding as to the purpose of their life. The question, “Do you see any difference in how you define your life’s purpose?” was asked in the beginning to understand how the respondents perceive life and its purpose before becoming a member of the club and finally, a question was asked to understand their current understanding of the purpose of life.

The Respondent one, who wishes to develop her career in the academic field as a lecturer reported,

*“The majority of the people talk about sustainability but personally, they lack the social well-being component of it. I did my undergraduate research in corporate sustainability and ethics related to the field of marketing because I know that is the solution. The health issues and most of the problems arise because the corporate sector does not provide accurate information. So, one day I want to do something that will provide an example to others. I know the club is promoting such ethical conduct and that is why I joined the club.”*

She also stated,

*“I have understood that the large multinational corporations in Sri Lanka along with its marketing function creates unnecessary needs for the consumers. Knowledge and intelligence are two different things and I see that the attitudes of the people are in a very low position currently in our country. So, I want to bring in sustainable and ethical ways of doing business and products one day”*

Respondent two who is currently operating his own business that delivers natural organic fruits and vegetables to the consumers reported,



*“I think the purpose of life is to live a long life in a healthy way. I think a lot of people today have given more value to money, but money isn't the only thing that we need in life. Most of us today eat a lot of unhealthy food it inspired me to start my business. I started my business after becoming a member of the club. I got to know members who were conducting research in the field of agriculture and who are working with the technology side of agriculture. I first started to learn about different plant types I had little knowledge as I came from a village”*

According to the respondents' response of the data collected, it appears to suggest that respondents have highlighted slight changes in the way of perceiving and thereby living their life with meaning and purpose with the membership of the club. It is evident that the respondents have had spiritually driven purposes in life before becoming a member of the club.

They have added more value to the purpose of their lives with much more meaning and spiritual values with a proper understanding received by the experience received by witnessing the social and community problems by engaging in the initiatives of the club.

#### *4.1.2 Self-awareness, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation*

Almost all the respondents showed greater self-awareness with respect to the transformative changes that have taken place in their life like with the membership. Respondent five, who claimed that she was able to bond with other members greatly reported,

*“I'm not usually getting inspired to help other people just because I feel that pain. But recently as one of our members and his whole family got infected by covid-19 members got together collected money and other. Essentials, but I didn't give money as all the other members have donated but I got the feeling that I must help, and I think that is an improvement”*

As per Singh and Premarajan (2007) Self-awareness is knowing oneself for who they really are, and the beliefs that one holds in life. According to the findings it is evident that the respondent has been inspired by actively engaging in the activities of the club

in favour of social and community development through their social responsibility activities facilitate an opportunity for service learning for the members has increased self-awareness as a dimension of spiritual orientation.

#### *4.1.3 Inter-connectedness, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation*

Respondent ten, who intended to start a business even at the point of joining the club reported,

*" I manage to get to know a lot of good people through the club. I was surprised to see their kindness and how helpful they were. I was exposed to friends who are into studies before. They were only focusing on their studies but not on any extracurricular activities. But I in the club we bonded so strongly"*

It is clear that clubs do cause people to develop good connections as networking is one of the top reasons for joining a club, to find connections for personal, business, social, or spiritual reasons. The above quote does identify the respondent's ability to find people with spiritually driven attitudes.

As per Singh and Premarajan (2007) is an expression of unity among all. The results show that the respondent has been motivated to participate actively in club activities that support social and community development. These activities provide members with a chance to participate in service learning, which has increased interconnectedness as a dimension of spiritual orientation.

#### *4.1.4 Respect for others, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation*

Respondent four, who has improved herself with respect to being actively and socially engaged in with others through the club reported,

*"As undergraduates usually we, don't get the opportunity to visit the hope Hospital and to actively engage with cancer patients. Also, the friendly relationships that we have with the non-Academic Staff, visiting the elder's homes, and spending time with them taught me the importance of respecting all human beings"*

Respondent 12 also stated,

*"I was exposed to seeing how all the members who respect each other even the senior members of the club. They are so friendly, kind and maintain no status or distance between each other"*

#### *4.1.5 Feeling of inner peace, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation*

Most of the respondents did value peace of mind. They reported various sources of peace of mind for them but most importantly it is evident that the members avoid unnecessary troubles and looking forward to happiness and peace of mind. Respondent 9 who is one of the authors of the research along with the autoethnography reported,

*"I value peace of mind now in my life more than anything. The true understanding of the purpose of life along with happiness reached me in 2020 with the learning of the philosophy of Buddhism. When I was working in the club, I did not have that understanding. And I believe with the understanding that I have right now if I had it before we would have been able to do things with much more meaning and true value than not just doing it merely for the purpose of doing it"*

It is also clear that the respondents are experiencing spiritual satisfaction as a result of participating in the socially responsible events outlined in the literature review. These respondents are evidently happy for reasons other than pleasure, as seen by their responses. Literature clearly distinguishes between happiness and pleasure, with happiness being a mental state and pleasure being a chemical reaction that occurs in the brain as a result of the five senses being satisfied. Pleasure can bring happiness, but only for a brief time. Long-term happiness can be attained through completely fulfilling one's human responsibilities and duties. Obtaining power, wealth, prestige, position, and reputation provides pleasure to humans (Ulluwishewa, 2016).

#### *4.1.6 Service towards humankind, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation*

Respondent 7, who has participated in several business competitions organized by multinational companies for which the willingness was inspired by the club reported,

*"Happiness for me is getting to know that someone has achieved something because I helped. I always had that way of thinking and by entering into the club it increased"*

The response does identify a change, a positive increase, that occurred as a result of club membership.

The majority of respondents have acknowledged the importance of serving other people, as evidenced by their comments. Serving other people is both a source of long-term satisfaction and a responsibility for them. In the literature accessible, serving other people is also regarded as a wonderful virtue. Based on a thorough examination of the existing literature, Morales-Sánchez and Cabello-Medina (2015) identified a list of sixteen virtues for workers: transcendence, courage, environmental responsibility, commitment, benevolence, honesty, optimism, humility, fair treatment, perseverance, prudence, self-control, gratitude, service to others, solidarity, and amiability. It can be concluded that because serving other people is seen as a source of happiness, respondents are more interested in happiness than pleasure. In literature, it is believed that when a person seeks pleasure, he or she sees other people and the natural world around them as possible pleasure objects. And the software brain causes people to see themselves not as integral parts of the whole, but as individuals separate from others and the environment, and to see our fellow humans as 'others,' as in competitors and foes (Ulluwishewa, 2016). They become more self-centered when they regard themselves as individual creatures. Self-centered humans are unconcerned about other people, which has bad consequences for other people and the environment. As change agents, specifically social entrepreneurs, if they are self-centered, they will not develop enterprises that will solve social concerns, nor will they conduct business in a way that will safeguard other humans and nature, according to the setting of the current study.

#### *4.1.7 Being vision and value led, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation*

It is evident that the respondents. have become vision and value-led with their membership. Respondent three who has a plan of improving the teaching of Geography in Sri Lanka reported,

*“Joining the club improved my willingness to help one another more. I have previously taught in a Sunday school and currently, I have my business. It has a Vision and a Mission. I'm working in a way that I will be able to achieve them. I came this long by myself, and I am looking forward to implementing both long-term and short-term goals and strategies to achieve them in the future.”*

It can be stated that the respondents have reshaped their way of moving forward in life with the experiences that they have received by working with the club.

According to the evidence it cannot be concluded that the club and its service-learning projects are the only reason for the respondents to provide such responses that highlight the Spiritual Orientation. Also, the statement applies to all of the findings as it is nearly impossible and most likely impossible to isolate the impact of club membership from all other sources that influence a person's attitudes, opinions, and behaviour.

As per the current research findings, the club has become a fantastic platform for enhancing the willingness and capability of the majority of the respondents to serve other people and the society in which they live. During their time in the club, the responders' spiritual growth grew even more. As per the literature, the current study used a series of measures to assess respondents' spirituality levels and development. It was learned that the members of the club were chosen through an interview procedure conducted by the founder, initiative members, and existing board members. The author has also become active in the interviewing and selection processes. The members are initially assessed based on their level of kindness and viewpoint on societal concerns, as well as what they plan and hope to do in the future to avoid such situations. It is clear that their level of selflessness increased significantly after they first joined the club, and that their level of selflessness has continued to rise.

#### ***4.2 Social Entrepreneurship***

It was found that active participation in the club has simulated important aspects of entrepreneurial learning. Most of the respondents reported that they did not have a sound understanding of the concept of social entrepreneurship when they first joined the club yet over time, they have become well aware.

Respondent 8 who is the current president of the club reported,

*"Even though I knew from my Sunday's school that we must help the people in need I never practiced as I does now. It is because I saw how the senior club members helped others even with a little money in hand. I understood the importance of solving social problems. A social entrepreneur is the one recognises the social problems and tries to solve them through a creative business idea. Also, I think it is our responsibility as human beings"*

Respondent 11, who has started three businesses of her own reported,

*"I was inspired by the senior club members to start my own business soon. All the three businesses of mine received a huge support from the club. "*

Empathy is an important trait for an entrepreneur to cultivate. The respondents' level of empathy has gradually improved as a result of their participation in the numerous social activities that the club has introduced. Many respondents expressed that observing elderly parents left alone in their homes lamenting their solitude and longing for their children—through the social project *Walk of Mercy* evoked a strong sense of empathy in them.

Solomon (1992), Shanahan, and Hyman's research findings are also consistent with the current findings (2003). Empathy, the Protestant work ethic (considered as hard effort), respect, piety, incorruptibility, and incorruptibility and reliability as a virtue of businesspeople, with managers were suggested based on their work where they established a new empirical virtue ethics scale out of 45 corporate virtues.

#### ***4.3 Weaknesses of the Club***

As the only weakness that was reflected was the poor understanding of spirituality and the true meaning of selfless service. Respondent 6, who has only joined the Vikings Club in the University reported,

*"I think I became more selfish by becoming a member of the club. I learned that we have to communicate greatly than truly working"*

Respondent 20, who had given up working in other clubs and decided only to be a member of the high Kings club because of its uniqueness reported,

*" The members do not communicate well. They just listen to something that someone else tells and blindly believe them. I think the members must be more friendly than they are now"*

It is clear that such problems occur due to the fact of understanding the true meaning of service-learning even though they are planning projects that provoke selfless serving.

Table 3 provides the demographics of the respondents.

### **Limitations of the Study**

It was also assumed that the respondents' actions were motivated by their religious beliefs in order to help other people and protect the environment in which they live. Because Buddhists made up the majority of the respondents, the sample was skewed toward one dominant faith. The respondents' ability to understand the teachings that they had previously learnt through Buddhism has been hampered by service projects organized by the club in which they had participated. As per the literature, service-learning projects are seen as a better way for Christian students to put their ideas into action at school rather than just expecting or analyzing them (Schaffer, 2004). According to the results of the current study, the respondents practiced Buddhism. And by participating in such service initiatives, the respondents have gained a better awareness of life's realities, and as a result, they have made certain changes to their way of life based on their comprehension of Buddhist philosophy and real-world experiences.

Table 4 : Comparative Overview: Christianity, Buddhism, and the Real World

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>	<b>Real World</b>
<b>Ultimate Reality</b>	One God, creator and sustainer of the universe; revealed	No creator God; reality is impermanent, conditioned, and	Material, observable existence; explained through science, culture, and human experience

	through Jesus Christ (McGrath, 2016).	interconnected (Rahula, 1974).	(Berger & Luckmann, 1966).
<b>Human Condition</b>	Humans created in God's image but fallen through sin; need redemption (Tillich, 1957).	Humans suffer due to ignorance, craving, and attachment (Gethin, 1998).	Humans face biological and social challenges (aging, death, inequality, conflict) (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).
<b>Moral Framework</b>	Rooted in God's commandments and Jesus' teachings of love and compassion (Yoder, 1972).	Guided by the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path (Harvey, 2013).	Based on cultural norms, secular ethics, laws, and human rights (Rawls, 1971).
<b>Goal of Life</b>	Eternal salvation and union with God in heaven (Lewis, 1952).	Liberation ( <i>nirvana</i> ) from suffering and rebirth (Williams, 2009).	Health, happiness, success, security, and legacy (Taylor, 1989).
<b>View of Time &amp; Afterlife</b>	Linear: life → death → judgment → heaven or hell (Wright, 2003).	Cyclical: rebirth until enlightenment is achieved (Harvey, 2013).	Emphasis on the here and now; afterlife not assumed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

It was difficult to determine the willingness to participate in the service initiative. The majority of respondents said they were also inspired by the club's teaching of new skills through the many projects they had executed. When they joined, the majority of the respondents didn't have a clear idea of the club's purpose. At first, the respondents were unfamiliar with the concept of social entrepreneurship. Some of the respondents have



witnessed the club's service programs, which has influenced their decision to join. The originality of the club's service projects can be seen as a good characteristic.

## **5. Conclusion**

The research paper contributes to a better understanding of the club's role in spiritual orientation development through service learning. Thus, the study facilitates answers to the below research questions. RQ01: What is the contribution of the Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in enhancing the spiritual orientation as a change in attitude towards social and community development of a potential social entrepreneur through service-learning aspects? RQ02: How effective is service learning in improving the vital aspects of social entrepreneurial learning? RQ03: What are the ways through which the Vikings Club of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura can further improve for a better way forward?

The study revealed that the Vikings Club influences the value systems and mind-sets of future social entrepreneurs significantly. Through the service learning programs they design, the club ensures decision-making at both an individual and organizational level, on the ethical grounds of leadership, social responsibility, and community development. Subsequently, club members are engaged increasingly in genuine socially responsible activities geared toward solving immediate societal problems and toward fostering personal transformation. The key findings from this research is the spiritual orientation as a relevant factor for meaningful social change. The mission of the club-solving social problems and empowering emerging social entrepreneurs-is deeply anchored toward fostering compassion, empathy, and universal love. These orientations are translated into planned and spontaneous acts of service, thus furthering the idea that any service or action performed without expectation of reward is an act that contributes toward spiritual evolution.

The study also points toward another gap in knowledge: while most join the club with some spiritual values, their theoretical understanding of spirituality and its connectedness to service is limited. To increase impact, it is further recommended that the club includes some training for new recruits that will teach them to relate altruistic service to spiritual growth. Discussing it with them in theoretical, philosophical, and

even neuroscientific terms-that altruistic activity can literally rewire one's brain from self-preoccupation toward selflessness-will deepen members' ability to relate their experiences and enrich the transformative potential within those experiences. With a more intentional integration of theory and practice, the Vikings Club can further strengthen its role as a catalyst for spiritual and social entrepreneurial development. By fostering both awareness and understanding, the club can nurture a new generation of ethically grounded, socially conscious leaders who are equipped to create sustainable change in society.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 01

Code	Theme	Sub themes
<p>Sustainable, Mindful, Happiness, Success, Love, healthy life, Wealthy life, Peaceful, family time, friends time, alone time, Trips, Travelling, helping others, teaching others, living in the moment, organic food, taking care of parents, family, well-being, good human being, doing better, giving, something back, nature friendly, family friendly, self-love,</p> <p>Help, live to the fullest, give back, Sharing, Caring, Others, Empathy, Compassion, team spirit, drive to help.</p>		<p><i>Purpose of life, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation</i></p>
		<p><i>Self-awareness, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation</i></p>
<p>good people, kind, helpful, friendly, bonds, strong connection, caring, loving</p>		<p><i>Inter-connectedness, a dimension of Spiritual Orientation</i></p>
<p>friendly relationships, non-academic staff, clerical staff, cleaning staff, all humans, no distance, no status</p>		<p><i>Respect for others, a dimension of spiritual Orientation</i></p>

Happiness, peaceful mind, philosophy of Buddhism, circle of life, eternal peace, nibbana	<i>Spiritual Orientation</i>	Feeling of inner peace, a dimension of spiritual Orientation
Supporting, teaching others, giving, sharing		<i>Service towards humankind, a dimension of spiritual Orientation</i>
willingness to help, Vision, Mission, Achieve, long-term goals, short-term goals, strategies, future.		<i>Being vision and value led, a dimension of spiritual Orientation</i>
social problems, social business, support members, social entrepreneur, creative business idea, responsibility, community, wellbeing of people, help,	<i>Social Entrepreneurship</i>	
Miscommunication, selfish, outperform, competition, jealousy, anger, unkind	<i>Weaknesses of the Club</i>	

## Appendix 02

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Respondent profile

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**Name:**

**Age:**

**Gender:**

**Membership position of the club:**

**Religious beliefs:**

**Transformation Story**

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1. What is it that you really wanted in life (purpose)?  
සැබවින්ම ඔබේ ජීවිතයේ අරමුණ වූයේ කුමක්ද ?
2. What happen in your life that inspired a change in your life?  
ඔබේ ජීවිතයේ වෙනසක් ඇති කිරීමට හේතු වූයේ කුමක්ද?
3. Why did you join the Vikings club?
4. Did the Vikings club support the change in your life? How?  
ඔබගේ ජීවිතයේ වෙනසක් සඳහා වයිකින්ස් සභාය වූයේ කෙසේද?
5. What did you do and saw through the club? (Self-awareness / Inter-connectedness / Compassion/ Respect for others / Feeling of inner peace / Service towards humankind /love / happiness/ Being vision and value led/ Mindfulness/entrepreneurship)  
වයිකින්ස් හරහා ඔබ කළේ කුමක්ද?
6. Did you become more selfless?
7. Did your ability to face sadness (reality of life) grew? (Atalo dhamma)
8. How do you live and see life now?  
ඔබ දැන් ජීවත් වන්නේ කෙසේද?
9. Have you done things differently? What are they?  
ඔබ වෙනස් ආකාරයකින් කටයුතු කර තිබේද? ඒවා කුමක් ද?
10. What is your purpose in life now?  
දැන් ඔබේ ජීවිතයේ අරමුණ කුමක්ද?