

Conference Name: SSHRA 2026 – Social Science & Humanities Research Association International Conference, 13-14 April, Tokyo
Conference Dates: 13-Apr- 2026 to 14-Apr- 2026
Conference Venue: TKP Ichigaya Building, 8 Ichigaya Hachiman-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-0844
Appears in: PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences (ISSN 2454-5899)
Publication year: 2026

Khachatur Babayan, 2026

Volume 2026, pp. 389-390

DOI- <https://doi.org/10.20319/icssh.2026.389390>

This paper can be cited as Babayan, K. (2026). *Leadership Development as Lived Practice: An Autoethnographic Study of Founding and Leading a Volunteer-Based High School Club*. SSHRA 2026 – Social Science & Humanities Research Association International Conference, 13-14 April, Tokyo. *Proceedings of Social Science and Humanities Research Association (SSHRA), 2026, 389-390*

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS LIVED PRACTICE: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF FOUNDING AND LEADING A VOLUNTEER-BASED HIGH SCHOOL CLUB

Khachatur Babayan

High School, Burnaby Mountain Secondary School, Canada

khach.babayan@gmail.com

Abstract

This autoethnographic study, grounded in theories of identity formation and experiential learning, examines how founding and leading a volunteer-oriented school club shaped my leadership development and personal growth. Drawing on my experience as founder of an Astrology Club, I analyze one year of weekly reflective journal entries documenting the challenges and insights of coordinating peer learning and community engagement. Using an inductive approach that combined manual thematic analysis with AI-assisted pattern recognition via QualiGPT, I conducted a human-AI co-analytic process to surface patterns across the journal entries. In this study, QualiGPT functioned solely as a methodological support tool (not the object of analysis), helping to enhance the visibility of recurring ideas while all interpretation remained grounded in the journal data. The findings reveal that leadership evolves not through authority but through empathy, shared responsibility and reflective practice. Volunteering and club participation create

spaces where personal passion aligns with community service, transforming learning into a process of becoming. This study contributes to emerging discussions on reflective pedagogy and the use of AI in qualitative research, demonstrating how self-initiated service experiences cultivate grounded, collaborative and digitally literate student leaders.

Keywords:

AI in Education, Autoethnography, Qualitative Analysis, Reflective Practice, Youth Leadership, Club Volunteering