

BEYOND THE NETWORK: HOW SaMnet SHAPED A GENERATION OF STEM LEADERS

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KEYWORDS: SaMnet, distributed leadership, higher education, career progression, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), long-term impact

SUBTHEME: Other

BACKGROUND

The Science and Mathematics Network (SaMnet) project (Sharma et al, 2014), funded by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching, aimed to build leadership and scholarship of teaching and learning capacity among academics in science and mathematics education. Launched in July 2011, SaMnet supported 25 action-learning projects across 16 universities, focusing on fostering a collaborative approach to teaching and learning.

AIMS

This study sought to evaluate the long-term impact of the SaMnet project's distributed leadership model on career progression and achievements of participants in higher education. The distributed leadership model encompasses five key domains: context, culture, change, relationships, and activity. By integrating these domains into a comprehensive evaluation framework, this research aims to understand how involvement in the SaMnet project has influenced participants' professional growth, academic contributions, leadership roles, and impact within and beyond their institutions over the past decade.

DESIGN AND METHODS

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study analysed quantitative data from a structured survey and qualitative insights from open-ended responses. Key metrics included career milestones, leadership skills development, academic publications, teaching innovations, and institutional contributions.

RESULTS

This research highlights the transformative impact of the SaMnet project on participant career progression in academia and SoTL. The findings provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of distributed leadership in fostering long-term professional and academic growth. The results have the potential to influence future projects, strategic decisions, and contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective leadership practices in academic settings and the role of networks.

REFERENCES

Sharma, M. D., Rifkin, Johnson, E., Tzioumis, V., & Hill, M. (2014) *Fostering institutional and cultural change through the Australian network of university educators – 'SaMnet'*. Report submitted to the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching, Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, Australia, ISBN 978-1-74361-463-1. Downloadable from <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-3067247761/view>

Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, The University of Melbourne, 30 September - 2 October 2025, page 37, ISSN Number 2653-0481.