



## An Investigation of the Perception of Inquiry-Based Learning amongst Science Teachers in Saudi Arabia

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### Abstract

*The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has emphasized the use of inquiry-based learning in teaching and learning science in the last curriculum reform in 2008. This mixed-methods study investigated Saudi science teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and implementation of inquiry-based learning. Classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and online questionnaires were conducted to collect data from science teachers at three school levels (primary, middle, and high). 27 science teachers were observed and interviewed. A total of 288 science teachers completed the online questionnaire. The findings revealed that, in general, science teachers showed limited understanding and practice of inquiry-based learning. However, the participants held a strong positive attitude towards IBL. The lack of inconsistency between beliefs and practices appear to result from the influence of contextual factors. Teachers reported various factors that hinder the implementation of inquiry-based learning. These factors included lack of resources, large class sizes, heavy teaching load, heavy curriculum contents, and students' lack of abilities. The findings of this study suggest that there is a gap between policymakers and science teachers.*

**Keywords:** *curriculum reform, inquiry-based learning, teachers' beliefs, teachers' perceptions, teaching and learning science.*