Functional Literacy of First Stage Researchers in Russia and the UK: Summary and Discussion of the Main Research Findings

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Marketization of higher education

Inadequate international visibility

High migration rates

Globalization of human life

Brexit and its consequences

Research funding

Internalization of education

Global competition phenomenon

Low HE global attractiveness

HE leadership agenda

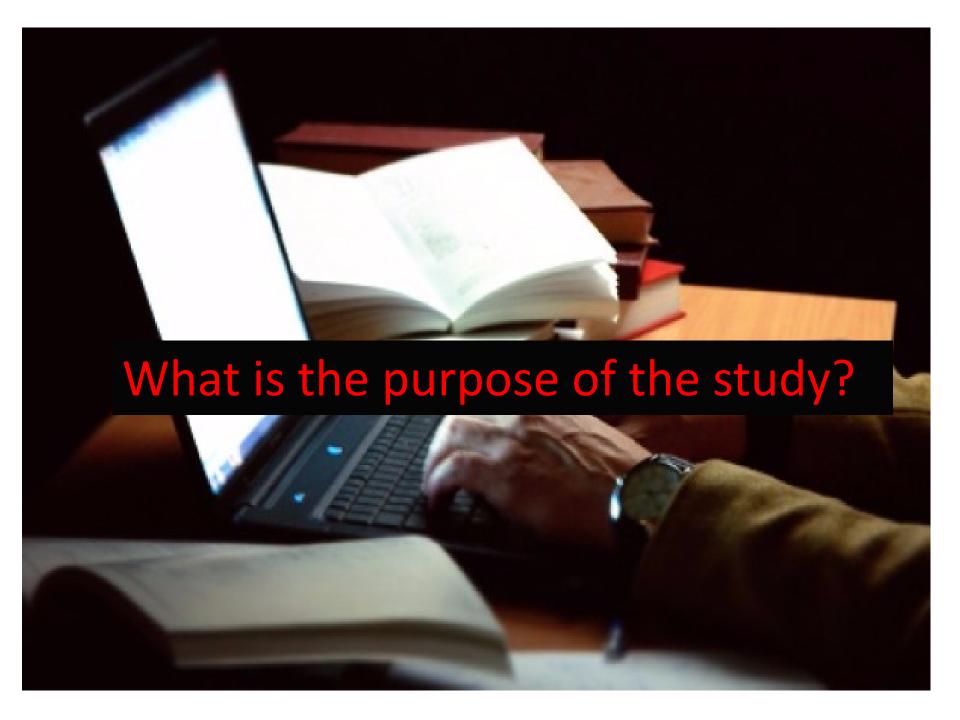
Fast technological transformation

Higher education challenges

Insufficient international research integration

Advanced IT development

Poor English language skills



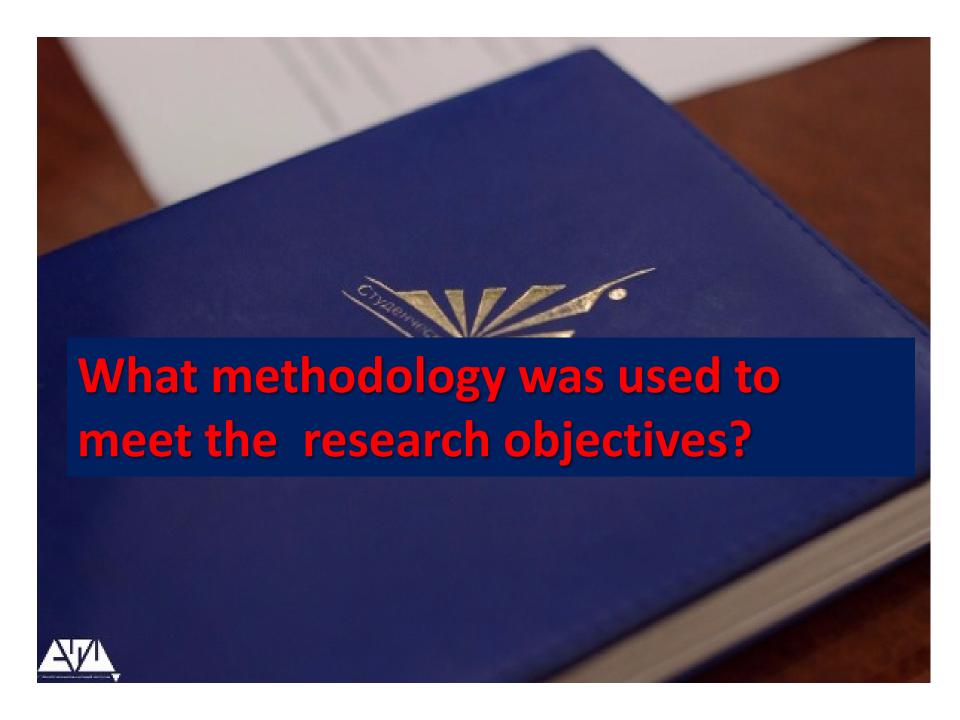
How different kinds of functional literacy allow researchers not to be left at the knowledge and professional periphery in the modern world?

Are they essential for successful global research career development?



- 1. How is functional literacy determined in the sphere of educational research?
- 2. How are functional academic and foreign language literacies treated?
- 3. What are the factors influencing functional academic and foreign language literacies development?
- 4. Are functional academic and foreign language literacies necessary for global research career development?

Positions 2 to 4 reflect the opinion of Russian and British PhD students (Education only)



Key research approaches and methods:

Phenomenological approach
Standardized open-end interviews with PhD students (Education only)

N	Questions
1	What is functional literacy?
2	What is functional academic literacy?
3	How good is your functional literacy?
4	What are the positive factors contributing to the development of functional academic and foreign language literacy?
5	What are the negative factors adversely affecting the development of functional academic and foreign language literacy?
6	What changes in the teaching and learning process can be potentially beneficial for the development of academic and foreign language literacy?
7	Are functional academic and foreign language literacies a competitive advantage for the research career and why?
8	Where and how are you going to pursue your research career?
9	Are you planning to maintain the level of your functional academic and foreign language literacy in the future? If no, why? If yes, in what ways?

Students interviewed:

April-May 2017 - students of the Academy of Psychology and Educational Sciences at Southern Federal University (Rostov-on-Don, Russia). 45 out of total 62 PhD students interviewed.

Group 1 - 22 first-year PhD students

Group 2 - 18 second-year PhD students

Group 3 - 5 third-year PhD students

October 2-10, 2017 – 11 PhD students of the School of Education, University of Glasgow interviewed (different levels of PhD training).



- Literacy (UNESCO, 1957)
- •Functional literacy (Tehran, World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, 1965)
- •Functional literacy and minimum literacy (UNESCO, 1978)
- New literacy (Kolesnikova, 2013)
- •Functional foreign language literacy (Chigisheva et al., 2016; Uhuegbu & Edung, 2015)
- adult literacy as a mechanism of social inclusion (Kuz`mina & Popov, 2015)
- •financial literacy (Han et al., 2016)
- •functional medical literacy (Tsubakita et al., 2017)

BROWNING, L., THOMPSON, K. & DAWSON, D. 2017. From early career researcher to research leader: survival of the fittest? In: Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, vol. 39, n. 4. ISSN 1360-080X.

Functional literacy is the ability of a person to interact within the social environment, to adapt and function in it, integrating the connection between education and multidimensional human activity..

Perceptions of functional literacy

Russian (out of		British (out of
total 45)		total 11)
27	Never heard of the term "functional	8
	literacy"	
18	Adequate guesses	7
16	Functional literacy understood in	2
	terms of language command	
4	Totally wrong guesses	0
6	Functional literacy understood as literacy in its narrow sense	4
3	Reported being fully functionally literate	2
31	Expressed concerns about the functional literacy level	9

Factors influencing functional literacy development

Russian	British	
motivation	motivation	
"real-life" demands	feeling of contributing to society, making life better	
up-dated and efficient textbooks	being exposed to international academic communication	
the sufficient number of classes and courses provided by the university	events and courses provided by the university	
qualified teachers who are functionally literate	regular reading	
regular practice	accessibility of the sources	
modern, flexible and versatile teaching methods, tailored training activities	efficient communication with the supervisors	

Functional literacy for global research career development

Russian		British
43	Acknowledged the direct	11
	connection between functional	
	literacy and global research	
	career	
29	Wished to continue their	10
	research career	
15	Positive about prospects of	6
	academic employment	
9	No plans for research career	1
25	Intentions to maintain the level	6
	of functional literacy	
17	Clear and numerous ideas of the	3
	ways how to sustain the level	

Thank you

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