

Lessons on Information Literacy Research: a Portuguese Experience

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The Project

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- **eLit.pt - Information literacy in European Higher Education Space context : case study of Portugal information skills**
 - PTDC/CCI/65355/2006
 - Main Area: **Communication and Information Sciences**
 - Secondary area: **Higher Education and Science Policies**
 - Keywords: information literacy, information skills, European Higher Education Area, information behaviour
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FCT - Science and Technology Foundation (Portugal)
 - Principal Contractor and Host Institution:
Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto (FLUP)
 - Principal Research Unit:
CETAC.MEDIA - Centre for Studies in Technologies, Arts and Communication Services
 - Website (<http://web.letras.up.pt/eLit/index.htm>)

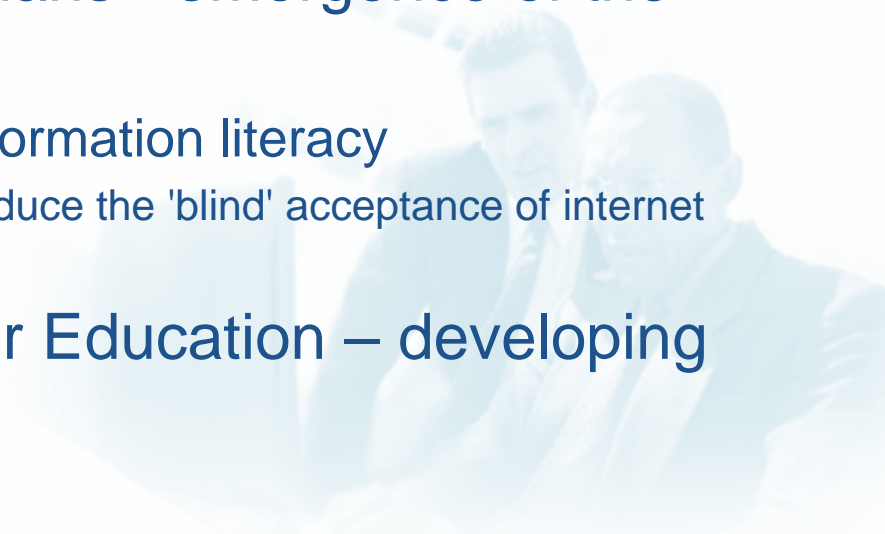


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European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

■ In Portugal

- 2001-2002 - the curricular reform for primary and secondary levels of education - instrumental nature of the use of Information and Communication Technologies
- Changes in the role of librarians - emergence of the librarian teacher
 - The need to formally teach information literacy
 - Teaching in a critical way - to reduce the 'blind' acceptance of internet content
- Curricular changes in Higher Education – developing students' competencies

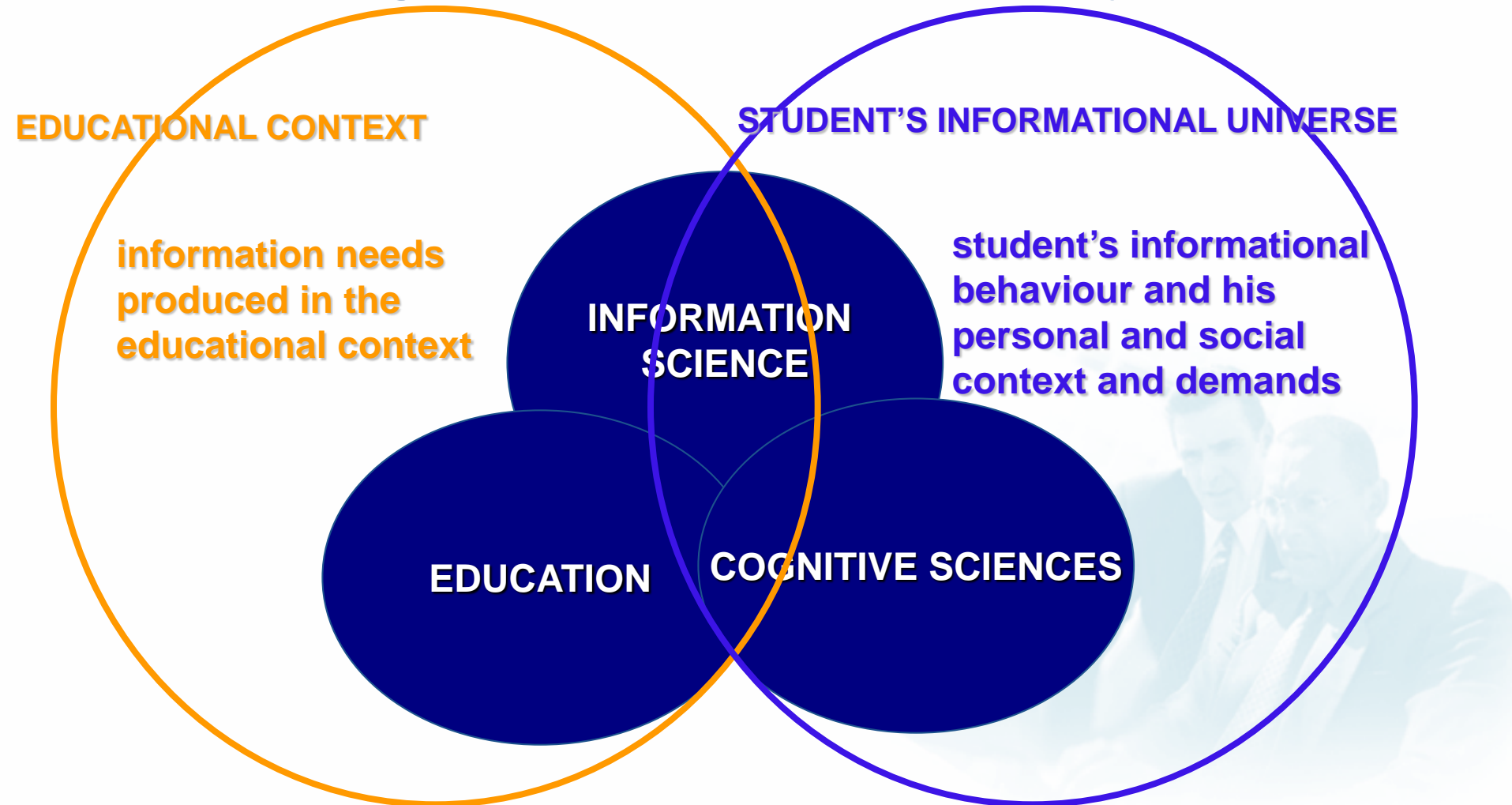




- A distinction must be made
 - Digital Inclusion – refers to skills acquired in the process of learning basic informatics, computer use and internet browsing
 - Information literacy - includes the ability to evaluate, select and critically use the information generated/obtained through the computer or the Internet



- Performing an inter and transdisciplinary approach



Main questions

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1st

Question

To understand how the university students face the new competences required by the creation of the EHES

2nd

Question

To know how these students are prepared in terms of information competences

prior to the university

during the university frequency period



1st phase

Focus Group
prepared according
to an indicative
Interview
(qualitative)

2nd phase

Survey
built upon
the interview results
and
national application

3rd phase

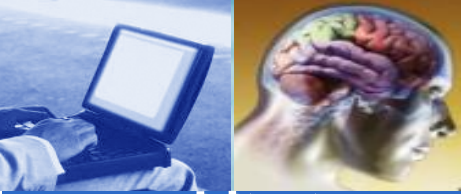
Results analyses
and **model design**

Participants

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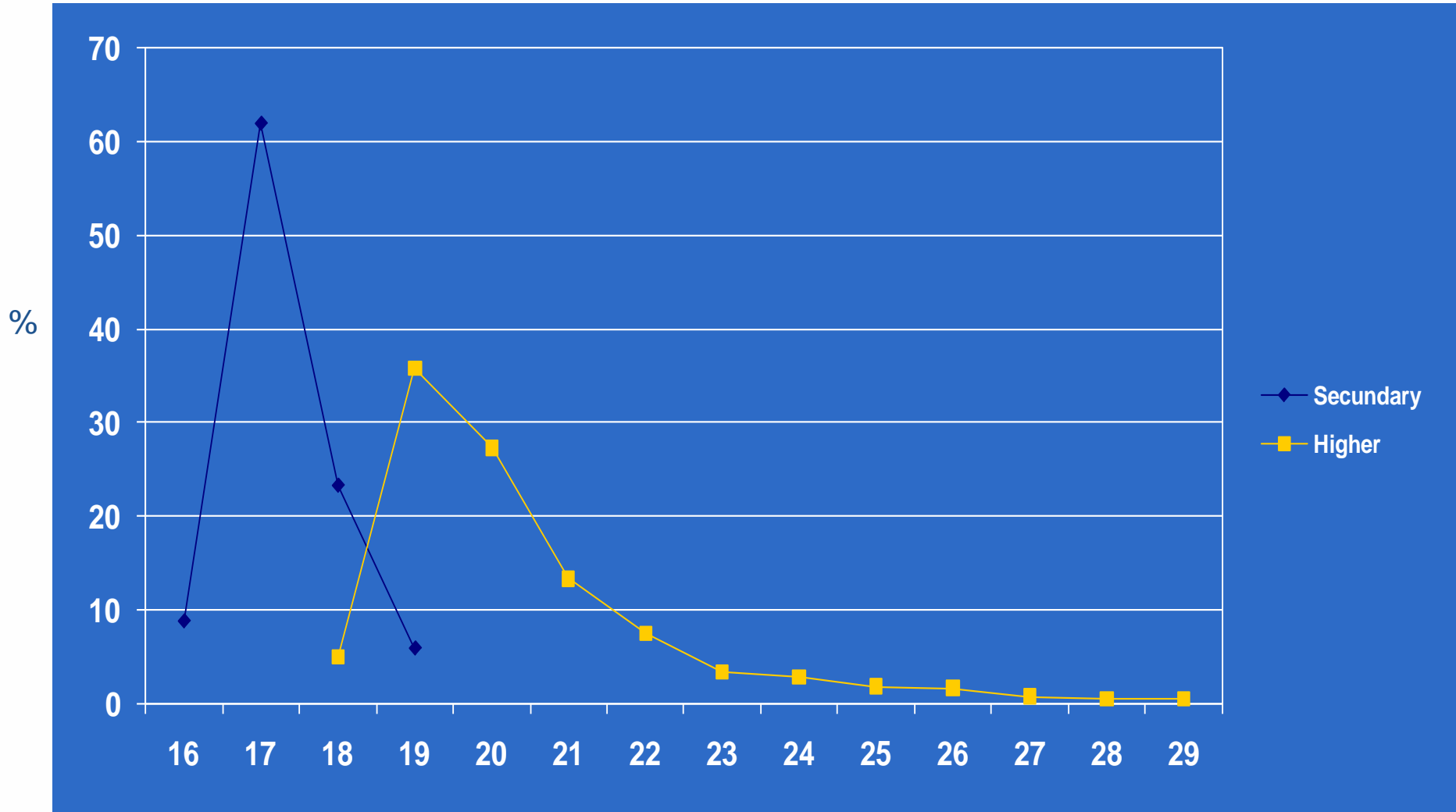
- **10 Secondary schools**
 - 855 students
- **13 High level institutions**
 - 2271 students

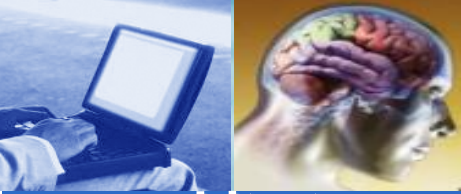


Characterization of the sample

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■ Age

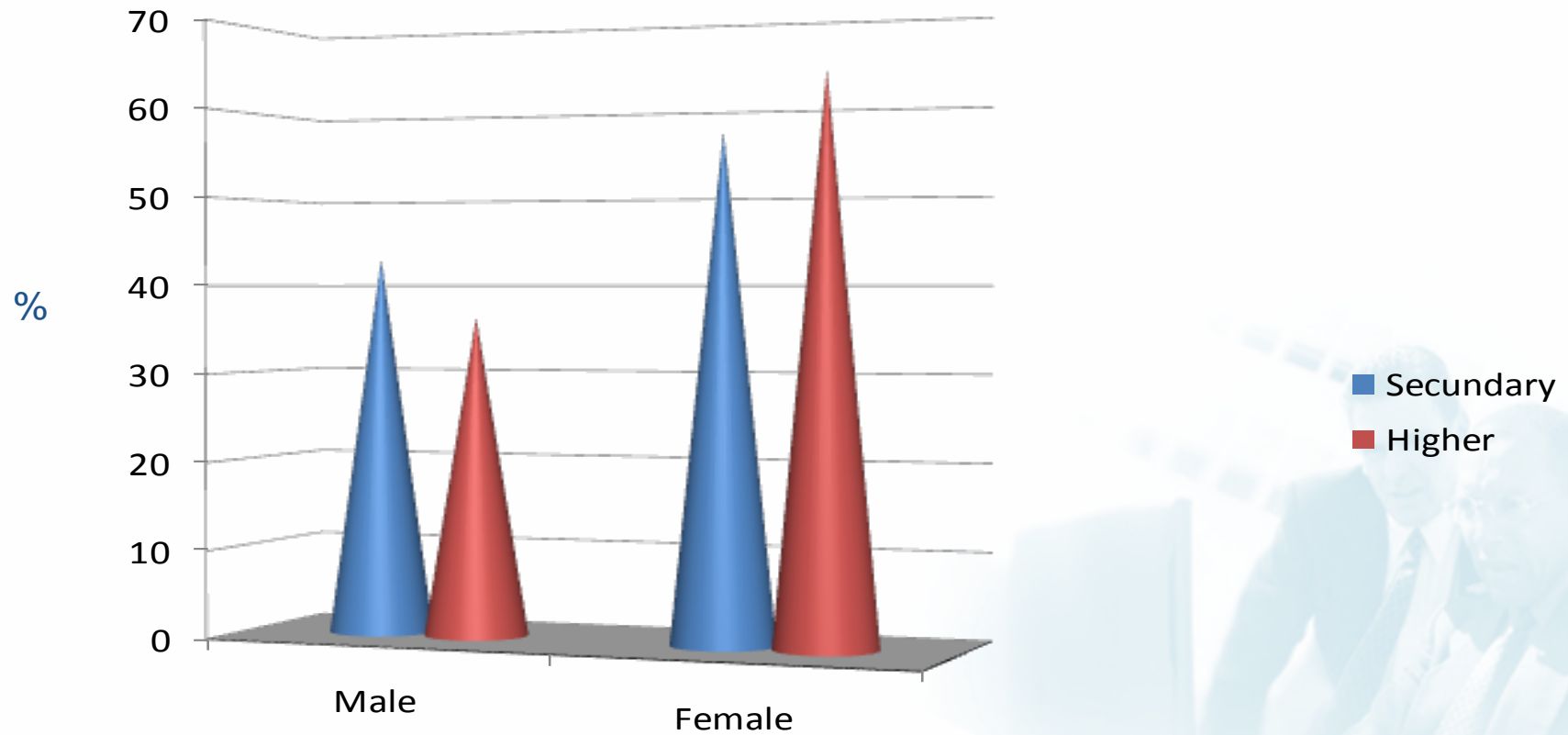




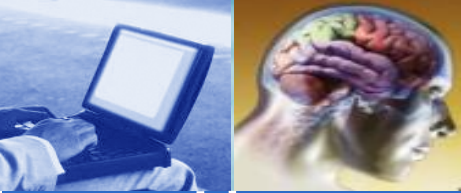
Characterization of the sample

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■ Sex



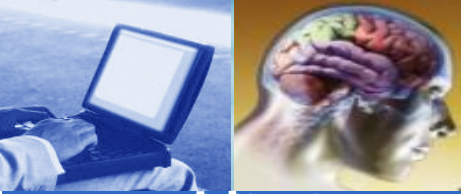
- Personal Background (10 questions)
- School Context (4 questions)
- Use of Library and Information Resources
 - Schools / Colleges (8 questions)
 - Public (8 questions)
- Internet use (5 questions)
- Recovery and Use of Information (19 questions)



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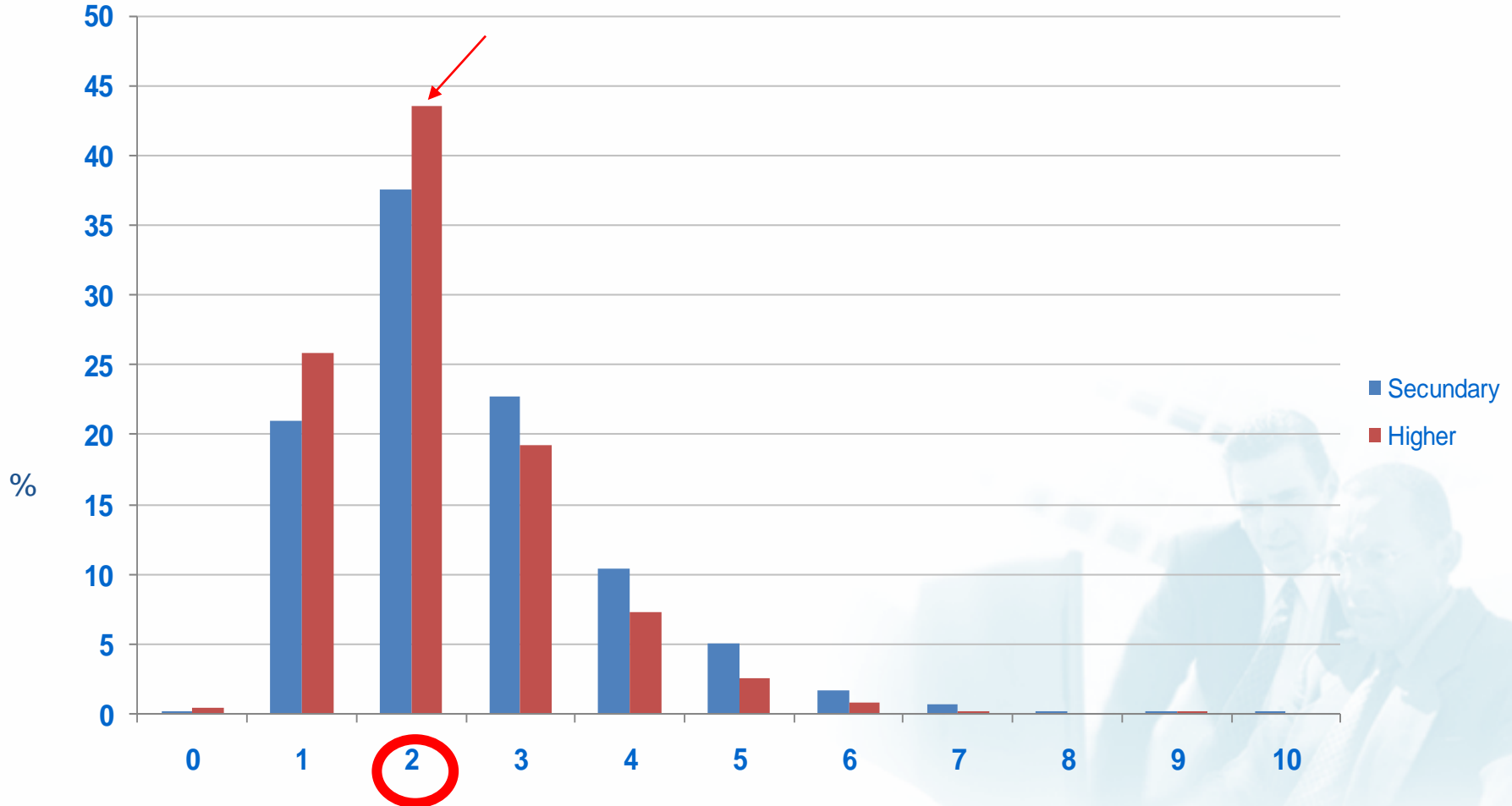
Some Results

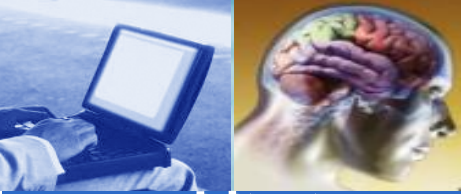




Number of computers at home

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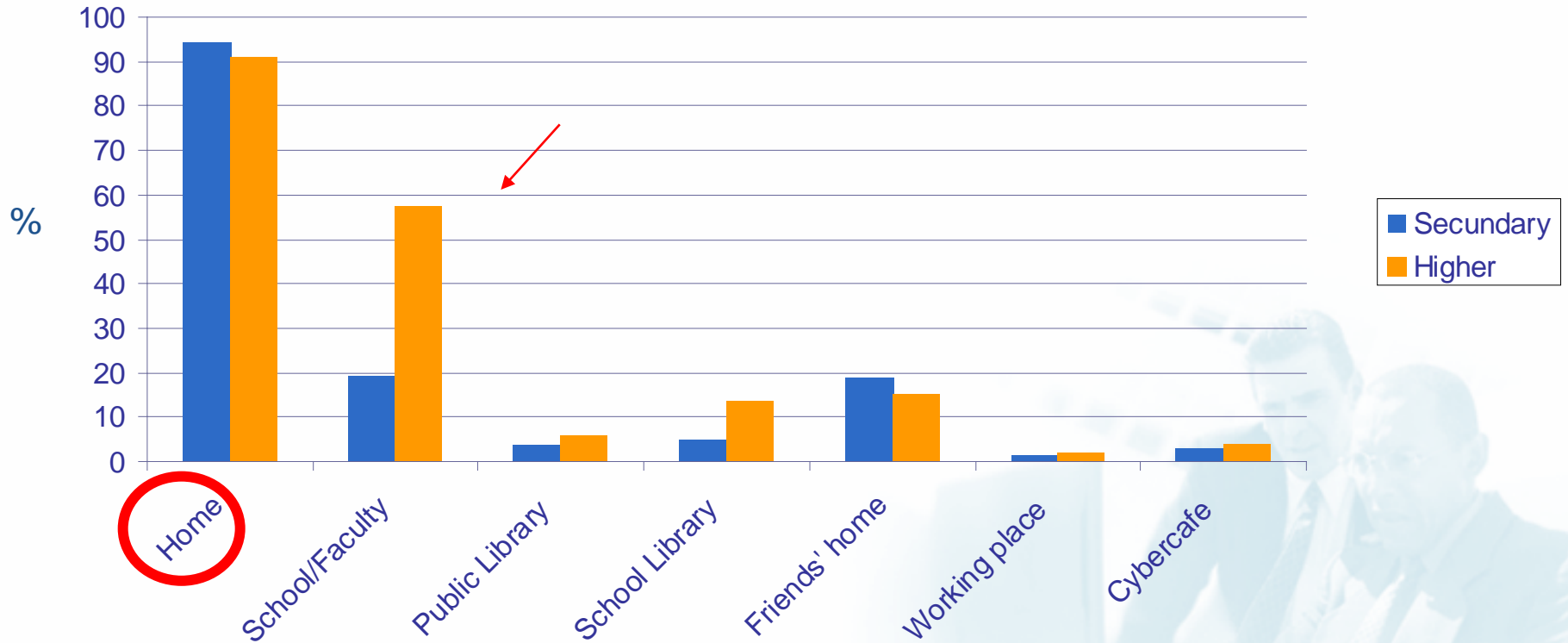


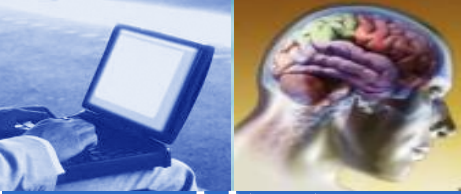


Where do they access the internet

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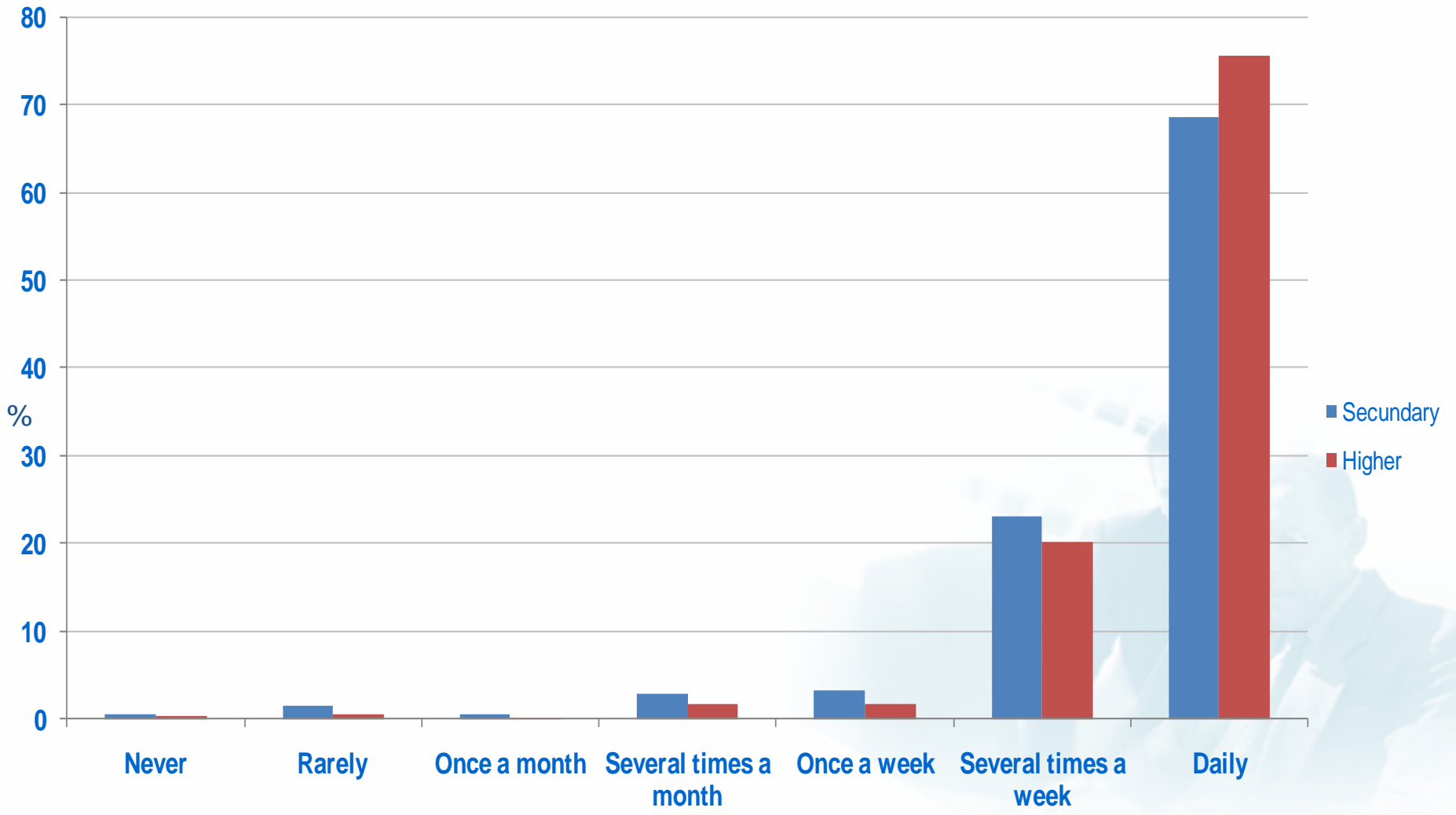
The option **Home** is greater
In High Education they also access at the Faculty





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Frequency of accessing the Internet



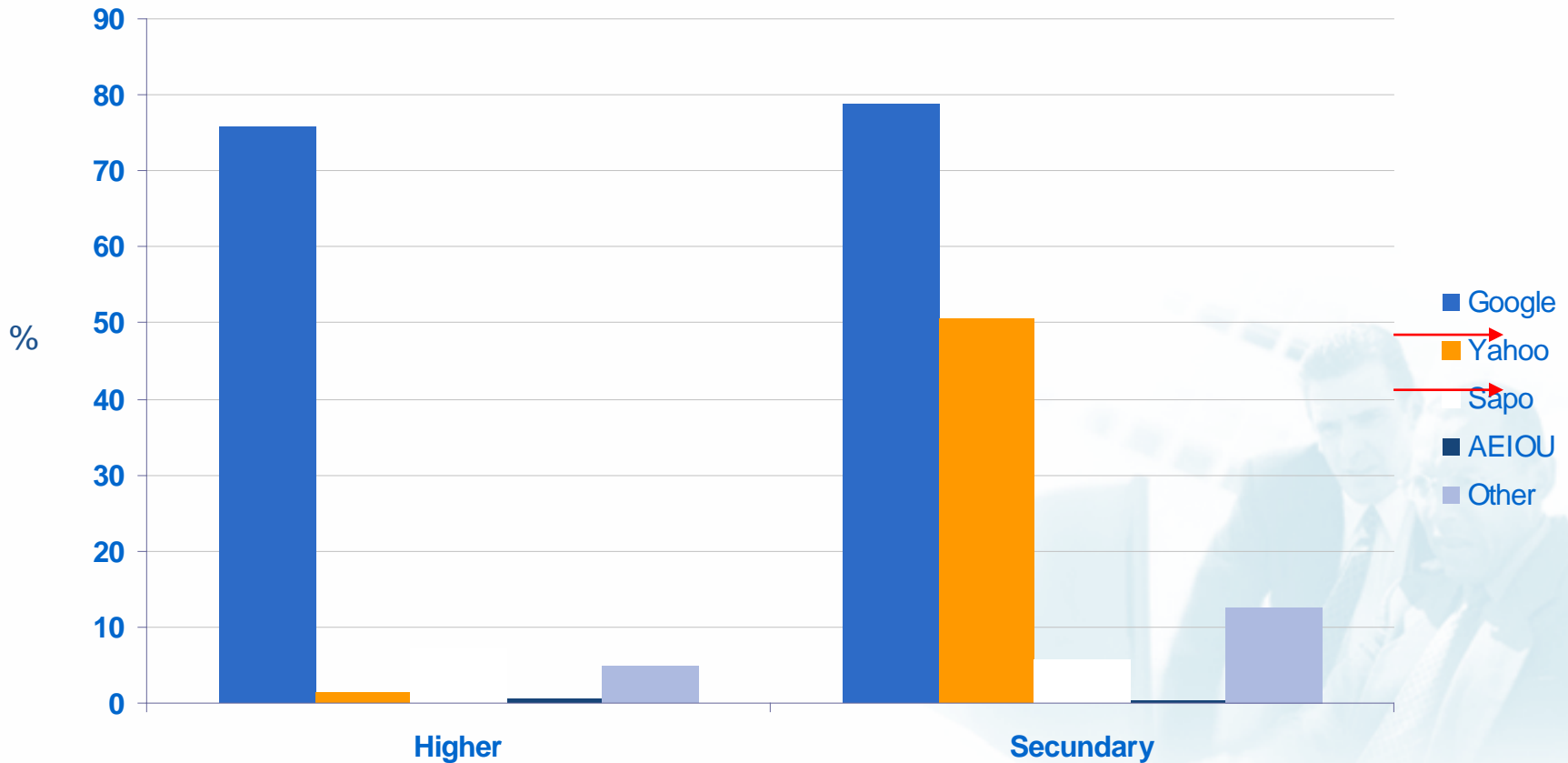


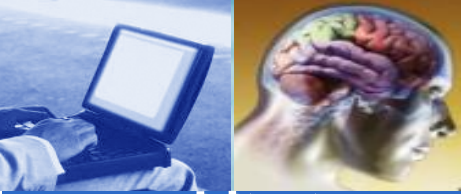
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The use of search engines

Very frequent

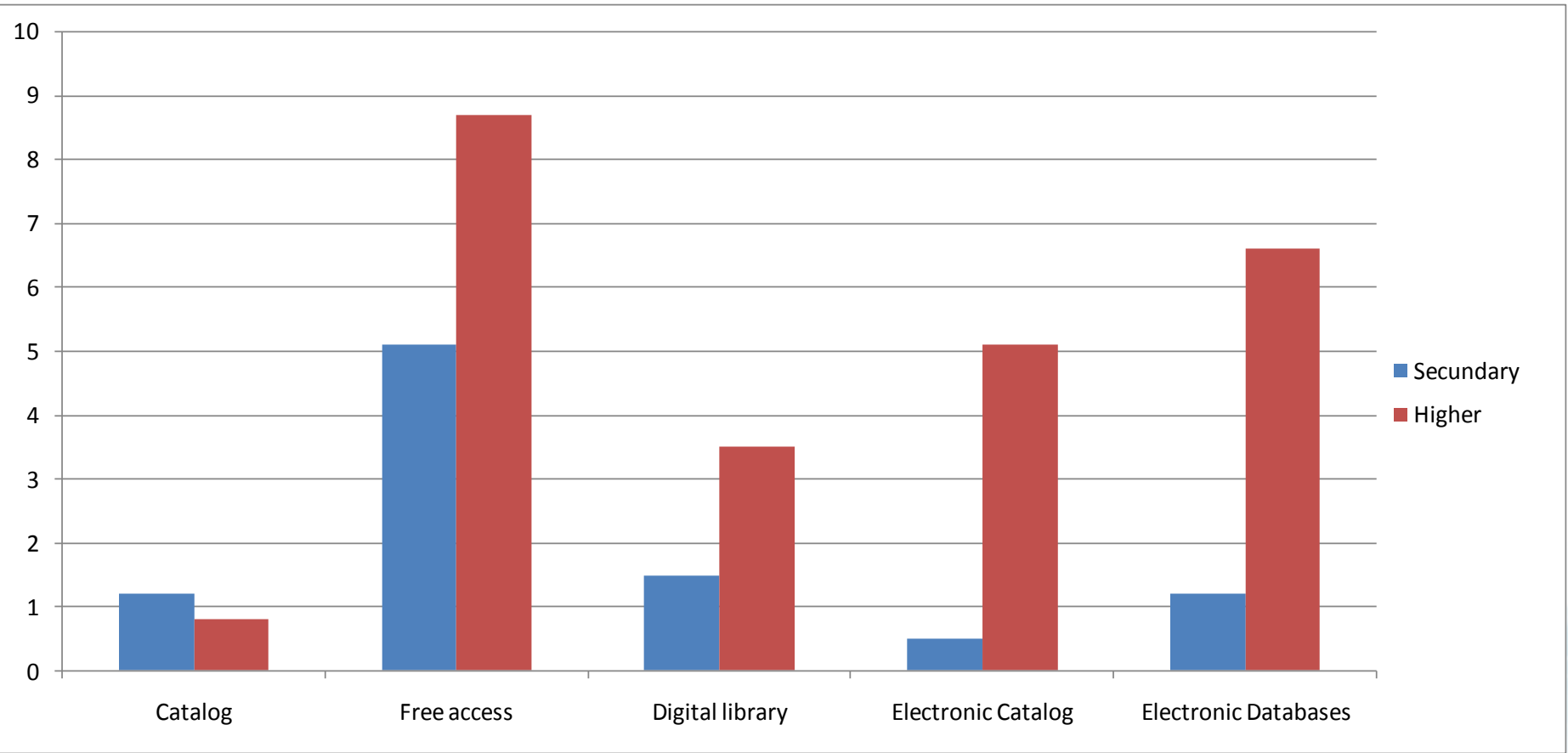
Google leads, while Yahoo has some representation in Secondary

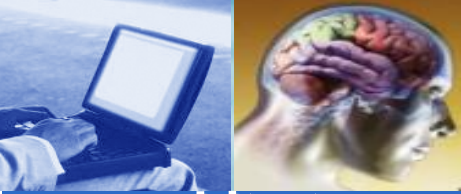




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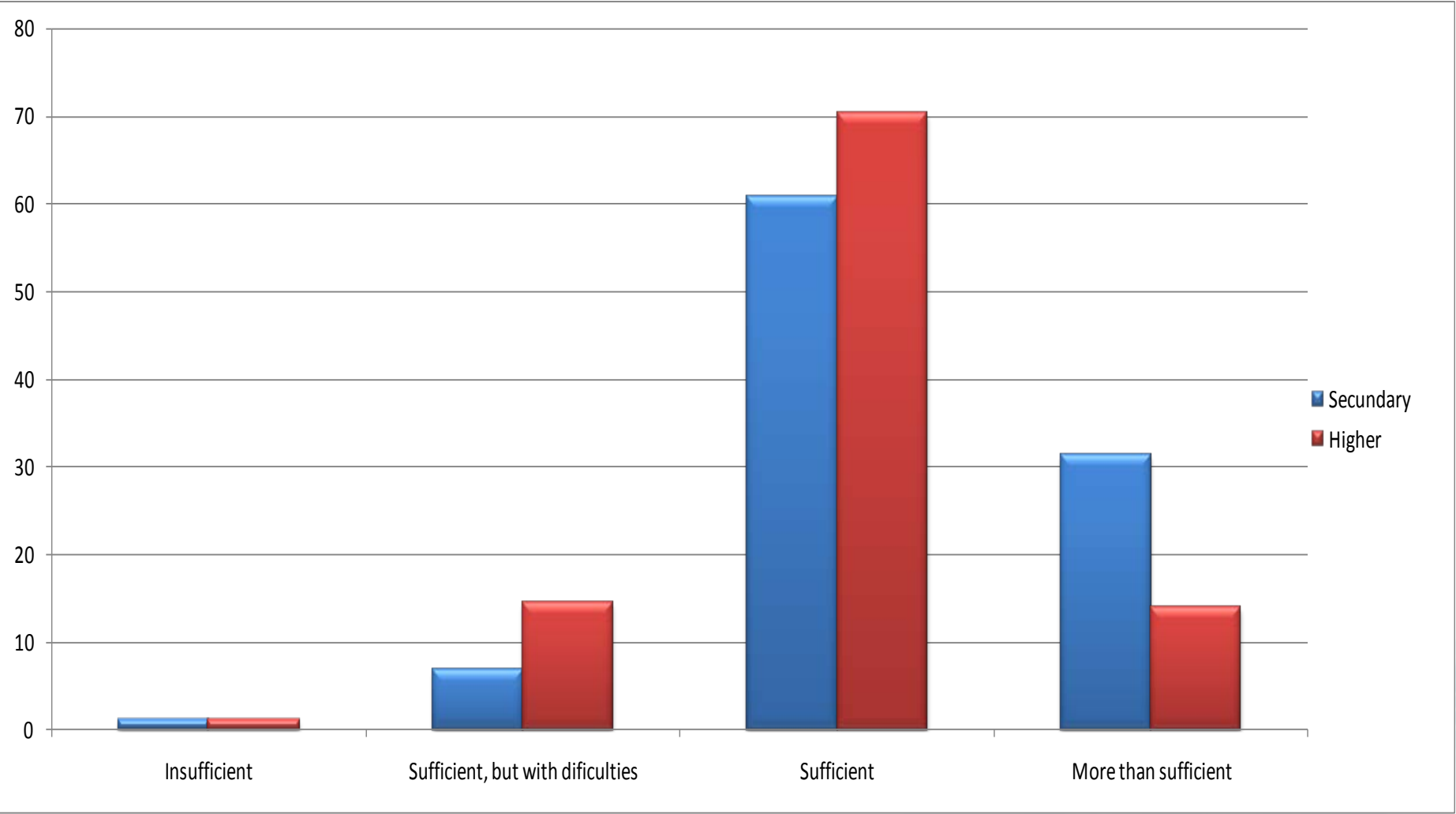
Frequency of use of school library resources





Self evaluation about search

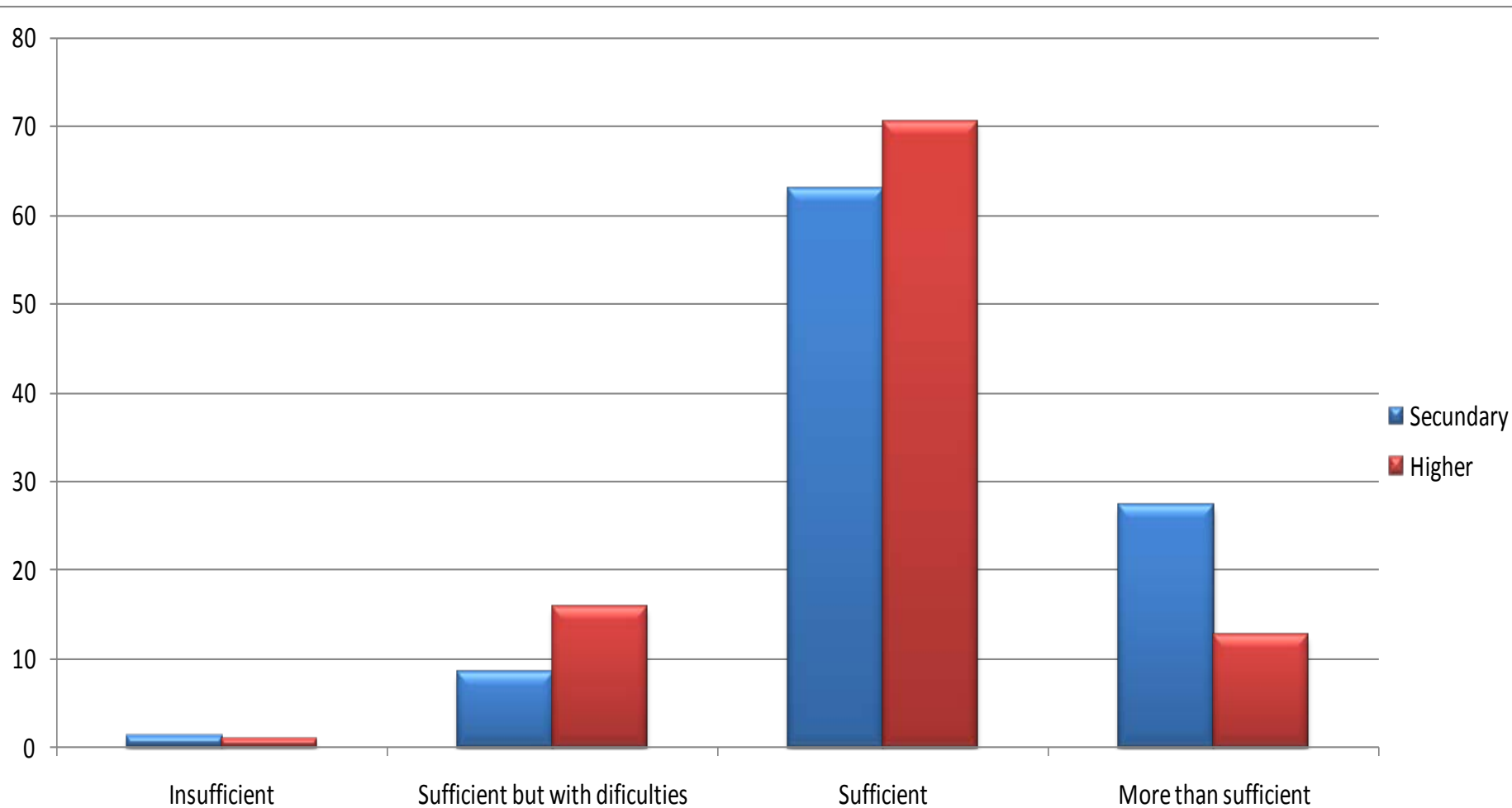
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Self evaluation about evaluation and selection of results



- There is an informational gap
- Good technological equipment already exists
- Good network of public and school/university libraries
- In terms of information literacy, the role of libraries in the teaching/learning process does not have the necessary expression
- Low critical ability of students that adversely affects the information literacy competences



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Strengths and Limitations of the Research

- Research based on a theoretical perspective – to give a new way of analysis within Information Science exploring the binomial Digital Inclusion vs Informational Literacy
- It has strengthened the interdisciplinary dimension of this kind of study





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Strengths and Limitations of the Research

- It was a study that has covered all the national territory with exclusion of the islands (Madeira and Azores)
- Results have evidenced the existence of technological structures but also a digital gap
- It was possible to build a model based on empirical and analyzed data





Strengths and Limitations of the Research

We were moreover sensitive to some not so positive aspects:

- Results were overall descriptive and did not allow reviewing some of the assumptions - it was not possible to clearly understand the influence of the socio-demographic variables
- Our research has put an emphasis on quantitative research - not the best way alone to study the real nature of information literacy





The balance is still positive

- To contribute to a reflection about the methodological way of studying informational literacy
- Important for future research projects and for those who are planning to study information skills



- It is important to develop:
 - experimental research based on theoretical postulates and conceptual frameworks
 - a holistic perspective about IL
 - this kind of research on IL to design and plan strategies to increase people's informational skills
- It is useful to insist on the importance of applying qualitative methods



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Thank you for your attention ...



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