

APPLICATION OF THE PORTFOLIO AS A METHOD OF ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

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Abstract

The evaluation is the judgment of quality and it is a systematic way of looking at important issues. It provides information for decision-making. In education, assessment is often associated to testing and it is narrowed by being limited to student achievement. Furthermore, it is a constructive tool for improvement and innovation. This research aims to reveal the attitudes of teachers and parents regarding the application of the portfolio as an evaluation method and of its functionality are positive. In order to give a real overview of the involved situation, we selected a random sample of 50 teachers and 50 parents from the municipality of Gostivar. The research is based on data collected from questionnaires filled in by parents and teachers. Relevant data were processed with statistical tools, namely with Pearson's correlation. The results give us evidence that even though the two variables attitudes of teachers and parents have a normal distribution, from the above correlation coefficients we conclude that these two variables have no potential relationship. It means that teachers have more positive attitudes (according to Kurtosis -. 269 which shows fewer negative cases), despite the attitude of parents (according to kurtis -.635 which shows more cases with negative points), who have more neutral and negative attitudes towards the application of the portfolio to the educational process. This research forms a potential basis for examining the attitude of teachers and parents towards the portfolio as an assessing method to evaluate student's achievement.

Keywords: assessment, formative assessment, portfolio

Introduction

The greatest challenge of educators in modern theories, in addition to the focus given to personality development, is the question of how assessment can have a motivating effect on students, that is, how the same process can positively affect their achievements. Assessment is a didactic and complex process that is carried out by the teacher in order to record the level of knowledge and achievements gained. The introduction of descriptive assessment in the first cycle of classroom teaching began the implementation of such a practice as a reflection of methodological changes that include formative assessment. During the inclusion of innovations in education, that is, the introduction of descriptive assessment, it shows the need for preparation, guidance and assessment through a portfolio, which will provide an opportunity to create a comprehensive record of facts about the activities of students, their progress and their achievements. A portfolio is a collection of works selected by the student that will record achievements and how they have been achieved in a particular area. The determination of the subject of the research is initiated by the great importance and need that includes modern educational theories. If we turn to the purpose of this research, the subject of our research is:

"Portfolio application as a method of evaluating and developing student achievements."

1. On the term assessment

The educational process in schools introduces dynamics, encourages and generates the achievement of the best results for all participants in the learning process. Modern society reflects its demands for the modernization of education, where we face many challenges. One of them is the objective control and evaluation of students' knowledge and achievements. Assessment of student achievement is a very important component of the education process. Assessment as a didactic component is encountered in all stages of the development and organization of a lesson. (Murati, Xh, (2002), fq. 45)

By the notion of evaluation we mean placing a judgment value on the measured results, so that people are evaluated with different evaluations throughout their lives. However, during the school years, assessment is an element present in every teaching and educational activity.

"Assessment is a range of methods used to measure student performance and achievement including, testing, examinations, assessments of practical work, oral assessment, classroom-based assessments led by teachers".

Assessment can also be used as a technique that encourages students to improve certain learning outcomes. Assessment has an extremely important role in teaching and learning. Regular assessment of students' work provides us with information about their progress in all subjects. Student assessment should boost the student's self-confidence and positively affect his learning achievements. Assessment is the process of collecting data and judging the value of achieving learning outcomes, based on levels of achievement.

The main purpose of assessment is to improve the fulfillment of learning outcomes by the student and the learning process itself. It constitutes a judgment value on the measured result and interpretation of the data from the collected information. More specifically, assessment is the way in which teachers collect data about their teaching and their students' learning.

The rating is used:

- *To judge the students' efforts to learn;*
- *To motivate and encourage students to learn;*
- *To judge, reflect and improve the teaching-learning process;*
- *To measure student achievements;*
- *To report achievements;*
- *To give suggestions to students about their progress;*
- *To give suggestions to parents on their children's progress.*

2. Formative assessment

Formative assessment has become a keyword in the field of verification and assessment in education. There are many synonyms used such as: assessment for learning, formative assessment or classroom assessment. Regarding formative assessment, it can be said that similar claims have been made by a very large number of pedagogues who have contributed to this field. They state that formative assessment is assessment for learning, students are assessed over a longer period of time and the focus is on their improvement during the learning process. (Osmani, F, (2010), fq. 24)

Formative assessment refers to assessments that provide information for students and teachers to use to improve teaching and learning. Formative assessment shows how the learning process of students goes during teaching, so it serves us to make instructional corrections to close the gap in addition to students' current knowledge and desired goals. The goal of formative assessment is to improve student motivation and learning.

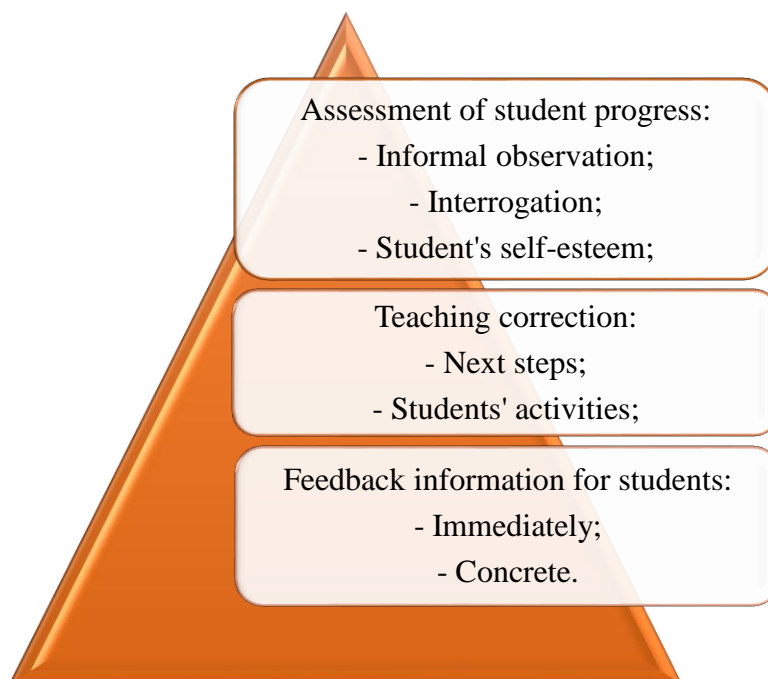


Fig no. 1 Formative assessment cycle

"The picture above shows that, after teachers have gathered evidence of students' knowledge, understanding and skills through monitoring students and asking questions, that evidence is interpreted (assessed) and is specific feedback. This feedback that supports or expands the relevant understanding of the goals - is followed by activities that are improved in understanding, to expand their learning or to correct wrongly making concepts". (Valdeta, Z (2020), p 57)

3. Definition of the term portfolio

The word portfolio derives from the Latin language and consists of the words Rortare, which means carrying, and Foglio, which means paper. The portfolio as a key concept in pedagogy is equated with the student file, which means that portfolios are samples of individual student achievements. The term "portfolio" - according to the Oxford University Dictionary is interpreted as a folder used to keep documents, drawings, collection of documents, papers used for applying for a job or interview, etc. (OXFORD ADVANCED LEARNERS DICTIONARY, 2000)

A portfolio is a useful collection of student work that shows effort or achievement in a subject. It is a collection to show the best works of students or to show the educational development of the students over a period of time. It is useful, as the documents show students' efforts, and progress, such a collection should include students' participation in the selection of portfolio content, selection guidelines, assessment criteria as well as its strengths and weaknesses. The portfolio is in the context of informal assessment, with assessment instruments and procedures used to collect information about learning and the learner, which are different from published instruments, formal assessment as well as summative assessment are linked by giving grades and certificates and authentic assessments that contain the same challenges and standards for the practical competence of students as writers, scientists, leaders of municipal services, historians, designers, etc. (Primena na standardite za ocenuvanie na učenice, (2008), fq, 73)

The portfolio is considered an instrument that:

- *Expands the range of elements that are evaluated;*
- *Creates opportunities to discover a variety of skills in the student;*

- *Creates an overview of changes and improvements for a period of time;*
- *Encourages the students and the teacher, and supports the parents' reflection;*
- *Ensures continuity in education from one year to another.*

4. Portfolio elements

The portfolio is a document that requires great commitment and respect for the elements that every portfolio should contain.

The basic elements of a portfolio are:

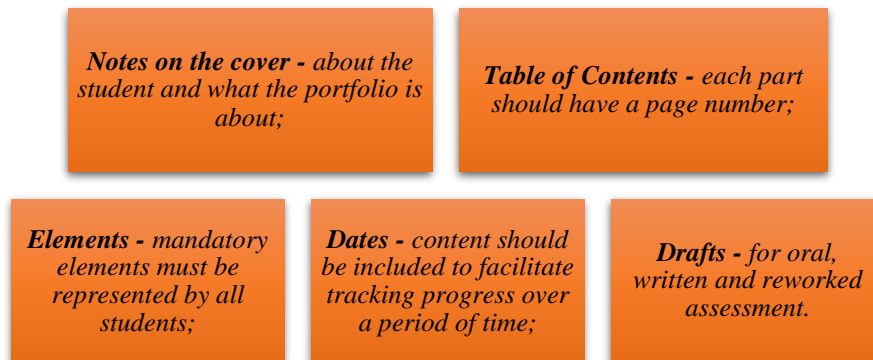


Fig no. 2 Basic elements of portfolio

5. Types of portfolios

The main purpose of the portfolios is to select the best works of the student and provide data on how successful the student has been in the learning process and in communication. The portfolio is a tool to support integrated learning through a range of theoretical and interpersonal skills. The goals of the portfolio and development are: to help teachers and students in a systematic way to achieve learning, but also to encourage the development of learning and allows students to view their work and see what has been done during the learning process.

During portfolio assessment, emphasis is placed on assessing student progress, process and practical training over a period of time, therefore there are two types of portfolio:

- ***Development portfolio*** - documents the level of learning and provides evidence of student progress. It is usually used for formative assessment, but it can also be used for the final assessment from the school year;
- ***Representative portfolio*** – demonstrates the best learning achievements and contains the most successful works. Used for summative assessment. The purpose of this type of portfolio is to make the final assessment and is usually used in conjunction with a presentation of the content included in the portfolio. (Nastava na učenje vo 21 ot – vek (2009),fq, 50)

Research methodology

The purpose of the research was to find out the level of understanding of teachers and parents about the meaning, characteristics, purpose of the portfolio and its function, as well as the sufficient information of parents.

This research will not overlook the examination of teachers' competencies for proper design and management of portfolios according to their purpose, the determination of evaluation criteria, as well as the use of teaching portfolios and information.

Following the stated purpose of the research, we have decided:

Fundamental Hypothesis

X. *The attitudes of teachers and parents regarding the application of the portfolio as an assessment method and its functionality are positive.*

Scientific research methods:

- *Observation method;*
- *Method of theoretical analysis;*
- *Test method;*
- *Descriptive method;*
- *Comparative method.*

Techniques - measuring instruments:

As a technique, we used the survey where the measuring instrument was the questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire for teachers and parents was composed of 20 questions. In this questionnaire, the gender of the teachers and parents, the school they work in, the level of education completed as well as the opinions and attitudes about the questions asked were requested.

The populations of this study were the primary schools in the vicinity of the municipality of Gostivar which were randomly selected. 50 teachers from primary schools in Gostivar and 50 parents gave their opinions about the topic in question. The research was carried out in the following schools:

- *Sh.f. “Bashkimi” – Gostivar;*
- *Sh.f. “Goce Delçev” – Gostivar;*
- *Sh.f. “Përparimi” – Gostivar, Çajlë;*
- *Sh.f. “Liria” – Gostivar, Vërtok;*

Research results

❖ Demographic characteristics of the sample

The table shows the frequency of teachers by gender. According to the same, we have this distribution: 39 or 78% of them are Female, while 11 or 22% are Male.

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Female | 39 | 78.0 | 78.0 | 78.0 |
| Male | 11 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

According to the level or degree of education of the teachers, it turned out that over 78% had a higher education, 18% of them with a second degree, as well as close to 4% with other qualifications.

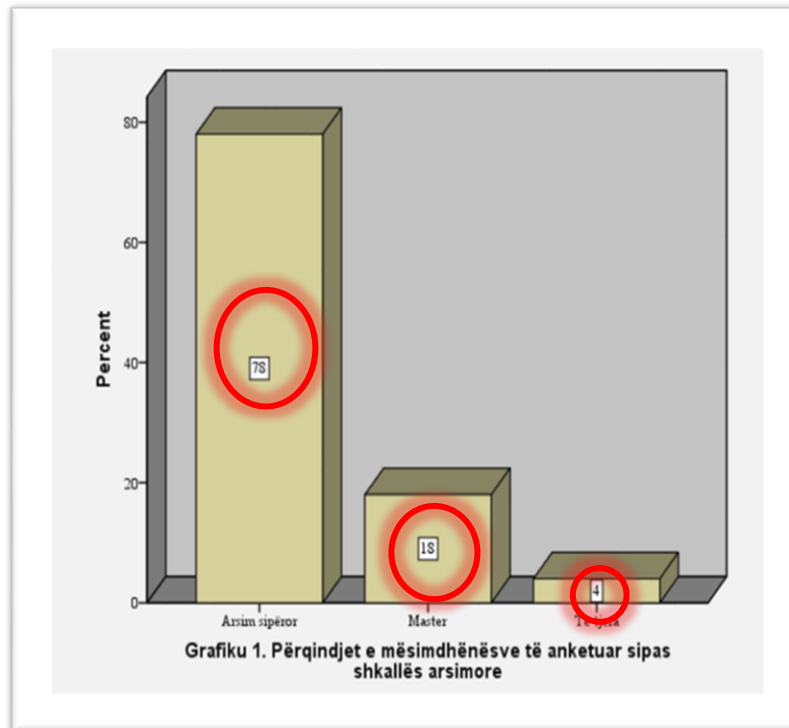


Figure 3 The percentage of teachers surveyed according to educational level

Since the information about the parents' gender is considered relevant, we also present the information in question: 27 or 54% of the Female gender and 23 or 46% of the Male gender.

Table 2. Surveyed parents by gender

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Female | 27 | 54.0 | 54.0 | 54.0 |
| Male | 23 | 46.0 | 46.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

❖ ***Distribution of attitudes in the sample***

Given that the research is oriented towards identifying the attitudes of teachers and parents regarding the application of the portfolio, summarized data is presented where:

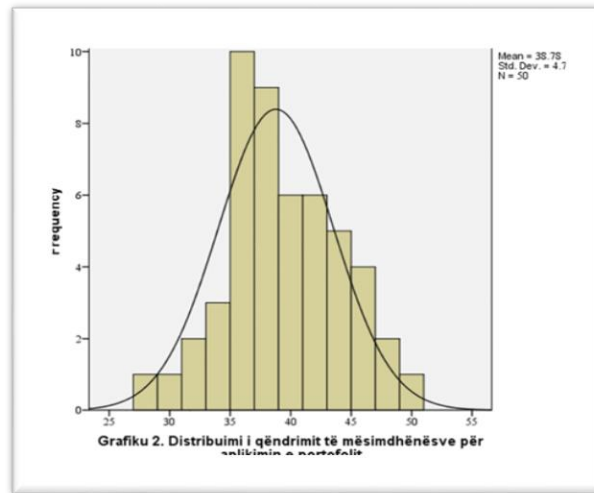


Figure 4. Distribution of teachers' attitudes about portfolio application

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of teachers' and parents' attitudes

| | Attitude to Teachers | Attitude to Parents |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Average | 38.78 | 16.20 |
| Median | 38.00 | 16.00 |
| Mode | 37 | 15 |
| Standard Deviation | 4.752 | 1.666 |
| Skewness | .133 | .110 |
| Kurtosis | -.269 | -.635 |
| Minimum | 28 | 13 |
| Maximum | 50 | 20 |

The attitudes of the teachers, in which the maximum points are 50, after processing them, it follows that the average of the points obtained is 38.78%.

The Median with 38%, the Mode with 37% and the Standard Deviation of 4.752%, who's ranking according to Skewness with 133% and Kurtosis with 269%, allows us to conclude that the variable of the teachers' attitude to the application of the portfolio in the educational process has a normal distribution. According to the processed data, the parents' attitude results in the following presentations: As for the parents' attitudes, the maximum points are 20 after their processing, it follows that the average of the points earned is 16.20%, the Median with 16.00%, Mode by 15% with a Standard Deviation of 666%. According to the ranking of the value of the Mean, Median, Mode, Skewness with 110% and Kurtosis with 635%, we can conclude that the variable of the attitude of the parents for the application of the portfolio in the educational process also has a normal distribution, even though the level of the attitudes of theirs is not as pronounced as the statements of the above-mentioned subjects.

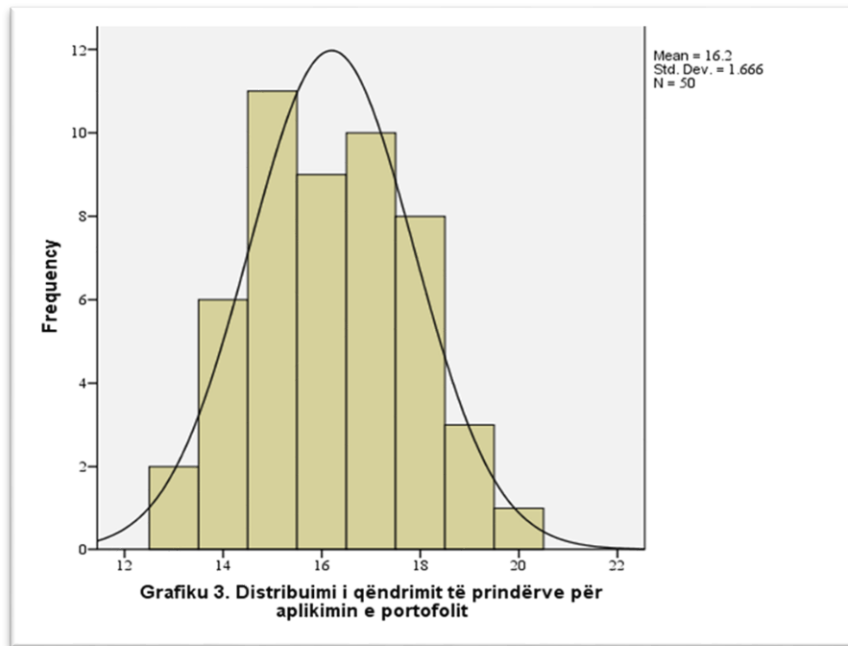


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For the sake of scientific accuracy, we have presented the Kolmogorov - Smirnov test for the normal distribution of variables: So, for the value of 106% with Sig=.200% for the attitude of teachers, the normal distribution is confirmed, as well as for 144% with Sig=.061%, the normal distribution is also confirmed for the attitude variable for parents for the application of the portfolio in the educational process - educational.

Table 5. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normal distribution of attitudes

| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|----|-------|--------------|----|------|
| | Statistic | Df | Sig. | Statistic | Df | Sig. |
| Attitude to Teachers | .106 | 50 | .200* | .987 | 50 | .841 |
| Attitude to Parents | .144 | 50 | .061 | .960 | 50 | .088 |

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

❖ *Inferential statistics and hypothesis interpretation*

A. Before moving on to the interpretation of the hypothesis to have an objective overview of the research objectives, we first analyzed the potential correlation between the attitudes of teachers and those of parents utilizing the Pearson correlation coefficient. The attitudes of teachers and parents analyzed with Pearson, show that their proportionality is not equal, even though in both cases they have a normal distribution.

Table 6. Correlation between the attitudes of teachers and parents regarding the application of the portfolio

| | | Attitude to Teachers | Attitude to Parents |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Attitude to Teachers | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .155 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .282 |
| | N | | 50 |
| Attitude to Parents | Pearson Correlation | | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | |
| | N | | |

So, according to the content of the main research hypothesis, it follows:

H. *The attitudes of teachers and parents regarding the application of the portfolio as an evaluation method and its functionality are positive.*

According to the findings above, we can conclude that the **basic hypothesis is being confirmed in this research.**

B. On the other hand, since we potentially have the demographic factors of teachers and parents, for scientific correctness we have analyzed the potential differences in attitudes of teachers and parents according to these demographic factors.

The dilemma of the existence of differences in teachers' attitudes according to their gender is presented. The table in the fourth column presents the averages of teachers' attitudes according to their gender, which are (F=38.31% and M=40.45%), it can be seen that there is a difference between the two averages.

Table 7. T-test for the difference of attitude averages according to the teachers' gender

| Gender | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mistake |
|----------------------|--------|----|-------|----------------|---------|
| Attitude to Teachers | Female | 39 | 38.31 | 4.937 | .791 |
| | Male | 11 | 40.45 | 3.751 | 1.131 |

According to the value of T=1.334% for Sig=.189%, we say that there is no statistically significant difference in the level of attitude towards the application of the portfolio in the educational process according to the gender of the teacher in this research.

Table 8. Significance for the above differences

| | T-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------|-----------------|------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Difference | Error | 95% confidence | |
| | | | | | | Bottom | Top |
| Attitude to Teachers | -1.334 | 48 | .189 | -2.147 | 1.610 | -5.383 | 1.090 |
| | - | 20.8 | .135 | -2.147 | 1.380 | -5.018 | .724 |
| | 1.556 | 49 | | | | | |

C. Likewise, the next demographic factor that poses a dilemma in the difference in the attitude of teachers is the school where the teacher works and acts. So, we conducted our survey in 5 schools of the municipality of Gostivar, where the averages for the stay depending on the school are presented in the third column.

Table 9. The difference in teachers' attitudes according to the school where they work

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Error | 95% confidence | |
|------------------------------|----|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | | | | | Bottom | Top |
| Sh.F Ismail Qemali – Gostiv. | 10 | 38.00 | 6.200 | 1.961 | 33.56 | 42.44 |
| Sh.F Bashkimi – Gostivar | 10 | 38.20 | 3.994 | 1.263 | 35.34 | 41.06 |
| Sh.F Përparimi – Çajlë | 10 | 37.10 | 4.254 | 1.345 | 34.06 | 40.14 |
| Sh.F Goce Delçev – Gostivar | 10 | 40.20 | 5.051 | 1.597 | 36.59 | 43.81 |
| Sh.F Liria – Vërtok | 10 | 40.40 | 3.950 | 1.249 | 37.57 | 43.23 |
| Total | 50 | 38.78 | 4.752 | .672 | 37.43 | 40.13 |

Based on the results presented above, we find that there ***are no differences*** in the level of attitudes of teachers regarding the application of the portfolio according to their gender and the school where they work and operate in this research.

Although at first glance there are differences between these averages for each school, in particular from 40.40 to 38.00%, the last column presents the value $F=.925\%$ with $Sig=.458\%$, we say ***that there is no*** statistically significant difference in the level of attitude of teachers for the application of the portfolio in the educational process according to the school where the teacher works and acts in this research.

Table 10. Significances for the above differences – ANOVA

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Squared | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|----|--------------|------|------|
| Between groups | 84.080 | 4 | 21.020 | .925 | .458 |
| | 1022.500 | 45 | 22.722 | | |
| Total | 1106.580 | 49 | | | |

D. For the group of teachers, there remains a final conclusive analysis for the potential difference of their attitude depending on their degree or level of education for the application of the portfolio in the educational process.

In the third column, the averages of tenure are presented depending on the educational level of the teacher himself, where for higher education 39.64%, for teachers with a second degree 35.89%, and for other qualifications 35%. In the last column for F=3.203% with Sig=.40%, *we find that there is a* statistically significant difference in the level of attitude of the teachers regarding the application of the portfolio in the educational process depending on their educational level or degree.

Table 11. The difference in teachers' attitudes according to their educational level

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Error | 95% confidence | |
|------------------|----|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | | | | | Bottom | Top |
| Higher Education | 39 | 39.64 | 4.469 | .716 | 38.19 | 41.09 |
| Master | 9 | 35.89 | 5.183 | 1.728 | 31.91 | 39.87 |
| Other | 2 | 35.00 | .000 | .000 | 35.00 | 35.00 |
| Total | 50 | 38.78 | 4.752 | .672 | 37.43 | 40.13 |

Table 12. Significances for the above differences – ANOVA

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Squared | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|----|--------------|-------|------|
| Between groups | 132.717 | 2 | 66.358 | 3.203 | .040 |
| | 973.863 | 47 | 20.720 | | |
| Total | 1106.580 | 49 | | | |

Although at first glance the difference between the two averages (f=15.89% and m=16.57%) can be seen, in the first and third columns according to T=1.447% for Sig=155% we say *that there is no* statistically significant difference in the level of attitude towards the application of portfolio in the educational process according to the gender of the parents in this research.

Table 14. Significances for the above differences

| | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--------|--------------------|------------|-------|----------------|------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Difference | Error | 95% confidence | |
| | | | | | | Bottom | Top |
| Attitude to Parents | -1.447 | 48 | .155 | -.676 | .468 | -1.616 | .264 |
| | -1.450 | 47.181 | .154 | -.676 | .466 | -1.614 | .262 |

Conclusion

Elaborated from the consulted literature, from the analyzed results relevant to the issue in question and from the results obtained from the research carried out in our underworld resulted:

- *The portfolio is presented as a useful collection of student work;*
- *The portfolio, in parallel with the efforts, also shows the educational achievements and development in a subject;*
- *It is presented as a collection to show the best works of students;*
- *As an evaluation instrument, it is proven to be applied by male and female teachers;*
- *Although two groups of subjects, teachers and parents, declared that they have positive attitudes, the level of attitude of teachers was in marked superiority;*
- *Attitudes were encountered which justify the need for the content of specific assessment criteria based on the portfolio, as well as for the same to present selections of works and papers which prove the achievements and progress of the student in the relevant field or field.*

Recommendations

Elaborating on the many benefits it brings to the process of evaluating students' achievements and their performance, we recommend that:

- *Portfolio to be found in the spaces of every classroom;*
- *The same should be well structured;*
- *Designed to include all subjects;*
- *To be organized with student works which can be presented as evidence not only of achievements;*
- *At the same time, it also provides data that would have proven the progress of students in a certain subject or field;*
- *The same should be designed so that it responds to the requirements and contents according to the current curriculum;*
- *The portfolio must be based on educational criteria and standards.*

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