

ABSTRACT

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Despite the abundance of literature, available media and social networks contents, an analysis of existing publications has revealed a significant research gap in the assessment of skateboarding footwear quality. Previous research has mainly focused on the evolution of design and technology applied to footwear, ignoring the aspect of mechanical changes caused by skateboard abrasion. Limited access to footwear manufacturers' research data and a small number of scientific papers significantly hinder consumers' ability to gain adequate knowledge about the shoes they purchase. In addition a lack of publications focusing on consumer preferences and behavior has been observed in this area. This state applies also to the assessment of skateboard footwear quality of using appropriate, standardized laboratory methods.

This situation leaves an opened field that can be effectively filled by systematizing existing knowledge and applying a variety of research methods that allow a better understanding of the issues related to the use of this particular equipment. Addressing this topic has been the main attempt of this dissertation.

This thesis has a both theoretical and empirical nature. It consists of two chapters segregated into a literature part and a research segment. The technical, mechanical, social and marketing aspects presented in the first chapter are based on the analysis of gathered literature representing knowledge about skateboarding footwear. Whereas the carried out empirical research, proved significant relevance to the undertaken problem, which can be defined as the quality of footwear used for skateboarding.

The study's main objective was to systematize available knowledge regarding the wear and tear followed by selected methods of testing and assessing the quality of footwear used for skateboarding. This goal was achieved through an analysis of the collected literature allowing outlining the issue of this particular sport and the footwear used in. A multidimensional research process was carried out and included several key stages:

1. Defining the research problem: the study began with the formulation of the main issue, which included an analysis of user preferences and an evaluation of the technical characteristics of various models of skateboarding shoes.
2. Data collection: a survey amongst skateboarders was conducted. Its main focus was to evaluate their shoe choices and preferences. Moreover an analysis of shoe deterioration during usage was performed. In addition, laboratory tests were conducted on upper materials and different types of soles used in skateboarding shoes.
3. Data analysis: the data were statistically and graphically analyzed to identify patterns and relationships between various parameters, which allowed the identification of areas particularly vulnerable to wear.
4. Interpretation of results: based on the analysis of the data, conclusions were drawn regarding user preferences and technical characteristics of the shoes, which were used to assess compliance with the hypotheses and formulate suggestions for improvement.
5. Conclusions and further research directions: summarizing the research, the results were used to draw conclusions and highlight further possible research directions. This included forecasted research into the impact of shoe design in relation to skateboarder's safety and the possibility of improving shoe durability through a certain selection of most suitable materials.

In addition the research made it possible to test three formulated hypotheses:

1. The products most favored by consumers are characterized by the best abrasion resistance parameters.
2. Cupsole soles are characterized by better abrasion resistance in comparison to vulcanized soles.
3. Uppers made of nubuck leather are more abrasion resistant when in contact with skateboard griptape.

Hypotheses 1 was positively verified, whereas hypothesis 2 and 3 were not confirmed by data analysis.