

Risk perception evaluation in parents and/or guardians of a group of beginner traceurs before and after parkour practice

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to evaluate the risk perception of parents and/or guardians of a group of beginner traceurs before and after parkour practice. Although the existing information about it was limited and had numerous distortions, it was successfully executed. This research has been carried out from interviews applied to 15 parents/guardians before and after a program of parkour practice. To this end, the sessions were recorded and subsequently viewed with the parents, creating a discussion forum. From the first interviews, in which almost all the parents had had the view that it was a very dangerous activity until the last interview, most of the interviewees changed their opinion, thinking that the risk of parkour depended mostly on its use by the person.

Key words: Parkour, Risk Perception, Education, Physical Activity.

Introduction

This research aims to evaluate risk perception in parents and/or guardians of a beginner traceurs group (13-14 years), before and after practising parkour. In order to do this, it will be explained what parkour is and its relationship with the risk perceived by observers.

In the last decade, it has been noted that a large number of people and media have identified parkour as a dangerous or high-risk sport (McLean, Houshian and Pike, 2006). However, this often arises from a large part of the population's lack of knowledge concerning it .

Etymologically, according to David Belle (creator of the concept), the term parkour comes from the French word *parcours* (Muñoz, 2013), which means route. It consists of a training method that allows carrying out an itinerary, either in an urban or a natural environment, in an efficient, fluid and fast way, making use of the basic physical capacities developed, in addition to a series of specific techniques that favor movement and overcome obstacles (Ferrero, 2011). Its practitioners are known by the name of traceurs (masculine) or traceuses (feminine). Traceur is a French word whose translation means "tracer", being called this because they are characterized by tracing the paths in which they execute their movements, in an urban or a natural environment (Belle and Gros La Faige, 2009, in Leyden, 2013).

Although many people and authors consider it a sport (Suárez and Fernández, 2012), parkour is conceived as a discipline that does not require norms or competition (Grabowski, 2013), so it would not be appropriate to entitle it as such. In this way, parkour involves the exploration of places and the creation of unique movements that contributes to the development of creativity and knowledge of one's body (Bavinton, 2007). Ilabaca (2009) defines it as a form of expression of one's interiority in relation to the environment in which one lives and interacts.

Its origins go back to the natural method of Georges Hébert, which pursued the overcoming of any obstacle with the use of only one's own body. This method was adopted by Raymond Belle, a fireman and military man born in Vietnam who later became a hero saving the lives of people, inspiring French society with his epic rescues (Atkinson, 2009).

When his son, David Belle, was born, he began to transmit his spirit of strength and courage through his exploits and stories in the fire department. In this way, David Belle began to adopt the method of natural training at age 15 in his hometown, Lisses, near the city of Paris. The natural method consisted of global movements such as walking, running, jumping, climbing, throwing, lifting, quadrupedalism, defense and swimming. In this way, the main objective was the integral development of the person and its motto was "to be and last" and "to be strong to be useful" (Hébert, 1913). Later, he met Sébastien Foucan, Laurent Piemontesi and Yann Hnautra, and it was with them that he began to develop the urban version and to call himself "Parkour". From this moment, they began to give this name to the movements that they carried out. In the end, due to a series of events, the

Parkour was divided into two branches, the classic one from which everything comes and another devised by Sébastien who called it Freerunning. Yet, the most common and currently used term is parkour (Redondo, 2011).

Currently, despite the development and popularity it is acquiring, the topic continues to have scarce bibliographical references (Atkinson, 2009, Bavinton, 2007, Gilchrist and Wheaton, 2011, Saville, 2008). Facing, in turn, the conceptual ignorance on the subject both by practitioners and by the rest of the people in society, there are few scientific studies regarding the danger of Parkour (Kidder, 2013). Despite this issue, different videos can be watched on the Net, where images of people who perform dangerous jumps are shown. In this way, the media show parkour as a dangerous and high-risk activity, as they do with sports considered "extreme" (McLean, 2006), in which their practitioners are at risk of serious injury (Attwood, 2013). This entails the acquisition of an uncertain perception concerning the practice of parkour by most of the population which, as Ameel and Tani (2012a, 2012b) defend, can be a misleading point of view about the true reality of the parkour objectives. Most people relate parkour with danger but, like any other physical discipline, it can be risky if it is executed without taking the necessary precautions and safety measures (Kidder, 2013).

Nowadays, many of the young people who are entering the world of parkour do not consider progression and safety as basic principles. This implies the immersion of risk in its practice and its possible negative consequences (Montoro and Baena, 2015). Those traceurs who have experience put safety first as a fundamental element in their daily workouts (Gómez, 2014). According to several authors (Miller and Demoigny, 2008, Frumkin, 2005, McLean et al., 2006, Vivanco-Allende et al., 2013), parkour is considered an activity of extreme risk due to the data obtained in the different clinical reports. Nevertheless, serious injuries are unusual except in beginners who try to go beyond their abilities without the necessary training and supervision (Miller and Demoigny, 2008). The most common injuries that parkour can cause are slight sprains of ankles, muscle aches or insignificant cuts. All the same, these injuries tend to occur less frequently than in other physical competition disciplines (Kidder, 2013).

Although parkour is considered an activity for adrenaline and risk addicts (Herborn, 2009), Edwardes (2006) defines it as a reintroduction of risk in an administered manner and not as a promotion of risk behaviors. On the other hand, for Saville (2008) the different experiences with the environment and the emotions caused by the inclusion of the real and perceived risk that parkour offers can be a very valuable tool for a person's integral development. Likewise, risk management promotes the growth of a series of competencies that allows individuals to adapt to any environment or condition (Priest and Gass, 2005).

In order to determine the relationship of parkour with the perception of risk, it is necessary to define it. To do this, we must differentiate between the concepts of risk and danger. Danger, on the one hand, is defined as something real and objective, since it can be measured and verified as it is evaluable and preventable. For this reason, it can be specified that the objective risk and the danger are the same element (Bonvin, 1992). On the other hand, when mention is made of subjective risk, this refers to the attitude of people in the face of danger, their perception when facing it. It is, therefore, the way of perceiving the danger that represents risk (Soulé and Courneloup, 2007). Consequently, risk is not something fixed, but something subjective that we build on an individual basis based on our imagination, phobias or fears (Martha, 2002).

The factors that influence and interrelate between each other to determine the perception of risk are trust, fatigue, difficulty and haste (Chamarro, Rovira and Fernández-Castro, 2010).

The decision to expose oneself or not to a risk depends, first, on the presence of a danger and, second, on the subjective perception of it. In this way, there can be no risk without danger. Conversely, it could happen that if people do not perceive the danger, they are not aware when facing a risk, which could result in a fatal outcome. Notwithstanding, despite the fact that parkour is an activity that, like many others, can involve a series of hazards, its implementation entails an objective perception of them. This provides its practitioners with a series of benefits (safety, learning to take risks or to know uncertainties, among others) (Belley et al., 2014, Schollossbauer and Borel, 2012).

In today's society, such an obsession with safety has been generated that risk has become a negative indicator, synonymous with danger and the concern to measure and control everything (Davidson, 2008). This phenomenon has been extrapolated so much that the activities that are not accepted from the beginning by the majority are labeled as unwanted and hostile (Brymer, 2010). This has also led teens to tend to underestimate their own abilities in situations of risk (Kim and Lee, 2017). Ewald (2002) expresses the impossibility of obtaining absolute safety. One is not able not to suffer any type of mishap or accident since the risk is present in all places and times of the day. Nonetheless, it might be more appropriate to speak of risk management than of safety, since when we talk about this we are referring to all the mechanisms and tools that are used to reduce the probability of risk in a dangerous activity (Ewald, 2002). In this way, risk must be understood as an alarm system that awakens our sense of security and protects us from the fears of society. As Sirost (2002) shows, risk participates in the social construction of reality.

Methodology

The qualitative research model has been used as the one that best fits the purpose of this study, which has dealt with people with different life experiences, and in which their narration and the details of the facts are

what have contributed to the wealth to this research (Arnal, Del Rincón and Latorre, 1996). This type of research model is about understanding particular processes, conditioned by limiting circumstances at certain times, where the action of a new type of physical activity can affect the pre-established concepts about it, often very limiting.

Participants

The sample with which the intervention will be carried out will be a group of 15 adolescents of 2nd year of secondary education (13-14 years) of a public high school in Spain, as well as their parents and / or guardians: a total of 17 people interviewed, 12 mothers and five fathers. Those selected did not know what parkour was, or had little or no knowledge about it.

Instruments

To carry out the research, a semi structured open-ended interview will be used as a tool to establish a qualitative study of the perception of perceived risk. An adaptation of Borel and Scholossbauer (2012)'s questionnaire will be used for the script of the interview.

These interviews were sent to two experts who analyzed them and gave their own contributions about them. Several tests were made with subjects unrelated to the topic but having characteristics similar to the pilot group, until an understandable and adapted script was obtained.

The Script of the interview was as follows:

Previous Interview:

1. Good afternoon, would you mind telling me your name, age and the sport that you have practiced previously
2. What view do you have about parkour?
3. Have you ever observed it? How? (News, internet videos, newspaper, in person, etc.)
4. Do you consider parkour to be a dangerous activity?
5. What would worry you about your child practicing parkour?
6. Do you think the risk in parkour is intrinsic to the sport or does this have to do with the attitude of the practitioner?
7. Do you consider that parkour can be practiced without exposing oneself to risk situations?
8. Do you see parkour as a tool to interpret and better prevent risks in your child's day-to-day life?
9. Do you think parkour practice could benefit your child?
10. Do you think of parkour as an activity that can cause injuries?
11. Would you recommend parkour as an educational tool?

Posterior Interview:

1. What view do you have now about parkour?
2. Do you consider that the session that has been carried out with the children could have beneficial effects for them?
3. Do you consider parkour to be a dangerous activity?
4. Do you think the risk in parkour is intrinsic to the sport or does this have to do with the attitude of the practitioner?
5. Do you consider that parkour can be practiced without exposing oneself to risk situations?
6. Do you see parkour as a tool to interpret and better prevent risks in your child's day-to-day life?
8. Do you think of parkour as an activity that can cause injuries?
9. Would you recommend parkour as an educational tool?
9. Would you experience such a discipline yourself?

In addition to the interviews, a discussion group with the parent / guardian group was used at the end of the sessions to assess their opinion of perceived risk after viewing the summary video of their mentees.

Process

The idea of this work was to carry out an interview with the participants and the people responsible for them in the pilot group before and after the application of two sessions of parkour, each lasting two hours, to find out the perception they had about the practice done and analyze it, as well as their evolution as they were acquired knowledge about the practice.

During the sessions the main objective was the understanding of the importance of controlling the objective risk and safety management through an adequate progression that gives confidence to the people who practice it.

The way to do this was as follows. First, the parents and / or guardians of the adolescents involved in the study were contacted through the physical education teacher of the center by phone, in order to ask if they had any problem concerning their children / mentees and their own participation in a pilot study on risk perception and parkour. After obtaining an affirmative answer from 15 family units, field work was started.

Both participants and parents were asked to answer the interview questions about their conception of parkour practice and the risk that its practice involved (subjective risk) before the field work started. After finishing the interview, we explained to them what the practice of parkour is, its history and its values.

After the first session of contact with the discipline, including an explanation of it, specific warm-ups and related games were carried out. Then, a second session was developed to introduce the group into the initiation of movements and more specific techniques of parkour, consisting of a method of repetitions to show how to gain confidence in oneself and in others and, finally, to create movements on their own in such a way that the participants carry out the movements that arose from themselves, establishing security measures and supervising at all times the actions to be taken.

The sessions were recorded, edited to be presented later to the parents and / or tutors of the participants, creating after viewing it a discussion forum (discussion group) in relation to the practice. In this way these parents acquired a greater awareness of the discipline and its real risk. Finishing this forum, and in the same session, those attending were asked to respond again to the questions of the interview, in order to determine and analyze the results obtained and, lastly, to observe if there had been changes regarding the perception of the perceived risk before and after performing parkour sessions.

With the results obtained from the interviews and the discussion group, we proceeded to the data analysis.

Data analysis

The analysis of the data obtained (transcribed interviews) as well as the organization of the data was done through the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti 7, as this is a program that facilitates integrating all the available information and grouping it under the same codes and families, which made the organization and search of the elements that were needed easier (Trinidad, Carrero and Soriano, 2006).

Results

The parents of the children who participated in the parkour sessions were interviewed. Given that the objective of the work was to assess the perception of risk by their referring to their sons or daughters in parkour, they were interviewed taking as reference the idea that they had about it. To do this, eleven questions were asked and the ATLAS.ti program was used to group the information of each interview and thus be able to carry out a more specific and detailed analysis.

Initially, they were asked to give their consent to be interviewed and their name and age was requested so as not to lose sight of whether there was any difference regarding their answers according to their age and gender. Of the 17 people interviewed, 5 fathers who had an average age of 47 to 59 years and 12 mothers whose average age was between 43 and 56 years were valued.

Starting from the recognition that parkour is still a very little-known discipline compared to other physical and sport disciplines, the interview started with a question to find out what view they had about it and hence be able to assess from the beginning if it was positive or negative. The result was that 10 parents had a negative perception of it, four positive and three did not have an opinion. The vast majority of them define it with the term "sport" when parkour is really a physical discipline where there is no competition, rules or federations. In the same way, they believe that parkour is a high-risk, aggressive and dangerous activity, which can be a problem for their sons and daughters.

Next, they were asked if they had ever seen it and through what means, to assess what sources they got their initial idea from. 100% of the fathers knew parkour through the media, while the mothers who knew about it had received their information from their children and through the film *Yamakasi*, which they had heard them speak about. It was revealed that the media showed them parkour as a high-risk activity, where large jumps and accidents involving this activity were shown.

To the question "Do you consider parkour to be a dangerous activity?", twelve of the interviewees answered that it was a very dangerous activity. Two mothers indicated that it could be dangerous and only three of the subjects interviewed (two fathers and one mother) thought they it was as dangerous as another activity or sport.

From this same question, the authors inquired about their concerns regarding the practice of parkour and their children. In this way, except for two subjects, the parents interviewed had a negative view about parkour, believing that their children would jump from roof to roof, could suffer an accident or even kill themselves, that they would damage urban furniture and therefore would be considered as vandals. On the other hand, they expressed fear at the time that their sons or daughters would not know how to understand the risk involved in this activity and could end up imitating what they saw in the media (e.g., YouTube).

Despite the fact that the vast majority considered parkour to be a high risk activity, there was a higher percentage of parents (58.82%) who believed that the risk is involved in the attitude of the person in the practice. Only 33.3% of mothers thought that the risk is involved only in the activity and 8.88% believed that the risk was in both the activity and the person. Regarding fathers, 60% point to the attitude of the person while 40% refer to both aspects.

Given that the objective was to assess the perception of risk, the following question was addressed to assess whether they thought if it would possible to adapt the activity in such a way that its practitioners were not exposed to risk situations or that these would be the same as in other activities. It was observed that 64.71% of the total of fathers believed that this could be possible, as long as the heights were lowered and the practice was carried out with a professional instructor who knew how to initiate their sons and daughters. They stated that gradual progression and adaptation were key elements to reduce such situations of a risk of suffering an accident. On the other hand, up to 50% of mothers believed that this discipline could not be practiced without exposing oneself to situations of risk.

Regarding the question about whether parkour could serve as a tool for their children to face the risks of daily life, 47.06% answered that it could help them. The main reasons were that it was a new activity and different from traditional sports, which would allow them to develop their senses more, and if the attitude with which they performed it was positive and conscious, it would help them to better manage their safety in order to adapt to risk situations. On the contrary, 35.29% did not see this as possible. They believed that the activity was too dangerous and that in the adolescent stage it could not benefit them because of the need to imitate friends or even go further and want to impress them. In the last place, three subjects did not know the means to achieve this physical tool's usefulness.

At this point, a contradiction is observed about the opinion of the parents of this research, since in the question of whether they considered that parkour practice could benefit their children, up to 94.11% of the subjects showed positive responses, especially in reference to the physical (get fit) and intellectual (abandoning mobile-dependence) aspect, and even 47.05% linked both aspects.

It was also assessed what they thought about the injury probability in parkour compared to other sports. 47.05% of the people interviewed valued that parkour could cause more injuries than other sports because of the danger involved and the lack of reasoning presented by beginners in this activity. However, 52.94% of the subjects thought that parkour could cause injuries, but the same as in other sports. None of the people interviewed considered that parkour could lead to a lower number of injuries compared to other sports.

In the next question, the subjects were asked if they would recommend parkour as an educational tool in schools. 70.58% of parents would recommend it, as it is an innovative activity that is a break from what is classic and, like other sports (physical activity), it can have an educational purpose. Likewise, a great majority of them considered it necessary for this discipline by to be taught by professional instructors. On the contrary, 29.41% considered parkour as an activity that is too dangerous to be recommended as an educational tool in schools. Among these, 20% of fathers would not recommend it and 50% of mothers would not either.

After viewing the video of the second session and holding the discussion group, the second interview took place. In the second interview, none of the interviewed had a negative view about parkour. The great majority was impressed to see how the concept could be completely rectified if it was adapted to other circumstances and characteristics. Many of the parents were surprised by the values that the discipline was immersed in. Cooperation and non-competition were key elements.

When asked if they believed that the session with their children could have positive effects for them, 100% positive responses were obtained. Regarding the first interview, the subjects talked about positive effects at a physical and intellectual level. Yet, in the second they introduced educational values, socialization and other aspects related to wellbeing and quality of life. From this, two phrases that summarize the feelings of the subjects stand out:

"Above all as an educational medium and channel to transmit a series of values that are not inherent to other competitive activities such as football and other team sports."

"Of course, at the level of values, education and evidently as a way of gaining confidence, respecting your friends, respecting the environment and knowing yourself, which in adolescence is key. Watching the video fully transmits me an atmosphere of cooperation, of companionship, of beauty... "

There is also a quite relevant change regarding the initial results on the consideration of parkour as a dangerous activity. 88.24% of the interviewees indicated that it was, but the same as other sports. No one said it was more dangerous than other sports, and 16.67% of mothers indicated that it could even be less dangerous than other sports. They also expressed that the non-competition observed in the video and the integrating function of the exercises undertaken could reduce the risk of the activity by eliminating the concept of superiority in the face of others and encouraging cooperation and assistance as a means to achieving a common objective, happiness and wellbeing.

Regarding whether the risk was intrinsic in the attitude of the person at the time of practice or in the activity itself, 100% of the respondents expressed that the risk was closely related to the attitude of the person. None understood that the risk was in the activity, since they conceived that the sessions of parkour did not have to mean a greater risk than another physical or sport activity. They focused on the importance of the use of reasoning by practitioners when practicing this discipline, highlighting the following answer:

"The risk depends on the person. Attitude is key when carrying out this activity, to be sure at all times what we should do and what not. "

Regarding the consideration of whether parkour could be practiced without exposing oneself to situations of risk, 82.35% of the subjects said that it was possible to practice this discipline without exposing themselves to risk situations higher than in other sports, while 20% of fathers and 16.65% of mothers did not know how risk situations could be eliminated.

Next, 100% of the interviewees contemplated parkour as a tool to better manage personal safety and better perceive the risks of day-to-day life. An example of this is the following response:

"Yes, the fact of gaining confidence is a way to get a defense shield that helps you deal with the stimuli of the environment in a different way and that can benefit you a lot."

In reference to the evaluation of parkour in relation to injuries, 82.35% of the subjects answered that it can cause injuries, but as with other sports. 17.65% (one father and two mothers) indicated that parkour could cause fewer injuries than other sports due to the absence of competition and be an activity of individual or collective and free use.

"Less even than football or other competitive sports. Depending on how you understand it and how it is taught, it can be an activity that helps even avoid typical injuries. "

On the other hand, they were asked if they would recommend parkour as an educational tool and why. 100% of the parents answered that they would recommend it. Also, the reasons were divided into two types of response:

"Yes, the way you see it in your session could be a very interesting tool to research and teach in schools to develop a series of aspects and values that may not be developed so clearly in other activities"

"Of course. It is a team activity, without distinction of gender ... I think it can be very beneficial when it comes to motivating students. As long as it is carried out as in your session it can have very positive effects, not only on a physical level but also on a social and intellectual level ".

Discussion and conclusions

As McLean et al. (2006) said, it is confirmed from the initial interviews that the opinion about parkour is negative, being considered to be a dangerous activity of extreme risk. Nonetheless, having seen the video and understood parkour as a physical activity adapted to the abilities of the adolescent, this perception was modified and the opinion about it became very positive. The parents were surprised by the values that this discipline entails and contemplated its realization as a beneficial act for their children.

In addition, it was observed how this initial opinion about parkour being an "extreme risk sport" was disseminated by the YouTube-type media (McLean et al., 2006). Notwithstanding, there was a very significant change regarding the opinion of the parents. The video of the session that took place with their children awoke their interest in their children continuing practicing this activity, and in the second interview the negative opinions became positive with respect to their previous idea of parkour, with some of the parents expressing the idea that parkour could be a less dangerous activity than other sports because of the elimination of the competitive term reducing the risk that it could entail.

From another point of view, the parents associated the danger with the number of injuries that could be suffered practicing parkour. This opinion was conditioned by the injuries suffered by inexperienced people who begin parkour, not knowing its philosophy and surpassing their own limits, often due to beginners not having knowledge of safety.

Despite these controversies, as reflected by Ferrero (2014), parkour is a tool that allows safety management to avoid suffering any type of accident. This caused the parents, when viewing the session, to modify their perception about the risk of injury. Those who believed that it could be a cause of obvious injury found that, if carried out in a responsible manner, parkour does not have to cause more damage than another activity or sport.

As a conclusion, and after seeing the changes that occurred in the risk perception of the parents before and after the intervention, the results have been very revealing, since a very negative pre-intervention idea of parkour, became a very positive post-intervention perception.

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