



A CLASSIFICATION OF THE DRESS OF HEAVY METAL MUSIC GROUPS

Tammy R. Robinson, Doris H. Kincade,
and Valerie L. Giddings
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061

The research was a qualitative study of the dress of heavy metal (HM) music groups using content analysis. The purpose was to examine dress characteristics of a representative random sample of HM music groups. The objectives were (1) to develop a classification system for HM music groups based on time and subgenre, (2) to identify music groups within each cell (i.e., time and subgenre) of the classification system, and (3) to identify dress characteristics of a representative random sample of the music groups.

Subjects in the study were HM music groups as pictured on albums. The variables were the selected items of dress and the classification of the groups by time and subgenre. A classification system was developed and used for the selection of subjects. Using the HM Dress Classification Instrument developed by the researcher, specific dress characteristics of 24 HM music groups were identified. These data were compiled in tabular format.

Among the 24 groups, the predominant clothing was a black woven shirt and black leather/suede pants. Clothing trim included studs, motifs/designs, words, and fringe. No type of jewelry was predominant. Primary shoes observed were western boots. Straight, shoulder-length black or blond hair with no head covering was predominant. Beards, makeup, tattooing, and other forms of corporal adornment were observed. Findings of the study provide empirical evidence regarding the use of apparel by music groups to create images that are consistent with their style of music.