

# Research Paper, Qualitative Methodology, APA Style (Sociology)

---

Running head: AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES' PERCEPTIONS OF DRESS 1

The header consists of a shortened title (no more than 50 characters) in all capital letters at the left margin and the page number at the right margin; on the title page only, the shortened title is preceded by the words "Running head" and a colon.

African American Males' Perceptions of Urban  
and Hip-Hop Styles of Dress  
Bradley J. Zopf  
University of Chicago

Full title, writer's name, and school halfway down the page.

## Author Note

Bradley Zopf, SOCI 31600, Seminar: Social Stratification,  
Professor Edward Laumann, Department of Sociology, University  
of Chicago. Faculty adviser: Edward Laumann; preceptor: Kim  
Babon.

An author's note (optional) gives the writer's affiliation and specific information about the course. It can also provide acknowledgments and contact information.

Marginal annotations indicate **APA-style formatting** and **effective writing**.

Source: Hacker Handbooks (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013).

This paper follows the style guidelines in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. (2010).

Abstract, a 100-to-150-word overview of the paper, appears on a separate page. The heading is centered and not boldface.

### Abstract

African American males are often stereotyped as rebellious because of the clothing they wear. Because these stereotypes are often held by authority figures (teachers, parents, police), there is little research about how African American males perceive their choice of clothing styles. Therefore, the question “Is the urban wear or hip-hop style of clothing a result of an African American oppositional culture or a result of purchasing choices?” has yet to be answered from the perspective of African American males themselves. Research suggesting that African Americans form a distinct collective identity, or oppositional culture, has argued that African Americans formulate a conscious resistance to conforming to white standards of conduct, dress, and behavior. However, in interviews with 20 African American males, I found that respondents reported that their clothing styles are a matter of personal preference, a desire to look presentable, and a way to express their unique sense of style.

Numerals are used for all numbers in the abstract, even numbers under 10.

Keywords (optional) help readers search for a paper online or in a database.

*Keywords:* African American males, clothing, stereotypes, oppositional culture, urban culture, hip-hop style

[The paper continues with a review of the literature, beginning on a new page, followed by the method section.]

### Method

For this research, I conducted 20 interviews with African American males between the ages of 18 and 35, with the average age being 27, in downtown Chicago, IL. I asked African American males about their views on clothing styles, specifically if they considered themselves to have a style and how they perceive hip-hop or urban wear styles. Questions concerning their clothing styles during their teenage years were a means to understand if, how, and why older males changed their preferred clothing styles. Since the focus of the research was to analyze how hip-hop and urban styles are or are not forms of oppositional behavior, African American males were the target group. Because this group is the most likely demographic to wear such clothing and therefore experience the stereotypes that are attached to these styles, it was important to understand how African American males themselves thought of their own styles, the hip-hop and urban styles in general, and the stereotypes.

I conducted the interviews in person on State Street in downtown and tape-recorded 19 of 20 to ensure accuracy. I selected subjects through an informal screening process attempting to diversify the subjects' styles. In other words, I attempted to interview both those I perceived as wearing hip-hop or urban-style clothing as well as those wearing conventional business casual and business formal attire. The sample, therefore, was a convenience sample purposely biased to select subjects wearing a wide range of dress styles. While this type of sampling does not yield a random sample, the goal was to find exploratory information that will allow for a future project concerning consumption, clothing styles, and African Americans.

The method section describes the writer's research design.

Zopf describes his sample and the setting where the interviews took place. He explains the rationale for the sample he chose.

Zopf writes in the first person and active voice (*I selected subjects*) rather than in the less direct and wordier third person and passive (*Subjects were selected*).

Zopf uses terminology from the field (*convenience sample*) to describe the particular method he used.

All interviews were conducted between March and June of 2006 in downtown Chicago. Most interviews lasted around 10 minutes, but a few were longer. I approached potential participants and identified myself as a student at the University of Chicago completing a study on clothing styles and fashion. Informed consent was obtained verbally and recorded on tape.

In the next few paragraphs, Zopf acknowledges some limitations of his method.

With the convenience sample, a few problems did arise. Specifically, most interviews were conducted on weekdays because the streets on the weekends were so busy and crowded that few people were willing to stop and talk. Most interviews took place between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; therefore, the late evening and night crowds were not interviewed. Location was also somewhat problematic as South State Street is dominated by DePaul University, so an overrepresentation of DePaul students and workers may have confounded my sample. I attempted to correct for this by conducting several interviews on North State Street, but most of the interviews did come from the southern location.

Other potential issues were that I often did not approach people in groups, people wearing headphones, and people using cell phones. These people, when approached, were less likely to consent to being interviewed. Other self-selection biases were also present because potential participants could choose to participate or not.

Also, the memory of older participants about what they wore in high school could have been affected by the passage of time. Many of the older participants may have suffered from memory bias; however, most of the 20 respondents provided clear and descriptive information about their high school clothing styles and why they chose them.

Finally, the interviewer himself being a Caucasian male might have caused some respondents to withhold certain comments directed at white society or white people in general. While this did not seem to be the case, as most participants seemed to talk freely, there is the possibility that respondents chose not to characterize their style as oppositional because the interviewer was white.

The face-to-face interview method, however, was most appropriate for this type of research. It gave me the ability to draw out answers from participants as well as to ask them to describe their answers in greater detail. For example, when participants talked about casual clothing, hip-hop clothing, or urban wear, I could ask them to further describe what they meant by their answers as well as why they gave those answers. This research focused on the African American males' perspective on clothing styles, and the interview technique was most appropriate because it allowed the participants to explain responses at a broader and more descriptive level.

After discussing the limitations of his method, Zopf explains why the method was appropriate and effective.

[The paper continues with a results section, a discussion section, and a reference list, ending with the two appendices.]

Zopf uses appendices to provide specific information about his research that is not appropriate in the body of the paper.

Appendix A  
Interview Questions

Each appendix starts on a new page. For more than one appendix, use the letters "A," "B," and so on. The label and title are centered and not boldface.

1. Do you consider yourself to have a particular style of clothing? Please describe.
  2. When you were in high school, did you have a similar or different style?
  3. Why do you think it has changed or not changed?
  4. Are you familiar with urban wear or hip-hop styles of clothing?
  5. Do you consider the two styles to be similar or different? Why?
  6. Could you please describe what the urban wear style is? Hip-hop style?
  7. What types of clothes are they?
  8. Who typically wears these types of clothing?
  9. Do you think that people who wear these types of clothing are stereotyped? If so, how and why?
  10. What is the most important aspect of a person's style? Why is it important to have a style, or is it not important?
- Additional follow-up questions were asked on the basis of interviewee responses.

## Appendix B

## Participant Characteristics

Number of respondents: 20

Range of ages of respondents: 18-35

Average age of respondents: 27

**Descriptions of Interviews****Interview 1, April 5, 2006**

African American male, 25

Wearing fitted jeans, dark khaki jacket, polo shirt, casual black dress shoes, earring in left ear, and no sunglasses or hat

**Interview 2, April 5, 2006**

African American male, 18

Wearing oversized red and black Sean John jacket, zipped and visible gold chain, fitted NY Yankees hat, black Timberland boots, and black baggy jeans

**Interview 3, April 12, 2006**

African American male, 30

Wearing white long-sleeve cotton shirt, baggy jeans, and white tennis shoes

**Interview 4, April 12, 2006**

African American male, 34

Wearing saggy jeans, baseball cap, gold necklace, Bulls jacket, and multiple T-shirts

**Interview 5, April 21, 2006**

African American male, 22

Wearing casual dress shoes, fitted jeans, and a white T-shirt

Zopf presents relevant observations about each participant.

**Interview 6, April 21, 2006**

African American male, 35

Wearing long-sleeve white T-shirt, jeans, and Timberland construction boots

**Interview 7, April 28, 2006**

African American male, 31

Wearing jeans, a white T-shirt, and a nonbrand, oversized jacket

**Interview 8, April 28, 2006**

African American male, 26

Wearing jeans, polo shirt, and work jacket

**Interview 9, April 28, 2006**

African American male, 26

Wearing work pants and two white T-shirts

**Interview 10, May 8, 2006**

African American male, 32

Wearing bright red shirt, baggy Girbaud jeans, and no hat or earrings

**Interview 11, May 8, 2006**

African American male, 21

Wearing long-sleeved button-down shirt, khakis, and Timberland boots

**Interview 12, May 8, 2006**

African American male, 30

Wearing Girbaud jeans, black tennis shoes, a Sean Jean leather jacket, White Sox fitted baseball cap, and printed white T-shirt

**Interview 13, May 17, 2006**

African American male, 23

Wearing yellow hooded sweatshirt, baggy blue jeans, and Timberland boots

**Interview 14, May 22, 2006**

African American male, 28

Wearing blue khaki pants, a white collared shirt and a tie, a black leather jacket, and tennis shoes

**Interview 15, May 22, 2006**

African American male, 21

Wearing Enyce multicolored shirt, oversized khaki pants, and baby blue Timberland boots with tongue flap hanging out

**Interview 16, May 23, 2006**

African American male, 33

Wearing leather jacket, blue shirt, blue tie, dress pants, dress shoes, and glasses

**Interview 17, May 23, 2006**

African American male, 33

Wearing a cook's outfit, blue pants, and white apron

**Interview 18, June 1, 2006**

African American male, 21

Wearing baggy Girbaud jeans, white and black T-shirt, and plaid button-down shirt left open

**Interview 19, June 1, 2006**

African American male, 23

Wearing blue khakis, tennis shoes, and a Ralph Lauren Polo shirt

**Interview 20, June 1, 2006**

African American male, 31

Wearing baggy black jeans, a multicolored button-down shirt, and a do-rag