

# Portrayal of Hispanic Culture in Advertising

2006 Pontiac Campaign: “*Diseñado Para Seducir*”

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## Pontiac Launches Edgy Hispanic Campaign

### Do U.S. Advertisements Reflect Hispanic Culture?

- With the Hispanic population rising in the United States, advertisers’ interest in this market is rapidly increasing, and advertisements depicting Hispanic models are becoming common. However, it is not known whether Hispanics view these models as similar to themselves, or whether they view the culture depicted in particular advertisements as accurate.
- Using General Motors’ recent advertising campaign for Pontiac, in which young Hispanics are depicted as overtly sexual, this study tests whether Hispanics view themselves as similar to the models and what effect these perceptions have on their view of the product and the company.

## Research Questions

### RQ 1:

Do young Hispanics in the U.S. perceive themselves to be a) similar or b) dissimilar, to the models depicted in advertisements as young and sexy?

### RQ 2:

Do young Hispanics in the U.S. perceive the representation of their cultures as overtly sexual in advertisements as a) accurate or b) inaccurate?

### RQ 3:

Do young Hispanics in the U.S. perceive the representation of their cultures as overtly sexual in advertisements as a) positive or b) negative?

### RQ 4:

Do young Hispanics who view the portrayal of the culture as negative have corresponding negative feelings toward a) the advertiser and b) the featured product?

### RQ 5:

Do young Hispanics who view the portrayal of the culture as positive have corresponding positive feelings towards a) the advertiser and b) the featured product?

### RQ 6:

Are young Hispanics who identify with the models in advertisements more likely to purchase the featured product?

## Participants

There were 12 young Hispanics between the ages of 18-25 years in a Midwestern college community. These participants were found through the International Buddy Program, a program operated by the Center for International Education to provide involvement opportunities for international students around the campus.

## Instruments

Participants were shown two advertisements from Pontiac’s “*Diseñado Para Seducir*” campaign. After viewing both advertisements, the participants completed a survey using the following scales:

### ○ Perceived Homophily Scale

In this measure people self-report their perceptions of their own homophily (sameness) on a 16-item 7-point semantic differential scale that represents the four dimensions of homophily.

### ○ Perceived Realism Scale

Participants used this 5-item Likert scale, with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to assess how true to life people perceive the models and advertisements to be.

## Results

Generally the participants reported that they “think like” the models in the advertisements. Research found that 66% of the participants viewed their “status” as similar to the models and 58% of the participants found the advertisements appealing. However, participants viewed the advertisements as an overall inaccurate representation of their culture.

- RQ 1: The participants were divided equally in their perception of being similar or dissimilar to the advertisements.
  - 50% of the participants viewed themselves as having a similar social class to the models
  - 50% of the participants viewed themselves as similar to the models
- RQ 2: The participants generally did not perceive the advertisements as an accurate representation of their culture.
- RQ 3: The participants generally had a negative perception of the representation of their culture as overtly sexual in the advertisements.
- RQ 4: The participants who viewed the portrayal of their culture as negative had negative feelings toward the advertiser, but not towards the featured product.
- RQ 5: Participants who viewed the portrayal of the culture as positive had corresponding positive feelings towards both the advertiser and the product.
- RQ 6: Participants who identified with the models were not more likely to purchase the featured product.
  - 67% of the participants claimed that the portrayal of their culture in the advertisements would not influence their decision to purchase a Pontiac
  - 58% of the participants did not feel informed about the product after viewing the advertisements

**“Everything is based in a strong appealing sense: the guy, the girl, the car, their clothes, their make-up. Everything shines and appeals really beautifully to the consumer.”**

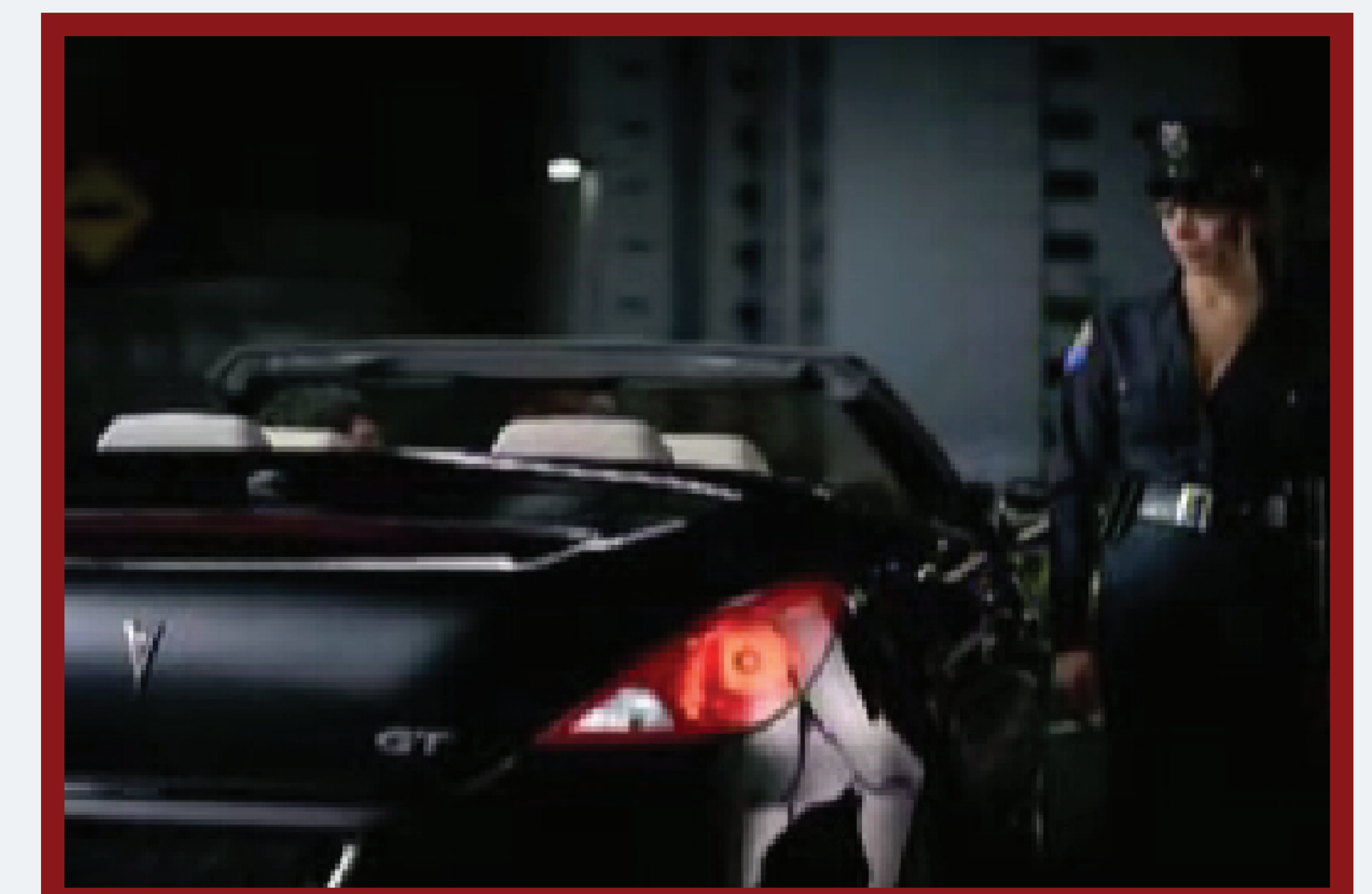
**-Anonymous**

**“Traffic Stop” Advertisement**



“Grab” Advertisement

\*Pictures taken from video clip; resolution may be blurred.



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