



New Bush Ad Elicits Strong Negative Reaction, Study Shows

An HCD Research and Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion Report

For Immediate Release. Contact: Glenn R. Kessler, 908-788-9393.

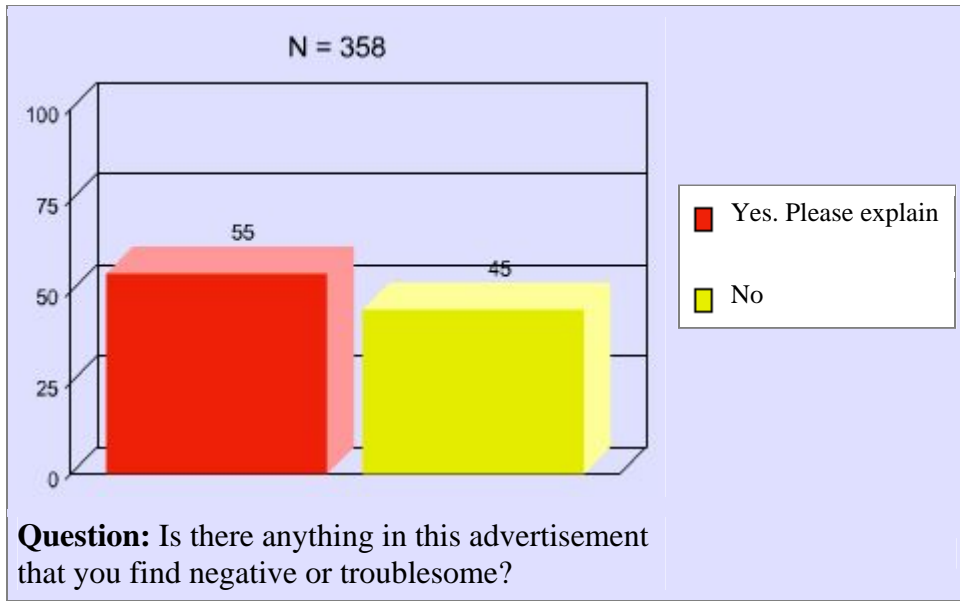
Flemington, New Jersey – June 28, 2004 – A new video advertisement released by the Bush re-election campaign (www.georgewbush.com) elicits very strong negative reactions among viewers in comparison to past advertisements, shows a study by **HCD Research** and the **Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion (MCIPO)**.

Previous studies performed by the groups found mostly passive reactions to ads run by the major parties' candidates. For example, in a study performed last week, only 26.19% of voters found a candidate's ad to be "negative or troublesome." These results were found to be in conjunction with the common perception that political advertisements are of a tamer breed than their consumer counterparts.

But a new ad released by the Bush campaign has caused a vigorous jump in negative reaction numbers. The advertisement, which refers to "John Kerry's Democratic Party" as the "Coalition of the Wild-Eyed," features clips of vitriolic speeches by Democratic luminaries such as John Kerry, Al Gore, and Howard Dean, interlarded with comments by leftist filmmaker Michael Moore and clips, lifted from an ad submitted to a MoveOn.org competition last year, which equate Bush policies with those of Hitler. The advertisement ends with a picture of Bush and a message promoting "optimism, steady leadership, and progress" over "pessimism and rage."

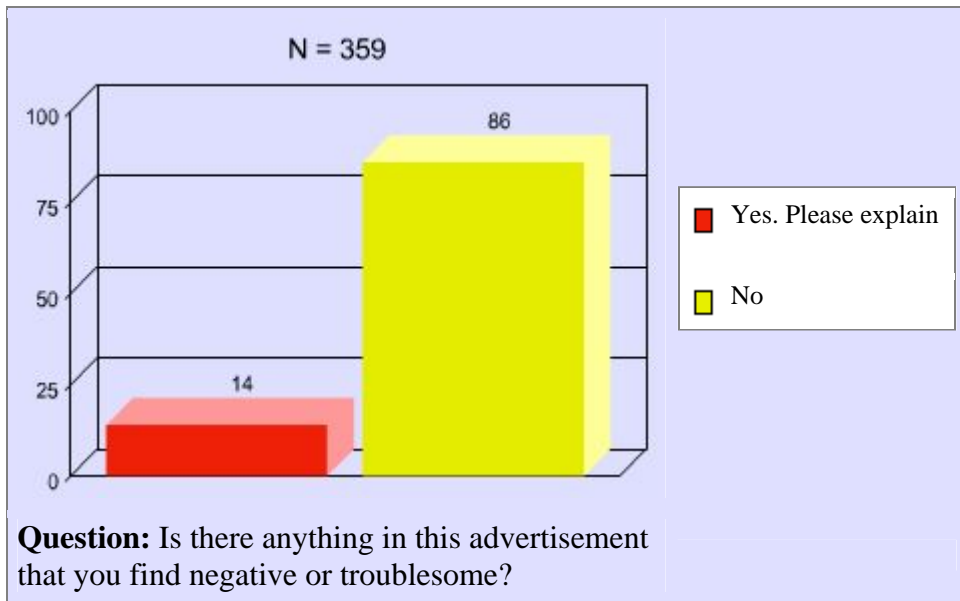
Surveyed voters, however, found the spot itself extremely negative in comparison to past ads. Those who found something in the ad to be "negative or troublesome" made up 55.03% (**Graph 1**) of participants, more than double the past reaction to a major Presidential candidate's campaign ad.

Graph 1 (Bush Advertisement)



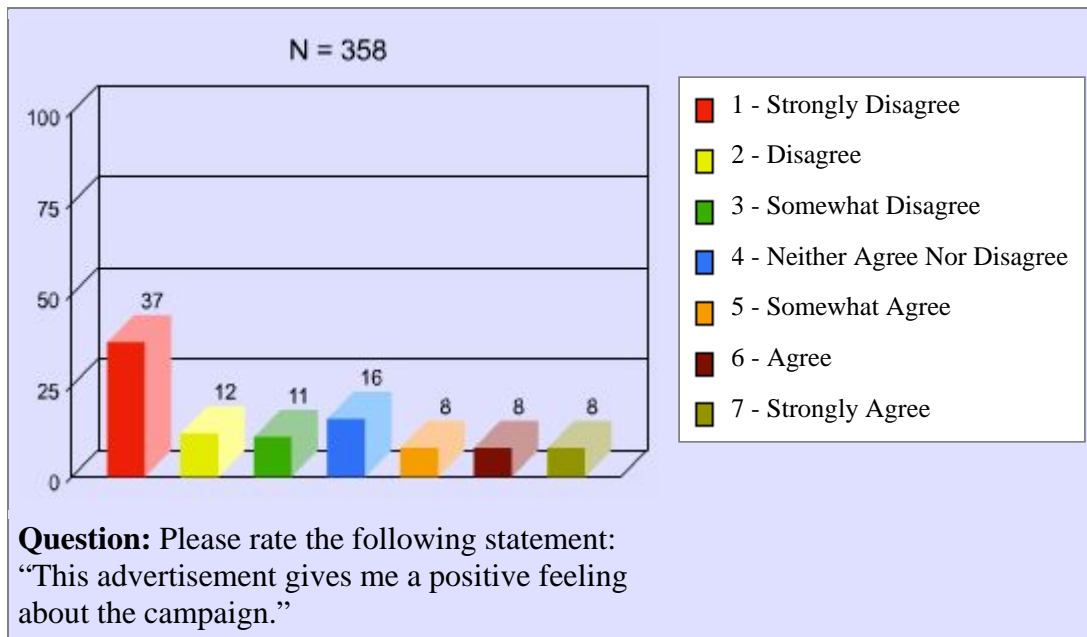
In comparison, a new ad released by the Kerry campaign, “Paperwork,” actually elicited a less negative reaction than the ad used in the aforementioned study performed last week. While the previous ad was found to contain something “negative or troublesome” by 17.69% of those surveyed, the new ad caused a similar reaction in just 14.48% (Graph 2) of surveyed voters.

Graph 2 (Kerry Advertisement)



Furthermore, surveyed voters seemed to transfer negative reactions about the new Bush ad to the campaign in general. When asked how they felt about the statement, “This advertisement gives me a positive feeling about the campaign,” in regard to the Bush ad, the majority disagreed, with a full 37.43% selecting the strongest level of disagreement (Graph 3).

Graph 3 (Bush Advertisement)

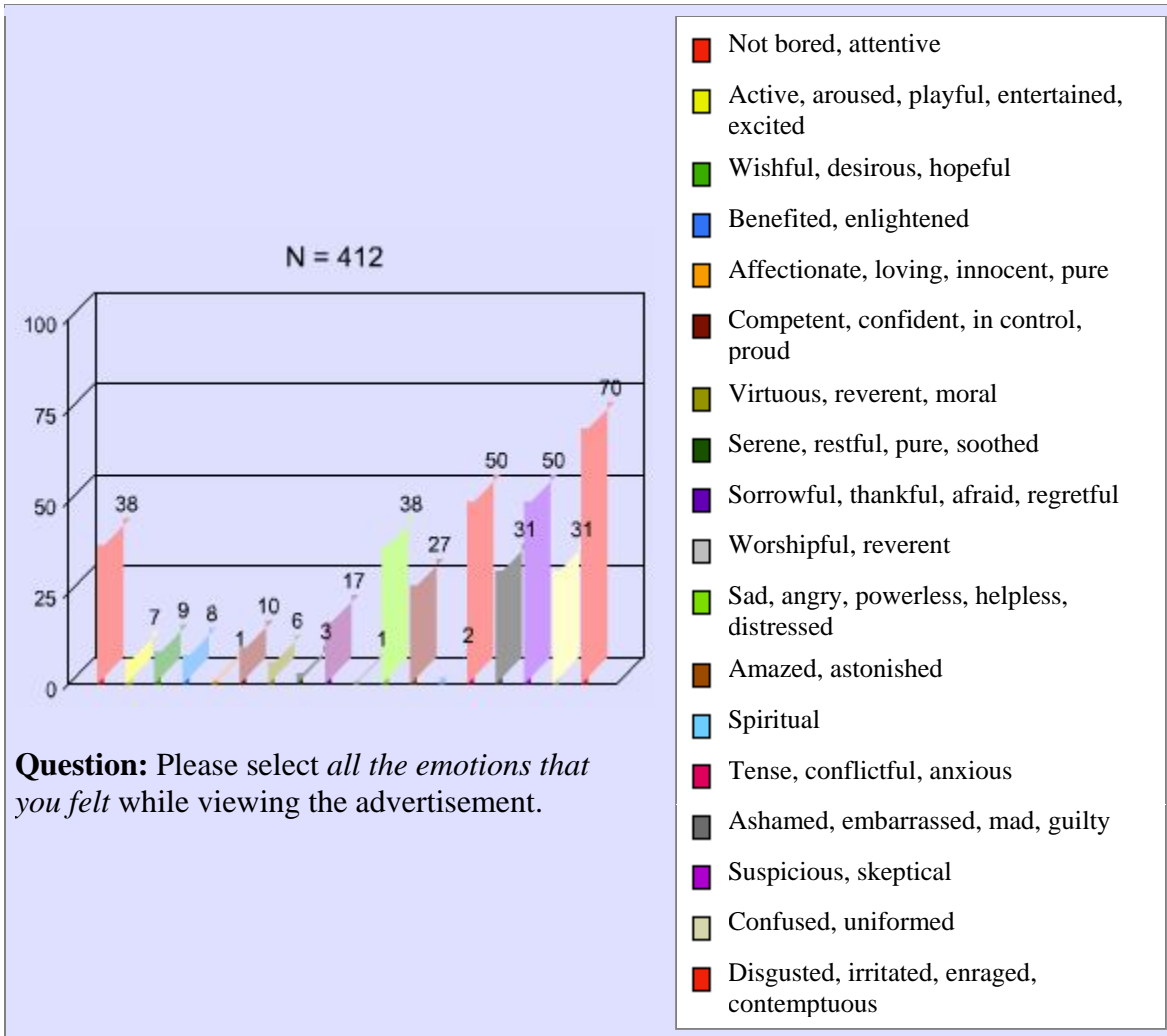


Voters were also asked to rate the emotions felt during the advertisement using the Ayer Emotional Battery developed by the former advertising agency, N.W. AYER. The Bush ad evoked strong emotions in viewers across a range of negative attributes, including feelings of disgust, irritation, rage, and contempt in 69.90% of viewers (Graph 4).

The only other negative emotion widely felt was “suspicious, skeptical,” which 50.24% of participants marked. However, this is in accord with political advertising in general; e.g., the Kerry advertisement elicited a “suspicious, skeptical” emotion in 55.12% of viewers (Graph 5).

These negative reactions were caused by three main problems. Many survey participants remarked that the images of Hitler were the greatest problem; one participant went so far as to say that the German language was simply a “turn off.” Others felt that the ad unfairly attributed positions to the Democratic Party that the party does not hold. Finally, some participants were confused early in viewing as to who was actually presenting the ad.

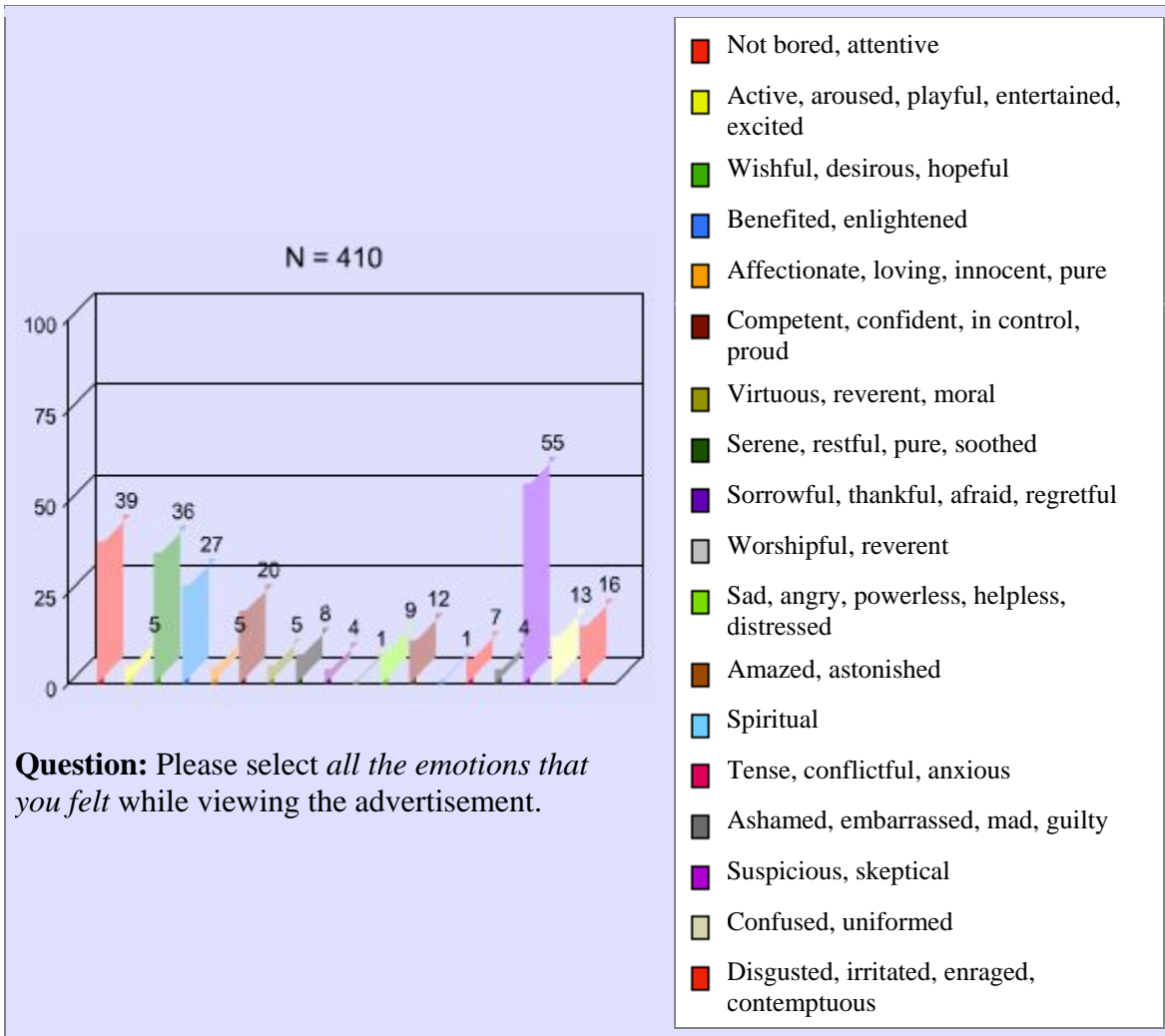
Graph 4 (Bush Advertisement)



In contrast, Kerry’s ad evoked infrequent negative emotions. In fact, barring the “suspicious, skeptical” emotion noted above, there were no significant negative reactions to Kerry’s ad (Graph 5).

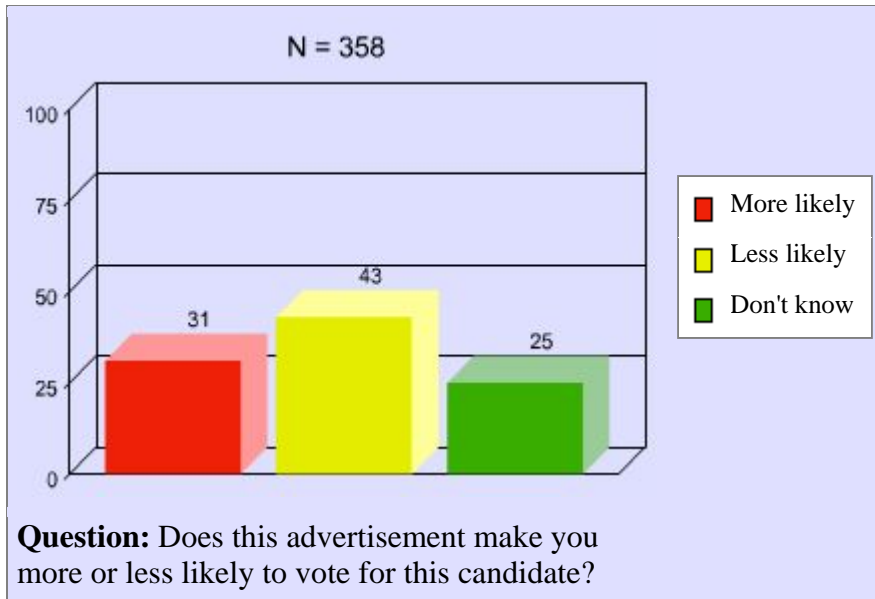
Moreover, the Kerry ad evoked strong positive emotions when compared to the Bush ad. Whereas the Bush ad managed to evoke only one positive emotion in greater than ten percent of people – that of “competent, confident, in control, proud” at 10.44% (Graph 4) – the Kerry ad evoked “wishful, desirous, hopeful” emotions in 35.61% of viewers, “benefited, enlightened,” in 27.32%, and “competent, confident, in control, proud” in 19.76% (Graph 5).

Graph 5 (Kerry Advertisement)

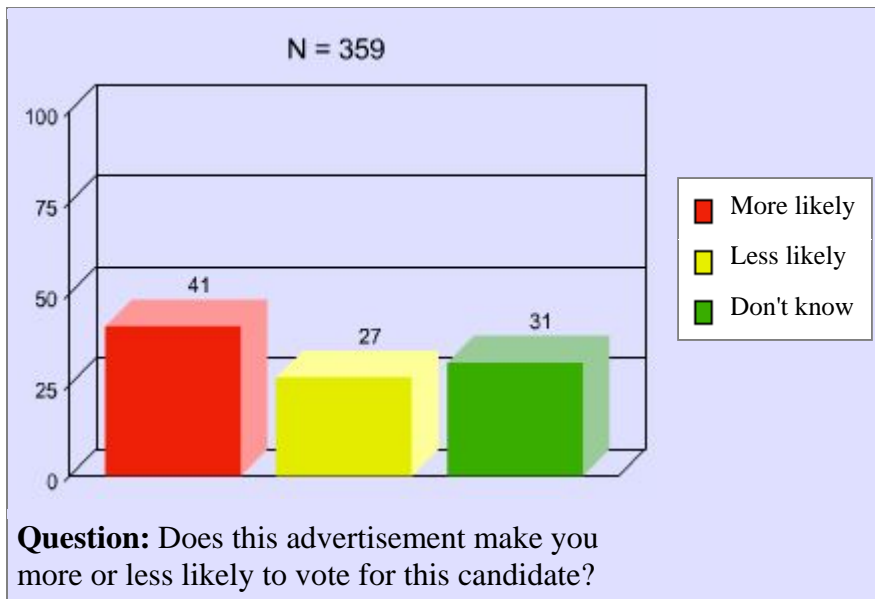


Finally, the data demonstrates that the new Bush advertisement harms his re-election efforts. After watching the ad, 43.3% of viewers were less likely to vote for Bush, while 31.28% were more likely. In comparison, 27.3% of viewers of the Kerry ad were less likely to vote for Kerry, while 41.23% were more likely (**Graphs 6 and 7**).

Graph 6 (Bush Advertisement)



Graph 7 (Kerry Advertisement)



APPENDIX A: Data for graphs

Graphs 1 and 2

N = 842 all	Is there anything in this advertisement that you find negative or troublesome?	
	Yes. Please explain	No
Total	34.68%	65.32%
Bush	55.00%	45.00%
Kerry	14.45%	85.55%

Graph 3

N = 842 all	On a scale of 1-7, where 1 represents "Strongly disagree" and 7 represents "Strongly agree", please rate the following statements: (This advertisement gives me a positive feeling about campaign.)						
	1 - Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Somewhat Disagree	4 - Neither Agree Nor Disagree	5 - Somewhat Agree	6 - Agree	7 - Strongly Agree
Total	26.60%	10.45%	9.50%	19.24%	11.64%	13.30%	9.26%
Bush	36.67%	12.62%	11.90%	16.19%	7.86%	7.62%	7.14%
Kerry	16.59%	8.29%	7.11%	22.27%	15.40%	18.96%	11.37%

Graphs 4 and 5

N = 842 all	Please select <i>all the emotions that you felt</i> while viewing the advertisement.								
	Not bored, attentive	Active, aroused, playful, entertained, excited	Wishful, desirous, hopeful	Benefited, enlightened	Affectionate, loving, innocent, pure	Competent, confident, in control, proud	Virtuous, reverent, moral	Serene, restful, pure, soothed	Sorrowful, thankful, afraid, regretful
Total	38.12%	6.29%	22.80%	17.22%	2.73%	14.85%	5.23%	5.34%	9.98%
Bush	37.62%	7.38%	9.52%	7.38%	0.95%	10.24%	5.48%	2.62%	16.19%
Kerry	38.63%	5.21%	36.02%	27.01%	4.50%	19.43%	4.98%	8.06%	3.79%

N = 842 all		Please select <i>all the emotions that you felt</i> while viewing the advertisement.							
	Worshipful, reverent	Sad, angry, powerless, helpless, distressed	Amazed, astonished	Spiritual	Tense, conflictful, anxious	Ashamed, embarrassed, mad, guilty	Suspicious, skeptical	Confused, uniformed	Disgusted, irritated, enraged, contemptuous
Total	1.07%	23.63%	19.24%	1.54%	28.38%	17.34%	53.33%	21.62%	42.87%
Bush	1.19%	37.86%	26.90%	1.67%	49.52%	30.95%	50.95%	30.71%	69.76%
Kerry	0.95%	9.48%	11.61%	1.42%	7.35%	3.79%	55.69%	12.56%	16.11%

Graphs 6 and 7

N = 842 all		Does this advertisement make you more or less likely to vote for this candidate?		
	More likely	Less likely	Don't know	
Total	35.15%	35.99%	28.86%	
Bush	30.00%	44.29%	25.71%	
Kerry	40.28%	27.73%	31.99%	