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DECEPTION FROM IMPLIED SUPERIORITY CLAIMS IN ADVERTISING: THE CASE OF COMBINED COMPARATIVES

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One of the goals of comparative advertising is to achieve a specific positioning for the sponsor brand. Competitive positioning may be achieved via an associative strategy but more often comparative ads are designed to emphasize differences between brands. With combined-comparative claims advertisers can achieve both association and differentiation from the competition. The cause for concern with combined comparatives is based on advertisers' misuse of this format to falsely suggest brand superiority. Recognizing the potential damage to their brands, advertisers are now legally challenging such claims.

The purpose of this dissertation is to identify instances when processing of combined-comparative claims leads to interpretive biases. The linguistic construction of