claim decays, recall of superiority statements will influence whether the depicted attribute is recalled in a superiority or a parity context. Moreover, as respondents fail to recall attribute information and rely on the general positioning of the sponsor, the comparison brand will be perceived as inferior overall.

H3: Recall of the attribute parity claim declines over time to a greater extent than memory for general superiority statements.

H4a: After delay, recall of sponsor superiority on the parity attribute increases over time when the combined comparative consists of a parity claim in negated form and superiority statements.

H4b: Recall of overall sponsor superiority over the comparison brand increases over time.

Pretest Surveys

A series of pretest surveys were conducted in order to select the product category, brands, and attributes to be featured in the advertisements. Thirty-one marketing students were asked how often (if at all) they used a series of over the counter health products. For those products they reported using at least once in the last six months they were asked to list the brand used most often, as well as three other brands they had purchased in the past or had considered purchasing. Finally, they were asked to list the attributes they considered important when choosing between brands in each of the product categories for those products they had used at least once.

35 Over the counter medications were chosen given the FTC’s ongoing interest in products of this nature and the potential harm to consumers from false or inaccurate information.