Design

The design was a 3x3x2x2 factorial design. The factors were form of the parity claim (negated parity claim, complete comparison parity statement, comparison of equality), delay (immediate testing, 1-hour delay, 24-hour delay), product category (pain reliever or antacid), and two measurement order manipulations. The dependent variables of interest were recall of superiority and parity claims at immediate testing and after delay.

Stimuli

Three advertisements were constructed, one for each parity claim condition. In each of the advertisements, explicit parity claims against one comparison brand (Advil for pain relievers, Pepcid AC for antacids) were paired with superiority claims against a second comparison brand (Tylenol for pain relievers, Tagamet HB for antacids). The phrasing and format of the superiority claims were similar to that of advertisements currently featuring combined comparatives (see Appendix E).

Experimental Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three delay conditions (immediate, one-hour delay, 24-hour delay) and one of the three advertising conditions for one of the product categories. They were informed that the purpose of the study was to assess their attitude toward a new magazine targeted at college students. In order to justify the return session for those in the delay condition, all participants were told that the study consisted of multiple phases, which they might not be able to complete during one session.

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38 For Study 2, the three brands most frequently mentioned by respondents as having been purchased or considered for purchase in the past six months were selected for the pain reliever advertisements (Advil, Aleve, and Tylenol). The brands respondents reported using less frequently were selected for the antacid category, these were Zantac 75, Tagamet HB, and Pepcid AC.