CHAPTER NINE
GENERAL DISCUSSION

Prior research on deceptive advertising has not focused on combined comparatives as a source of deception. The purpose of the studies presented here was to address this void in the literature. In addition, framing was suggested as the process responsible for the copy by copy interactions that result from combined comparatives.

Study 1 did not provide support for the hypothesized effects when the combined comparative consisted of puffery and negated parity claims. Very few subjects reported a parity comparison between the sponsor and the parity brand. The lack of variance in subjects' responses may be result of the puffery manipulation. The subtle manipulation of the parity claim may have been lost on subjects, who anticipate comparative ads to present only favorable information about the sponsor.

But even if subjects' responses to the ad communication questions did not reflect the framing effects predicted, their opinions and preferences suggest the ads had some influence. Subjects expressed preference for the sponsor brand in the antacid category, which was unfamiliar to subjects. In the absence of personal experience or knowledge about the product, subjects appear to have considered the ad’s claims. On the other hand, exposure to the ads was insufficient to influence subjects, who may have personal experience using each of the pain reliever brands.

Results from Study 2 were more encouraging than those from Study 1. A statistically significant ad condition by delay interaction supported the framing