hypothesis. Significantly more subjects said the sponsor was superior over the parity brand when the parity claim was in negated antonym form and the percentage of such responses increased with delay. Moreover, when the parity claim was simplified, significantly fewer subjects reported sponsor superiority. The ability of the simplified claims to convey the parity comparison persisted over time.

Challenges to deceptive advertisements rest on the assumption that they influence consumers' preferences and choice behavior. The findings of Study 2 on these variables suggest that the framing effects from combined comparatives may be more pronounced for new or unfamiliar brands. Significantly more subjects preferred the sponsor in the antacid category than in the pain reliever category. Their opinions also favored the sponsor over the competitors. However, preference scores for the pain reliever brands suggest that subjects perceived few differences between them, as their opinions also show.

Limitations

The most significant limitation to these studies was the sample size. For external validity purposes, it was important to approximate the methods used in copy tests for litigation. However, the screening process required by the funneling technique resulted in a small number of respondents per cell in some conditions. This was especially true for the first study, which was seriously underpowered to detect the effect of interest.

An additional limitation was the use of existing brands. Again, the choice was made with external validity in mind. It is difficult to determine with certainty the impact of prior experience on the effects observed for the pain reliever category. At the time the studies were conducted, the antacid brands had been recently introduced. However, as