



A comic by

*Julia Deelman*

Julia@deelmannel.nl



Based on:

Dunn, M. E., Mills, M., & Veríssimo, D. (2020). Evaluating the impact of the documentary series Blue Planet II on viewers' plastic consumption behaviors. *Conservation Science and Practice*, 2(10), e280. <https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.280>

Project created for the class:

Visual Thinking and Composition, Winter 2021

Tilburg University, Department of Communication and Cognition

Instructor: Neil Cohn, [neilcohn@visuallanguagelab.com](mailto:neilcohn@visuallanguagelab.com), [www.visuallanguagelab.com](http://www.visuallanguagelab.com)

The oceans:  
Home to millions of  
plants and animals.



But since a few  
decades...



... the oceans have new  
inhabitants besides  
plants and animals.



plastic litter  
forms an emerging  
and critical  
threat to our habitat!  
(Hartley et al., 2008)



To solve this  
global  
problem  
...

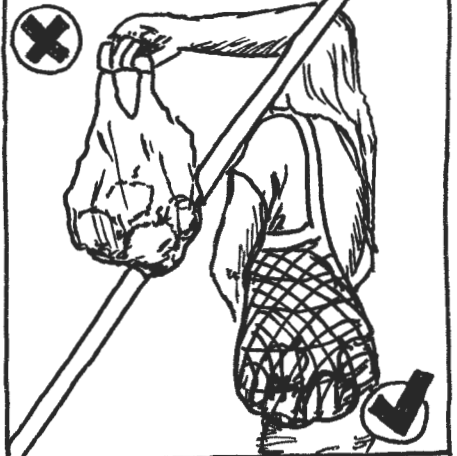


...  
humans  
have to  
collectively  
change their plastic  
consumption behaviors.

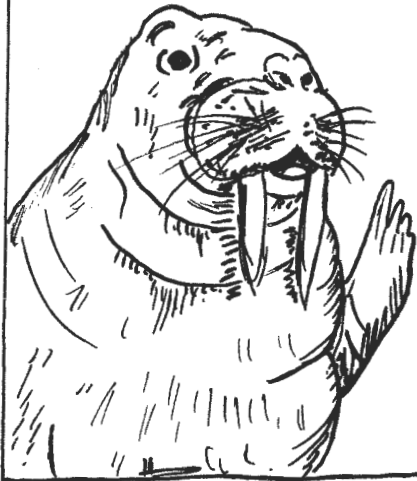
for example, humans  
have to reduce  
their plastic  
consumption...



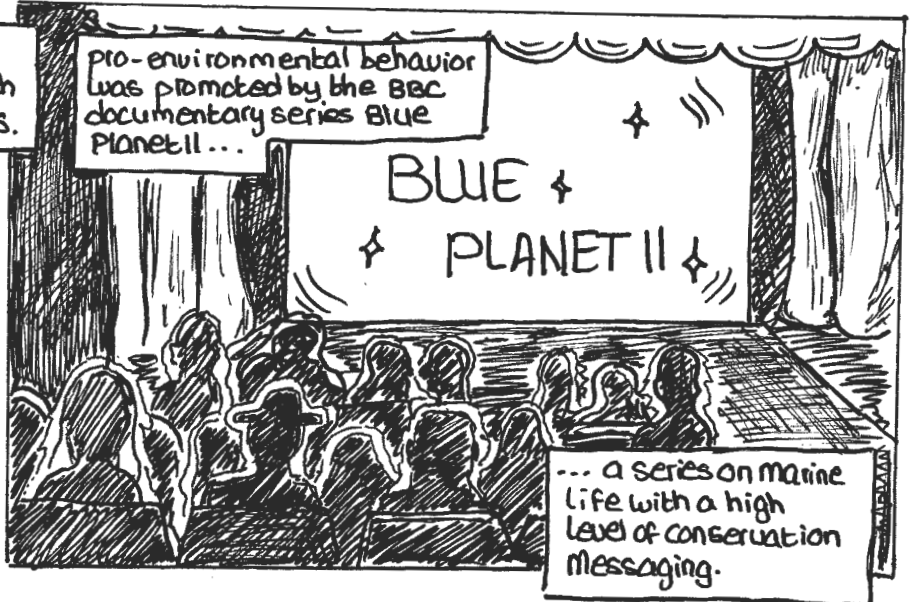
... and their disposal of  
(single-use) plastics  
(Steg & Ulek, 2009 ; Jambeck  
et al., 2018).



Recently, I heard of an exciting way to promote such pro-environmental behaviors.



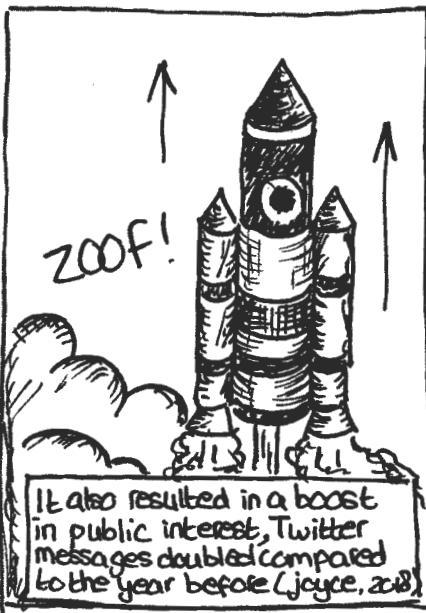
pro-environmental behavior was promoted by the BBC documentary series Blue Planet II...



... a series on marine life with a high level of conservation messaging.

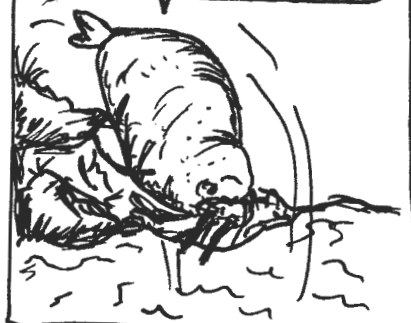


Blue planet II raised awareness of plastic pollution to people across the UK (Jones et al., 2019)

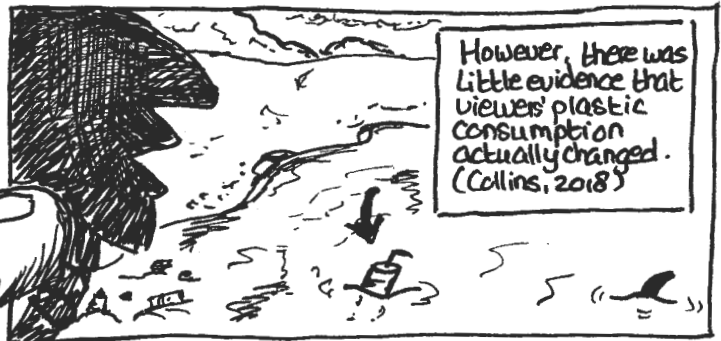


It also resulted in a boost in public interest, Twitter messages doubled compared to the year before (Joyce, 2018)

The documentary also reportedly led to changes in plastic consumption behaviors, (Collins, 2018), a phenomenon called ...



# THE BLUE PLANET EFFECT!

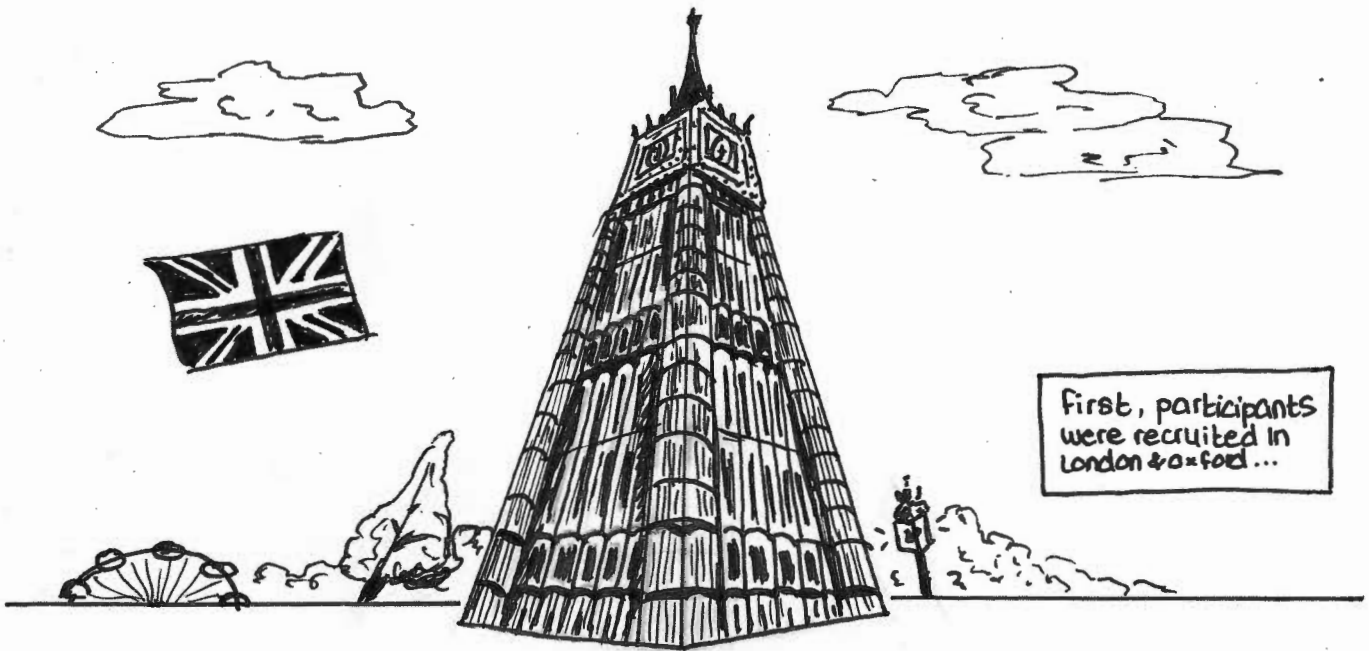


However, there was little evidence that viewers' plastic consumption actually changed. (Collins, 2018)

This is exactly what was investigated in a study recently!



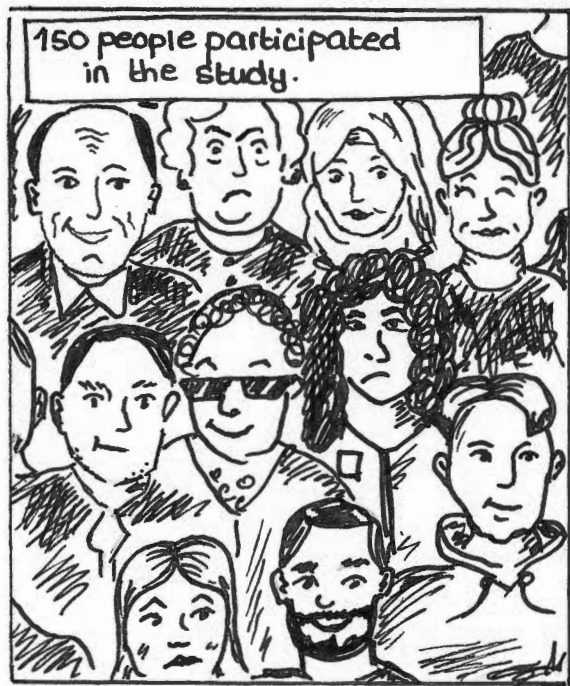
Dunn, Mills & Veissimo (2020)



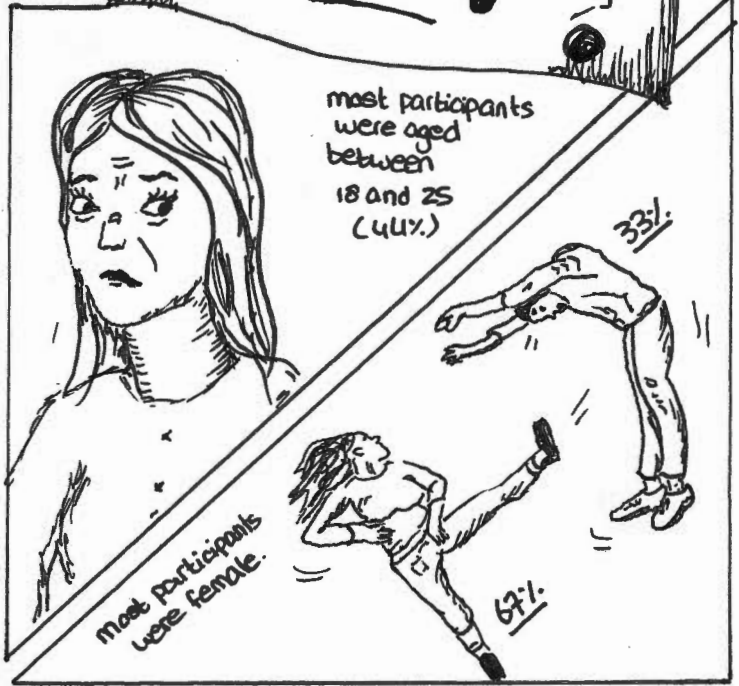
First, participants were recruited in London & oxford...



... through posters distributed around the local area and online.



150 people participated in the study.



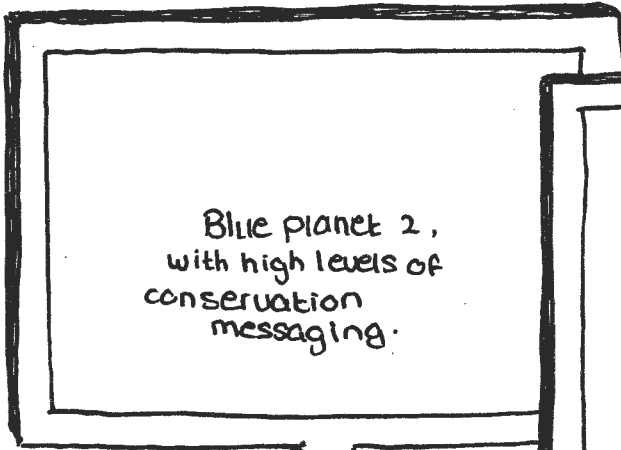
most participants were aged between 18 and 25 (44%)

most participants were female.

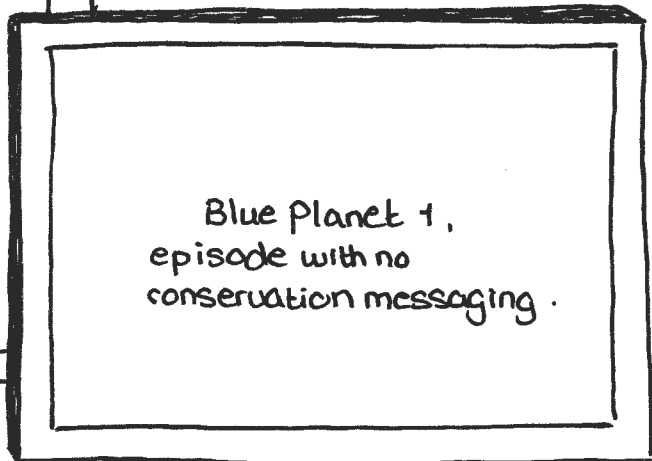
33%

67%

Participants saw one of two documentaries.

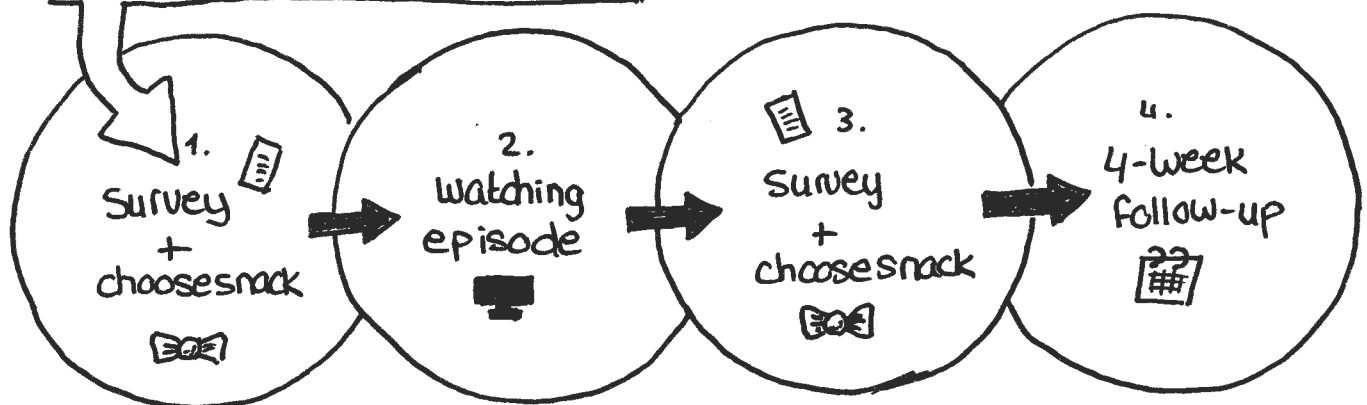


treatment group

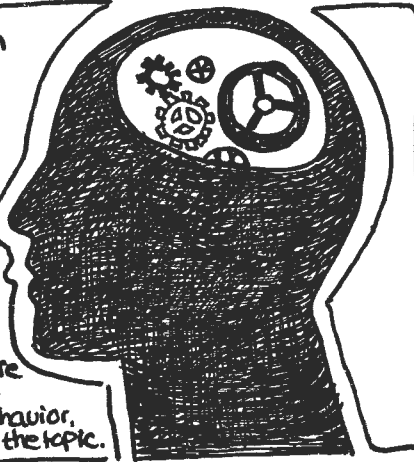


control group

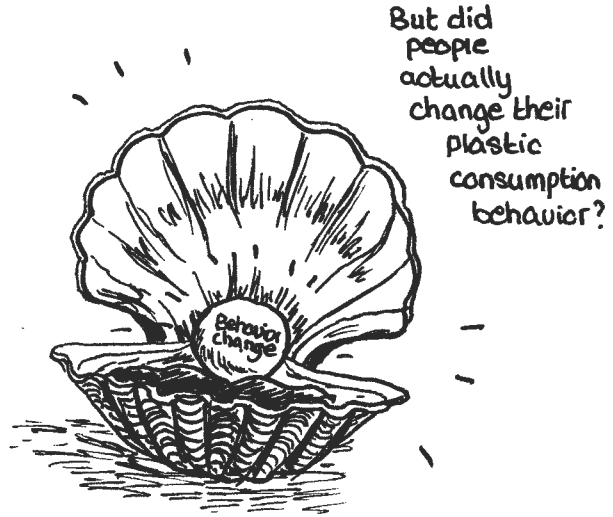
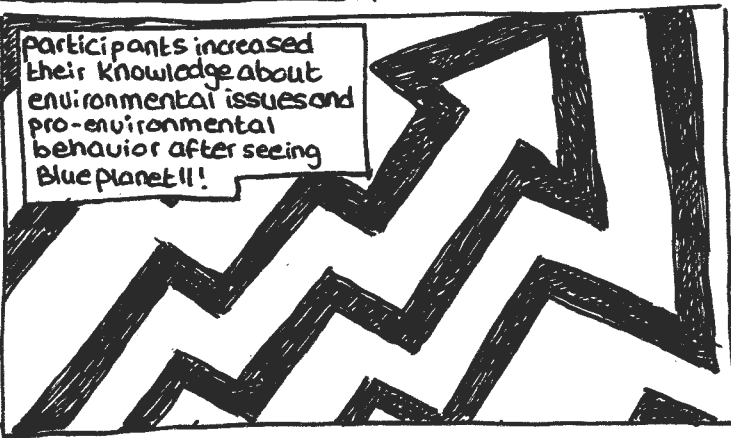
Participants followed 4 phases during the study:

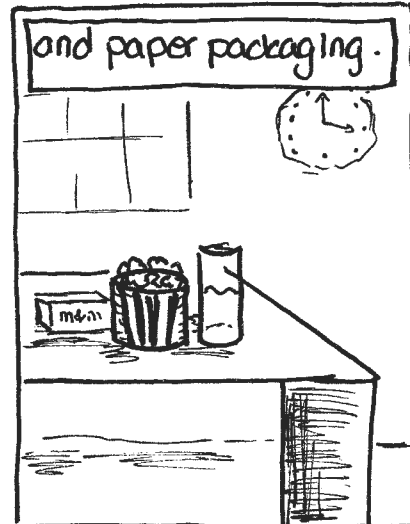
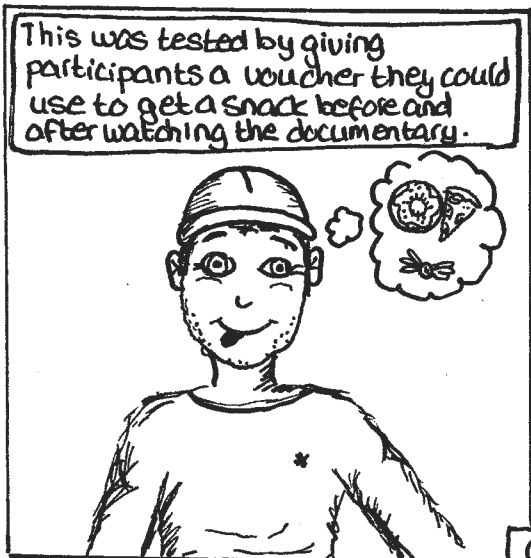


Because human behavior is highly complex, and influenced by a lot of factors (Tonglet, Philips & Reed, 2004), the researchers did not only measure actual behavior but also used a survey to measure predictors of pro-environmental behavior, like knowledge of the topic.



Participants increased their knowledge about environmental issues and pro-environmental behavior after seeing Blue Planet II!



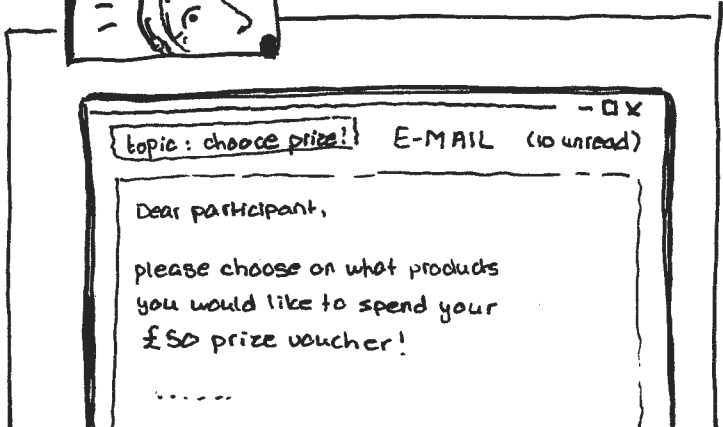
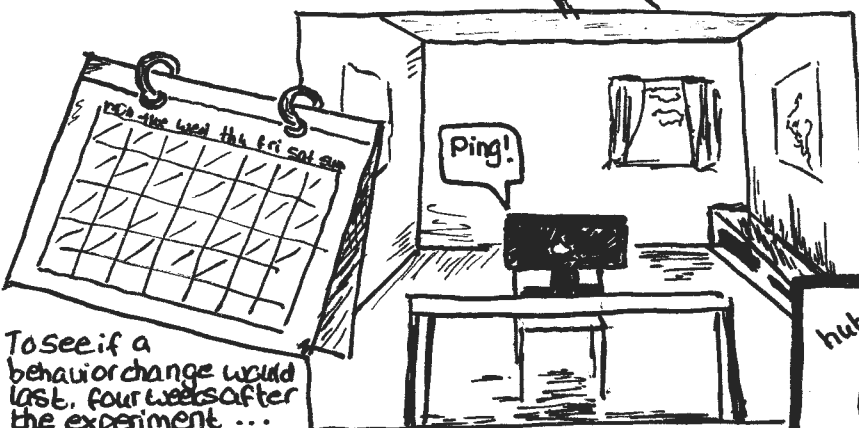


The experimenters noted these choices and matched them back to the participants' survey answers

Of the participants who chose a different snack after watching the documentary...

... 40% of people who saw Blue Planet II went from choosing plastic to paper, while this was only 28% after seeing the other documentary.

However, this difference was not statistically significant!



again, participants could choose from plastic and paper options.

