

Turning behavioral science into real results for your organization

Fien De Wever [fien.deweever@kuleuven.be] presenting an impact driven thesis approach developed by Florian Lange for BEE

What's on offer

Every year, BEE students conduct research in partnership with real organizations — working with real data and customers and/or testing behavior change interventions in the wild, not in the lab.

A win-win-win

- Students learn valuable experimental skills
- Society benefits directly through behavior change
- Science gains valuable data points for the cumulative scientific record

- A real field experiment run in your own space — a store, restaurant, office, or campus
- A supervised student team — who design and run it with a BEE researcher throughout
- Results you could act on — not just a report, a concrete answer to "what works here"
- No cost, low overhead — you provide the setting, we provide the research design

What it shows

The example is a small result on its own. What it demonstrates is the model: a rigorous, low-cost field test that gives our partner a concrete, evidence-based answer. The same approach can be applied to many observable choices; anywhere a partner has a real setting and a real question.

Past projects

Coffee cup reuse · FEB library
Bee-friendly seed sales · Makro
Mapping garment flows, clothing swap · MAAKbar
Plastic bag use · Loempialand
Vegetarian pasta choices · Past à Porter

IMPACT DRIVEN STUDENT THESES

EXAMPLE of a master thesis project

Healthy source of protein: Promoting vegetarian meal choices with informational appeals

Julie Decock*, Jana De Meester*, Fien De Wever, & Florian Lange · *joint first authors



Introduction

Reductions in meat consumption can help address societal challenges in the domains of environmental protection, animal welfare, and public health.

To obtain such reductions, knowledge about the effects of behavior change techniques for the promotion of plant-based alternatives and vegetarian diets is needed.

In the present field experiment (N = 8,840 observations), we examined whether vegetarian meal choices can be encouraged through informational appeals displayed on the menu of Leuven university restaurant Alma.

Method

Vegetarian meal options were highlighted as being good for the environment, full of healthy protein, animal friendly, or especially tasty.

We used a counterbalanced experimentation schedule: appeals were varied on a day-to-day basis across a period of 30 observation days.

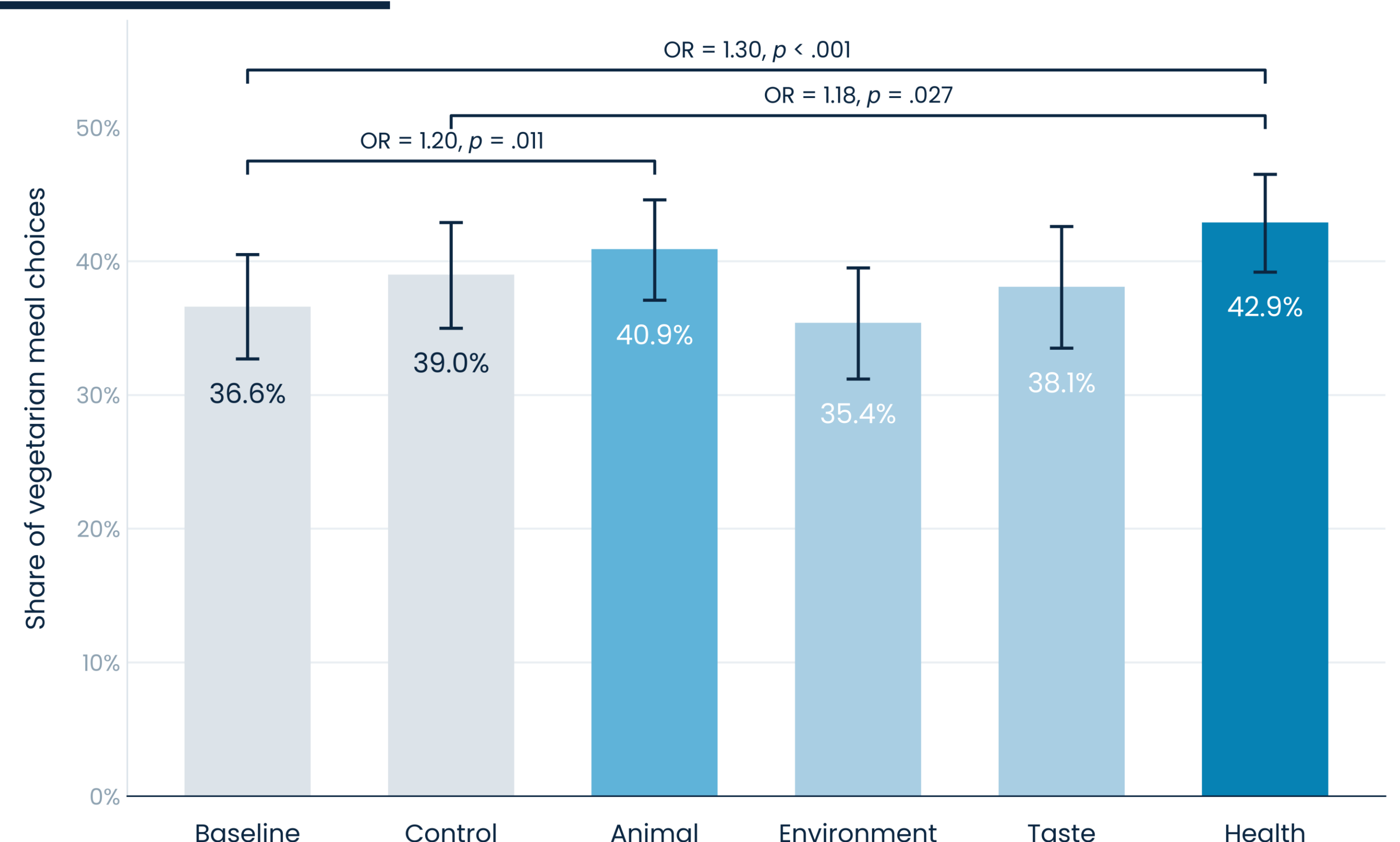
The share of vegetarian meal choices was then compared to a baseline (week before experiment) and a control condition (green label without text).

Results

Only messages with a protein focused **health appeal** were found to be **effective**, possibly because it highlighted a benefit not previously associated with vegetarian food.

The **animal welfare appeal** only showed a **partial effect**. This might have been too weak to outperform both baseline and control condition.

Figure 2 displays the proportion of vegetarian meal choices among students across experimental conditions. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Brackets mark significant pairwise comparisons.



Small changes to the Alma menu can shift real purchasing behaviour

but the message content matters.

Reference

Decock, J., De Meester, J., De Wever, F., & Lange, F. Healthy source of protein: Promoting vegetarian meal choices with informational appeals. *Manuscript submitted*, KU Leuven.

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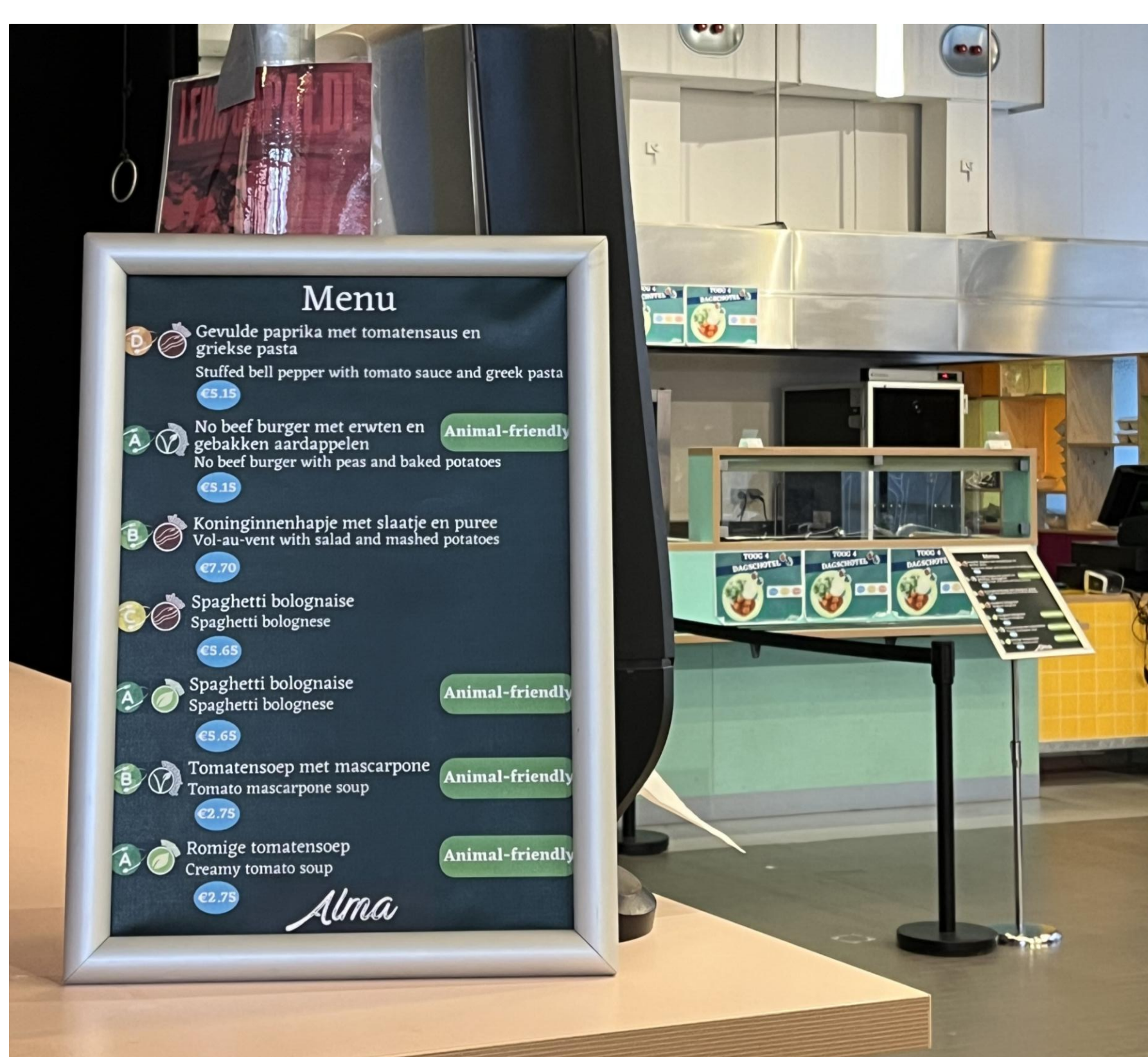


Figure 1. The green appeal labels, on display next to vegetarian options in the restaurant.



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On **LinkedIn**, or via
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Want to run a project with us?

We're always looking for organizations open to testing a real intervention — in a store, restaurant, office, or public space — with a supervised student team, at no cost to you.

- You provide the setting; we design and run the study
- You get a clear, evidence-based answer within one academic year