

RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Evolution of Critical Success Factors in the Eco-Friendly Market

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to show the evolution of the critical factors that can be determinant for the success of the commercialization of green products of the company *O Boticário*. The following critical factors were considered for this research: consumer's perception regarding eco-friendly characteristics featured in the products; consumer's environmental awareness; consumer's eco consumption; and the purchasing criteria that consumers will consider when acquiring a product. This research was divided into two phases in order to show the evolution of the factors that were studied. The first phase took place in 2004 and the second one in 2008. The instrument used for data collection was an evaluation model developed by Bertolini (2004) to assess consumer's perception concerning eco-friendly products. It was verified that during this period both consumer's eco-awareness and eco-consumption had an increase. Consumer's purchasing criteria, had an increase in what concerns the environmental issues, however, consumer's perception remained static during the studied period.

**Keywords:** *Perception (Eco-friendly), Environmental awareness, Eco-consumption, Purchasing criteria.*

### Introduction

Throughout history, around the sixties, the companies were concerned only about using the natural resources available in nature and they had a myopic view of it not imagining that in a near future these resources could become scarce. However, in order to supply the productive system and to obtain efficiency as much as possible, they put aside concerns about the environment.

After some years, companies changed their strategies, way of thinking and acting due to various factors that have been occurring in the globalized environment and that are related to the increasing competitiveness. It is possible to realize that the companies began to visualize and notice new opportunities concerning the protection of the environment, so that their eco-awareness besides supporting the environmental preservation also opens doors to new market opportunities.

New consumers are found within this market as a consequence of so many emerging problems regarding environmental degradation. Once they have achieved an eco-awareness, these new consumers are seeking to consume products and

services that are eco-friendly. As a consequence of such facts, companies were lead to insert the environmental variable within their marketing strategies in order to offer eco-friendly services and products.

The requirements of a healthy environment increase the pressure upon the conformity of production once the company is responsible for the unsustainable use of natural resources, for environmental accidents, and for the use of technologies that causes irreversible damages [1]. Considering these aspects, the aim of this paper is to show the evolution of critical factors that could be considered decisive for the success of the commercialization of green products of the company *O Boticário*.

For this research the following critical factors were considered: costumer's perception regarding the eco-friendly characteristics of products; consumer's eco-awareness; consumer's eco-consumption; and the purchasing criteria that consumers take in account when acquiring a product.

## Methods

This study was conducted in an exploratory and descriptive way. An exploratory research is carried out in order to provide, to clarify and to modify concepts and ideas in order to formulate precise problems or research hypothesis for further issues. The aim of this kind of research is to provide an approximate overview of a specific fact. This kind of research is carried out especially when the topic of a research is one that has not been well explored, thus making it difficult to formulate precise and operational hypothesis over it. A descriptive research systematically describes the factors and the characteristics of a particular area, to establish comparisons, contrasts, interpretations and evaluations [2].

The survey was carried out with customers of one store of *O Boticário* Company in Cascavel city – PR, Brazil, in two phases in order to show the evolution of the studied factors. The first phase occurred in 2004 and the second one in 2008.

In 2004 the store had an average of 700 customers per month. With this universe value, with a sampling margin of error of about 10% and a level of reliability of 95%, the number of selected sampling elements was of 83. In 2008, the store began to meet an average of 1.300 customers per month, and the calculus of the new sampling showed 91 elements, however, as a request from the company, the survey was applied to more clients, totalizing a number of 158 surveyed clients.

The instrument used for data collection was the evaluation model developed by Bertolini [3] to assess consumer's perception concerning eco-friendly products. Model of evaluation of consumer's perception in relation to eco-friendly products Figure 1 Shows a flowchart of the 5 stages of Bertolini's model.

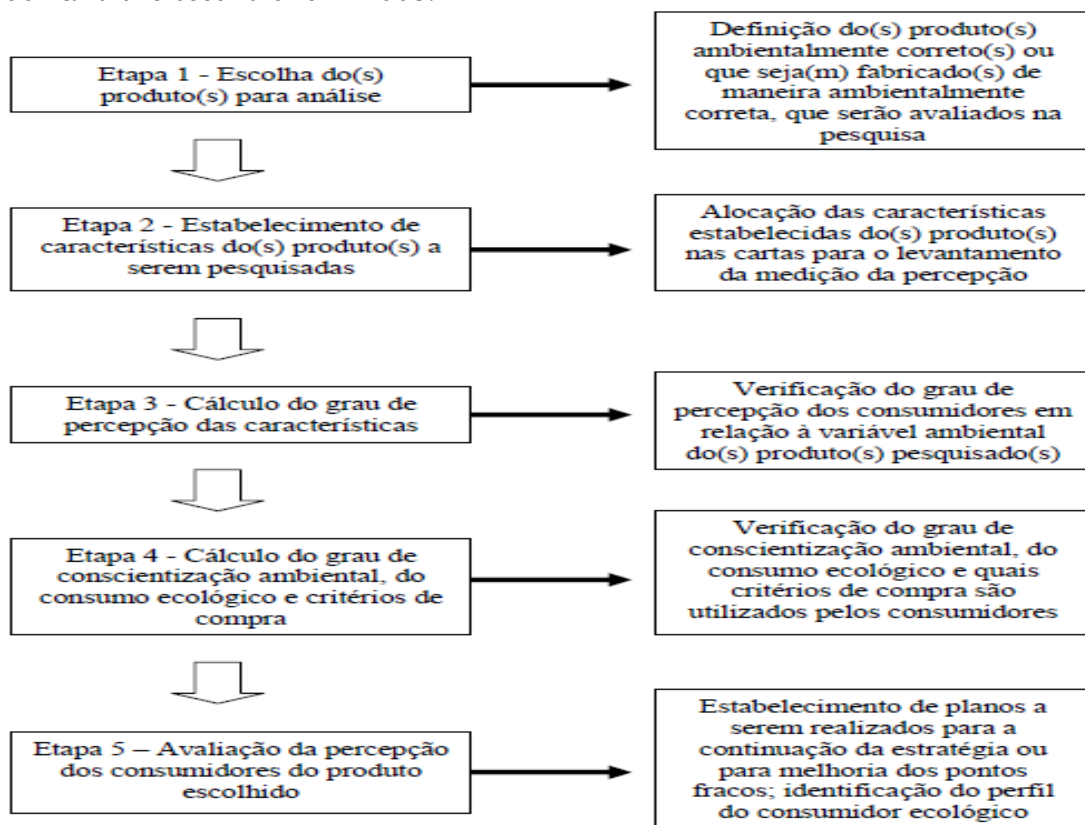


Figure 1: Flowchart of the 5 stages of Bertolini's model [3].

**Etapa 1** (1° stage – selecting the product(s) for the analysis)(Defining the environmental-friendly products, or the ones that are of environmental-friendly fabrication, that will be evaluated in the survey)

**Etapa 2** (2° stage – establishing the characteristics of the products to be studied) (Allocating the established characteristics of the

products on cards for the survey of measurement of perception.)

**Etapa 3** (3° stage - Calculating the level of perception of the characteristics) (Verifying the level of perception of the consumers concerning the environmental variables of the studied product)

**Etapa 4** (4° stage – calculating the level of environmental awareness of the eco-consumption and of the purchasing criteria)(Verifying the level of environmental awareness and of the eco-consumption, and which purchasing criteria are used by the consumers.

**Etapa 5** (5° stage - Evaluating the consumer's perception on the chosen product)(Establishing plans to be accomplished in order to archive a continuation of the strategy, or for solving the problems of the weak ones; indentifying the profile of the eco-consumers.

In order to begin the application of this model, it is necessary to establish the characteristics of the products of the target company so that the consumers can be able to evaluate them. Once the products are selected, some of their characteristics must be verified, thus the consumers can identify them and associate them to the products.

To apply this model, the use of a sorting tray of 5

levels scale is necessary. The scale measures from very close (A) to very distant (E). The weights distributed on the classification levels are the following: A = 8; B = 6; C = 4; D = 2 and E = 0. In order to perform the classification, the surveyed consumers must allocate some cards in the tray, this cards indicate the researched items, as shown in Fig. 02. In order not to make it evident to the interviewee what the main item in the survey is, other characteristics are also used. The proposed characteristics are the following: quality, price, propaganda and marketing, good service, and eco-friendly. After choosing the selected characteristics, they must be placed on the cards that will then receive a title and a figure illustrating the specific characteristic.

The cards are put in the tray next to the proximity of the characteristic shown on the chart and the one observed by the surveyed customer concerning the products, according to his perception.



**Figure 2: Indicative cards of the characteristics of the products to be evaluated by the consumers.**

Source: Bertolini [3]

Qualidade - quality,

Preço - price,

Propaganda e marketing - propaganda and marketing,

Bom atendimento - good service,

Ambientalmente correta - environmental-friendly

Once having the sorting tray and the cards, those who are been surveyed must classify the cards in the tray. They sort the cards by the proximity of

each characteristic they show in relation to the product, according to the knowledge and perception of each interviewee. After all the

characteristics are classified by the surveyed consumers, only the quantity of classification of the cards with the title of "environmental-

friendly" is going to be verified. Table 1 Used to elaborate the calculus to define the perception level of the eco-friendly products.

**Table 1: Weight allocation and calculus of eco-friendly products level of perception.**

(a) N° Responses	(b) Score	(a X b) Result
A	8	
B	6	
C	4	
D	2	
E	0	

(c) Sum of the results  
 (d) N° of interviewee  
 (e = c / d) Results of perception

Source: Bertolini [3]

After elaborating the calculus, a Perception Meter must be used in order to visualize in what levels

the consumer's perception is, according to the environmental variables, as shown in Fig.03.



**Figure 3: Perception meter**

Font: Bertolini [3] Despercebido – Unnoticed  
 Quase despercebido – Almost unnoticed  
 Pouco percebido – Little noticed  
 Moderadamente percebido – Moderately notice  
 Completamente percebido – Fully noticed

For each different level of the meter there is a classification in which each alternative fits and that will indicate the level of perception. After classifying the cards, those surveyed costumers should be given a questionnaire with 21 questions elaborated taking in account the measurement of the consumer's level of environmental awareness, of eco-consumption, and of purchasing criteria.

Question 1 sought to know which criteria the consumers use when selecting the purchase, and

what level of importance each of them have. These criteria are distributed in a scale of 10 scores.

Questions 2 to 9 of the tool aim to verify the consumer's eco-awareness, and questions 10 to 17 the eco-consumption. They are closed questions with 4 possible answers, starting from 'always' (A) to 'never' (D). The weights distributed to the answers are the following: A = 4; B = 3; C = 2; and D = 1. The distribution of the scores to each factor must be done in order to determine the classification of those surveyed consumers, according to what is shown on Table 2.

**Table 02: Allocation of the weights; and elaboration of the calculus of the level of eco-awareness and of eco-consumption.**

(a) N° Answers	(b) Scores	(a X b) Results
A	4	
B	3	
C	2	
D	1	

(c) Soma of the Results  
 (d) N° Of questions  
 (e = c / d) Results

Font: Bertolini[3]

The tool proposes a scale of classification that starts from 4 (conscious) to 1 (not conscious) for the eco-awareness. In the same way, the tool proposes a scale of classification that starts from 4 (eco-friendly) to 1 (eco-unfriendly) for the eco-consumption.

## Literature Review

### The Behavior of the Consumers and the Environmental Consciousness

To ensure that the products launched in the consumer market will reach the objectives of the marketing concept or a satisfactory level of service to the consumer, it is necessary to understand the reason why consumers make their purchases, thus it is possible to reach to an understanding of this process, which will enable products and services to meet the desires and needs of most consumers [4].

Considering that so many changes have taken place through values that sustain the ideology of consumption in the society, the green customer is the one that no longer worries only about the relation between quality and price, but goes beyond this relation, for this changes indicate that this consumer needs to be eco-friendly and that he will not cause harm to the environment in any stage of the product lifecycle [5].

The author also emphasizes that the green consumer would be the regulator effect, the true motivation, the invisible hand that operates through the supply and demand law. But the corporate sector will only use green technology in case it is requested by the green customer; such customers are still a minority in Brazil. Thus, the prospects for this scenario without government regulation make this green consumer one of the most important elements in the process of ISO 14000, although it is still the most fragile one. This occurs because the demand for green products is still minimal.

There is an ongoing question that the consumer should make himself: why to buy? This is a question that requires a reorientation in the awareness of individuals, and there are several factors that influence this decision, such as the image of oneself and of the other, of the past, present and future time, of autonomy and interdependence and an entire transformation in the set of premises of human existence [6].

These authors highlight at least four fundamental basic concepts that are quite related one to another: consumerism, green consumerism,

ethical consumerism and anti-consumerism [6].

Consumerism has its origin in the growth of industries, which started to develop goods and services in abundance and a varied range of them; in this way the consumerism could be defined as an inordinate acquisition of products. Its expansion has two allies: the financial system (for its credit facility), and the advertising, which encourage the consumer to acquire an ever greater and renewed number of products. Thus, consumerism can be seen as an economic creed that makes people aspire it in spite of consequences it brings.

Green consumerism is an attempt to convince consumers to buy goods or services that do not harm the environment, through clean practices.

Ethical consumerism is a branch of the development of green consumerism. It goes beyond the fact of being "friend of the environment", once it seeks to check, by monitoring, the behavior of business, focusing on the ethical market within the present economic system.

Anti-consumerism is a concept that comes from the point of view that rich countries are essentially destroying the planet and themselves, due to the acquisition of material without interruption. The anti-consumerism emphasizes that, in addition to buying green products or the ones that are ethically produced, people need different ways of living, marketing, and working, so that the human being could be less dependent on buying things in order to feel well.

### Consumer's Perception

The consumers buy products and make their choices according to the information that are perceived, and they use them primarily for an evaluation and subsequently for making a choice among several possible alternatives [7].

Perception is related to the psychological phenomenon, in which one can check a set of processes that interact and are noticed by sensations and environmental stimulus [8]. Perception is "an interpretation that a person makes of a received message, and it may be different depending on who receives the message. This suggests that the level of instruction and experience influence in the way a stimulus is perceived and, consequently, in the attitudes and in the behavior of consumption" [9, our translation].

The perception and awareness only occur when the selected stimulus and aspects of interest call the attention of someone, resulting in a response that leads to a behavior [10]. The perception shows some ways to encode a stimulus recorded in the brain through the sensory mechanisms. The authors highlight that the interpretation of these perceived stimuli may change from one person to another, according to the past experiences everyone has already made [11].

### **Purchasing Criteria**

The situations of purchase vary from one product to another, generally defined by the degree of involvement and complexity that they impose [12]. The criteria used by consumers to select and purchase products have various forms, and may be related to the products security, reliability, price, brand, manufacturing site, guarantees, status that it may show; delivery speed, quality, appearance, impact on nature and society and good service offered at the purchasing [13].

The given criteria, according to the authors [13], may depend on, or be influenced by, factors such as the social influence, the similarity of the choice alternatives, the utilitarian motivation (price and quality) or hedonistic motivation (status). The involvement of consumers can influence the number of criteria, and also the knowledge can affect the assessment criteria.

In addition to that, appeals to consumption propagated by the mass media are competing with the environmental campaigns. For this reason, it is necessary to know the positioning of the consumer concerning the different speeches when choosing a product or a brand [9].

Understanding the priorities of consumers is more than simply knowing the needs of the consumer [14]. The need refers to the characteristics of the products that consumers would like to buy; however, what consumers really want is the result of a complex decision-making system. There are influences of several external factors, such as regulations, commoditization, and offers from old and new suppliers, technology and costs. These factors influence the decision-making system of the consumer, providing him with a set of priorities to be achieved.

If the ecologically conscious consumer selects to purchase the products considered 'green', he becomes an eco-consumer. Companies that want, or that offer environmentally friendly products overtake, with these consumers, a competitive

advantage in relation to their competitors that do not have this characteristic.

### **New Opportunities Generated Through the Environmental Issue**

The environmental issue is not seen anymore as an activity that only generates expenses [15]. It became important from the moment on that opportunities were visualized, such as reducing costs through recycling, a processes in which the reuse and sale of the residue is possible, making the discoveries of new components and new raw materials that result in the creation of more reliable and more technologically clean products.

This author cites that the current strategy of marketing activity aims to verify the arrival of the final product to the final consumer, once the environmental factors gain a lot of importance because of the alterations in the environmental legislation, which is getting even more rigorous, and of the increase in consumer's environmental awareness. Such aspects can provide the emergence of potential risks and opportunities of marketing of goods and services, which when well evaluated, can assure the competitiveness of the company and its image together with its social responsibility.

Finally, the author [15] also points out that the environmental area and the marketing need to establish a strategy that could evaluate the current products, and the ones that are more susceptible in relation to the ecological issue, going through promotion, price, and through the distribution of the products.

Companies were gradually planning strategies so changes could occur in the linear form in various sectors of the organization and in the lifestyle of their employees. This new vision meant that the companies were able to assimilate new information, to adapt themselves to this new situations and to change, to learn about it and then to become more competitive in a globalized market, due to its environmental responsibility [16].

### **Awareness and Environmental Consumption**

The awareness is fundamental to the conservation and maintenance of nature because, bearing in mind that the world has limited resources, people are part of a continuous movement for the preservation of the environment [17]. Environmental Awareness can be understood as a change of behavior, both in activities and in aspects of life of individuals and of the society in relation to the environment. This vision is

essentially a matter of education [18]. Is from the knowledge (education) and the environmental perception that the attitudes (the behavior) may be modified [9].

In the same diapason, having an eco-awareness means using the environmental resources in a sustained way, i.e. consume what can be produced without harming the environment for future generations [19].

The conscious citizen is concerned with the saving of electricity, with the scarcity of drinking water; he tries to feed himself with food products from the ecological agriculture, because the organic compound is a homogenous product obtained by means of biological process [17]. He is concerned in producing biodegradable rubbish and collaborates with the recycling of waste.

The one who possesses an environmental awareness is attentive to the waste of water, such as it happens with tap dripping, car washing, in showering, in shaving, and in the discharge of the toilet [19]. Such person only lights up the bulbs when it is necessary, turns off the lights when leaving the rooms, uses the electric shower the minimum possible and leaves no television sets connected with no people watching it.

It is through the consciousness that intentions are transformed, and that transformations lead people to have and recognize the value of environment [20]. The Ministry of the Environment and the Institute of Religious Studies affirm in the national survey on sustainable consumption that environmental awareness has evolved in the country. This concerns specially to what refers to non-interfering in nature, to the change of habit of production and consumption for reconciling development and protection of the environment, to the concern about the environment and about the preference on pollution reduction rather than on the generation of jobs[21].

A person's change of behavior is possible by environmental awareness if there is a change in the social behavior [22]. There are some techniques that can modify the conduct of people to favorable to environment protection, such as education, publications and media which aim to creating social norms and that may have a lengthy process of awareness [20]. These techniques have a wide range, and once the goal is reached they have a lasting effect.

Environmental awareness is considered as the concepts that a person acquire through the information perceived in the environment [18]. Thus, the environmental behavior and the responses to the environment are influenced by the concepts acquired. People's awareness concerning environmental issues is a determinant factor to produce sensitivity for it and, consequently, for the environmental behavior, what could lead people to prefer eco-friendly products and make them become ecological consumers [23].

The eco-friendly consumer has the attitude to select the products to be bought and used at home, preferring the ones that are less pollutant and from companies that invest in environmental preservation [24]. The eco-friendly consumer is the one who is environmentally conscious and well informed. In his purchases, he pays attention and carefully looks at the label of the product, verifying if there is any certification seal, seeking information about the origin of the product, how it was produced and whether it has guarantees [25]. He questions the absence of degradable packaging for organic products, prevents industrialized foods and products that have chemical residues.

The eco-consumer is the one who does not buy non-starchy vegetables, vegetables, and fruits grown with pesticides, neither wood products that have been manufactured from a non-reforestation source [24]. The eco-consumer is also the one who purchases biodegradable products, meat with no hormones, and home appliances with Procel seal of quality, because he pursues sustainable consumption in alimentation, in household cleaning, and in beauty care. The eco-consumer is faithful and conscious [26].

The eco-consumer is the one who is thoughtful in his purchases and prefers recyclable packaging, specially packaging with seals indicating the eco-friendly precedence of the product, who opts for brands that inform the composition of the packaging of their products, who uses products with refill among other proactive actions [17].

It is possible to rationalize the use of natural resources in our daily lives with a change of habits by developing simple projects and aims that are adjusted to the experience of everyday life and purchasing habits [9].

### **Consideration on the Theoretical Revision**

One can observed that, if the determinant factors of perception depend on the characteristics of the

stimulus and of the psychological state of the person who receives it, it is possible to make an association between the environmental awareness and the psychological state of the person who receives it, and between the eco-consumption and the characteristics of the stimulus.

The environmental awareness derives from the knowledge that one's behavior can influence the future of the nature and people, i.e. the person who has an environmental awareness will change his behavior, pursuing-as an objective of his own—the preservation of nature, and so becoming a citizen interested in environmental actions and products. Thus, it is possible to say that there is a linkage between the environmental awareness and the psychological status of the one who receives the stimulus. This happens because the person's motives and expectations make the offered stimulus understandable for him. The environmental awareness is a determinant factor that can make someone conscious about and appreciate an eco-friendly product.

The eco-consumer is the one that has the attitude to select the products he buys and uses. He gives preference to the ones that pollute less, and he also privileges the companies that invest in environmental preservation. The link between the consumer and the ecological characteristics of the stimulus is that no stimuli are arisen if they do not call the consumers' attention.

If consumers are interested in the preservation of the environment, and they have a need to take care of nature, as a consequence of an environmental awareness, they will become eco-friendly consumers and will take in account the offer or incentive of companies that produce eco-friendly products.

In the light of these considerations, one can conclude that a determining factor to take such products in account is to be an eco-friendly consumer, and whether if the characteristics of the stimulus – in other words, if the offered product – is appropriate for the consumers. A review of the literature allows one also to affirm that there will be no eco-friendly consumer if the same one does not possess an environmental awareness.

### Analysis and Interpretation of Data

To carry out the assessment of the research, the model of Bertolini [3] was applied in the two analyzed phases in order to identify, in addition to the degree of perception of ecological characteristic, the degree of environmental awareness, the eco-consumption; and which are the purchasing factors of the surveyed clients of the chosen company.

### Evolution of Consumer's Perception

Tables 03 and 04 show the results of the level of consumer's perception of the eco-friendly product.

**Table 3: Allocation of weights and calculus of the level of perception of the eco-friendly products**

Source: research data (2004)

	(a) N° Responses	(b) Score	(a X b) Result
A	30	8	240
B	22	6	132
C	15	4	60
D	10	2	20
E	6	0	0
(c) Sum of the results			452
(d) N° of interviewee			83
(e = c / d)			5,45
Results of Perception			

**Table 4: Allocation of weights and elaboration of the calculus of the level of perception of the eco-friendly products**

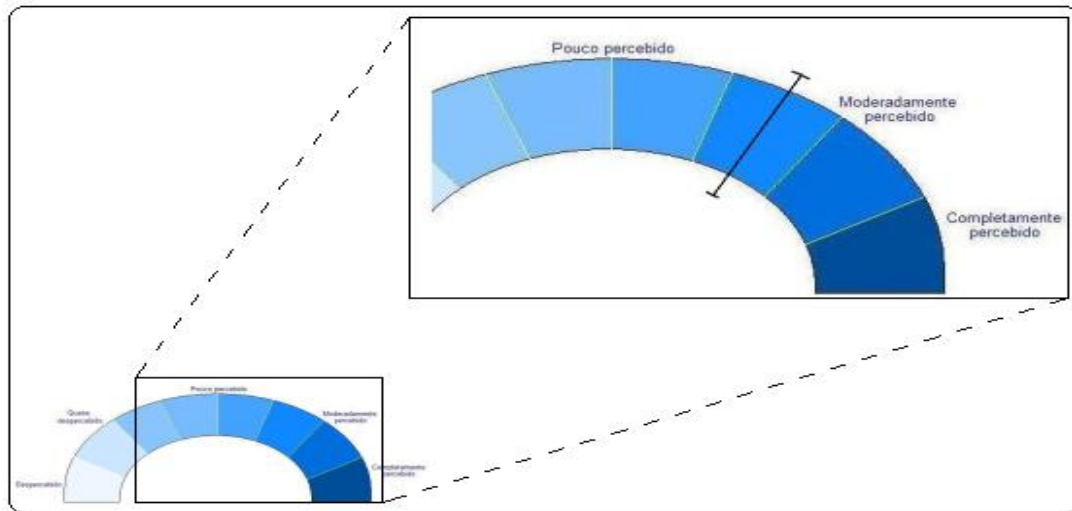
	(a) N° responses	(b) Score	(a X b) Result
A	56	8	448
B	44	6	264
C	20	4	80
D	20	2	40
E	18	0	0
(c) Sum of the results			832
(d) N° of interviewee			158
(e = c / d)			5,27
Results of perception			

Source: research data (2008)



Considering Bertolini's perception meter (2004), the levels found in 2004 and 2008 are basically the same and classify consumers with a moderate

perception in relation to ecological products of the company. Figure 04 shows the result of a survey from 2008 in the perception meter.



**Figure 4: Perception meter showing the perception of the consumers in relation to the eco-friendly product**

Source: research data (2008)

Pouco percebido = little noticed.

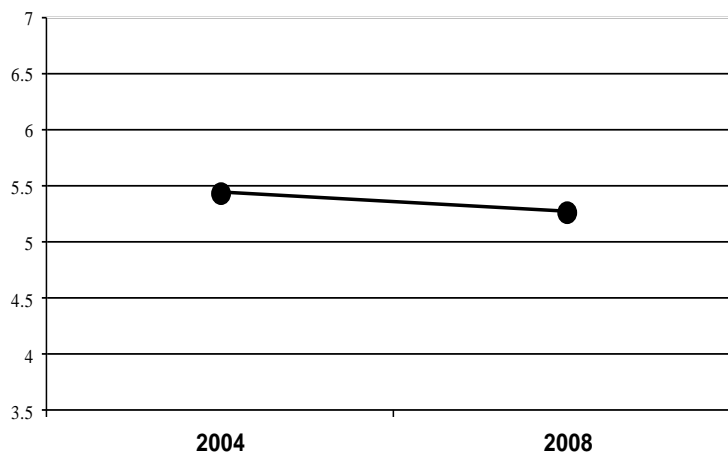
Moderadamente percebido = moderately noticed.

Completamente percebido = fully noticed

The standard deviation in the survey from 2004 was of 1.24. Taking this result in account one can consider that the posture of the company to offer eco-friendly products is little to moderately noticed by consumers. However, in the survey from 2008, the standard deviation was of 2.75. Such change shows that the consumers of this company do not have a complete perception of their eco-friendly products. The magnitude of the results show that it varies from the first to the eighth stage connected to the perception meter,

and the characteristic may vary between almost unnoticed to fully noticed.

This amplitude can be explained by the fact that the calculated data have provided heterogeneous results. Finally, respecting the predominant classification offered by the weighted average, despite the reduction in the level between the periods evaluated (Chart 01), we can say that the perception is moderately noticed by consumers.



**Figure 5: Evolution of the level of perception of the consumers in relation to the eco-friendly products**

Source: research data (2004 e 2008)

Tables 5 and 6 show the results of the level of environmental awareness of consumers of the organization under study

**Table 5: Allocation of weights and elaboration of the calculus of the level of eco-awareness**  
Source: Research data (2004)

	(a) N° Responses	(b) Score	(a X b) Result
A	249	4	996
B	187	3	561
C	139	2	278
D	89	1	89
(c) Sum of the results			1.924
(d) N° of questions			664
(e = c / d) Result			<b>2,89</b>

**Table 6: Allocation of weights and elaboration of the calculus of the level of eco-awareness**  
Source: Research data (2008)

	(a) N° Responses	(b) Score	(a X b) Result
A	794	4	3176
B	293	3	879
C	65	2	130
D	112	1	112
(c) Sum of results			4297
(d) N° of questions			1264
(e = c / d) result			<b>3,40</b>

Considering the classification proposed by Bertolini [3], the levels found in 2004 and 2008

show that consumers have potential traces of eco-awareness, as shown in Table 07.

**Table 7: Classification of the level of eco-awareness**

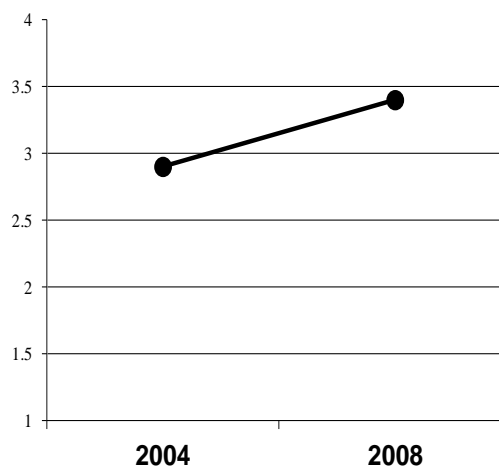
Grau de consciência ecológica	Valores
A) Conscious	Between 3,5 e 4,0
B) Owns potential traces of eco-awareness	Between 3,4 e 2,5
C) Owns little potential traces of eco-awareness	Between 2,4 e 1,5
D) Does not own eco-awareness	Between 1,4 e 1,0

Source: Bertolini [3]

The standard deviation for the data of 2004 was 0.56, thus it is possible to conclude that the consumers of the company have little potential to achieve an environmental awareness. In a survey done in 2008, the standard deviation was 0.94; that way, one can notice that the consumers of the company present just a few traces of environmental awareness to be considered conscious ones in relation to the environment. Despite the scale based on heterogeneous results, in the predominant classifications, offered by weighted averages of the evaluated periods, a growth of 17.64 % in environmental awareness of the consumers was shown. (consult chart 02).

### Development of the Consumers' Purchasing Criteria

Table 8 shows the results of purchasing criteria of the consumers of the company under study



**Figure 6: Evolution of the level of environmental awareness of the consumers.**

Source: research data (2004 and 2008)

**Table 8: Distribution of scores for consumer's purchasing criteria, 2004/2008**

Purchasing criteria	2004	2008	Variation
Quality	3,46	2,70	-22%
Sevice	1,05	1,60	54%
Price	0,85	1,40	65%
Brand	1,00	0,50	-50%
Environmental concern	0,82	1,10	34%
Location	0,27	0,50	85%
Propaganda	0,80	0,40	-50%
Other	1,75	1,80	

Source: Results of the research (2004 e 2008)

By comparing the consumer's purchasing criteria of 2004 with the ones of 2008, one can verify that the quality remains as the first criterion for purchasing, however, there was a reduction of importance in the order of 22 %. In 2004 the brand was the second criterion of consumers when purchasing, in 2008 brand went to the fifth place on the criteria used, this means a a devaluation of 50 %.

The service was the third criterion used in 2004, in 2008 consumers put it to second place on their preferences that represents an appreciation of 54% for this criterion. The price, fourth criterion in 2004, rose to third place in 2008, a significant recovery of 65 %.

The environmental concern in 2004 was ranked in fifth place as a criterion used by consumers at the moment of purchase, in 2008 this criterion rose to fourth place, having an appreciation of 34% on the environmental issues.

The **propaganda** was kept as the sixth criterion of consumers in the two evaluated periods; however, in spite of the maintenance of the ranking, there was a devaluation of 50%. Although the store where the research took place did not have its location changed, those consumers who were surveyed in 2008 valued to 85% this criterion in comparison to what they did in 2004.

## Final Considerations

This research considered as critical factors of success, for the companies that have in their products some ecological characteristic: the consumer's perception of environmental friendly characteristics existent in the products; the consumer's eco-awareness; the consumer's eco-consumption; and the purchasing criteria that

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consumers take into account when purchasing a product.

The research showed that the consumers of *O Boticário* continue to moderately notice the offer of environmental friendly products by the company. This fact demonstrates that the perception has not changed along the evaluated periods. The consumer's eco-awareness increased in 17.64 % in the environmental awareness of the consumers between 2004 and 2008, the classification almost reached the initial stage of complete awareness.

The eco-consumption grew up in a range of 15.1 %, thus, consumers now have potential possibilities to become eco-friendly. One important factor found out in the research was the enhancement of environmental issues, which shows an increase of 31% between the periods from 2004 to 2008.

Considering the factors of success, the study showed that the consumers' conscience, consumption, and purchasing criteria increased in what concerns the environmental issues. The perception of consumers remained stagnant along the period, this situation might have been influenced by the devaluation of 50% of the importance given by consumers to the propagandas as a purchasing criterion.

It should be noted that this article is not conclusive on the matter, and that the data might have received influence from other variables that were not analyzed. However, one can see the importance of monitoring the analyzed factors to establish a connection between the environmental aspects and the competitive ones.

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