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E-READERS INDUSTRY IN PORTUGAL:
WHAT ARE THE PERCEPTIONS OF CONSUMERS ON E-READERS AND HOW CAN
BRANDS LEVERAGE THEM IN THEIR POSITIONING STRATEGIES?

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Abstract – Group Research

This study examines Portuguese consumers' preferences and perceptions of e-reader devices, providing insights into the factors that drive their appeal and adoption in the growing digital reading market. Employing conjoint analysis and perceptual mapping, the study assesses key factors such as usability, price, and technological features that shape consumer decision-making. Data obtained from surveys, interviews, and secondary research identify opportunities to improve brand positioning strategies, foster greater subscription service adherence, and address adoption barriers. The findings provide actionable recommendations for e-reader brands to enhance their devices' appeal, foster stronger consumer engagement, and support strategic growth in the competitive e-reader market.

Keywords

E-readers Industry, Consumer Preferences, Consumer Perceptions, Brand Positioning, Portugal, Digital Reading, Marketing Research, E-books Subscription Service

Abstract – Individual Research

This individual study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the contextual background by examining the digital reading market in Portugal, along with the key and emerging players that are shaping this industry. Furthermore, through preliminary interviews, this study will offer valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer preferences for e-readers in the Portuguese market.

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1. Introduction

In today's world, digitalisation has become a pivotal aspect of the daily lives of most societies across the globe, giving rise to profound shifts in consumer behaviour, preferences, and perceptions of value (Cham et al., 2022). The technological advancements registered in the last decades, together with the widespread use of the Internet, have been driving a real transformational process, with profound implications for the way the economy and society function (McKinsey Global Institute & Roxburgh, 2011). Moreover, the growing awareness of the finite nature of natural resources and the phenomenon of climate change have prompted a global discourse on sustainability, exerting pressure on companies to offer environmentally friendly solutions. Hence, digitalisation and growing environmental consciousness have driven significant growth in recent years in the market for specialised e-reader devices, with readers appreciating the convenience and accessibility of these devices (E-Reader Market Size | Mordor Intelligence, n.d.).

As reported by Statista (2024), approximately half of the Portuguese population engages in reading activities, with 4.5 million individuals reading physical books and 0.8 million reading e-books. Furthermore, it was verified an increase of 9% in the number of readers embracing digital reading formats, versus 2022 (APEL, 2024). Nevertheless, despite the prevalence of reading habits in Portugal and the apparent increasing attractiveness of digital reading, only 7% of the population owns an e-reader device (Statista, 2024). Therefore, Portugal represents an appealing case study for analysing how companies might enhance the appeal of e-reader devices and the extent to which these devices currently align with the ideal configurations preferred by consumers. Considering this, the objective of this research is to develop a comprehensive understanding of Portuguese consumers' preferences and perceptions concerning e-reader devices. These perceptions will be

further explored to identify optimal positioning strategies that will enhance the market growth of e-reader brands.

In addition, to complement the primary research question, the project aims to provide comprehensive responses to auxiliary questions concerning consumers' perceptions of e-reader brands' e-reading subscription services. In particular, the supplementary research will examine which characteristics of e-reader brands' e-reading subscription services are most highly valued by consumers, what factors are inhibiting the success of these services, and how subscription services can be enhanced to improve adherence and retention rates. The present study excludes any analysis associated with multi-purpose devices, such as tablets, smartphones, or laptops, focusing solely on specialized e-reader devices.

The initial stage of this study encompasses the analysis of secondary data to gain a deeper comprehension of the various brands and their contextual background. In this regard, the literature review examines essential concepts, offering valuable insights into the attributes of e-reader devices, the customer decision-making process, technology acceptance and intention to use, smart product-service systems, subscription-based business models, and brand positioning. The second stage of the study comprises preliminary interviews with e-reader users and an industry specialist, selected to represent a range of backgrounds and demographics. The interviews facilitate the gathering of preliminary insights about the primary factors that consumers consider valuable when engaging with e-reader devices and their associated e-reading subscription services. The third step comprises the creation of two distinct surveys, which will be analysed employing two different methods: conjoint analysis and perceptual mapping. To address the necessity of sharing several surveys within a constrained timeframe and to ensure consistency in analysis results by using the same sample, both perceptual maps and e-reading subscription questions were integrated into a single survey.

The comprehensive research offers valuable insights into the Portuguese e-reader market, which is primarily characterised by four players: Kobo, Kindle, PocketBook, and Woxter. Kobo and Kindle are established market leaders, whereas PocketBook and Woxter are emerging competitors. These companies demonstrate a consistent commitment to innovation, integrating advanced features into their devices on a continuous basis, thereby contributing to a dynamic market landscape. Furthermore, established market players differentiate themselves through the offering of e-reading subscription plans, which will be subjected to further analysis in this project.

The first method employed during this research is the conjoint analysis, which will be conducted using the “Conjoint.ly” platform. In this research, the type of conjoint method applied is the Choice-Based Conjoint Analysis (CBCA), which utilises a tool that simulates real-market decision-making by presenting respondents with different product profiles to identify their preferred options. Accordingly, the corresponding survey is focused on seven key attributes of e-reader devices, and corresponding levels, selected based on preliminary interviews and prior market research. These attributes are presented in the form of hypothetical device options with varying levels, and respondents are asked to choose their preferred option. Consequently, this method enables the comprehension of consumer preferences through the examination of trade-offs between product attributes. A further analysis of the level partworth utilities enables the quantification of the utility assigned by consumers to different attribute levels, thereby providing valuable insights into consumer preferences and highlighting the impact of different attribute levels on overall product preference.

The second method employed in this study is perceptual mapping, a research tool that enables the visualisation of consumer perceptions of brands within a multidimensional framework. This approach yields valuable insights into consumer preferences, brand positioning, and competitive dynamics. Data for the analysis was collected through a survey created on Microsoft Forms, which

examined e-reader usage patterns, brand preferences and awareness, as well as evaluates perceptions across twelve key attributes using a five-point Likert scale. The gathered data was subsequently analysed using SPSS software.

Subsequently, further research is conducted through the analysis of the data collected from the subscription's subset of the perceptual maps survey. This section of the questionnaire comprises a series of questions pertaining to a number of topics, including the current rate of subscribers, levels of brand awareness and preference, primary obstacles to adherence and renewal of e-reading subscriptions, preferred payment frequency, and the relative importance of seven key attributes of e-reading subscription plans, evaluated on a five-level scale. The combination of the data obtained from the survey with insights gathered from secondary research and reviewed literature enables the formulation of conclusions.

This project aims to enhance the comprehension of how consumers perceive not only e-reader devices, but also the complementary e-reading subscription services offered. Considering the findings, recommendations are proposed for the enhancement of brand positioning and the acquisition and retention of users.

2. Contextual Background

2.1. Digital Reading Momentum in Portugal

In September of 2024, APEL (Associação Portuguesa de Editores e Livreiros), in partnership with Nielsen/GfK released a report regarding the reading habits of the Portuguese population in 2023. The study reported that overall book sales, in Portugal, increased by 7% in 2023, versus the previous year (APEL, 2024). Furthermore, young adults (ageing from 25 to 34 years old) corresponded to 76% of the overall buyers, and the 15 to 24 years old cohort reported the higher

increase in terms of books purchases in comparison with the previous year (Lusa, 2024). The association suggests that this evidence might reflect the adoption of new reading behaviours motivated by the appearance of alternative digital formats, such as e-books and audiobooks (Pinto, 2024). In addition, evidence underscores the rising popularity of the digital book format, in Portugal, with 17% of the readers embracing digital reading practices, in 2023. This represents an increase of nine percentage points versus the previous year (Cunha, 2023). The study also highlights that the most common way of reading digital books is through a specialized e-reader device, suggesting an increasing importance of such devices for the overall reading community, in Portugal.

Due to lack of extensive available data on the e-reader market in Portugal, the assumption of its incumbent potential is reinforced by evidence of market expansion, both at global and European levels. In 2023, the global e-reader market was valued at USD 7.33 billion, with the expectancy of growing at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 6.31%, between 2024 and 2029, predicting a revenue base of USD 10.62 billion in 2029 (E-book Market Size | Mordor Intelligence, n. d.). Even though North America is expected to hold the largest share of the market during the period under consideration, Europe immediately follows North America in terms of market size. When looking into other related statistics, 7.2% of EU residents, in 2023, purchased an e-book, representing an increase of 6.6% versus 2022 (Eurostat, 2024), which aligns with the current Portuguese scenario, as well as with accessed increasing Governments' incentives to foster interest in digital reading, in Europe.

Since 2018 that Governments of several European countries have been cutting down VAT taxes on e-books, turning them into a more competitive option in terms of costs for the readers, possibly producing an effect in the attractiveness of e-readers. In countries like Norway and United Kingdom, e-books are currently VAT free, with EU countries progressively following the same

path. In Spain, Italy and Portugal the current rates range between 4% to 6% (Apostolos, 2021). Specifically, addressing the case of Portugal, this represents a significant cut in the VAT rate as, before 2019, the applicable rate was of 23%. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemics had also a role to play in the promotion of digital reading, bringing a new light to the e-readers' market. With the lockdown, many readers were inhibited from going to physical libraries, and the distribution of paper-print books became a complex and time-consuming process, leading to the need to find alternative ways to access books and content.

Even though there is not extensive data available regarding the Portuguese specialized e-reader market, the scenario of increasing relevance of digital books, such as e-books and audiobooks, is expected to be reflected in the number of e-readers' users in Portugal, due to their complementary nature. Thus, this research aims to understand consumers' preferences on these types of devices and perceptions on correspondent providers, setting the basis for a deeper understanding on how far the market currently is from providing the ideal e-reader device in the eyes of consumers.

2.2. Defining the Competitive Landscape

The e-reader market in Portugal, similarly to the broader European market, is shaped by few key players with a focus on innovative digital reading solutions. Hence, the competitive landscape in Portugal is dynamic, with companies constantly trying to incorporate advanced new features into e-reading devices. These companies also aim to establish partnerships with publishers and authors to ensure a supply of diverse and exclusive content, expanding their digital libraries to attract and retain users. In addition, e-reader brands are trying to differentiate from competitors by developing subscriptions services that offer the access to extensive e-books collections, providing consumers with cost-effective and convenient reading options (E-Book Reader Market Size & Share | Analysis Report 2032, 2024).

Although there are only a few major players in the e-reader market, some smaller players have begun to emerge, possibly challenging the more established ones. As new players bring fresh competition, established brands strive to maintain their market share by investing more in research and development and, thus, leading to technological advancements and new features in their e-readers, offering better products, more choices, and more competitive prices (E-Reader Market Size | Mordor Intelligence, n.d.-b)

2.2.1. Key Players

To gather insights into e-reader availability and market presence, the presented research required an examination of both physical retail stores and online platforms, in Portugal. Amazon Kindle and Rakuten Kobo were the most popular brands, with consistent availability in both physical stores and e-commerce platforms. Although they appeared significantly less frequently, PocketBook and Woxter were regarded as two of the most relevant emerging brands since, in addition to the two major brands, they were the easiest to find in commercial platforms available in Portugal.

Amazon Kindle

Amazon Kindle is the market leader globally, being widely available in Portugal, mainly through e-commerce platforms. Although Kindle was not the first e-reader being introduced to the market, its launch marked a turning point, driving significant growth in both the e-reader and e-book markets and establishing on-the-go libraries and unlimited access to books as the new norm. Kindle's innovative features and unique characteristics – specially its size and storage space, turned it into the ideal travel and work companion and a one-stop solution for readers that were enabled to purchase e-books through the device – and the lack of existence of same-level competition played a crucial role in its widespread adoption (How Kindle Dominated the E-Book Industry, 2020). Furthermore, over the years, Amazon has been focusing on innovation, improving various

Kindle models by introducing new ones with enhanced features and capabilities, hence, continuing to shape the digital reading landscape and maintaining their stronghold in the industry (Amazon Kindle Market Share Analysis - Osum, 2024).

Amazon Kindle's strengths that help to establish its position as market leader lie essentially on its devices' portability, user-friendly interface, long battery life, and on its extensive collection of globally appreciated e-books (Amazon Kindle Market Share Analysis - Osum, 2024). In addition, Kindle's low complexity is also a very important driver for the brand's popularity and market position (How Kindle Dominated the E-Book Industry, 2020). Nevertheless, this e-reader has a drawback which is that it is deeply embedded in the Amazon ecosystem, being quite hostile in terms of side-loading books, and only supporting e-books in the AZW file type, which are exclusively accessible through the Kindle store (Pike, 2024).

Amazon's subscription service, "Kindle Unlimited", supports Kindle's popularity, contributing to its differentiation among competitors, by offering access to over one million e-books for 9.99€ per month. Such a service enabled Amazon to successfully tap into the growing demand for digital reading, allowing readers to access its on-line library through multiple devices (Amazon Kindle Market Share Analysis - Osum, 2024). Nonetheless, the largest portion of Kindle Unlimited catalogue consists of English-language titles, with the number of available Portuguese-language titles being limited. Consequently, as most Portuguese readers tend to prefer reading Portuguese-authored or translated books (APEL, 2024), this might be seen as a disadvantage in this specific market.

When it comes to pricing, Amazon Kindle adopts a value-based pricing strategy, meaning that the e-readers' prices are closely linked to the perceived value that consumers place on them. To encourage users to buy both hardware and content from the Kindle ecosystem, Amazon also

successfully uses bundling and cross-selling techniques. For instance, it may provide special discounts on e-books after customers purchase a Kindle e-reader.

Rakuten Kobo

Kobo, owned by Rakuten, is another key player in the Portuguese e-reader market. Kobo stands out from competitors through its strategic partnership with FNAC, a major electronics and books retailer in Portugal, which prompted a notable local presence. This collaboration enables a fully localized experience, by offering a vast collection of Portuguese-authored and translated books, from local works to international bestsellers, tailored to Portuguese readers (Rakuten Kobo, Kobo Brings eReading to Portugal in New Partnership with FNAC, 2012). Furthermore, Kobo offers a variety of e-readers models at different price points, ensuring there is an option for every budget, from basic models to high-end devices with more advanced features (Rakuten Kobo, n.d.).

Kobo offers a wide range of operational features, ranging from waterproofing to coloured E-Ink and note-taking compatibility for the margin scribblers (Rakuten Kobo, n.d.). Similarly to Kindle, an increasingly popular feature available for Kobo is Bluetooth connectivity, allowing the pairing with wireless earphones, primarily for listening to audiobooks. Furthermore, the brand's e-readers support all kinds of files formats – EPUB, MOBI, PDF, CBZ, and CBR Comic Book formats – all of which can be side loaded, offering a more widely accessible experience. Hence, for customers who are looking for e-books and documents in several different formats, Kobo might stand out as a feasible alternative. The only exception is in terms of audiobooks, which will only play on the Bluetooth-enabled models when only purchased from the Kobo Store and no side-loaded audiobooks will work on a Kobo device (Sarkar & Carter, 2024).

In terms of environmental effect, Kobo has a constant track record of transparency and sustainability that extends throughout the full life cycle of a Kobo. Likewise, all Kobo devices are

made from environmentally friendly materials, with an exterior made of over 85% recycled plastic, 10% of which comes from the ocean (Pike, 2024).

Rakuten's subscription service, Kobo Plus, also enhances the appeal of Kobo e-reader devices, strengthening its position in the Portuguese market. Kobo Plus subscribers have access to a comprehensive collection of content with the option of selecting either an e-book or audiobook plan for €6.99 per month or a combined bundle for €8.99. Unlike other services, The main distinction between Kobo Plus and other subscription services in Portugal, is the partnership that Kobo holds with the Portuguese publishing group LeYa. Due to this collaboration, subscribers have access to exclusive contents provided by LeYa and other Portuguese publishers joining the platform, including 9000 e-books in Portuguese, along with 700 audiobooks (Kozlowski & Kozlowski, 2021). Hence, both partnerships with FNAC and LeYa allow Kobo to have a very distinctive positioning in comparison to the remaining brands operating in the market, turning its offer more tailored to local preferences.

PocketBook

PocketBook, a European e-reader brand, has been gaining traction and growing reputation as a competitive brand in the Portuguese e-reader market. PocketBook's distinctive features and diverse offerings are the primary drivers of its rising brand awareness and appeal. In addition, the brand has partnered with Esprinet, a leading distributor in consumer electronics and Information and Communication Technology products market, allowing the brand to reach a wider audience and establish stronger presence in the market (Trigo & Trigo, 2021). PocketBook also offers models at various price points, ranging from 115€ to 354€, providing both budget-friendly and more premium alternatives. This flexibility allows it to cater to different market segments, enhancing its appeal in Portugal (Todos Os Produtos PocketBook, n.d.).

PocketBook is one of the leading users of E-Ink Kaleido technology, in contrast to most e-reader manufacturers, who predominantly use E-Ink Carta technology for their displays. Whereas some of its models feature E-Ink Carta, others incorporate E-Ink Kaleido, introducing colour capabilities to the e-reading experience. This makes some of the PocketBook devices especially well-suited for reading graphic-intensive content, such as comics, illustrated books, and educational materials. Likewise other E-Ink screens, Kaleido technology is highly energy-efficient, consuming power only when the page refreshes, allowing for a longer battery life. Kaleido screens also rely on natural or surrounding light to display content, rather than emitting their own light like backlit screens. This reduces eye strain and makes them more comfortable to read in various lighting conditions (Ecrã E Ink Kaleido™ – Uma Nova Era De Leitura Eletrónica a Cores, n.d.). The brand's devices are also known for supporting the widest range of e-book and image formats in the e-reader market, being compatible with 19 e-book formats and 4 image formats. Thus, this broad compatibility eliminates the need for file conversion, providing a considerable advantage to users who get their e-books from a variety of sources. Most PocketBook devices are also compatible with audio formats, allowing users to listen to audiobooks through Bluetooth connection. In addition, some devices include the Text-to-Speech function, which enables the device to read e-books aloud (PocketBook, n.d.).

PocketBook also offers a reader app available for both Android and iOS which enables users to access their e-book libraries on devices other than their e-reader. This app supports all popular e-book formats, including PDF, EPUB, DjVu, FB2, FB2.zip, MOBI, DOCX, RTF, TXT, CHM, HTML (basic), CBZ, CBR, and CBT. This is possible due to the existence of the PocketBook Cloud, which by allowing users to store their e-books in the cloud, ensures that their libraries and reading positions are synchronized across multiple devices (PocketBook Reader, n.d.).

Woxter

By prioritizing affordability, the Spanish brand, Woxter, turns the e-reading experience accessible to a wider audience, carving out a niche in the competitive e-reader market and securing its position as a more budget-friendly alternative. Hence, the main model Woxter Scriba 195S illustrates the brand's strategy by targeting users who seek a more basic and affordable solution for their e-reading needs (Mandal & Mandal, 2023).

The Woxter Scriba 195S, unlike most other readers, does not have a display with enabled touchscreen. To compensate, it includes physical buttons at the bottom for navigation, and additional page-turn buttons on both sides, making it highly user-friendly for one-handed operation. In terms of format compatibility, the Woxter Scriba 195S offers a versatile reading experience as the device supports a wide array of e-books formats, including PDF, ePUB, txt, DJVU, HTML, RTF, FB2, DOC, MOBI, CHM, and PRC. This flexibility allows users to purchase e-books from a variety of platforms, ensuring greater accessibility and freedom of choice. Furthermore, in comparison to its competitors, the Woxter Scriba 195S stands out with its compact display and lightweight design (Mandal & Mandal, 2023).

As one of the smallest, lightest and more basic e-readers in the market, Woxter's e-reader devices have some drawbacks. Firstly, the devices' small screen size present challenges, particularly for viewing PDF documents due to its formatting nature. Although this format is compatible with the device, as PDFs are formatted with fixed layouts that do not adapt well to smaller screens, as text can appear too small requiring frequent zooming and scrolling, which negatively impacts the reading experience. Furthermore, the Woxter e-reader lacks Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity, limiting its ability to sync or download content directly. Users must also rely on ambient light for reading, as the device does not feature a built-in front light. Audio is also not available on Woxter's device, therefore accessing audiobooks is not possible. All these constraints on the devices'

functionality justify their lower pricing when compared to other brands on the market (Mandal & Mandal, 2023).

2.2.2. Distribution Channels

In light of the preceding analysis, it can be posited that the various players in the Portuguese e-reader market rely primarily on a similar set of distribution channels to cater to both in-person and online shopping preferences: physical specialty stores and e-commerce platforms.

Specialty stores are retail establishments whose primary focus is on a particular category or niche market. This kind of store offers a unique shopping experience, catering to specific customer needs and preferences (Chakrabarty, 2023). Hence, technology and electronics specialty stores provide a specialized space where customers can browse and buy various e-readers devices. By providing expert knowledge and personalised service, these shops play a key role in pre-purchase phases by supporting consumers towards the selection of the e-reader that better suits their needs (Bhasin, 2023). The most significant market players, Amazon Kindle and Rakuten Kobo, can be easily found in most of the technology and electronics specialty stores, such as FNAC, Worten and Radio Popular, which are widely distributed across Portugal. Thus, consumers can easily locate and purchase e-reader devices from these brands, making the shopping experience highly convenient. In contrast, PocketBook and Woxter have a more limited presence in physical retail stores, making them less accessible compared to the key players.

E-commerce (electronic commerce) refers to the buying and selling of goods and services over electronic networks, primarily the Internet (Hashemi-Pour et al., 2023). As e-commerce platforms have a large online marketplace, they can sell a variety of e-readers from different manufacturers, giving users an easier path to buy digital materials and e-reader devices (Bhasin, 2023). Hence, consumers can purchase e-reader devices through various e-commerce platforms, such as

technology and electronics specialty stores websites and online platforms or directly from brand websites. Although the most prominent players have some models available for purchase in physical stores, the variety of models available for purchase online is greater, with the brands' websites having the largest diversity. Emerging players, on the other hand, have a more limited selection in physical stores but provide a wide range of options on e-commerce platforms. Similarly to major brands, emerging brands offer the largest selection on their own websites.

2.2.3. Barriers to Entry

Based on the analysis conducted on the competitive landscape and on the different players that shape the e-reader market in Portugal, it is possible to understand that there are some barriers to entry for new players. First and foremost, well-established brands like Amazon Kindle and Rakuten Kobo benefit from strong brand loyalty, reputation, and recognition, which is highly important in shaping consumers' purchasing intention. Because of this, it is challenging for newcomers to succeed without a large financial investment, requiring them to highly invest in marketing, product development and customer acquisition to gain market share. Secondly, the major players have established relationships with important retailers, ensuring that their devices are widely accessible in Portugal's physical stores and e-commerce platforms. As a result, it may be challenging for new competitors to build rapport with these shops, which could make it challenging for them to spread their e-reader devices throughout physical stores. Lastly, in terms of technological innovation, dominant players continuously invest in research and development to constantly introduce new advanced features and differentiate from each other. Thus, new entrants require significant investments and resources to keep up with technology advancements and offer innovative features that set their products apart from the competition.

3. Preliminary Interviews

The collection of primary insights through the preliminary interviews was of extreme importance to the completion of this dissertation, as there was a scarcity of secondary data available on the e-readers' market in Portugal, limiting the scope for investigating consumers' perspectives. The interviews also had the objective of providing support for future research efforts, such as the development of different questionnaires that were used to collect data for a quantitative analysis.

To gain insights into the factors influencing consumers' preferences for e-readers in the Portuguese market, ten exploratory interviews were conducted. These comprised nine interviews with e-reader users and one with an industry specialist. This analysis enabled to gain initial insights into the prevalence and patterns of e-reader usage, the factors influencing e-reader purchase decisions, the psychological associations consumers have with different e-reader brands, potential industry opportunities and threats, and future expectations for e-readers. Furthermore, the qualitative research also facilitated an initial comprehension of the importance of e-book subscription services for e-reader users.

To ensure that the focus was on the most significant elements of the interviews and that there was cohesion between all of them, a script was created to serve as a guiding mechanism during each discussion (*See Appendix 2, Table 2 & Table 3*). The interviews were thus preceded by extensive research, which played a pivotal role in shaping the structure of the interview script. During the course of this research, it was possible to identify the e-reader brands that hold a more significant presence in consumers' minds – Kindle, Kobo, Pocket Book and Woxter – and the distinct e-reader's characteristics that could be perceived as important by consumers and play a decisive role in the decision-making process of buying an e-reader (*see Appendix 1, Table 1*).

The ten individuals interviewed were Portuguese females, all holding at least a bachelor's degree, with ages ranging from 21 to 50 years. The sample included three generational cohorts: Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X, with nine respondents were aged between 21 and 32 and one respondent aged 50 years old. Although efforts were made to ensure representativeness in terms of both age and gender, it was only achieved in terms of age. It was not possible to interview any male or other gender e-reader users, as no such participants were available or sufficiently familiar with the topic under investigation. All respondents own an e-reader, either a Kindle or a Kobo, and use it exclusively to access e-books.

Most respondents indicated that owning an e-reader had a favourable impact on their reading habits. This was evidenced by an increase in reading time following the adoption of digital reading devices. According to them, the primary reason for this outcome was the capacity to utilize their e-readers and access books in any location, enabling them to engage in reading at various times of the day, including in low-light environments.

3.1. Factors Influencing the Purchasing Decision

The customer's purchasing decision is significantly shaped by the characteristics of the different e-reader devices. In light of the insights gathered from the interviews, it can be posited that the features of e-readers that exert a certain level of influence on a customer's decision-making process are their size and weight, battery life, build quality and storage capacity, the content that can be accessed through the device, the user interface and customisation options, and the price of the various models.

Portability was identified as a key attribute for consumers. From their perspective, e-readers must be practical and lightweight, giving them the ability to be easily transported. For most interviewees, e-readers should be between 6 and 7 inches (15.24 to 17.78 cm) in size, being "*larger than a phone*

but smaller than a tablet". Consequently, smaller screens are perceived as more convenient, with the option of increasing the text size serving to mitigate the challenge of the screen being too small to read. Furthermore, battery life is a crucial factor in determining the portability of the device, with interviewees expecting their devices to last multiple weeks on a single charge. Given the reported intention to take e-reader devices with them wherever they go, the durability of the devices is also a significant factor in the decision-making process. A noteworthy proportion of interviewees expressed a preference for reading in more exposed settings, such as the beach or the pool. This highlights the importance of a device that is resistant to damage and able to withstand prolonged use in challenging environments.

Despite the existence of a variety of brands on the market, the rationale behind the choice of a specific brand was shown to be primarily determined by the content available for purchase through the device's ecosystem and the ease of access to it. It was observed by participants that the Kindle, as part of the Amazon ecosystem, has a restricted selection of Portuguese e-books available for purchase or subscription. Conversely, Kobo enables consumers to purchase and access a more extensive range of Portuguese and Portuguese-translated titles due to its collaboration with local retailers, such as FNAC. Consequently, most interviewees purchased a Kobo device, given their preference for reading books written in Portuguese or translated into that same language.

Moreover, the interviewees asserted that an e-reader device must be intuitive and easy to use, enabling a certain degree of customisation in the reading experience, such as modifying the font size, style, and margins. A significant part of the sample indicated that models incorporating metrics related to the process of goal achievement, such as the percentage of a book already read, the duration of reading, and the number of pages in a chapter, enhance the enjoyment of e-reading. Lastly, the price of the various e-readers models available in the market also plays a significant role on the decision to purchase the device. The majority of those interviewed expressed the view

that e-reader prices are reasonable, given the durability of the devices and the reading features they offer. In addition, respondents indicated that, in comparison to the cost of traditional printed books, the financial outlay required to purchase these devices is significantly more beneficial in the long term. In terms of price, all respondents concurred that a maximum expenditure of €150 on such devices is reasonable. One respondent indicated a willingness to pay up to €180, while two others indicated a willingness to pay up to €200.

3.2. Psychological Associations

When interviewees consider e-reader devices, the brands that predominantly spring to their mind are Kobo and Kindle, given that all participants referenced these two brands. According to their psychological associations, the most frequently used adjectives to describe these two brands were practical, accessible, useful, and enjoyable. Assessing the different brands in more detail, Kindle is perceived as the pioneer and the most popular brand. It is regarded as innovative, and aesthetically pleasing, and, due to its association with Amazon, is also seen as a global system. Conversely, Kobo is deemed to be a more reliable, intuitive, and easy-to-use brand. Participants further reported that this brand is perceived as a more affordable alternative, attributed to its frequent promotional discounts and consistent presence in physical retail stores. The brand is also regarded as being more “local”, particularly for its extensive catalogue of Portuguese literature. Although Kindle was perceived as the trendier brand, Kobo seems to be gaining more recognition as an increasingly popular brand, especially around social media.

3.3. Future Expectations

When asked about how they think reading will evolve in Portugal and what role e-readers will play in this evolution, all respondents stated that the use of e-readers will increase exponentially. As per their assertions, reading is becoming a “*cool and trendy activity*”, while e-reading is becoming

increasingly popular on social media, such as Instagram and Tik Tok. Hence, the future of reading will shift towards a more digital manner, with e-readers playing a major role in this change. Despite agreeing that e-readers will play an important role in the future of reading, respondents anticipate e-readers will never fully substitute traditional physical books. Most interviewees concur that even if readers eventually access their reading content through digital methods, they will continue to buy traditional physical books either to “*keep their favourites on shelves*” or to “*offer as gifts*”, emphasising the emotional attachment to physical books that e-readers (and e-books) cannot compete with.

3.4. Suggestions on How to Improve Marketing Strategies

Based on their expectations for the future, respondents provided some recommendations on how they believe brands can improve their business strategies to better appeal to Portuguese consumers. Most respondents highlighted that brands can significantly improve their advertising strategies, as e-readers do not have much visibility in the Portuguese market. Therefore, it was suggested by a significant number of participants that brands should increase their advertising spend on social media and TV to demonstrate how the benefits of e-readers outweigh the factors that make customers reluctant to purchase these digital tools. In addition, brands should interact more with the online community and influencers who are driving behavioural change in reading habits.

Value and affordability were also noted, as respondents stated that whereas e-readers undergo changes and updates with enhanced features, their pricing should remain commensurate with the current reasonable price range (up to 150€). Furthermore, the interviewees recommended that brands should enhance their assortment of Portuguese literature by integrating popular Portuguese authors, to accommodate local preferences and tastes.

Lastly, some bookshops, like Wook, restrict consumers to using e-books exclusively within their own apps, limiting both content diversity and the appeal of e-readers. Establishing partnerships with Portuguese bookstores could address this issue by allowing them to sell e-books compatible with e-readers, making these devices more attractive to consumers.

3.5. Subscription Services

The insights of the interviews revealed a lack of consensus among participants concerning their opinions on subscribing to existing e-reading services and the influence of these subscriptions on their purchasing decisions. Therefore, the role of the subscription services in the purchase decision-making process was found to be of secondary importance for 40% of respondents, while the remaining 60% reported a moderate to major influence. Accordingly, the possibility of accessing such services influenced the decision-making process of most of the respondents.

Most interviewees are either current subscribers to e-reading subscription services or have subscribed at some point, with Kobo Plus emerging as the most popular choice. According to the insights, a multitude of factors, including price, the available content – particularly in terms of language, recency, and quality – and the existing relationship between price and the quantity and quality of the content offered, influenced the decision of whether to subscribe to an e-reader service or not. Interviewees with experience utilizing subscription services have also identified deficiencies in the current subscription models. Firstly, the subscription algorithm is not particularly efficient and does not provide accurate recommendations based on the content users have read. Secondly, more well-known and best-selling books are not included in these services and users are required to purchase them separately.

The preliminary interviews also assisted in the identification of the reasons behind the decision of consumers not to subscribe to these services. The primary reason for this was that new releases and

popular bestsellers are not typically included in the subscription library. Another significant reason was the ability to access free content online for e-readers. Even though the free content is mainly accessible through online piracy activities, which is illegal in Portugal, the possibility renders the expenses associated with the subscription ultimately unjustifiable. Finally, according to the insights, these subscriptions are not a viable option for those that read less frequently, emphasizing the weight of reading frequency in the decision of whether to subscribe or not.

4. Conclusions

4.1. Discussion

The conducted study provided valuable insights into the preferences and perceptions of Portuguese consumers, emphasizing the attributes of greatest importance and the differing e-reader device's brand perceptions across key dimensions. By integrating conjoint analysis and perceptual mapping, alongside the additional investigation of the e-reading subscription market, the research offered a holistic understanding of consumer decision-making processes, unveiling key opportunities for brand development and market growth within the e-reader industry.

Consistent with expectations, the findings derived from the conjoint analysis revealed the pivotal role of price in shaping consumer purchasing decisions, demonstrating a pronounced preference for lower price points and highlighting the price sensitivity of Portuguese consumers within the e-reader market. Additionally, functional attributes such as "Accessibility to e-books in Portuguese" also emerged as critical determinants of consumer behaviour, prompting further research and analysis into the e-reading subscription service's market, recognizing the role the intrinsic connection between these services and the access to and availability of e-books, have in shaping e-reader demand.

From the perceptual analysis, it was possible to identify two dominant dimensions influencing consumer perceptions in the Portuguese e-reader market: general product/brand quality and affordability. Kobo emerged as the brand most strongly aligned with both dimensions, reflecting its balanced appeal through high-quality perceptions and competitive pricing. Kindle followed as a close competitor, with strong quality-related associations but a weaker alignment with affordability perceptions. Meanwhile, Woxter and PocketBook were positioned far from most attributes, indicating weaker or negative perceptions, particularly in terms of quality-related attributes.

The findings of the conjoint and perceptual analyses reveal overlapping yet distinct insights into consumer preferences. While both analyses underscore the competitive strengths of Kindle and Kobo, the perceptual map provides additional nuance in understanding how brands are perceived across specific attributes. Kobo's appearance at the top of the ranked list of product concepts, derived from the conjoint analysis, indicates its competitive edge when paired with other favourable attribute levels, a result that supports the perceptual map's analysis that indicated strong positive consumer preferences across all attributes relative to this brand, strongly aligning with both the quality and affordability components. Conversely, Kindle demonstrates strong consumer appeal overall, emerging as the utility maximizing brand, but reveals weaker perceptions of affordability. The positioning of Woxter and PocketBook as underperforming brands is consistent across both analyses, aligning with previous expectations regarding the limited awareness of these brands in the Portuguese market and underscoring the challenges these brands face in resonating with Portuguese consumers.

The importance of price and local content accessibility

The results from the conjoint analysis demonstrated the critical role of price and local content accessibility attributes in shaping consumer preferences in their decision-making process when

selecting an e-reader device. Additionally, the importance of these two attributes is reflected in their influence in shaping how the selected brands are perceived.

The preeminent importance of “Price” is evident from its consistently high relative importance rating across all four brands, as well as within individual brand analysis. Existing research on the e-reader market supports the survey results, indicating that “Price” might constitute a significant barrier to the adoption of this technology. Consumers frequently express expectations for considerably lower prices for both e-reader devices and electronic books, stating that prices should fall below 100€ (PwC, *Turning the Page: The future of eBooks*, 2011). Nevertheless, the current pricing strategies by the selected brands diverge significantly from these expectations, especially for the devices that incorporate the utility-maximizing attributes identified in the partworth analysis. For instance, Kindle, Kobo and PocketBook devices are priced between 130€ and 400€, leaving Woxter as the only brand that offers devices for a price below 100€. Interestingly, the analysis conducted on elasticity of demand revealed that the optimal pricing point for the utility-maximizing device is closer to 250€, a range more consistent with current market prices. Consumers are driven by utility maximization, seeking devices that offer optimal value for their money, while still catering to their specific necessities. Research revealed that the increased perceived risk associated with high involvement purchases, often leads consumers to extend this “seeking” stage, which in turn, enhances the likelihood of selecting a higher quality option, which is frequently associated with a greater willingness to pay, as higher quality devices are generally linked to elevated price points.

“Accessibility to e-books in Portuguese” was identified as the second most important attribute, maintaining this ranking at the individual brand level as well. E-reader devices generally operate within brand-specific ecosystems, which determine the extent of their catalogue offerings and subscription models. These ecosystems significantly impact the availability of Portuguese and

Portuguese translated e-books, as well as e-books in general. For instance, Kobo's partnership with Portuguese publisher e-LeYa in 2021, resulted in a catalogue enhancement, providing a broader and more readily available selection of e-books in Portuguese within its subscription services. However, despite such advancements, the disparity between the 9,000 e-books available in Portuguese and the total catalogue of 1.5 million e-books, highlights the accessibility challenges noted by Portuguese consumers (E-LeYa, 2024).

These findings align with prior research discussed in the literature review, emphasizing the inherent connection between e-reader adoption rates and the availability of e-books within the device's ecosystem. Furthermore, the performed baseline simulation results from the conjoint analysis, validate this conclusion, by demonstrating how the improvement of e-books accessibility can result in substantial changes in preference shares, consolidating already dominant brands' positioning, and enabling underperforming brands like PocketBook to increase their market penetration.

In conclusion, while affordability remains the most influential factor, there is a clear opportunity for companies to align consumer expectations with utility-maximizing offerings, allowing for enhanced market penetration.

Dominant perceptual dimensions

The perceptual map analysis provided valuable insights into consumer perceptions of the selected brands and their associated attributes chosen for the analysis. Two distinct clusters of attributes and consequent explanatory dimensions emerged in the perceptual map. These clusters reflect the relative correlations between the twelve attributes, with those with higher relative correlation appearing closer together within the perceptual map's quadrants. This proximity is indicative of consumer's similar perceptions regarding these attributes.

On the first cluster attributes related with overall product quality such as "Durable", "Innovative", "Portable" and "Aesthetic" demonstrate strong positive correlations with attributes linked to

overall consumer experience, including “User-Friendly”, “Local Relevance”, “Accessible”, “Useful”, “Trendy”, “Enjoyable” and “Personalised”. This cluster emphasizes the interconnected nature of these quality-related perceptions, suggesting that consumers associate high-quality technology with features that enhance usability and enjoyment.

These priorities were strongly captured within Component 1 of the perceptual map, emphasizing their central role as core quality-related features influencing consumer preferences.

These observations support existing research that shows that high-quality technological products are perceived as more useful and easier to use by consumers enhancing their overall experience with the product (Kinsella et al., 2011). Furthermore, the results reflect a consistent alignment with consumer priorities identified in the preliminary interviews, as well as in literature findings, underscoring the positive influence of perceived usefulness and ease of use on consumer decisions to adopt technological devices.

The second cluster comprises only the attribute “Affordable”, which is strongly associated with Component 2. While “Affordable” demonstrates a positive correlation with the attributes in the first cluster, this correlation is weaker when compared to the strong inter-relationships among the quality-related attributes themselves. The observed moderate correlation between affordability and quality-related attributes can be associated to the nuanced trade-offs consumers perceive in the e-reader market. These findings align with Ganesh & Nagadeepa (2024), who highlight that budget-conscious consumers often prioritize price as a critical factor in evaluating high-tech devices, reflecting affordability as an independent yet complementary dimension in consumer decision-making. While affordability is often associated with lower-quality features or fewer functionalities in many technological markets, the analysis on the e-reader segment revealed exceptions where the perceptions of affordability align with higher levels of perceived quality.

This phenomenon likely arises from the ability of certain brands to strike a balance between cost-efficiency and acceptable product performance, mitigating the perception that affordability necessarily compromises quality. For example, localized features, such as the availability of e-books in Portuguese, bridge the gap between affordability and quality. Consumers may perceive localized content as both cost-efficient and highly valuable, thereby fostering a moderate positive correlation between affordability and attributes like “Local Relevance” or “Accessible”.

Additionally, the inherent functionality of e-readers – being designed for specific use cases such as reading – ensures that even affordable options meet baseline expectations of usability and practicality. This baseline quality may enhance the association of “Affordability” with attributes like “Useful” or “User-Friendly”, although to a lesser degree than the inter-relationships observed among quality-related attributes themselves. Thus, the moderate correlation reflects a detailed evaluation process, where affordability does not negate quality but instead complements specific aspects of consumer value within the e-reader market.

Brand positioning insights

An analysis of the perceptual map, based on the survey responses, reveals significant differences in the positioning of Kobo, Kindle, PocketBook and Woxter, relative to the twelve attributes and corresponding dimensions. Kobo stands out as the brand with the strongest associations with all twelve selected attributes, particularly in terms of product quality and affordability. These results align with the Portuguese e-reader market reality, where Kobo has a high market penetration and large consumer base. The success of the brand in the target country might be explained by the early efforts made to establish exclusive partnerships with local publishers and bookstore chains, such as FNAC, a well-known high-tech retailer in Portugal (Público, 2024), boosting brand awareness and content availability. Although presenting the best perceptions regarding local content, there is still significant room for improvement regarding this attribute that, as previously noted, poses as

one of the main barriers to e-reader adoption. Addressing this can help Kobo solidify and enhance its already favourable position.

Contrasting with its strong global market dominance and reputation, Kindle presented a less pronounced, although still favourable position, displaying positive associations with quality-related attributes such as “Aesthetic”, “Trendy”, “Innovative”, and “Personalised”, but a relatively weaker association with “Affordable” and “Local Relevance”. The analysis reveals a moderate alignment with quality perceptions, which reflects the brand’s focus on premium features and user experience, yet this is tempered by a weaker association with affordability, highlighting a potential barrier for price-sensitive consumers. The findings indicate that, while the Kindle brand is strongly positioned globally, certain challenges remain in addressing the specific priorities of Portuguese consumers.

Lastly, concerning Woxter and PocketBook, both brands are positioned far from most key attributes on the perceptual map, reflecting predominantly negative perceptions across the evaluated attributes. While Woxter is negatively perceived on most quality-related attributes, such as “Useful”, “User-Friendly”, and “Accessible”, and shows no significant correlation with “Affordable”, PocketBook suffers from negative perceptions across most attributes, including both quality and affordability.

As previously mentioned, Woxter is the most affordable brand, practicing prices below 110€. Nonetheless, its devices feature less favourable attribute levels, justifying its negative perceptions across quality-related attributes. Conversely, PocketBook’s notably weak positioning in the perceptual map is particularly striking, considering its extensive and comparatively robust product portfolio. However, when taking into consideration previous expectations regarding PocketBook’s lack of recognition by Portuguese consumers, later justified by the perceptual analysis survey responses, the results appear to be more coherent. Logically, consumers will have weaker and more neutral perceptions regarding the attributes for brands they are not aware of.

These findings suggest that both brands face significant challenges in competing within the Portuguese e-reader market, emphasizing the critical role of brand awareness and strategic positioning in driving a brand's success, particularly within the consumer electronics sector. A strong positive brand image can effectively mitigate perceived risks and exert a favourable influence on consumers' perception and purchase intentions, thereby enhancing the brand's market performance. Companies should position their brands by emphasizing distinctive characteristics that differentiate them from their competitors, designing their offers and image with the aim of occupying a distinct and valued place in the target customer's mind (Cristea, 2014).

Generational differences in attribute preferences

The age-based segmentation analysis offered valuable insights into the distinct attribute preferences between younger and older generations. While both segments exhibited an overall similar ranking of attribute importance, significant variations emerged in the importance scores assigned to individual attributes. Notably, these differences were most pronounced in the two attributes identified as the most important by the overall sample.

The price of the e-reader devices exerts higher influence on the purchasing decisions of younger generations, a result expected given the reduced purchasing power of this segment. Contrastingly, older generations assign greater importance to the accessibility to e-books in Portuguese, when compared to younger generations, a finding that can be explained by the current linguistic reality in Portugal. More than half of the adult population does not speak any language other than Portuguese, positioning the country as the second EU member state with the highest proportion of people who are monolingual (Jornal de Negócios, 2024). This linguistic limitation may emerge from the fact that the promotion of the English language in Portuguese education system began only in the early 1990s with the restructuring of the primary and secondary education (Diário de Notícias, 2024), only impacting younger generations, who place comparatively lower importance

on this attribute. This reality underscores the critical barrier that the low accessibility of e-books in Portuguese can represent to e-reader adoption, as the lack of content in this language renders the device obsolete for most consumers. For younger generations it is more beneficial to read in English, as the content is more readably available in this language (while readers who prefer to or only read in Portuguese may have to wait for years for the translated version), increasing convenience and access to preferred content. Furthermore, national editions have an increased price, given the costs associated with rights acquisition, cover design, translation, editing, among others, that when paired with the price sensitivity of this segment, rises as an additional point in favour of English e-book adoption (Público, 2024).

4.2. Managerial Implications

Invest in building strong brand awareness

During the presented research, consumers emphasized their familiarity with two brands: Kobo and Kindle. As expected, brand recognition has proven to play a critical role in purchasing intentions, with most e-reader owners reporting possession of either a Kobo or Kindle model. As consumers were not significantly aware of PocketBook and Woxter, this restricted their evaluation set to only two brands.

These findings set the stage for recommendations regarding investing in brand awareness and in building a credible brand reputation. Even though consumers reported a high degree of familiarity with Kobo and Kindle, it was also observed that the recognition of these two brands, in Portugal, is mainly built upon word-of-mouth recommendations. As discussed in literature, consumers in this context tend to deliberately look for multiple sources of information to diminish the risk of purchasing a less adequate device, recalling both commercial sources and personal recommendations (word-of-mouth). Thus, it is of extreme importance for brands to have accessible

information regarding their offerings in this stage of the purchasing decision process, as it can be a moment in which consumers are more likely to be influenced. As the marketing strategy of Kobo and Kindle may rely more on organic consumer discussions rather than formal advertising efforts, it must be of Woxter and PocketBook's interest to build awareness through the provision of reliable commercial sources of information about their products, for example, through advertisement. This approach allows these smaller brands to spark curiosity among consumers, gradually integrating into their evaluation sets while shaping perceptions of their benefits and characteristics, ultimately building brand reputation (Keller, 1993).

Segmented strategic advertising

E-reader devices are becoming increasingly popular within the reading community. In terms of promotion, as reinforced by the gathered insights, e-readers' brands lack visibility in the Portuguese market, with insufficient emphasis on showcasing their key benefits. As the acquisition of customers is influenced by both word-of-mouth and marketing initiatives (Abinesh et al., 2024), it is fundamental for brands to invest more heavily on the development of strategic advertising and marketing campaigns, tailored to specific customer segments and markets.

The conjoint analysis revealed that different age groups assign varying levels of importance to different attributes. For this purpose, it is crucial that brands develop differentiated campaigns targeted at different segments employing the correct marketing channels, ensuring alignment with the preferences and media consumption patterns of each age segment.

Social media has become one of the most impactful channels of communication in today's world, given its facilitating nature in interactions between businesses and consumers (Dwivedi et al., 2015). The Social Media Content Strategy Report (2024) revealed that 91% of Generation Z utilizes Instagram, and 86% utilizes TikTok, making them the most prevalent social media platforms among younger generations (Smith, 2024). Thus, to reach younger generations and

capture them into their consumer base, companies must focus on building a strong presence on these social media channels. This can be achieved through the company's personal page by participating in current trends, and opting for authentic and relatable content, leveraging the platform's unique algorithm and engaging format to reach a broader audience. In the context of the e-reading market, TikTok has been gaining traction as a trendsetter in terms of reading habits and device adoption, driven essentially by the rise of the BookTok communities, where consumers share their reading experiences, and acquired content, strongly influencing the behaviour of younger readers (Gonçalves, 2023). Brands should establish partnerships with both micro and macro influencers within this communities, that often post content that resonates with the brands' offering. These influencers can share their experiences with the devices and subscription services sponsored by the brands, discussing their benefits and providing recommendations.

In contrast, older generations, although increasingly present on social media platforms, tend to prioritize traditional media channels, such as television (Deloitte, n.d.). Consequently, while still employing social media platforms, brands should focus their resources on the creation of television marketing. Additionally, the advertisement should be focused on attributes such as Portuguese content accessibility, given the importance placed on this attribute by this segment. These campaigns should also seek to dismantle the perception that e-reader technologies are exclusively for younger generations. Therefore, they might aim to demonstrate the device's user-friendliness and encourage older individuals to engage with e-reading. Such a strategy might be particularly appealing for Kobo, which is the leading brand in terms of local content.

Ensure the balance between advanced features and affordability

Consumers in the e-reader market demonstrate significant price sensitivity, which highlights the critical role of pricing in their purchasing decisions. While the market has evolved to offer

advanced features that provide additional utility, the primary factor impacting consumers' perceived value remains the initial investment cost. Notably, based on the partworth utilities, the absence of advanced features such as notetaking or coloured screens results in a decrease in utility of less than 3 points, while an increase from the lowest (preferred) price to the highest price level, result in a decrease of 10 points in utility.

The forementioned observations must be considered by e-reader providers when designing their product portfolios. Offering advanced features like coloured screens and note-taking capabilities can enhance the reading experience and content comprehension, however, these innovations are often accompanied by price increases, a trade-off that proved to be utility minimizing. To maintain profitability and attract a broader customer base, it is of extreme importance to continue providing budget-friendly options. From the insights gathered through preliminary interviews and conjoint analysis, lower prices are significantly preferred by those who acquired or are considering acquiring a specialized reading device.

In reviewing actual market offerings, models featuring these advanced features often exceed the price points considered reasonable by consumers. For example, the two most advanced models from leading brands – Kobo Elipsa 2E and Kindle Scribe – are priced well above the price range favoured by consumers. These price points can be a constraint to the purchase, in the actual context of the market. Thus, it is of extreme importance for brands to consider a balance between more technological advanced and affordable models when designing their portfolio strategy.

Pricing strategies to enhance customer acquisition

When entering the digital reading world through the utilisation of an e-reader, consumers are required to make a relatively high initial investment given the practiced prices of the devices.

Hence, it is crucial for brands to implement effective pricing strategies to encourage new users to make the initial investment.

To boost e-reader sales, companies can use bundling strategies, providing multiple products together at a unified price (OECD, 2024). One potential strategy is to include an e-book voucher with the e-reader, enabling customers to purchase e-books for use on their new device, thereby enhancing the value of the purchase. In addition, brands may wish to consider offering e-readers with discounted accessories, such as cases and screen protectors, to provide a complete package and enhance the appeal of the device.

In the context of subscription services, brands may adopt a dual pricing strategy to attract new users, offering both monthly and annual subscription plans. Monthly plans are appealing to users who are seeking low upfront costs and flexibility, as they permit the consumer to make use of the service without a long-term commitment. Conversely, annual plans are designed to appeal to customers with greater financial stability and a greater propensity to use the service frequently. The discounted rates offered by these plans provide customers with the benefit of significant savings over time. In essence, this dual pricing strategy renders the service more accessible and attractive to a broader customer base, enabling them to select the most suitable payment plan in accordance with their preferences, commitment levels, or financial constraints.

Improve the accessibility of content included in the e-reader's ecosystem

Given the significant importance placed on the accessibility to Portuguese content and general content variety, it is crucial for brands to prioritize the expansion and diversification of their literary offerings, appealing to a broader Portuguese consumer base. By doing so, e-reader brands can position their e-reader devices and corresponding ecosystems as comprehensive, one-stop solutions for accessing and reading content, ultimately enhancing consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, as noted in the preliminary interviews, some prominent bookshops sell e-books but

restrict access to their content exclusively through their own apps. Addressing this limitation by enabling e-books purchased from these stores to be used on e-reader devices could present significant advantages.

To this end, it would be advisable for companies to adapt their library content extensions considering the market they are operating at, by investing in partnerships with national publishers and bookstores (both physical and online). Such partnerships would help in the development of a well-established and up-to-date content library that caters to diverse consumer preferences while enabling customers to purchase e-books from a variety of sources.

Mitigate the impact of digital piracy

The willingness to adhere to a subscription-based service can be highly influenced by the consumer's overall attitude regarding the acquisition of content through illicit means. If the consumers perceive online piracy as a financially advantageous and not as ethically wrong, then they will continue to engage in such activity, thereby reducing the likelihood of adherence to a subscription plan (Cesareo et al., 2014), representing a significant threat for these service providers. Nevertheless, there are some strategies that might be adopted by the brands that provide e-reading subscription plans to mitigate this problem.

Given the widespread availability of pirated content, price competition may not be a sustainable strategy for providers. Nonetheless, companies must be conscious of this challenge when determining their price structures, as most participants deemed a reasonable price range of up to 10€. Consumers' perceptions on price ranges are thus aligned with current market offerings, with Kindle Unlimited being the most expensive plan, with a monthly fee of 9.99€. Furthermore, these findings also underscore the need for subscription providers to carefully consider price increases. Raising fees beyond customers' willingness to pay could result in a drop of perceived value, leading to higher churn rates and potentially foster a more positive attitude toward digital piracy.

Additionally, through their communication channels, brands can implement sensibilization campaigns to raise awareness around the importance of legitimate content acquisition, while also highlighting the benefits that subscription services can bring to consumers. Those who subscribe to digital content subscription plans appreciate benefits such as the convenience that they provide, by enabling users to adjust their content consumption timely and spatially, as well the increased accessibility to a diverse range of content (Echauri, 2023; Wang, 2005; Hsiao et al., 2017). These are advantages that illegitimate content access does not provide.

Customisation of experience

Addressed in the literature review chapter, the success of a smart product-service system, such as an e-reader, is closely linked to its ability to address each user as a unique individual, with specific needs and tastes (Valencia et al., 2015). Recalling the data obtained from the subscription perceptions analysis and from the preliminary interviews, it became evident that the lack of personalisation in the current digital reading subscription plans, inherent to the selected device, is a noticeable theme of dissatisfaction around subscribers.

Individuals participating in preliminary interviews shared valuable insights indicating that, in most cases, the new reading recommendations provided by the platforms do not align with their previous reading preferences, fostering a sense of poor algorithm and individual data tracking. Moreover, a notable subset of overall subscribers indicated their openness to subscribe to a more economical plan that would allow the selection of a limited number of literature genres that are selected by them beforehand. This could be an interesting initiative to be explored by e-reader providers, as it can possibly improve the personalisation of these plans and cater to a broader consumers base by reducing the monthly fee associated with the plan.

Furthermore, brands can focus on the improvement of the new readings recommendation system. This would require the development of a better personalisation system, capable of aligning

recommendations more closely with consumer's prior reading habits and preferences. Such an approach could be achieved through the application of AI-driven innovation, that enables the provision of better tailored recommendations based on the algorithmic analysis of consumer data (Abinesh & Dulloo, 2024).

Individual brand overview and recommendations for positioning

By closely examining each of the brands covered in this dissertation – Rakuten Kobo, Amazon Kindle, PocketBook, and Woxter – it is possible to derive specific suggestions and insights to enhance their market positioning.

As suggested by Fuchs et al. (2010) and Azmat et al. (2015) effective brand positioning for high involvement products should focus on benefits rather than products' features. Moreover, brands should pursue a consistent positioning strategy that enables them to secure a favourable position in the minds of consumers, setting their offering apart from rivals while capitalizing on their core capabilities (Thompson, 2003).

Given its placement on the perceptual map, Kobo seems to hold a relevant and differentiated place in consumers' minds, being well positioned in comparison with fellow competitors. Kobo has managed to establish itself as the preferred brand for most Portuguese users, largely due to its presence in physical retail stores and its focus on improving accessibility to Portuguese-language content. Considering the high relative importance attributed by consumers to the accessibility to Portuguese-authored and translated e-books, it is advisable for Kobo to continue to differentiate itself from Kindle by heavily investing in the availability of this type of content. By focusing on the functional benefit of providing content tailored to the tastes and preferences of Portuguese readers, Kobo can cater to a broader audience. This strategic focus on local content would not only enhance its appeal but also strengthen its position as the preferred e-reading platform in Portugal.

Kindle, the second most preferred brand in the market, is strongly positioned in terms of overall brand quality. Considering the insights resulting from the performed conjoint analysis, Kindle is the brand that provides higher utility for consumers when assessed separately from other attributes, which can be a result of the strong brand reputation Kindle holds at a global level. Thus, Kindle can capitalize on its solid international brand reputation, namely in the United States (D'Souza, 2024), emphasizing its pioneering and innovative nature. For Kindle, it thus might be appropriate to adopt a surrogate benefit positioning strategy for the Portuguese market, associating its product offer to a more international lifestyle that might particularly resonate with younger generations. Being perceived as being trendier at a global level, Kindle can more easily appeal to younger generations that, besides, being more comfortable with reading in English, are more likely to look for global content, placing less emphasis on region-specific offerings. Moreover, it has been proven the influence of online trends, such as "BookTok", in shaping the reading habits of Gen Z, in Portugal (da Silva, 2024). Thus, Kindle can capitalize on the surrogate benefit of being aligned with popular, global social media-driven trends, appealing to a younger audience looking for the latest and most innovative reading experiences.

For less recognised brands like PocketBook and Woxter, the main challenge is essentially to build and secure a position in consumers' minds, in a market that is highly dominated by the two brands previously mentioned. Leveraging on the insights gained from literature review, it is suggestable that PocketBook and Woxter start building a positioning strategy that relies on the most needed associations to motivate users' acceptance and curiosity around their technological offer. For example, initiating by building associations towards the ease of use and enhanced usefulness of their products. For PocketBook, this might be an interesting opportunity to be explored as the brand's portfolio counts with high quality products. On the other hand, for Woxter it might be

effective to position itself as a more affordable alternative, given the importance of price to the adoption of e-readers by Portuguese users.

4.3. Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Despite substantial efforts to guarantee the veracity of the findings, this dissertation is not free from limitations. In this chapter a reflection of the possible drawbacks of the present study is presented, which should be considered and addressed by future researchers.

Regarding the Literature Review chapter, it is believed that it might possibly carry some limitations in what refers to the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the search strategy. According to Snyder (2019), quality and rigor of the research review is highly impacted by the search strategy employed, which includes deciding on search terms, databases, and inclusion/exclusion criteria. Deciding on inclusion and exclusion criteria is crucial to determine what type of research, and findings, will be included (or excluded) from the discussion, being one of the most important aspects to consider when developing a cohesive literature review (Snyder, 2019). In this dissertation, one of the inclusion criteria employed was the selection of journals and articles peer reviewed. However, when proceeding to select only specific journals, or search terms, the searching sample can become limited. This is an important aspect to recognize as a possible limitation of the present discussion, as it can imply that some useful studies might have been excluded from the research leading to less accurate conclusions. Additionally, articles were also selected based on their contribution to the overall discussion which brings the acknowledgement about the possible less rigorous or relevant nature of some of the reviewed articles. The downsides of the described limitations can be mitigated by future researchers by enlarging the sample of reviewed articles, as well as by exploring other concepts that might impact the marketing of high-tech devices, such as the case of e-readers.

Other major challenge presented in the building of this dissertation was the fact that reliable secondary data on the Portuguese e-reader market was not widely available. This scarcity made it difficult to establish a strong, data-driven argument concerning the growth potential of the market, as well as to identify key players and market leaders with certainty. Even though, through the combination of primary data collection and global trends assessment, it was possible to identify Kindle and Kobo as the market leaders of the Portuguese e-reader industry, more precise market share data was not accessible. Furthermore, the choice of including PocketBook and Woxter was made based on their availability on local retailers, but quantifiable data on the performance and relevance of these brands to the market were also difficult to address. This lack of quantifiable data on these brands and their consumer base represents a limitation, as it may have led to an incomplete picture of consumer preferences and brand performance. Researchers might find interesting to explore the Portuguese market for e-readers in a more quantitative way, providing valuable insights about how the market and operating brands have been evolving in the last years with increasing digitalization of reading habits and environmental consciousness.

For this research, samples were selected through a non-random sampling procedure: convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a non-random sampling method in which the only criterion being considered is how easily the researcher can access potential members of the target population (Saumure et al., 2008). This method can be significantly useful to uncover attitudes and perceptions, when researchers have prompted access to the target population (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Even though this type of sampling can be more affordable, simpler and less time consuming, in the sense that research subjects are readily available, the results should be carried out carefully (Golzar et.al, 2022; Etikan et.al, 2016). Convenience sampling is more likely to be biased, suggesting that results should not be generalized to the overall population (Etikan et.al, 2016). Due to high self-selection, there is always the possibility that behavioural patterns of the selected sample

substantially differ from those that could be observed on a randomly selected sample, as well as the existence of unconsidered outliers which negatively impact the validity and reliability of the findings (Farrokhi et.al, 2012). Another risk of convenience sampling is that some classes of subjects might be overrepresented, while others might be involuntarily excluded from the research (Farrokhi et.al, 2012). This is a scenario that will further be discussed as a particular limitation of the chapters of preliminary interviews, conjoint and perceptual analysis. For future research, it is advisable to address these risks either through randomizing samples or enlarging them, two techniques that can be used to reduce the effects of extreme scores and extraneous factors (Farrokhi et.al, 2012).

An outstanding limitation of the research sample is the fact that selected samples for primary interviews, conjoint analysis and perceptual & subscription analysis are female dominated by a large margin. In preliminary interviews, no male (or other genders rather than female) were possible to be interviewed due to demonstrated lack of interest in participating, or difficulty to reach out to non-female individuals who own, or have owned, an e-reader. Regarding gender distribution in the conjoint analysis, 75.3% of the participants identified themselves as female, while in perceptual analysis, female dominance was even more accentuated, with 76.79% of the participants identifying themselves as female. Overall, while this might be a characteristic of the overall population of Portuguese consumers of e-readers, this can also lead to the possibility of the findings being more aligned with preferences and behavioural trends of female consumers, which can significantly diverge from the ones of other genders. Even though it is advisable for future researchers to try to achieve greater gender diversity to attenuate possible bias of findings, the European reality regarding reading habits aligns with this sample characterization. In Europe, women report higher reading frequency in comparison with men, with 60.5% of women having

read at least one book in 2022, versus 44.5% of men (Hábitos de Leitura Em Portugal E Na Europa: Quem Lê?, n.d.).

Still in the demographic field, both surveys, for conjoint and perceptual and subscription analysis, excluded individuals below 15 years old. This age group was deliberately excluded from the research, as it usually refers to individuals with limited purchasing power, and reduced ability to make purchasing decisions. However, it is recognizable that individuals under 15 years old might have an influential role in the consumer decision making journey, especially when referring to parents, educators, or relatives, as e-readers are becoming increasingly relevant for educational purposes. Thus, considering insights from younger generations, including Generation Alpha, could be an interesting direction for future researchers, as they refer to individuals that were already born in the digital era, experiencing technological and portable devices from a very early age and being highly familiar with the consumption of digital content.

Researchers are also aware of the subjective nature of the associations included in the perceptual analysis. Without clear and consistent definitions, interpretations of the given attributes might substantially vary depending on personal characteristics, contexts, or preferences. It is also hypothesized that verified strong correlation among many attributes (except for affordable) arise from misunderstandings or varying interpretations of the terms by participants. While some attributes, such as “Affordable”, “Durable”, or “Innovative”, are more likely to be self-explanatory to participants, others might be more ambiguous to interpret. For instance, the attributes “Local Relevance” and “Accessible”, stood out for how easily readers can access local content through the e-reader device and for how easily the devices can be acquired, respectively. Regarding these attributes, it might have been useful to add a brief description of what each association stood for, to avoid misconceptions between concepts while ensuring that participants had a consistent understanding of the concepts being assessed. Furthermore, the fact that the survey was designed

in English, rather than Portuguese, could have also influenced the meanings attributed to the attributes, as linguistic barriers may have led to different interpretations.

Still referring to perceptual analysis, the fact that respondents were not equally familiar with the four brands under evaluation, might have resulted in incomplete or biased data, in case participants feel compelled to rate unfamiliar brands. Additionally, consumer perceptions may be affected by subjective biases that are difficult to fully account for in the research, including brand loyalty, past experiences, or outside influences. The perceptual map may be distorted by the variability that these elements introduce, especially if respondents rely on broad impressions rather than in-depth brand knowledge. Therefore, perceptual mapping in this study may be impacted by the knowledge limitations and subjective biases of respondents which may affect the validity of the insights obtained.

Relatively to survey-based analysis of the consumers' perspectives on e-reading subscription services, a limitation regarding the number of respondents was found. Out of the 112 respondents to the survey, the opinions were divided, with 53 respondents being non-subscribers to the services and not willing to do so soon, and 59 of them being either current, previous or potential subscribers (*Appendix 3, Graph 1*). Although the 53 respondents were able to indicate the key reasons for their reluctance regarding adherence to the subscription plans, they were excluded from the following parts of the survey that studied the consumer perceptions of subscription services. Thus, despite the significant attempts to investigate customers' perspectives on the characteristics and attributes of e-reading subscription-based services, only 59 subscriber replies could be registered as valid, falling short of the benchmark minimum of 100 responses required for this study. Nowadays, the economy continues to evolve towards higher degrees of dematerialisation and servitisation, with subscription-based business models presenting increasing relevance, especially for digital content providers. While extensive literature can be found regarding streaming and music subscriptions

services, little work has been devoted to exploring the topic of e-books and audiobooks in a detailed manner. Thus, future research can focus on exploring consumers' preferences and attitudes towards e-books/audiobooks subscriptions services.

Notwithstanding its shortcomings, this dissertation is thought to offer a solid foundation for directing further studies on the Portuguese e-reader market.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Defining the brands

Table 1: Product Offering of E-reader Brands

Name	Kindle			
	Kindle	Paper White	Paper white signature edition	Scribe
Photo				
Price	129,99 €	189,99 €	252,16 €	384,42 €
Screen Size	6"	6,8"	6,8"	10,2"
Internal Memory	16GB	16GB	32GB	16, 32, 64GB
Software	AMV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A	AMV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A	AMV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF	AMV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A
Screen Technology	No	No	No	No
Wifi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bluetooth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Touch Screen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Battery Capacity (mAh)	1008	1420	1700	3200
Weight	158g	205g	191g	430g
Note Taking	No	No	No	Yes
Levels of grey	16	16	16	16
Night Mode	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ajadjustable light	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
Waterproof	n/a	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	No

Name	Woxter			
	Scriba 195	Scriba 195 S	Scriba 195 Paperlight	
Photo				
Price	79,90 €	69,00 €	99,90 €	119,90 €
Screen Size	6"	4,7"	6"	6"
Internal Memory	4GB	4GB	4GB	4GB
Software	DOC, EPUB, DRPL, FEL, HTML, PDF, RTF, TOR, TIT	DOC, EPUB, DRPL, FEL, HTML, PDF, RTF, TOR, TIT	DOC, EPUB, DRPL, FEL, HTML, PDF, RTF, TOR, TIT	DOC, EPUB, DRPL, FEL, HTML, PDF, RTF, TOR, TIT
Screen Technology	No	No	No	No
Wifi	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bluetooth	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
Touch Screen	No	No	No	Yes
Battery Capacity (mAh)	1800	800	1800	1800
Weight	n/a	100g	170gr	1707g
Note Taking	No	No	No	No
Levels of grey	16	16	16	16
Night Mode	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ajadjustable light	n/a	n/a	Yes	Yes
Waterproof	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Nome	Kobo					
	Clara BW	Libra Colour	Elipssa 2E	Sage	Clara Colour	Clara HD
Foto						
Price	139,99 €	229,99 €	399,99 €	299,99 €	159,99 €	129,99 €
Screen Size	6"	7"	10,3"	8"	6"	6"
Internal Memory	16GB	32GB	32GB	32GB (24000 eBooks)	16GB	16GB
Software	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	EPUB, EPUB3, FLIP-A, PDF, MOBI, PES, GR, PNG, BHP, TIF, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB
Screen Technology	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Wifi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bluetooth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Touch Screen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Battery Capacity	1500	2050	2400	n/a	1500	1500
Weight	174g	199g	390g	241g	174g	166g
Note Taking	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Levels of grey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Night Mode	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a
Ajadjustable light	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes	Yes
Waterproof	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	n/a	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters

Nome	PocketBook									
	Verse	Basic Lux 4	Verse Pro	InkPad 4	Era	InkPad Lite	Era Color	InkPad Color 3	Verse Pro Color	
Foto										
Price	176,88 €	115,14 €	220,61 €	292,65 €	268,15 €	230,99 €	275,53 €	354,00 €	169,00 €	
Screen Size	6"	6"	6"	7,8"	7"	9,7"	7"	7,8"	7,8"	
Internal Memory	8GB	8GB	16GB	32GB	16GB	8GB	32GB	32GB	32GB	
Software	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB	ACSV, ANV, DOV, DOV, MOVL, MOVL, PDF, PNG, TIF, JP-A, ORZ, ORB, TIT, HTML, RTF, ORZ, ORB
Screen Technology	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Wifi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Bluetooth	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Touch Screen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Battery Capacity	1500	1300	1500	2000	1700	2200	2500	2900	2900	
Weight	182g	155g	186g	265g	228g	369g	235g	270g	267g	
Note Taking	No	No	No	No	No	No	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Levels of grey	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	
Night Mode	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Ajadjustable light	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Waterproof	No	No	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	Yes	n/a	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	Yes - 60 minutes until 2 meters	

Appendix 2 – Script for Preliminary Interviews

Table 2: Script for Customer Interviews

Introduction	May I have your permission to record this interview?
Starting Questions (E-Reader Usage)	Do you currently own, or have owned an e-reader device? If so, which brand(s) and model(s)?
	How often do you use your E-Reader? (On average how many books do you read in a year/per month?)
	What types of content do you typically read on your E-Reader? (E-Books, Magazines, PDFs, etc.)
	How has owning an E-Reader affected your reading habits compared to traditional books? Has it increased or decreased your reading time? Why?
Factors Influencing Purchase Decision	What features/characteristics do you consider to be most important when purchasing an e-reader? (<i>Let them speak first and then ask for specific characteristics below.</i>)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Brand (Would you consider trying a new brand if it offered better features or pricing?)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Price (What are your thoughts on the pricing of E-Readers? Do you find them reasonable for the value they offer? Were there any promotions or discounts that influenced your purchase? What price range do you consider reasonable for an E-reader?)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Screen Technology (<i>Coloured Screen VS Black and White screen</i>)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Battery Life
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Storage Capacity (Internal memory) (What is the ideal capacity for you? 4GB, 8GB, 6GB, 32GB...)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Content Availability (<i>Access to eBook stores, variety of content, compatibility with different file formats</i>) (Do you prefer an e-reader that is tied to a specific ecosystem, like amazon kindle, or one that is more open and compatible with multiple sources?)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Use of Experience (<i>Ease of use, interface design, customization options</i>)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Portability (How do you balance screen size with portability in your choice of an e-reader? What is the ideal screen size?)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Build Quality (<i>Durability, waterproofing</i>)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Ability to take notes/Highlight
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Light Adjustment/Night Mode
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Waterproof
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Available Languages (<i>Portuguese</i>)
What do you like the most when using your e-reader and, on the other hand, what do you think that turns the using experience less positive?	
Psychological Associations	When you think about E-Readers, what brands first come to mind?
	Can you describe each brand you mentioned with three adjectives?
	To what extent do you associate any of the following adjectives to the mentioned brands? Reliable, affordable, innovative, user-friendly/easy to use, useful, enjoyable, sophisticated, trendy, versatile, eco friendly, minimalist, portable, aesthetic.
Subscription Services	Do you subscribe/ have subscribed/ have thought about subscribing to any subscription services (e.g. Kindle Unlimited)?
	How important are these services in your decision to own an e-reader?
	What factors do you consider most important when deciding whether to subscribe to an E-Reader service?
	What price range do you find reasonable for the subscriptions of e-reader services?
	(<i>In case the interviewee is subscribing to an e-reader service</i>) Are there any specific features or content you feel are missing from your current subscription? If yes, which ones?

	What do you think are the main reasons for consumers not to subscribe to these services?
	What do you think brands should do to make their subscription services more appealing to consumers?
	<i>(If the interviewee used to subscribe but doesn't anymore)</i> What made you cancel your subscription? Why didn't you consider another subscription service?
Opportunities and Threats	Have you faced any challenges or issues when using e-readers to access the content you read? <i>(Interface experience, technical issues, content restrictions, etc.)</i>
Future Expectations	What improvements or features would you like to see in future e-readers?
	How do you see the future of reading evolving in Portugal, and what role do you think E-Readers will play in that?
	How do you think brands could improve their positioning/strategy to appeal more to Portuguese consumers?
Demographic Questions	Gender
	Age
	Education Level
	Occupation
	Nationality

Table 3: Script for Specialist Interviews

Research Question	What are the key factors influencing consumer preferences for e-readers in the Portuguese market, and how can brands leverage these factors in their positioning strategies?
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Introduction	May I have your permission to record this interview?
Starting Questions (Industry Experience)	Are you currently working for a company that produces or sells E-Readers?
	Do you own an E-reader device yourself, or are thinking about purchasing one?
Consumer Behaviour Insights	Do you think the utilization of e-readers has affected people's reading habits compared to traditional books? How?
	What characteristics do you perceive customers to value the most when choosing an E-Reader? <i>(Let the interviewee speak first, then ask about other characteristics below)</i>
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Brand (When you think about E-Readers, what brands first come to your mind? Do you think consumers would consider trying a new brand if it offered better features or pricing?)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Price (What are your thoughts on the pricing of E-Readers? Do you find them reasonable for the value they offer? Do you think there are any promotions or discounts that influence consumers' purchase? What price range do you consider reasonable for an E-reader?)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Screen Technology <i>(Coloured Screen VS Black and White screen)</i>
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Battery Life
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Storage Capacity (Internal memory) (What is the ideal capacity of an E-Reader? 4GB, 8GB, 6GB, 32GB...)

	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Content Availability (<i>Access to eBook stores, variety of content, compatibility with different file formats</i>) (Do you think consumers prefer an e-reader that is tied to a specific ecosystem, like amazon kindle, or one that is more open and compatible with multiple sources?)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Use of Experience (<i>Ease of use, interface design, customization options</i>)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Portability (How do you think consumers balance screen size with portability in your choice of an E-Reader? What is the ideal screen size of an E-Reader?)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Build Quality (<i>Durability, waterproofing</i>)
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Ability to take notes/Highlight
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Light Adjustment/Night Mode
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Waterproof
	Can you comment on the following characteristic: Available Languages (<i>Portuguese</i>)
Psychological Associations	When you think about E-Readers, what brands first come to mind?
	Can you describe each brand you mentioned with three adjectives?
	To what extent do you associate any of the following adjectives to the mentioned brands? Reliable, affordable, innovative, user-friendly, sophisticated, trendy, versatile, eco friendly, minimalist, portable, aesthetic.
Subscription Services	How important are subscription services (like Kindle Unlimited) to your business model? Do you see them as a key factor in driving E-Reader sales?
	Are you familiarized with the fact that a lot of E-Reader owners end up getting their books in a way that allows them to have books for free? In your opinion, how can a company prevent that?
	What are the most common reasons for consumers to subscribe to E-Reader services?
	What are the most common reasons for consumers to cancel the subscriptions/or not subscribe to E-Reader services?
Opportunities and Threads	What distinguishes your company's content ecosystem from competitors, and why should customers choose your platform?
	What are the most common reasons for consumers not to purchase or discontinue the use of E-Readers?
	How does your company address the competition from other digital devices like tablets and smartphones?
Future Expectations	What challenges do you foresee the E-Reader industry facing in the near future?
	What characteristics do you think will work as key factors in the future growth of the E-reader industry?
	How do you see the future of reading evolving in Portugal, and what role do you think E-Readers will play in that?
Demographic Questions	Name
	Gender
	Age
	Education Level
	Occupation
	Nationality

Appendix 3 – E-book Subscription Plans Perception Analysis - Results from the Perceptual Map

& Bonus Part Survey

Graph 1: Adherence to Subscription Plans

