

Research Proposal - LinkedIn Premium

Problem Statement

LinkedIn partners with universities to provide a free two-month trial of LinkedIn Premium, yet a significant portion of students fail to take advantage of or convert to a paid subscription after the trial period.

There are several features that LinkedIn offers for students seeking jobs/internships including InMail which helps users to contact recruiters or other industry professionals. Users also have access to Application Insights - which gives more insight about a job posting such as the other applicants for that position, or insights about the company.

The question we are trying to answer is: *Despite offering a complimentary two-month premium trial to university students, why is LinkedIn facing low conversion rates and low usage of the trial among students seeking internships/jobs?*

Research Aims and Objectives

The main goal of our research is to help LinkedIn convert the trial users into subscribers. By the end of the project, we would shed light on the factors that impact their conversion rate among university students and also provide strategies to LinkedIn to improve that. The recommendations would include improving their existing features and how they can be improved to meet early career job seekers' expectations. We would also suggest new features that would benefit our target user group and help LinkedIn increase premium subscribers. This project would focus on improving conversion rate.

We would explore different factors that would impact it and aim to find answers to questions like-

- What factors influence user decision to/not to subscribe to LI Premium?
- What user expectations were met/not met by the features provided?
- What are the users most used features and what are their limitations?
- How can the pricing plan be improved?
- Are users a part of any other services that provide better features?

Methods and Data Sources

Primary data sources, such as interviews and surveys, will be mined for this study's mix of qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

Interviews-> Our plan is to conduct interviews on an individual basis which will create a sample of students at the university. They might have used LinkedIn premium trials and the interviews will help us understand their experience and the level of satisfaction with the service. The interviews will enable us to investigate the factors that influenced their decision to subscribe or not, their experience with the premium features, and their suggestions for enhancement. We intend to execute at least 15 interviews in order to obtain a variety of perspectives.

We will also poll a statistically significant number of college students to learn more about their experience with LinkedIn premium services. The survey will ask respondents about their motivations for subscribing, their favorite features, and suggestions for service enhancements. At least one hundred people are needed to fill out the online survey.

Analysis Approach: Both qualitative and quantitative approaches will be used to examine the information gathered.

Subject Selection and Sampling Procedure

The population for this research are university students who meet these criteria: (1) have a LinkedIn account, (2) received a free two-month premium trial from their university, and (3) are looking for an internship/job. This population is the target audience and the objective is to understand why they aren't converting to paid subscriptions or not using the trial effectively.

Convenience sampling will be utilized as it is practical given the time-frame available. The sample will include students (1) enrolled in the University of Washington, (2) with a LinkedIn account, (3) seeking a job/internship, and (4) using LinkedIn for their search. This sample will include undergraduate, graduate, and PhD students.

To ensure a balanced representation, interviews would be split evenly between 50% who have never used LinkedIn Premium and 50% who tried it for two months and discontinued. This will be a quota sample of the convenience-based sample chosen. For the post-interview survey, we would reach out to students through various communication channels such as LinkedIn, Teams groups, WhatsApp, and email. However, the sample may not be representative of the population, and the results may not be generalizable.

Project Timeline

5/1 - 5/3

Step 1: Drafting the interview

- Decide on the initial interview length and format
- Create a first draft of interview questions to understand the effectiveness of the interview and understand attitudes of users towards the premium service

5/4 - 5/5

Step 2: Piloting the interview + Review of questions

- Decide on sampling method and inclusion/exclusion criteria for the entire research
- *Conduct pilot interviews with a small group of participants*

- *Review and refine questions to address issues observed in the pilot*

5/8 - 5/10

Step 3: Conduct final interviews

- Determine the final interview format and length
- Decide on the sample size for the interview
- Approach and recruit participants based on sampling criteria
- Conduct a final round of interviews

5/11 - 5/12

Step 4: Develop the survey + pilot

- Analyze the responses from the interview
- Use learnings from the analysis to develop a survey
- Pilot the survey with a small group of participants based on the sampling criteria
- Evaluate and refine the survey questions

5/13 - 5/14

Step 5: Final survey rollout

- Administer the survey to the selected sample participants
- Collect and clean the survey data
- Analyze the survey data using quantitative analysis

5/15-5/24

Step 6: Data analysis and synthesis

- Integrate and compare the findings from the interviews and the survey
- Use mixed methods data analysis techniques to synthesize the data
- Interpret the findings in light of the research questions and objectives

5/24-5/26

Step 7: Consolidate and report findings:

- Create and document final recommendations for LinkedIn based on analysis
- Present findings to the class

Ethical Considerations and Risk Management Strategy

In order to manage ethical considerations and risks we need to take the following steps:

1. **Capturing and managing consent** : We want to ensure that everyone who participates in our research understands its purpose, its rights, and the associated risks and benefits. Therefore, we will first obtain their consent, and we will keep their information private and anonymous.

2. **Managing data:** We will exercise caution when managing the data we collect. Only authorized individuals will have access, and we will ensure its safety and security.
3. **Addressing limited data :**As we will be collecting data through surveys, interviews, and focus groups from UW students, our findings may be subject to certain biases. With limited data, we may not be able to draw accurate conclusions about the population we are studying, and our findings may be subject to sampling error.