Customer Insights Research Report

LinkedIn for Early Career

Linh Chu

Situational Overview

Bridging the Gap: Where Student Success Drives Growth

LinkedIn - the world's largest professional network with over 950M users - reported $1.7 billion from Premium subscriptions in 2023, accounting for 11.3% of its total revenue [1]. Premium sign-ups increased by 51% in FY2024, driven by job-seekers' demand in getting the best possible opportunities amid economic uncertainty[2], therefore LinkedIn is focusing on enhancing Premium offerings to meet this demand.

Our secondary research revealed a stark decline in GenZ confidence in securing a favorable job or internship in Fall 2023 compared to Fall 2022, with 50% early-career candidates not confident in recruitment (Fig 1). This insight presented an opportunity for LinkedIn to develop Premium feature offerings catered to the rising needs of the student segment. A product-centric approach that ultimately aims to make LinkedIn more customer-centric while capturing additional revenue growth.

Based on the findings on top anticipated job search challenges among Gen Z (Fig 2), a new feature was proposed: **LinkedIn Internship Hub**, a centralized hub where students can find all internship opportunities, apply directly, and access exclusive resources like application tips, recruiter connections, interview prep, and more (Appendix B).

The research project aims to answer: **"Will LinkedIn Early Career features increase students' willingness to upgrade to LinkedIn Premium?"**

We hypothesize that **the introduction of Early Career with dedicated features for internship seekers will enhance perceived value and increase the likelihood of students subscribing to LinkedIn Premium.**

Ultimately, the research aims to inform management team's strategic decisions regarding Premium feature development and student segment engagement:

1. **Product Development Strategy:** validate customer insights and test product-market fit before proceeding to next stage of product pipeline
2. **Revenue Growth Potential:** test if specialized features could drive significant Premium subscription growth

[1] Reuters. (2023.) In new disclosure, LinkedIn says premium subscriptions bring in $1.7 billion. https://www.reuters.com/technology/rare-disclosure-linkedin-says-premium-subscriptions-bring-17-billion-2024-03-07/
[2] LinkedIn. (2024.) Business Highlights from FY24 Q4 Earnings. https://news.linkedin.com/2024/July/LinkedIn_Business_Highlights_from_FY24_Q4_Earnings
[3] RippleMatch. (2024). The State of Gen Z Job Search Report https://resources.ripplematch.com/hubfs/2023-2024%20The%20State%20of%20the%20Gen%20Z%20Job%20Search.pdf

CANDIDATE JOB CONFIDENCE REMAINS SHAKY HEADING INTO FALL RECRUITMENT

50% of candidates said they are **NOT confident** in their ability to secure a good internship/job (Fig 1)
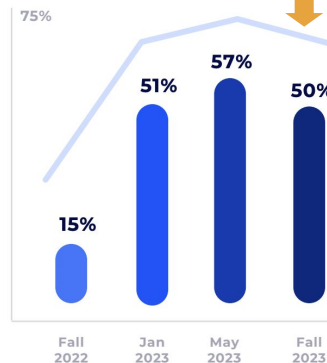
HAVING APPLICATION STAND OUT & BEING 'GHOSTED' ARE GEN Z'S TOP ANTICIPATED JOB SEARCH CHALLENGES

What do you expect the biggest challenges in your job/internship search to be this year? (Fig 2)
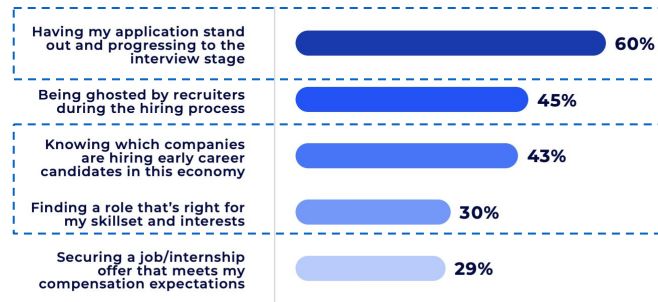
Source: RippleMatch (2024) The State of Gen Z Job Search Report [3]
Responses from 1570 early-career candidates

Summary

Research Question

Will LinkedIn Early Career features increase students' willingness to upgrade to LinkedIn Premium?

Methodology

Phase 1: Qualitative Research (10 in-depth interviews)
- Explore needs and pain points of students in finding internship
- Explore perceptions of LinkedIn Premium offerings among students

Phase 2: Quantitative Research (100 survey responses)
- Conducted an experimental design survey using factor analysis, clustering and logistic regression to evaluate drivers of subscription intent

Findings

Increased Value Added: 6 respondents believe the Internship Hub would increase LinkedIn perceived value

Increasing Demand: All respondents express demand for reliable job postings

Pricing Constraint: Affordability might affect consumers' subscription intent

Exploratory Factor Analysis: EFA analysis provides evidence for using 5 factors to measure user's perceived values of LinkedIn Premium

Clustering: K-Means Clustering confirms the existence of a highly engaging, high willingness to subscribe customer segment

Logistic Regression: Logistic regression demonstrates the strong influence Networking treatment has on increasing user intent

Recommendation

Analysis suggests that there is an opportunity for LinkedIn Premium to **increase customer lifetime value** among students by **enhancing networking usage and perception**. LinkedIn should conduct further interviews with users in cluster 3 to learn why they have such strong intent to subscribe and whether they are using LinkedIn differently and more effectively than other users. **Additional product-centric research** is needed if LinkedIn pursue development of Premium features

Phase 1

Qualitative Research

Findings Summary

Our exploratory study was conducted among 10 students from diverse academic backgrounds and varied familiarity with LinkedIn and LinkedIn Premium. The findings revealed some shared opinions along with divergent thoughts on the current perceived value of LinkedIn feature and Premium offerings, as well as reactions to Internship Hub idea and willingness to pay for Premium subscription.

1 **Digital Connection Matters**
Connection and the ability to build a long lasting digital network were commonly noted by respondents as what sets LinkedIn apart from competitors

2 **Need for Efficiency, Clarity, Security**
Students face inefficiencies, poor search accuracy, unclear position requirements, and unreliable postings in internship searches

3 **Awareness and Value Gap**
Many students are unaware of LinkedIn Premium full offerings, perceiving the main benefit as InMail credits, and remain unsure if Premium offers distinct value over the free account

4 **Price Sensitivity**
Cost associated with LinkedIn is a relevant consideration when students decide how they want to use LinkedIn

5 **Perceived Value of Internship Hub**
Six respondents believe the Internship Hub would increase LinkedIn's perceived value, three were undecided, and one felt it would not enhance its value

6 **Valuable Investment**
Students may invest in the Internship Hub for its benefits in reducing overwhelm, offering crucial insights, boosting confidence, and enhancing transparency in the job search

Methodology | 1:1 In-depth Interview

Interview Profile

10 students from team's networks were recruited for interviews : 5 undergraduate & 5 graduate students

7 students have subscribed to LinkedIn Premium

Deductive Coding

- Evaluate important concepts in each interview
- Group students' responses into major themes to observe similarities and differences

Interview Goals

- Understand students' internship search behavior and evaluate LinkedIn's role and effectiveness during searching process

- Identify users' pain points using LinkedIn and gauge receptiveness to LinkedIn Premium

- Assess potential impact of proposed LinkedIn Internship Hub

- Identify opportunities to differentiate LinkedIn from competitors

- Gather feedback for product refinement

Discussion Guide Design

1. **Background**
   Major, Year of School

2. **Internship Search Experience and Pain Points**
   e.g. What frustrates you when seeking internship?

3. **Perceptions of LinkedIn Features and Premium Offerings**
   e.g. What features do you use the most? Why?

4. **Reactions to the LinkedIn Internship Hub**
   e.g. What is your first impression of the feature?
   "Internship Hub makes me feel ____"

5. **Impact on LinkedIn Premium Subscription Intent**
   e.g. If the Hub is exclusive to Premium users, would you be willing to upgrade?

Insights | Interviewees have different unmet needs during internship search

Wanted Values	Unmet Needs	Customer Narration
Accuracy	• Students get postings for full-time jobs when searching for internships • Students do not know which keywords to use for optimized results	• "You apply for so many things, and then you look at the results again, and a lot of it's just **irrelevant jobs**…" • "When I typed…a **keyword…not get many results I wanted** nor met the jobs' qualification…wasn't sure which keywords to…optimize"
Efficiency	• Students need several steps to identify past interns for specific positions • Students waste time crafting personalized messaging • Students lose time scrolling through numerous duplicate postings	• "You…see if they look like they're still in school…probably interns. A bit like a **guessing game**, which is **time consuming**" • "I think the **most time consuming thing is crafting the message** or cold messages to hiring manager" • "I used…filter…search for new jobs, seeing **reposted jobs**…I already **applied** but I didn't remember and…**wasted my time**"
Transparency	• Students struggle to evaluate their fit for internships due to due to vague requirements and unclear eligibility criteria • Students do not know where they are in the recruitment process	• "So many interviews… **after the first interview**, they said, 'Oh, we **won't allow** sponsorship.'" • "Most challenging part of getting an internship is filtering through opportunities, you don't know if it's a real opportunity or **just posted because they have to advertise**"
Security	• Students are concerned about the security risks of outdated and fraudulent internship postings	• "…because the **scam** that I got in May…I kind of want to **step away from LinkedIn**"

7

Insights | Students subscribe to LinkedIn Premium only for networking, yet the features feel like expensive barrier removal rather than valuable career enhancers

Networking equals to higher chance of getting a job

Students who had used Premium said that they were triggered by the InMail feature. Networking provides a sense of **security** over an opportunity.

"If you don't have Premium, it could be **very frustrating** because I want to connect and reach out to as many people as I can to have some sort of referral to **secure a position at a better firm**"

"I used Premium **just for the networking part, hopefully to get a job**…"

There's no other benefit to upgrade if it's not for networking

Consistently reveal **confusion** and lack of understanding about Premium features, unaware of or unclear about other potential benefits.

"I don't understand the **difference** on job search smarter with Premium. **What does that do? I don't know.** I just use the premium for cold messaging."

"Not much [intention to resubscribe], because I'm now **not as interested** or motivated to cold message people again"

$40 feels like an indulgence rather than an essential tool for job search

Don't understand or see the concrete benefits that would justify the $40 price tag. For students especially, price point feels high when the return on investment isn't clear. **Skepticism** with price sensitivity pose a big barrier to upgrade.

"I have thought about upgrading. But then I looked at the price, and I **immediately tell myself, no**. I think, for the price, the features are **not necessary**"

"I wouldn't consider Premium. If somehow the product could better detect jobs that better suit your needs, then for me that would be **worth the price.**"

↳ Key Insight: Our research indicates a **value gap problem**, at least in student segment. Experienced value does not match expected value. To solve this problem, LinkedIn needs to improve the perceived value of the offerings to justify the benefits given the current price point.

Insights | Majority of students reacted positively about LinkedIn Internship Hub, yet a few students felt skeptical about added value

Positive		Skeptical	
Centralization Eliminates Overwhelmingness	"This Hub essentially **consolidates all** the **information** and puts everything **in a chronological state … maximize chances** of finding something they like." "I like the idea that you're able to consolidate everything, because when I was searching for internships I **had no idea where to start**"	**Added Complexity**	"**Don't want** another separate place to see internships, **increased time searching** and separating things might make it **more confusing**"
Insider Intel Ignites Advantage	"Being able to talk with previous interns and recruiting agents… **leverages yourself** so much… you learn what they expect and any interview tips."	**Verified, Not Outdated Intel**	"…needs to make sure if there are actual user input, it **has to be reliable** and most recent ones. **Input from 2012 are probably not relevant** that much"
Guidance Grows Confidence	"I didn't know how to use LinkedIn at first, this would **give me guidance** to navigate during the job search, **ensuring** that I'm in the **right direction**"	**Indistinctiveness**	"You can do that for free in other platforms, it's just not convenient…centralization but it's **still not persuasive enough**"
Transparency Empowers Opportunities	"I like the calendar… I'm such a **visual** person; that would **save so much time**."		

Takeaways

- Bridging positive feedback on centralization with skepticism about added value reveals key opportunities to strengthen the Internship Hub's product-market fit through targeted platform improvements
- To validate these insights, quantitative research will be used to measure user satisfaction and rank importance of each sub feature in relation to perceived product value

Insights | Higher willingness to subscribe to Premium for the Internship Hub, but need to see guaranteed proof of concept, while cost still remains a barrier

" I would **definitely subscribe** to Premium to use this feature if it's launched "

1	Increased value perception of LinkedIn Premium	Many students would consider Premium if the Internship Hub offered resources that streamline the job search experience. Features specifically addressing early-career needs improved the perception of Premium as a worthwhile investment.	"If this feature is a part of LinkedIn Premium… that's so much better. Right now, I can't differentiate it."
2	Affordability still remains a significant barriers	Several suggested a lower-cost, student-focused tier. This model would make Premium more accessible and attractive for those who may be price-sensitive but interested in targeted internship features.	"If you're targeting the student population, they probably shouldn't make it Premium. It should be like a student premium [at lower price]" "For $40, I'm still not sure…"
3	Importance of clear differentiation in exclusive features	Value-conscious students based their willingness to upgrade on whether the features are unique and not available elsewhere. The features are expected to give them a distinct advantage in securing internships in order to justify the investment.	"LinkedIn already sends you emails with job recommendations… internship data and job recs kind of already exist… may need more differentiation"

Conclusion | Explorative research shows a positive response to the Internship Hub addressing unmet customer needs, proceeding with quantitative research to test hypothesis

Current Phase: *Explorative Research*

Insights

- **Increased Value Added:** 6 respondents believe the Internship Hub would increase LinkedIn perceived value
- **Increasing Demand:** All respondents express demand for reliable job postings
- **Pricing Constraint:** Affordability might affect consumers' subscription intent

Original **hypothesis** remains **unchanged**, proceed with quantitative research

Next Phase: *Quantitative Research*

Measuring Awareness of Premium Offerings

Assess current customers' awareness and usage of LinkedIn Premium features to identify any gaps in perceived value or understanding

Quantifying Customer Ranking of Features

Analyze customer ranking of wanted values (Accuracy, Efficiency, Transparency, Security) and Internship Hub feature to identify most crucial elements for customers

Change in Perception & Subscription Intent

Perform Sentiment Analysis of customers' perception of LinkedIn and compare Premium subscription intent before and after introduction of Internship Hub*

Final: *Proposed Strategies*

Communication of Premium Offerings

LinkedIn should provide clearer explanation of the unique benefits of Premium, as many users are unaware of how it differs from the free tier

Prioritization of Student-centric Features

LinkedIn should focus on developing top-ranked features that improve customer experience, as identified through research

Launch of LinkedIn Internship Hub

LinkedIn should launch the Hub to capture students' unmet needs if quantitative research produces positive results.

* Control group only has access to current LinkedIn offerings, test group will be shown mockup of Internship Hub

Phase 2
Quantitative Research

Quantitative Research Methodology | Guided by qualitative insights, we conducted an experimental survey using factor analysis, clustering and logistic regression to evaluate drivers of subscription intent

Survey Design

Experimental between-subjects design: Participants were randomly assigned into different treatments, enabling a direct comparison of the treatments' potential impacts on the measured outcomes

Subject Selection

Screening Criteria: Participants comprised of early career professionals, specifically current students and recent graduates (within 2 years), and who are active LinkedIn users
Total Responses: 155
Qualified Responses: 108

Subject Distribution

Survey Platform: Qualtrics
Survey Duration: 10 days

Analysis of Results

Factor Analysis: Identified latent variables, reduced data dimensionality, and grouped related variables into meaningful factors
Clustering: Categorized customers into distinct segments based on their similarities in platform usage and perceived value
Logistic Regression: Examined the binary outcome of intent* to subscribe, assessing how independent variables influence the likelihood of subscription

*Has Intent: responses of "Somewhat Likely" and "Extremely Likely"

Survey Design | Our survey explored how LinkedIn usage, platform perception, job search attitudes, and perceived Premium value influence subscription intent, randomly assigning participants into two treatments to assess their impact.

Independent Variables	Randomized Treatments	Dependent Variable

Independent Variables

1. **Usage:** measures platform usage and engagement with LinkedIn feature through activities e.g. job search, networking, referrals, social interactions
2. **Attitude towards Job Search:** users rate feelings e.g. confidence, anxiety, overwhelmingness,...
3. **Perception towards LinkedIn:** users rate functional and emotional benefits, and forced commitment with the platform
4. **LinkedIn Overall Satisfaction:** measures how satisfied participants are with the overall platform
5. **Premium Perceived Value:** evaluates perceptions of LinkedIn Premium's potential career benefits and worthiness of the upgrade

Randomized Treatments

1. **Control:** No Message

2. **Treatment: Centralization**

"With personalized support at every step of the way, extra resources to pick from, and insights about your career search, the new LinkedIn streamlines your path to the perfect role."

3. **Treatment: Networking**

"With the reduction of guesswork - connect directly with mentors, recruiters, and alumni from your top jobs and receive feedback throughout the application process from your growing network"

Dependent Variable

Intent to Subscribe: measures how likely respondents are to purchase or continue purchasing a LinkedIn Premium subscription specifically to support their job search efforts

EFA confirms internal data structure to be compared between customer clusters

Attribute Loadings on First Two Components
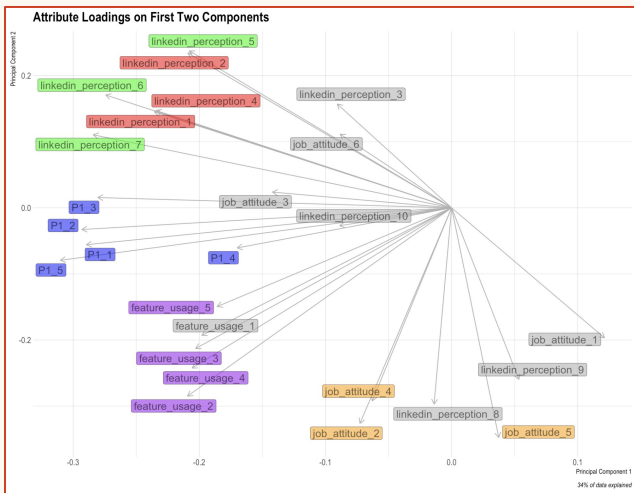
Factor	Reliability	Meaning
Functionality	0.72	Trust in LinkedIn's ability to provide relevant and efficient job recommendations
Premium	**0.80**	**Perception and value of LinkedIn Premium features**
Emotion	0.75	LinkedIn's impact on confidence, control, and organization in job searches
Social Usage	**0.83**	**Engagement with LinkedIn for networking**
Job Anxiety	**0.70**	**Feeling of stress and overwhelm in the job search process**

34%
of data explained

5
factors reduced from 18 dimensions

0.7
minimum factor reliability

Survey questions generally follow their overarching themes (similar directions)

Histogram of social_usage

social_usage
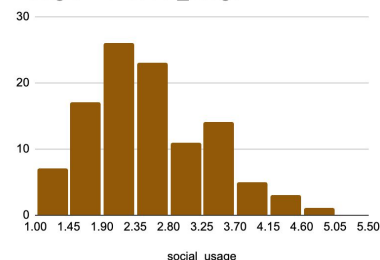
Overall low engagement with networking through LinkedIn

Histogram of job_anxiety

job_anxiety
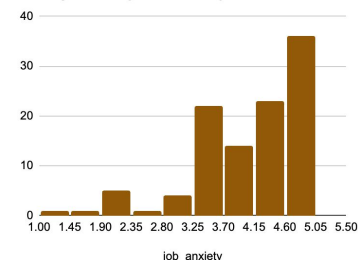
High anxiousness and pessimism across all groups

Histogram of premium_perc
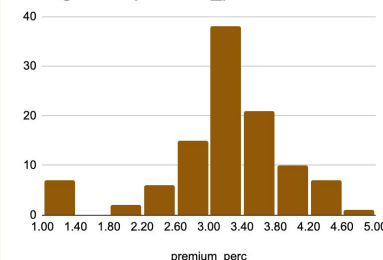
premium_perc

Some benefits from Premium founded but value gap remained

Insights | Students tend to be low promoters of LinkedIn and often fail to recognize the value of upgrading to the premium version

A small percentage of respondents in the survey are promoters, which could indicate that they are not fully satisfied with the product. This suggests a potential "value gap," where the premium features may not be perceived as worth upgrading to.

This is additionally backed by the responses to "are premium features worth upgrading from the free version," with no being the strongest response for all groups except those already subscribed. To address this, a new feature could be introduced to LinkedIn Premium in order to close the value gap and boost retention.

NPS | Would you recommend Premium to your friends?

Promoter Passive Detractor

	Trial	Past Subscribers	Current Subscribers
Promoter	6.7%	10.7%	13.8%
Passive	36.7%	39.3%	55.2%
Detractor	56.7%	50.0%	31.0%
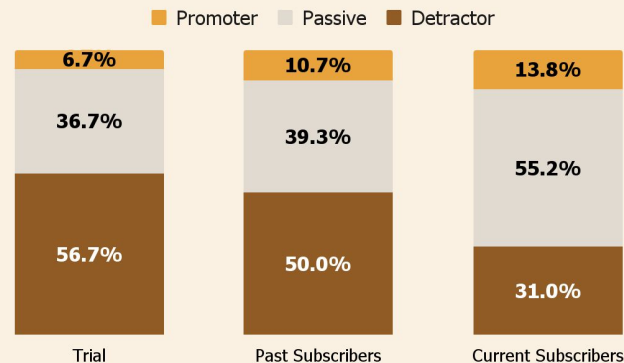
Are Premium features worth upgrading from free version?

Yes No

	Free	Trial	Past Subscribers	Current Subscribers
Yes	25.0%	30.0%	35.7%	69.0%
No	75.0%	70.0%	64.3%	31.0%
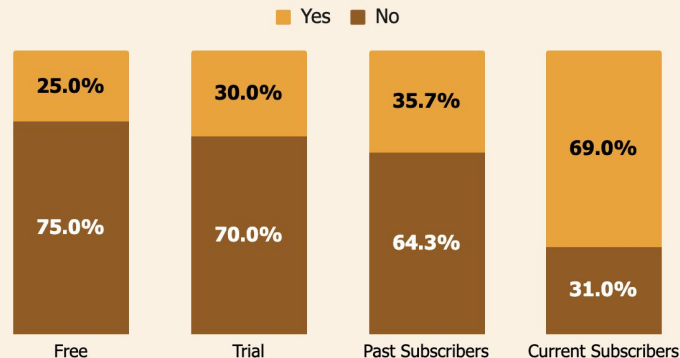
Insights | Networking message, emphasizing Premium offerings, addressing job search anxiety, and promoting LinkedIn's social engagement features are key to driving subscriptions

Logistic Regression

	p = 0.1	
Variable	**Coefficient**	**P-value**
constant	-7.550	0.001
treatment_centralization	0.663	0.259
treatment_networking	1.534	0.006
job_anxiety	0.863	0.012
emotion	-0.168	0.667
functionality	-0.142	0.720
premium	0.809	0.039
social usage	0.580	0.081

Insights

- **Treatment Networking**, with the highest positive coefficient, shows the strongest effect on increasing the likelihood of intent compared to the control group
- People who perceive higher value in the **Premium** offering and experience higher **anxiety** during their job search are significantly more likely to exhibit intent
- With a p-value of 0.1, the **social usage** factor is statistically significant. This suggests that individuals who engage more actively with LinkedIn's social features—such as networking, initiating coffee chats, posting, and interacting with others' content—are more likely to subscribe

Clustering | Students are segmented into 3 clusters sharing different usage, attitudes and perceptions

Radar chart axes: Premium Perception, Job Search Frequency, LinkedIn Importance, Social Usage, Job Anxiety, Emotion, Functionality
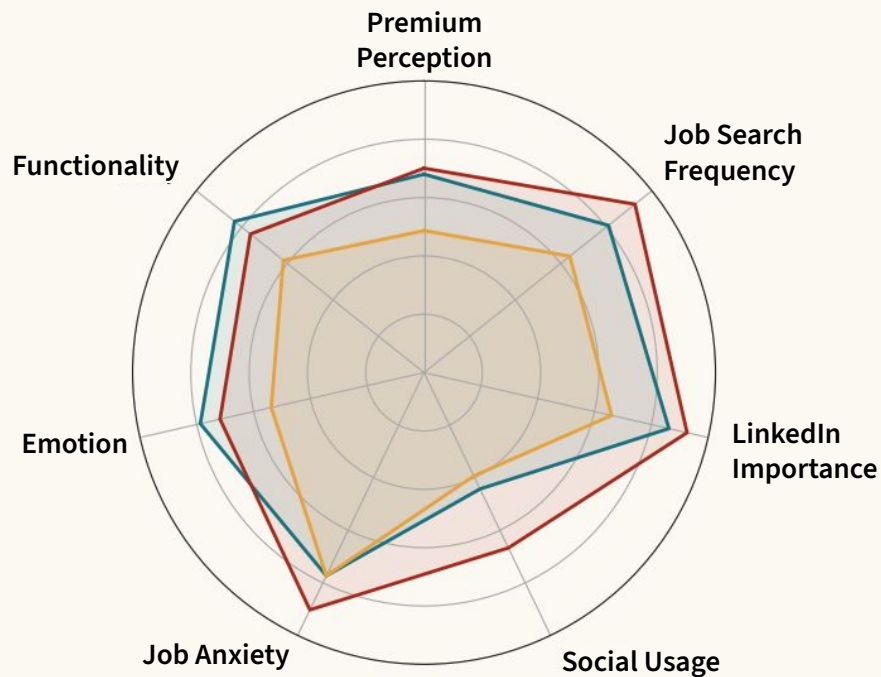
Legend: Cluster 1, Cluster 2, Cluster 3

**Cluster 1
39%**

Passive Job Seekers
- Appreciate the functional and emotional benefits from LinkedIn
- Somewhat anxious about job search but does not seem that aggressive in taking action in job searching
- Perceive LinkedIn Premium as an advantage to get a job and worthy to upgrade

**Cluster 2
28%**

Disengaged Doubters
- Low LinkedIn usage for both job search and networking
- Does not see the functional and emotional benefits from LinkedIn
- Unconvinced of the value proposition of LinkedIn Premium

**Cluster 3
33%**

Proactive Career Hunters
- Highly active in seeking jobs (applying/browsing for jobs daily on LinkedIn) and feel extremely anxious about it
- Use LinkedIn frequently for networking
- See LinkedIn as a highly important platform in job search
- Perceive LinkedIn Premium as an advantage to get a job and worthy to upgrade

Insights | Networking message increases intent to subscribe across customer segments, yet cluster 3 users show strong desire regardless of treatment

Logistic Regression

p = 0.05

Variable	Coefficient	P-value
constant	-1.31	0.005*
treatment_centralization	0.48	0.378
treatment_networking	1.46	0.006*
Disengaged Doubters	-0.36	0.51
Proactive Career Hunters	1.38	0.007*

Interpretation

A user in cluster 1 and receive no message has 21% probability to show intent to subscribe to Premium

Networking	Cluster 3

Probability of having intent

54%	52%

Insights

- Networking treatment has a stronger influence on intent compared to clusters

Effect of Test Messages on Treatment Group
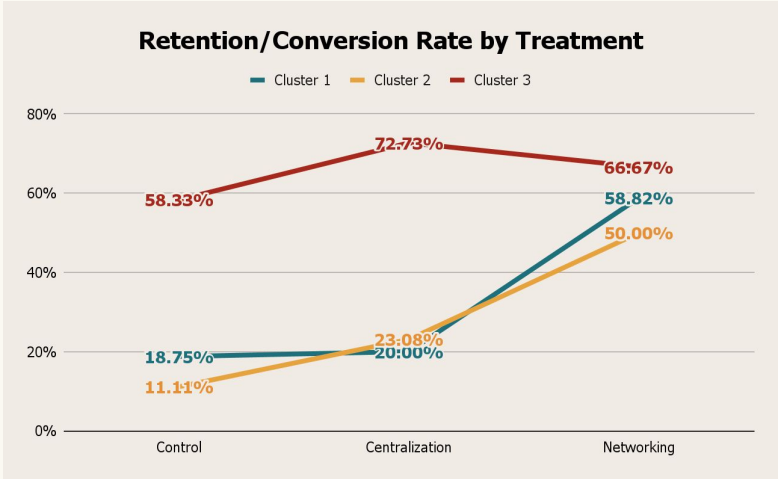
Retention/Conversion Rate by Treatment

— Cluster 1   — Cluster 2   — Cluster 3

Cluster 3: Control 58.33%, Centralization 72.73%, Networking 66.67%
Cluster 1: Control 18.75%, Centralization 20.00%, Networking 58.82%
Cluster 2: Control 11.11%, Centralization 23.08%, Networking 50.00%

Insight #1	**Cluster 3** shows high innate intent to subscribe even **without test messages** due to **high job anxiety**, **high Premium perception** and **high social usage**
Insight #2	**All clusters** demonstrate **lift** in **intent** to subscribe after exposure to Networking message

Short-Term Recommendation | Utilizing ad campaign to drive social feature usage and improve the gap in Premium perception for low-engaged segments

Insight #1	**Cluster 3** shows high innate intent to subscribe even **without test messages** due to **high job anxiety**, **high Premium perception** and **high social usage**

Next Steps

Identify Gaps in Perceptions of Premium
- **Usage alignment:** Assess if their strong perception of Premium's value aligns with actual usage patterns and whether they face barriers to fully utilizing the product
- **Explanatory Research:** Interview those with higher perception to understand why/how they see value in Premium (e.g. because of a specific feature) → could LinkedIn leverage those insights to develop other customer segments?

Strengthen LinkedIn Value Proposition through Ad Campaign
- **Improve Product Marketing:** Target users with low usage through message placement to remind users of relevant existing Premium features
- **Close the value gap of Cluster 1 and 2:** Tailor Ad campaigns to improve Premium value proposition for cluster 1 & 2 through understanding of cluster 3's engagement patterns

Business Impact

↑ **% Paying Users**
Customer Lifetime Value
Net Promoter Score

↓ **Customer Churn**

Long-Term Recommendation | Leveraging customer-centric insights to inform product development opportunities

Insight #2	**All clusters** demonstrate **lift** in **intent** to subscribe after exposure to Networking concept

Next Steps

Conduct research from a product-centric approach

- **Product-centric approach:** Transition from a customer-centric approach to a product-centric strategy to align resources and focus on delivering high-value features that meet specific user needs and drive product differentiation
- **Feature importance analysis:** Conduct in-depth feature importance research informed by qualitative and quantitative findings, particularly focusing on insights from Cluster 3 users, who represent a significant and distinct segment of the target audience

Conduct financial analysis

- **Analyze development costs and revenue potential:** Evaluate the investment required for product development versus the expected lift in conversion, retention, and CLV.
- **Perform a CLV vs. Cost analysis:** Use advanced models to compare projected gains in customer lifetime value against the associated costs of implementation.

Business Impact

↑ Customer Lifetime Value
Net Promoter Score

↓ Customer Churn

Linkedin®

High percentage of neutral responses

Skewed data distribution

Percentage of Asians in Dataset

Other categories
29.6%

Asian female
52.8%

Asian male
17.6%
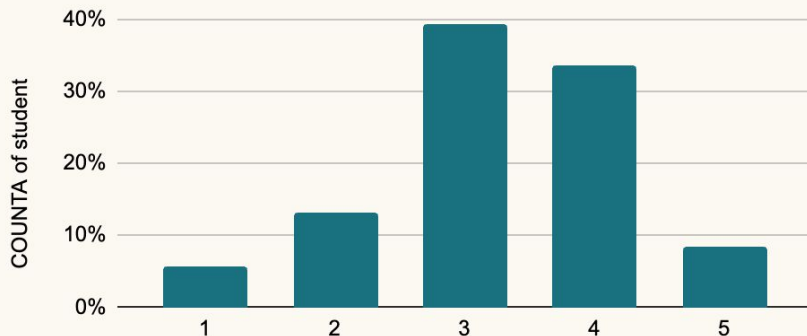
Our Qualtrics survey used an **odd-numbered response scale**, which allowed participants to select a neutral option. This led to a higher-than-expected number of neutral responses, limiting the ability to identify clear preferences or trends.

Implementing an **even-numbered scale** to force respondents to take a stance, ensuring more actionable insights

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The survey sample was **disproportionately** composed of **Asian female** graduate students. This skew was due to the distribution of the survey primarily within our own network, which does not fully represent our target audience (college and graduate students of diverse backgrounds)

Distributing the survey through more **diverse channels**, such as university-wide mailing lists, career centers, and student organizations, to reach a broader and more representative sample of students

Appendix

Appendix A | Qualitative Research Discussion Guide

Stage	Questions	Notes
1. Introduction (5 min)	- Thank participants for their time - Briefly explain the purpose of the interview: to understand their experiences with internship searching and their thoughts on potential new features for LinkedIn - Ask for consent to record - Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers; we're interested in their honest opinions and experiences	
2. Background and warm-up (10 min)	- Could you tell me a bit about yourself? - Age, School, School Year, Major - Have you ever searched for or applied to internships? - How long have you had LinkedIn? Have you ever used LinkedIn premium? If yes, for how long did you subscribe? - How often do you use LinkedIn? (daily/weekly)	**Professional Experience** 1. Don't spend too much time here. If interviewee can't recall, tell them to give a rough estimate 2. Internship: Consider follow up: - When was the first time they applied for internships? - How many summer internships have you applied for? → goal: try to gauge how experienced they are in internship seeking

Appendix A | Qualitative Research Discussion Guide (cont)

Stage	Questions	Notes
3. Current Use of LinkedIn and Pain Points (25 min)	**Internship Search Experience** ● As a student, how do you currently search for internships? Which platforms do you use? ● What's the most challenging part of finding an internship? 　○ Probe: 　　■ Difficulty accessing resources 　　■ Skill gaps 　　■ Timing and deadlines 　　■ Uncertainty about processes **Exploring Current LinkedIn Usage and Pain Points** ● Tell me about how you currently use/have used LinkedIn to navigate your internship search 　○ Probe: How effective do you find it? ● How often do you use LinkedIn, and what features do you use most? (e.g., networking, job searching, learning courses, etc.) 　○ What frustrates you? (can ask walkthrough for specific top pain points) 　○ What do you find the most time consuming? **Exploring Premium Subscription Awareness/Usage** ● If the interviewee **has** used LinkedIn Premium before, 　○ What triggers you to subscribe? 　○ What are your thoughts on the Premium version? ● If the interviewee **hasn't** used LinkedIn Premium before, 　○ Have you ever considered upgrading to Premium? Why or why not? 　○ If the answer is because of subscription price, ask what are some features you would like to see to be worth paying premium?	**LinkedIn Process** During walk-through session, notice what filters/features they click on first (e.g. check past recommendations or start a new search etc)

Stage	Questions	Notes

4. Introduction of LinkedIn Internship Hub
 	
(10-15 min)
	Introduce of the New Feature
	● Description: We're planning to launch a new feature called LinkedIn Internship Hub, which is a **centralization** of
	    a. It's a centralized platform where students can find all internship opportunities in **one place**, apply directly, and access exclusive resources like application tips, recruiter connections, interview prep, and more.
	
	Reactions to the LinkedIn Internship Hub
	● What is your first impression of the LinkedIn Internship Hub?
	● How relevant do you think this feature is for students like you?
	    ○ Probe: depends on the answer, try to ladder to get their feelings then perceived value
	● How do you see yourself using this feature?
	    ○ What problems or challenges would this feature help you solve?
	    ○ How could this feature benefit you? Why?
	● Projective technique: (at the end of new feature introduction)
	    ○ "As a student, LinkedIn Internship Hub makes me feel _____"
	    ○ Why does it make you feel that way?
	    ○ How could it be improved?
	    ○ What would you add to make the feature more valuable to you as a student?
		Internship Hub Feature
		- New feature dedicated to aiding students with their internship search
		- Show Linh's mock-up

Stage	Questions	Notes

5. Impact on Premium Subscription Intent	• If Internship Hub was part of LinkedIn Premium, how would that affect your perception of the Premium subscription?
	• Do you think this feature adds enough value to justify upgrading from the free account to LinkedIn Premium?
	    ○ If yes, what aspects?
	    ○ If not, why? What else do you expect from this feature to make it worth upgrading?	

6. Competitor Comparison	• Are you aware of other platforms or services that help students find internships (e.g., Indeed, Handshake, Glassdoor)?
	    ○ Probe: What do you like or dislike about using those platforms?
	• How does the LinkedIn Internship Hub compare to these platforms?
	    ○ Probe: Do you think this feature will make LinkedIn stand out compared to others for internship search?
	    ○ What additional features or improvements could make LinkedIn your go-to platform to search for internships?	

7. Closing (5 min)	**Summary** 1. Based on everything we've discussed, do you think the LinkedIn Internship Hub would change how you use LinkedIn? 2. What final advice would you give to LinkedIn about developing tools for students? 3. Is there anything else about internship searching or the proposed LinkedIn Internship Hub that you'd like to share? **Closing** 1. Thank the interviewee for their time and insights.	

Appendix B | Mockup

Linkedin P R E M I U M | Internship Hub

Your all-in-one career launchpad

Spot new opportunities with ease

Personalized job recs: Get recommendations for relevant jobs, opportunities, and events based on your profile, interests, and what's best for you.

Access to Internship Data: Offer a timeline detailing the internship hiring process for greater transparency.

Internship Search Calendar: Implement a built-in calendar tool to track application deadlines, networking events, and follow-up reminders throughout the application process.

Boost your confidence with expert interview insights

LinkedIn Learning Recommendations: Curate a list of LinkedIn Learning resources tailored to specific internships, helping students address any skill gaps in role requirement.

Interview Process Overview: Provide insights into the interview process, including a bank of common questions that candidates faced in specific roles.

Connect with recruiters, students, and alumni

Recent Intern Highlights: Showcase the latest interns at each company, distinguishing them from full-time employees.

Internship Experience Ratings: Share ratings and feedback on the overall internship experience to guide prospective interns.

Appendix C | Qualitative Research Discussion Guide (cont)

ID	Age	Gender	Year in School	Major	Current LinkedIn Status	Has subscribed to LinkedIn Premium	Frequency of LinkedIn Use
1	22	F	Undergraduate	Nutrition	Free	No	Daily
2	24	F	Graduate	Business Analytics	Premium	Yes	Daily
3	24	F	Graduate	Business Analytics	Free	No	Daily
4	21	F	Undergraduate	Business Information Tech	Free	No	Every other day
5	32	M	Graduate	Business Administration (MBA), Consulting	Free	Yes	Daily
6	21	F	Undergraduate	Marketing	Free	Yes	Every other day
7	20	F	Undergraduate	Marketing	Free	Yes	"Sometimes Daily"
8	29	F	Graduate	Business Administration (MBA), Finance	Premium	Yes	Every other day
9	26	F	Graduate	Business Analytics	Free	Yes	Daily
10	21	M	Undergraduate	Business Administration	Free	Yes	Daily

Appendix D | Qualtric Survey

1

W1

Welcome to our survey! All responses are 100% anonymous.

2

Are you currently a student?

- ○ Yes, I am an undergraduate student
- ○ Yes, I am a graduate student
- ○ No, I graduated less than 2 years ago
- ○ No, I graduated more than 2 years ago

3

How often do you use the following platforms for your job search or career-related activities?

	Never	Rarely	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Indeed	○	○	○	○	○
Handshake	○	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn	○	○	○	○	○
Glassdoor	○	○	○	○	○

4

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I feel confident in getting a job/internship	○	○	○	○	○
I feel anxious when I don't consistently apply to new job opportunities	○	○	○	○	○
Networking can increase my chance of getting a job	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I feel overwhelmed by the competition for jobs	○	○	○	○	○
The job search process feels overwhelming to me	○	○	○	○	○
I have access to the resources and guidance I need to succeed in my job search	○	○	○	○	○

5

How often do you use the following features on LinkedIn?

	Never	Rarely	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
I use LinkedIn's job search feature	○	○	○	○	○
I reach out to people to coffee chat through LinkedIn	○	○	○	○	○
I post on LinkedIn about my achievements and learnings	○	○	○	○	○
I engage with posts from my network (e.g., liking, commenting, or sharing)	○	○	○	○	○
I request referrals from my LinkedIn network	○	○	○	○	○

[* Full Qualtrics Survey Can Be Accessed Here](#)

Appendix D | Qualtric Survey

6

How important are these platforms in your overall job search strategy?

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Handshake	○	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn	○	○	○	○	○
Indeed	○	○	○	○	○
Glassdoor	○	○	○	○	○

7

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I feel confident in getting a job/internship	○	○	○	○	○
I feel anxious when I don't consistently apply to new job opportunities	○	○	○	○	○
Networking can increase my chance of getting a job	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I feel overwhelmed by the competition for jobs	○	○	○	○	○
The job search process feels overwhelming to me	○	○	○	○	○
I have access to the resources and guidance I need to succeed in my job search	○	○	○	○	○

8

How often do you use the following features on LinkedIn?

	Never	Rarely	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
I use LinkedIn's job search feature	○	○	○	○	○
I reach out to people to coffee chat through LinkedIn	○	○	○	○	○
I post on LinkedIn about my achievements and learnings	○	○	○	○	○
I engage with posts from my network (e.g., liking, commenting, or sharing)	○	○	○	○	○
I request referrals from my LinkedIn network	○	○	○	○	○

9

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about LinkedIn:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I trust LinkedIn's job search feature	○	○	○	○	○
I can find relevant jobs on LinkedIn without spending too much time	○	○	○	○	○
I can easily find professionals in my field of interest on LinkedIn	○	○	○	○	○
I find jobs recommended to me by LinkedIn relevant	○	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn gives me a sense of control over my job search process	○	○	○	○	○

10

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Using LinkedIn makes me feel more confident about my job search	○	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn helps me stay focused and organized during my job search	○	○	○	○	○
I use LinkedIn only because I have no other choices	○	○	○	○	○
If I had another option, I'd stop using LinkedIn	○	○	○	○	○
There are few alternatives to LinkedIn that I can use	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix D | Qualtric Survey

11

Overall, how satisfied are you with LinkedIn?

Extremely dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Extremely satisfied
○	○	○	○	○

12

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about *LinkedIn Premium*:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I think Premium gives me an advantage over other job seekers	○	○	○	○	○
I think Premium gives me better chance in getting a job	○	○	○	○	○
Premium could help me achieve my career goals faster	○	○	○	○	○
Premium features seem unnecessary for me	○	○	○	○	○
The features offered in Premium are worth upgrading from the free version	○	○	○	○	○

13

Have you ever subscribed to or used a free trial of LinkedIn Premium?

○ Yes, I am currently subscribed.

○ Yes, I am currently using a free trial.

○ Yes, I was subscribed in the past.

○ Yes, I used a trial in the past.

○ No, but I've considered subscribing.

○ No, and I've never considered subscribing.

14

How likely are you to recommend LinkedIn Premium to a friend or colleague?

Not at all likely										Extremely likely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

15

How likely are you to purchase/continue purchasing LinkedIn Premium?

○ Extremely unlikely

○ Somewhat unlikely

○ Neither likely nor unlikely

○ Somewhat likely

○ Extremely likely

Appendix D | Qualtric Survey

Participants now view 1 of the 2 below (or neither, control group):

16

"LinkedIn is excited to announce the upcoming launch of the *Early Career Hub*, a new feature exclusively available to LinkedIn Premium subscribers.

With personalized support at every step of the way, extra resources to pick from, and insights about your career search, the new LinkedIn streamlines your path to the perfect role."

Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The concept idea is relevant to me	○	○	○	○	○
The concept idea makes me more interested in LinkedIn Premium	○	○	○	○	○

17

"LinkedIn is excited to announce the upcoming launch of the *Early Career Hub*, a new feature exclusively available to LinkedIn Premium subscribers.

With the reduction of guesswork - connect directly with mentors, recruiters, and alumni from your top jobs and receive feedback throughout the application process from your growing network."

Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The concept idea is relevant to me	○	○	○	○	○
The concept idea makes me more interested in LinkedIn Premium	○	○	○	○	○

Please confirm your preferred gender identity
- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-Binary
- ○ Prefer not to say

What university do you currently attend/most recently attended?

Select your school [▾]

How many years of full time professional experience do you have?

[   ]

In what year were you born?

[   ]

What best describes your ethnicity of race?

- ○ White or Caucasian
- ○ Black or African-American
- ○ Hispanic of Latinx
- ○ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ○ Multiple ethnicity or Other (please specify)
  [   ]
- ○ Prefer not to answer