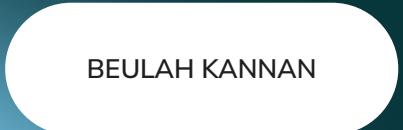


MKT 512 - Customer Insights and Analytics

# Customer Insights Report: Spotify & Grace



BEULAH KANNAN

# Meet Grace! ( Spotify Premium, Daily User)



"Spotify is a comfort friend... always here for me."

## BIO

International graduate student from China who listens **multiple times per day** while studying, doing chores, and on short drives. She has used Spotify for ~2–3 years; ads on the free tier **disrupted her vibe**, so she upgraded to **Premium**. She prefers to **stay with Spotify** because her library and playlists are already built in there

## FRUSTRATIONS(where friction shows up)

- **Repetition fatigue** in recommendations
- **Cluttered Home screen**; not clear what the “real” recommendation is.
- **Lyrics gaps** on some tracks.

## ATTRIBUTES

Loyal

Comforting

Peaceful

Dependable

## GOALS & NEEDS( What “success” looks like for Grace)

- **Mood fit, low effort:** music that helps her energize or calm down without work
- **“Similar, not the same” discovery:** new songs adjacent to her taste, not repeats of what she already saved
- **Easy togetherness with** collaborative playlists

# 1. Relationship Context- Grace x Spotify

## Background on the customer and Spotify

- **Who is Grace?**  
International graduate student; listens to music **multiple times per day** while studying, commuting, doing chores, and at the gym. Streaming audio is a daily companion, not an occasional treat.
- **How she first met Spotify (2018, Germany)**  
Discovered Spotify at a **volunteer camp in Germany** when friends from several countries(Mexico, Europe) wanted to share playlists. She downloaded the **free** app to participate and immediately used it for **social sharing and for her own use**.
- **Why Spotify wasn't part of her life back in China (2018–2023)**  
Spotify is **not practically usable in China** (platform blocks & licensing). Grace used **NetEase Music** instead. Using foreign apps typically requires **VPN**, and many people default to Chinese platforms.  
When in the U.S., some tracks on Chinese apps are **unavailable** due to rights, reinforcing her switch away from NetEase while abroad.
- **Return to Spotify in the U.S. (2024–present)**  
Moved to the U.S. for her master's and resumed Spotify, quickly upgrading to **Premium** (ads on the free tier **disrupted her vibe**) after 1 month of using the free tier. Now uses Spotify **~3x/day**, appreciates **CarPlay** and **collaborative playlists** for road trips, and values the **global catalog** for rare/unique tracks.  
Occasionally uses Spotify when she goes to foreign countries like Japan.
- **Community lock-in**  
Friends and peers in the U.S. share **Spotify playlists**, which keeps the habit sticky; her **library and playlists** are built on Spotify, making switching unattractive.

# Grace's timeline of using Spotify:

Grace's relationship with Spotify is "socially sparked" (2018), "environmentally constrained" (2019–2023), and "utility-driven" post-move (2024–), with Premium, collaborative playlists, habitual activities

2018                    2019                    2023                    2024                    2025 →

● 2018– When in Germany

**DISCOVERY AND TRIAL**  
Volunteer camp with international friends → downloaded free Spotify to share playlists and songs



*"They asked, 'Do you have Spotify?' ... I downloaded it so we could share songs."*

● 2019–2023 (China)

**BLOCKED/ALTERNATIVE**  
Spotify impractical (platform blocks & licensing). Uses **NetEase**; VPN needed for foreign apps.  
Rare Spotify use only when **traveling** (e.g., Japan)

JAN 2024 – PRESENT (US)

**PREMIUM MEMBER AND COMMUNITY**  
Used the free plan for a month and switched to Premium (Family); listens ~3x/day. Collaborative playlists (e.g., Yellowstone road trip) keep her locked-in

# Nature of the relationship on Spotify

- **Emotional role (how it feels)**

Grace experiences Spotify as a dependable, low-effort companion that matches her mood.

*"Friend... a comfort friend, always here for me."*

- **Functional role (why it works for her)**

She relies on Spotify's broad catalog, CarPlay in the car, and the playlists she has already built.

*"My playlist is all on Spotify... and sometimes only Spotify has the unique songs."*

- **Social role (why she stays)**

Sharing is easy because her friends use Spotify; collaborative playlists make group moments simple and fun.

*"We have a Yellowstone playlist went to Yellowstone National park... everyone adds songs; it's super useful for road trips." [Exhibit D]*

- **Trust and commitment (how strong it is)**

Trust is steady rather than growing, but commitment is clear: she pays for Premium annually and uses it several times a day.

*"My trust is Not increased or decreased... I regularly open it and listen." | "I'm so loyal to Spotify." | "It's between invisible and visible like sometimes I didn't notice but it's always there"*

- **Current friction (what strains the bond)**

She wants *new-but-similar* discovery; Daily Mix often repeats saved songs, the Home page feels cluttered, and lyrics are sometimes missing.[Exhibit A,B,C]

*"Recommend me something similar, not the same." | "Home page is too cluttered, I'm confused."*

- **Potential breakpoints (what could make her switch)**

She would consider switching if her Chinese service offered full U.S. availability with better, simpler discovery at a lower price.

*"If NetEase had all the songs here and was cheaper, I'd prefer it."*

# Grace's Touchpoints/Interactions (Customer Journey Map)

Note how VPN hassle in China created a barrier, this highlights opportunity for better international availability

Stages	Discovery & first use (2018, Germany)	Blocked/Alternative (2019–2023, China)	Habitual daily use & community (2024–present)
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downloaded free Spotify → join friends' playlist</li> <li>Switched to NetEase in China; rare Spotify use via VPN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Couldn't use Spotify easily → used NetEase daily, only opened Spotify when abroad occasionally (Japan)</li> <li>Stays in the Chinese app ecosystem with friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subscribed to Premium, listens ~3x/day, uses collab playlists for trips</li> <li>Checks Daily Mix / Made for..., browses others' playlists</li> </ul>
Emotions	 Excited discovery with friends	 Frustrated by restrictions in China but felt satisfied with NetEase	 Feels steady loyalty, though some small annoyances
Pain points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None major at first; just new discovery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spotify blocked; VPN was a hassle; songs bought on NetEase wouldn't transfer abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeats in recommendations; cluttered home screen; missing lyrics</li> </ul>
Touch points (where Grace interacted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>App install, playlist sharing with friends, basic search</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NetEase daily playlist, local Chinese apps, occasional VPN login</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Mix / Made for Grace, CarPlay, collaborative playlists, search, lyrics panel</li> </ul>

# Grace's lens: Spotify in Action

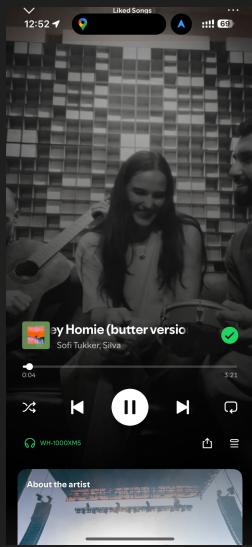


Exhibit (A)

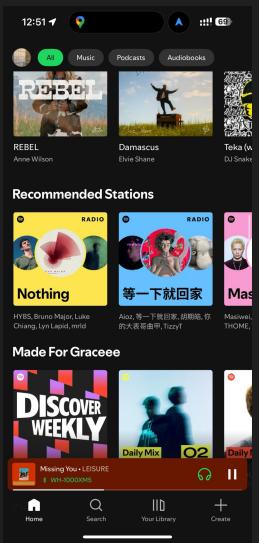


Exhibit (B)

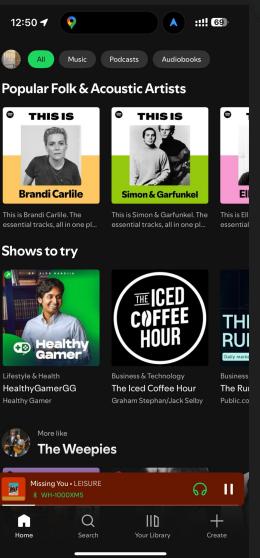
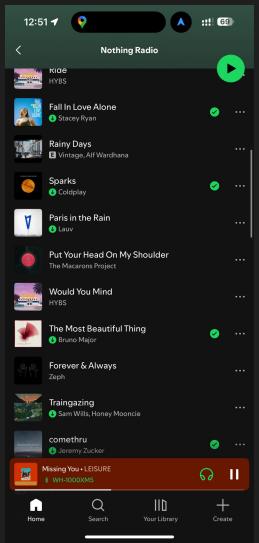
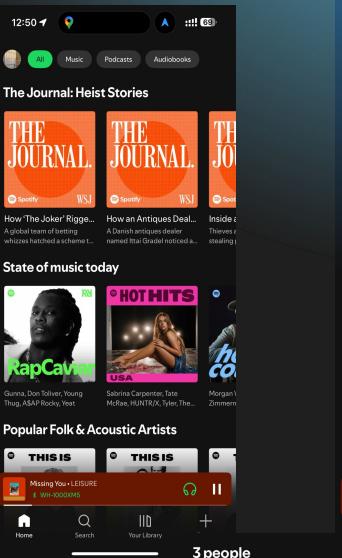


Exhibit (C)



3 people



Exhibit (D)



- Exhibit A — Missing lyrics: Lyrics often absent, breaks flow “*sometimes they don't have the lyrics.*”
- Exhibit B — Repeats in recommendations: Surfaces saved tracks, not discovery “*recommending my own songs.*”
- Exhibit C — Cluttered home: Too many carousels/podcasts; wants one clean daily list “*everything is cluttered... only one recommendation daily.*”
- Exhibit D — Collaborative playlists (strength): Great for trips; easy group curation “*Yellowstone playlist... super useful.*”

## 2. Relationship Dynamics of Grace x Spotify

- **Type of Relationship :**
  - Friend / comfort companion — dependable, mood-matching, low effort.
  - Utility partner — broad catalog, CarPlay, built playlists
  - Community connector — collaborative playlists keep her in the group.
- **Critical incidents (moments that moved the needle) :**
  - **Ad shock** → Premium: free-tier ads “disrupted my vibe” → upgraded.  
*“Suddenly an ad... I need to buy the membership.”*
  - **Collaborative playlist joy:** shared road-trip playlist cemented social value.  
*“Everyone adds songs... super useful.”*
  - **Algorithm let-down:** repeats her saved songs → frustration.  
*“They’re recommending my own songs.”*
  - **Home-page overload:** clutter and irrelevant tiles create confusion.  
*“Home page is too cluttered—I’m confused.”*
  - **Lyrics gaps:** breaks the listening flow on some tracks.  
*“Sometimes they don’t have the lyrics.”*



### 3. Strategic Implications

#### Opportunities to Strengthen the Relationship

- Simplify interface → One clear “Daily Discovery” list to cut clutter and help heavy users start faster.
- Improve discovery freshness → Focus on “similar, not the same” recs to keep listening engaging.
- Expand lyrics coverage → Increases immersion for mood-matching use cases.
- Leverage collaborative playlists → Strong retention driver; expand positioning as a social feature.

Why: Helps Spotify know where to focus product fixes that improve retention

#### Risks to Relationship Continuation

- Algorithm fatigue → Heavy users disengage if recs feel repetitive.
- UX overload → Cluttered Home may push users to simpler competitors.
- Competitive threat → Cheaper, rights-rich alternatives (e.g., NetEase) could win if cross-border access improves. Grace also said “*If there were an app like NetEase here — and at a cheaper price — I would switch.*”

#### Acquisition & Retention Insights (Beyond Grace)

- Many international students/young professionals treat Spotify as a **comfort companion** — this bond is replicable in other **segments** (*International Students & Expats/Young Professionals with busy schedules/socially connected users*)
- “**Fresh but familiar**” discovery is a common unmet need, not just unique to one user.
- **Community use** (e.g., road trip playlists, study group sharing) can be scaled in marketing and product positioning.

## 4. Research Applications

- **How Qualitative Insights could inform quantitative research:**
  - The qualitative insights we have gathered point to patterns that may apply beyond one user. To validate and scale them, we can translate each into measurable research questions and experiments.
    - a. **Insight:** Grace feels Spotify repeats her own saved songs.  
**Research Action:** Add survey question: "*How often do Spotify's recommendations feel repetitive?*"  
**Why:** Helps measure how widespread this issue is across users.
    - b. **Insight:** She prefers one clear daily playlist (like NetEase) instead of many tiles.  
**Research Action:** Run A/B test (one curated list vs. multiple mixes).  
**Why:** Tests whether simplification increases satisfaction and engagement.
    - c. **Insight:** Collaborative playlists are “super useful” for trips.  
**Research Action:** Track adoption and usage frequency of co-created playlists.  
**Why:** Identifies if this feature drives retention and community use
- **Suggestions for Relationship Development:**
  - Measure **loyalty** via continued Premium subscription despite frustrations.
  - Track **engagement** through daily listening frequency, cross-device use, and playlist sharing
  - Assess **emotional connection** with scale items like "*Spotify feels like a companion in my daily life.*"
- **Areas of further Investigation:**
  - **Ethnographic mini-studies:** shadow heavy listeners across gym, commuting, study to capture unspoken frustrations.
  - **Community effect:** map how friend networks drive platform lock-in vs. risk of switching.
  - **Price sensitivity:** study whether students or travelers would downgrade or churn if cheaper options existed.
  - **Cross-border UX:** understand expectations of Chinese users using Spotify abroad.

# APPENDIX

1. Discussion Guide :  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QCnTtdZg0G3AJTtXRbp2QZeKxs-Ozfflv7EKXqmwGag/edit?tab=t.0>
2. Speaker Notes:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-k5uVPfMyHEzciubwWBC6E-KwLNsroHNH2z9JX86MXo/edit?usp=sharing>