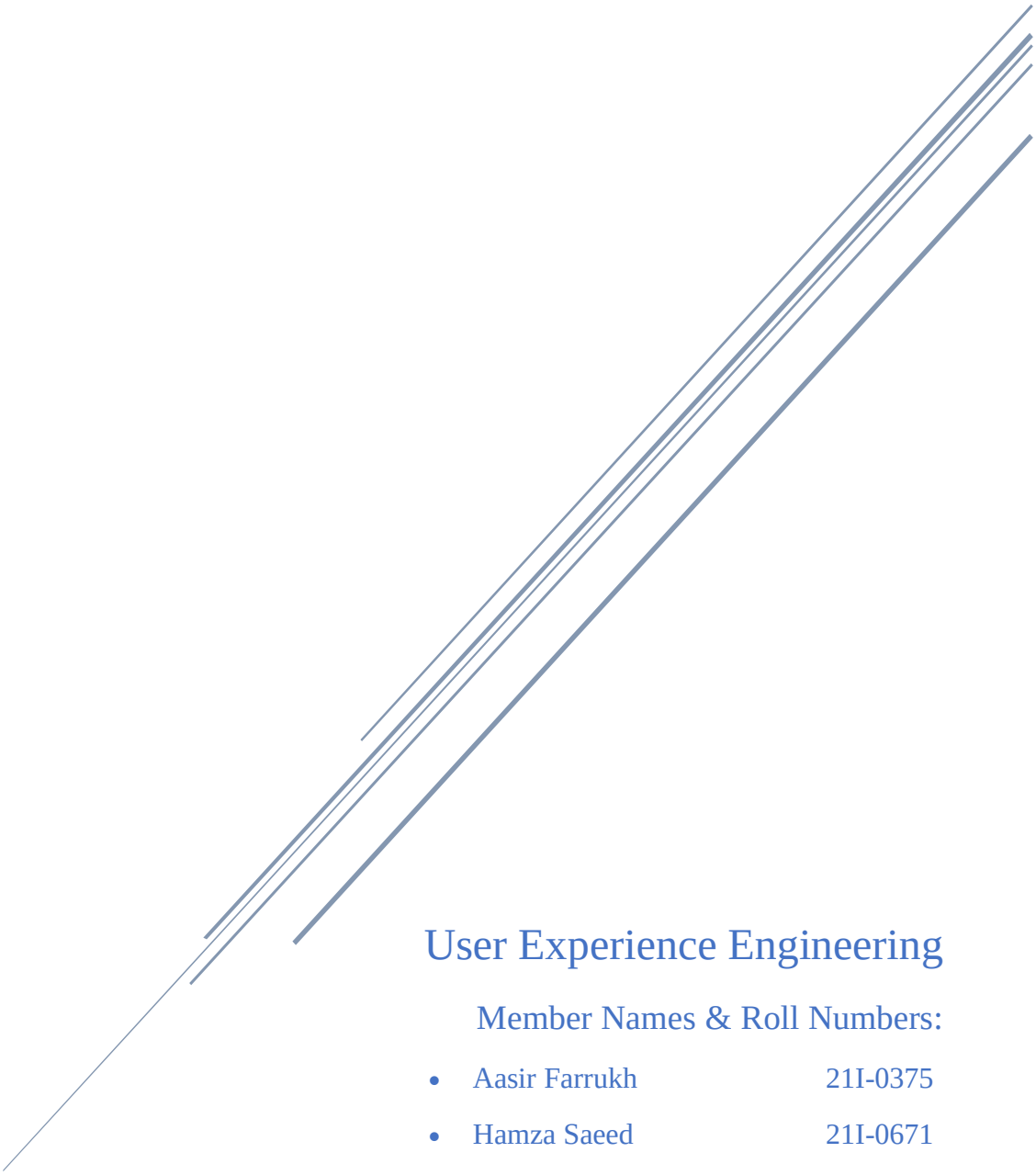
UXE SPRING 2025- MILESTONE 2

Team No: BO2
Team Name: TFC



User Experience Engineering

Member Names & Roll Numbers:

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Milestone Title: ZenQuest (Interactive Stress-Reduction Game)

Section 1: Design Brief

1.1 Target User Population

The primary users for this project are individuals who experience moderate to high stress and are seeking an engaging, accessible way to integrate mindfulness into their daily lives. This includes college students, young professionals, and anyone interested in gamified self-care. These users are generally tech-savvy, open to using digital wellness tools, and prefer a more interactive experience compared to traditional mindfulness or meditation apps.

1.2 Problem Definition & User Needs

Problem Statement:
While many mindfulness and meditation apps (such as Calm and Headspace) offer valuable resources for stress relief, they often lack interactive and playful elements. Users report that current solutions can feel repetitive or even like an additional chore, rather than a relaxing break. According to recent user reviews of popular meditation apps, approximately 40% of users abandon these apps within two weeks, citing "monotony" and "lack of engagement" as primary reasons. Additionally, many users note that traditional mindfulness practices require a level of discipline that is challenging to maintain during high-stress periods—precisely when they need these tools most.

User Needs:

- **Engaging Experience:** A dynamic, game-based approach to practicing mindfulness that motivates regular use. This directly connects to our "Engaging Mini-Games" must-have feature.
- **Effective Stress Relief:** Guided breathing exercises and mindfulness puzzles that are easy to follow and adapt to different stress levels. This addresses our "Guided Breathing Exercises" and "Mindfulness Puzzles" must-have features.
- **Immediate Feedback:** Visual and audio cues that confirm progress and provide a calming effect, supporting both the engagement factor and our "Progress Tracking" must-have feature.
- **Ease of Use:** A non-intimidating interface designed to be intuitive, reducing any friction associated with stress management practices. This aligns with our "User-Friendly Interface" must-have feature.

1.3 Activities & Competitive Landscape

High-Level Activities:

- **Mini-Games:** Engaging, bite-sized games designed to incorporate mindfulness techniques and focus exercises.
- **Guided Breathing Exercises:** Step-by-step routines that help users regulate their breathing and reduce stress.
- **Mindfulness Puzzles:** Interactive puzzles that encourage reflection on personal stress triggers and foster relaxation.

Competitive Landscape (Preliminary Overview):

- **Existing Digital Offerings:**
    - Mindfulness Apps: Calm and Headspace provide guided meditation and breathing techniques but lack significant interactive elements.
    - Games with Wellness Elements: "Journey" and "Flower" by thatgamecompany offer meditative gameplay experiences but don't explicitly teach stress management techniques.
    - Mental Health Apps: Moodfit and Sanvello offer mood tracking and cognitive behavioral therapy tools but minimal gamification.
- **Analog Methods:**
    - Traditional meditation practices (often requiring significant discipline)
    - Physical stress-relief tools like fidget spinners, stress balls, and adult coloring books
    - Journal writing and reflective practices
- **Identified Gaps:**
    - Most digital solutions either focus on serious mindfulness practice or casual gaming, with few options bridging this gap effectively.
    - Existing apps often lack the gamified elements that make stress relief feel interactive and fun.
    - There is an opportunity to integrate competitive game mechanics and progress tracking to boost user engagement and motivation.

1.4 System Goals & Unique Value Proposition

System Goals:

- **Engagement:** Deliver a highly interactive experience through gamified mini-games, mindfulness puzzles, and guided breathing routines.
- **Accessibility:** Create an interface that is intuitive and easy to navigate for users of varying tech comfort levels.
- **Progress Tracking:** Implement a dashboard that visualizes user progress and milestones to reinforce positive behaviour change.
- **Integration:** Develop a system that can be easily incorporated into daily routines, with options for quick sessions during breaks or more extended practice during dedicated self-care time.

Unique Value Proposition:
The Interactive Stress-Reduction Game transforms the conventional mindfulness experience by combining proven stress-relief techniques with interactive, game-based elements. This playful approach not only makes self-care enjoyable but also encourages consistent use, setting it apart from traditional, static mindfulness apps.

Section 2: Needs Finding Study Plan

2.1 High-Level Study Goals

The needs finding study is designed to explore and understand the current practices, challenges, and unmet needs of our target users regarding stress management. Key questions include:

- **How do individuals currently manage their stress using digital tools or traditional methods?**
- **What challenges do users face with existing mindfulness apps and stress-relief practices?**
- **What elements of a gamified stress-relief experience would be most engaging and useful for users?**
- **How do users integrate stress-management activities into their daily routines, and what barriers prevent consistent practice?**

2.2 Recruiting Criteria & Strategy

Recruiting Criteria:

- **Experience:** Participants should have prior experience using stress management or mindfulness apps (e.g., Calm, Headspace) at least occasionally.
- **Demographics:**
    - College students, young professionals, or individuals in high-stress work environments.
    - Users who are comfortable with mobile or web-based applications.
    - Age range: 18-40 years old (primary target demographic)
- **Behavioural Traits:**
    - Regular engagement with digital wellness tools.
    - A proactive attitude toward managing stress and maintaining mental well-being.
    - Some experience with mobile or video games (ranging from casual to regular players)
- **Exclusion Criteria:**
    - Professional meditation instructors or mental health professionals (to avoid expert bias)
    - Individuals who have never experienced significant stress or anxiety
    - Those with severe clinical anxiety or stress disorders requiring professional treatment
    - People who have no experience with any form of digital applications

Recruiting Strategy:

- Utilize campus networks, social media platforms, and professional online communities to reach a diverse group of participants.
- We will recruit exactly 8 participants with varied backgrounds to ensure comprehensive insights, exceeding the minimum requirement of 6.
- Schedule individual sessions (minimum 30 minutes per interview) and, where possible, incorporate observational studies to capture natural interactions with current stress relief tools.

2.3 Interview Protocol

Interview Structure:

- **Introduction:**
    - Briefly explain the purpose of the study and obtain consent for recording and note-taking.
    - Introduce the concept of the Interactive Stress-Reduction Game.
- **Semi-Structured Questions:**

1. **Current Practices:**
    - "Can you describe how you currently manage stress on a daily basis?"
    - "Which digital tools or techniques do you use for mindfulness and stress relief?"
    - "Do you use any non-digital methods for stress management, such as journaling, physical fidget toys, or breathing exercises without apps?"
2. **Challenges & Pain Points:**
    - "What aspects of your current stress management routine do you find challenging or unsatisfying?"
    - "Have you ever found existing mindfulness apps repetitive or unengaging? Please explain."
    - "What barriers prevent you from practicing stress management consistently, particularly during high-stress periods?"
3. **Gaming Habits & Preferences:**
    - "What types of mobile or video games do you currently play, if any?"
    - "What game mechanics or elements do you find most engaging (e.g., rewards, challenges, story, competition)?"
    - "How much time do you typically spend on games or relaxation activities in a day?"

4. **Reactions to Gamification:**
    - "How would you feel about a game that integrates mindfulness exercises with interactive challenges?"
    - "Which features (e.g., mini-games, guided breathing, puzzles) would most motivate you to use such an app?"
    - "Imagine you're feeling stressed before an important exam or meeting. How might you use a stress-reduction game in that moment?"
5. **Integration into Daily Life:**
    - "At what points during your day would you be most likely to use a stress-management app?"
    - "How would you prefer to be reminded to practice stress-management activities?"
    - "What would make it easier to incorporate stress-relief practices into your daily routine?"
6. **Wearable Device Integration:**
    - "Do you currently use any wearable devices that track health metrics?"
    - "How would you feel about a stress-management game that connects to wearable devices to track your heart rate or stress levels?"
    - "What features would you want in a wearable integration that would enhance your stress management experience?"
7. **Feedback & Suggestions:**
    - "What improvements or additional features would make an ideal stress relief tool for you?"
    - "Are there particular visual or audio elements that help you feel relaxed or focused?"

- **Closing:**
    - Summarize the discussion and ask if the participant has any additional insights or suggestions.
    - Thank the participant for their time.

Observational Component:

- We will conduct a standardized observation task where participants will be asked to:
    1. Use their current stress-relief app or tool for 5 minutes while thinking aloud
    2. Try a simple breathing exercise on a popular mindfulness app
    3. Play a casual mobile game they enjoy for 2-3 minutes

- Specific observations will focus on:
    - Facial expressions and body language indicating engagement or frustration
    - Navigation patterns through apps (hesitations, confusion, fluid movements)
    - Moments when attention drifts or focuses intently
    - Comments made spontaneously during use
- Observations will be recorded through a structured observation form with predefined categories for user reactions, combined with timestamped notes about specific interactions.

2.4 Work Breakdown & Team Dynamics

Team Roles and Responsibilities:

- **Aasir Farrukh -- Project Lead & Design Strategist:**
    - Oversee project direction, compile and edit the final document, and coordinate with team members.
- **Qazi Mohib-Un-Nabi -- UX Researcher:**
    - Design and conduct user interviews and observations; draft the needs finding study plan.
- **Hamza Saeed -- UX Researcher & Technical Coordinator:**
    - Assist in user recruitment, conduct additional qualitative research, and provide technical feasibility insights, including potential integrations (e.g., wearable device connectivity).

Division of Labor:

- Each member contributed to drafting their respective sections based on their roles. A final collaborative review ensured consistency in tone and thorough coverage of all project requirements.