(Tamer is conducting this research)

Observation

The goal of this observational research is to analyze how Gen Z players interact with board games in a social setting and identify opportunities to enhance gameplay using digital elements. By attending a board game night, I will observe player engagement, social interactions, emotional reactions, and game mechanics reception to understand what makes a game enjoyable or frustrating for this generation.

The table below is to note the key moments of the game. In this way we will be able to see when and why players get excited, bored, angry, etc. At what point of the game does this event occur, and why? Also, what digital component could be used to solve the issue.

TIME	EVENT	REACTION	DESIGN IDEA
Start	Translating to Eng	Disappointed	Make the game in English / provide translation
Start	Learning a new rule	Surprised / amazed	Include funny, irregular rules
Middle	Paying rent	Laughing (everyone)	Have small winning and losing moments
Middle	Paying to someone takes long	neutral	Keep the currency and payments simple
Middle	Throwing dice	Excited	Keep physical dice
End	Bankruptcy	Everyone enjoying, including the loser	Let ppl eliminate themselves, not someone else (directly)

Player Engagement

When do players seem most excited?

- Drawing card (revealing secret info)
- Winning moves

When do they seem bored or distracted?

- Unclear rules

Do players check their phones? When and why?

- Looking up rules
- Texting someone when bored
- Important call

Social Interactions & Communication

How do players react to each other?

- Friendly trash talks
- Laughing
- Helping with rules

Are there moments of frustration? What causes them?

- Didn't see really

Are there moments of celebration?

- Winning
- Luck-based success

Game Mechanics Reactions

Which mechanics get the strongest reactions?

- Dice rolls
- Hidden information
- Payments

Do players struggle with the rules? Which ones?

- Debating rules for situations less likely to happen, they look it up from the rulebook.

Do players suggest house rules or shortcuts? Why?

- Some house rules are suggested. To make the gameplay easier and quicker. (Design idea: Let people add their own rules such as exchanging property/card. Do not mention this in the rulebook.)

Are the rounds too long or just right?

- Finishing the game should not take more than 1.5h
- A usual turn should be around 30s-2min depending on the task/quest

Tech Usage & Digital Integration Potential

Do players instinctively use their phones?

- Searching up rules (ChatGPT)
- Calculate rent

Would a digital feature have helped?

- App for tracking scores/balance
- NFC for secret info (if done just from the app w/o needing to tap NFC, players might misuse by revealing the info secretly) OR have one device in the middle, used by everyone.

Would they enjoy a tech-enhanced twist?

- Sound effects could be fun, needs to be tested
- Having an app where you can view your score etc. is cool
- Seems like GenZ players would enjoy a tech twist

Game Pacing & Length

How long does the average turn take?

- Average turn usually takes no more than 30s which means max 3min of waiting time for a player in a game of 6 players.

Do players stay engaged for the whole game or lose interest halfway?

- People have a lot of energy in the beginning
- Somewhere in the middle they loose interest. Same things keep happening.

- An unusual event happens, interest is back
- Close to the end everyone pays attention and excitement is peak again

Do they rush the game to finish, or do they want to keep playing?

- If someone is taking too long, they warn
- They prefer quicker rounds
- Not chatting when it's their turn to save time

Expected Outcomes:

1. **Which game mechanics work best for Gen Z**
   - Luck based
   - Fast paced

2. **Common frustrations and how to address them**
   - Complex rules

3. **Potential digital enhancements** that could improve gameplay without disrupting the board game experience
   - NFC or app for revealing secret information

4. **How humor, social interactions, and trends influence engagement**, allowing us to design a game that feels modern and relatable to Gen Z.
   - Use GenZ humor
   - Follow trends of social media

Reflection

Having this template prepared before the event helped me a lot. I just had to fill in some spaces and try to find answers to the prepared questions of mine. In future research, I want to keep this way of preparing. By defining what I am looking for, I proved how much time can actually be saved.