

BOARD GAME MOTIVATION MODEL

OVERVIEW OF METHODS AND MODEL

WE COMBINED PSYCHOMETRIC METHODS AND A WEB APP TO COLLECT **MOTIVATION DATA FROM OVER 90,000 BOARD GAMERS**



Scale Development

We first used established psychometric techniques and data from 5,000 board gamers to identify key gaming motivations and create an assessment tool.



Online Profile Tool

We created an online app where board gamers could fill out a 5-minute survey and receive a personalized report of their gaming motivations that they can then share on social media.



Our Data Set

Using our online app, we have collected the demographic and motivation data from > 90,000 board gamers worldwide along with their favorite genres and game titles.

Our Expertise in Gamer Motivation Research

For over a decade, Nick Yee and Nic Ducheneaut have been studying the motivations and behavior of gamers. They have over 40 peer-reviewed papers on gaming. Nick Yee's paper on the motivations of online gamers has been cited over 1,700 times.

BOARD GAME MOTIVATION MODEL



Conflict	Immersion	Strategy	Social Fun
Hostile Interactions. High Conflict Mechanics.	Elaborate Lore & Characters. Immersed in Other World.	Thinking. Planning. Skill-Based. Complex Rules.	Lighthearted Fun. Laughter. Chat. Social Interaction.
Social Manipulation Deception. Bluffing. Persuasion. Negotiation.	Aesthetics Beautiful Artwork. Components Reflect Theme.	Systems Discovery Learn New & Innovative Game Systems / Mechanics.	Cooperation Being on a Team. Working on Common goal.
		Need To Win Winning. Trouncing Other Players.	Chance Card-Drawing. Dice-Rolling. Luck Mechanics.
			Accessibility Game is Easy to Learn. Accessible to Newcomers.

CONFLICT CLUSTER

Conflict

Gamers with high Conflict scores tend to be more competitive and enjoy games where players can take hostile actions directly against each other. This could be stealing another player's resources, forcing them to discard, blocking their move, or directly attacking and destroying their units/buildings. Confrontational mechanics often create more tense and dynamic gameplay because the stakes are higher and no outcome is certain until all the actions resolve. When you play the game of thrones, you win or you die; there is no middle ground.

Conversely, players who score low on Conflict prefer games that minimize direct and hostile confrontations (which high Conflict gamers may perceive as being boring "walled off" gardens).

Social Manipulation

Gamers who score high on Social Manipulation enjoy playing psychological mind games, where outcomes aren't determined by dice or rulebooks, but instead by their ability to bluff, deceive, and persuade other players. The social arena of trust and negotiation is their favored battleground. They enjoy games where they have to convince other players of something (especially if it's a lie). Sure, sometimes their friends may hate them when the game ends, but what good are friends that you can't lie to from time to time?

On the other hand, gamers who score low on Social Manipulation prefer more transparent and concrete gameplay mechanics where deception doesn't play a role.



Strategy	Discovery
<p>Gamers with high Strategy scores enjoy taking on <u>cognitive challenges</u>. For them, games are a way to hone and test their intellectual abilities. Thus, they prefer games that require <u>a lot of thinking and planning</u>, reward sound decisions, and where strategic mastery and skill (rather than luck) are the primary determinants of the game's outcome. They enjoy complexity, whether this comes from an intricate ruleset or overlapping mechanics that have short and long term trade-offs. They prefer slower paced games that give them the time to ponder their moves, where elaborate strategies can be planned and executed.</p> <p>Gamers who score low on Strategy want a more relaxed gameplay experience where decisions don't have much long-term impact.</p>	<p>Gamers who score high on this motivation are discoverers who have a <u>broad interest in rulesets, game mechanics, and the play spaces</u> that are enabled and emerge from different game systems. To this end, they enjoy keeping up with new game releases and staying up to date with the current meta. They take the time to find out about and try new game mechanics. As part of this, they also tend to have a good sense of the history and idiosyncrasies of different game designers and publishers. While they tend to have a more eclectic palette, they do have a preference for more innovative game mechanics.</p> <p>Gamers who score low on Discovery prefer more traditional, familiar, tried-and-true game mechanics.</p>



STRATEGY CLUSTER (CONTINUED)

Need To Win

Gamers who score high on this motivation care a lot about winning, and are especially happy when the margin of victory is overwhelming. They enjoy soundly beating an opponent. For them, games are a means to an end (preferably a victorious one), and winning is the most important part of the game. Gamers who score high on Need To Win prefer games where winners can completely dominate their opponents.

Gamers who score low on Need To Win don't care about the game's outcome, but focus instead on the journey of playing the game. To this end, they prefer games that aren't zero-sum between opponents, whether they are collaborative or solitaire.



IMMERSION CLUSTER

Immersion

Gamers who have high Immersion scores enjoy taking on a role in a believable alternate world, with its own lore, history, culture, and cast of interesting characters. Being able to choose or customize their starting character/city enhances this sense of taking on a role in another world. They like the implicit narrative of being part of an unfolding story as they play the game: to them, the game is a fantasy world that comes alive as it is played.

Conversely, players who score low on Immersion want to focus on the game mechanics and don't like it when the theme gets too heavy or intrusive.

Aesthetics

Gamers who score high on Aesthetics like high-quality components that strongly reflect the theme and setting of the game. For them, amazing artwork and beautiful component illustrations are particularly important. They enjoy tactile components that capture, enhance, and represent the fantasy world created by the game, such as well-sculpted miniatures that represent the game's characters or buildings.

Gamers who score low on Aesthetics care very little about the artwork and production value of the game. They focus on the game play and mechanics instead and are perfectly happy with abstract components.



SOCIAL FUN CLUSTER

Social Fun

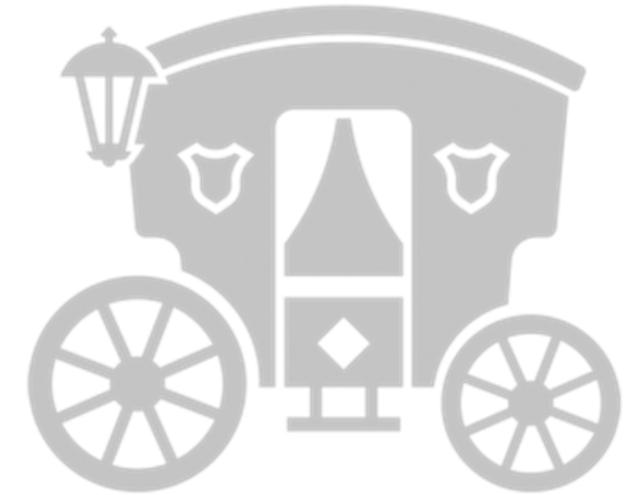
For gamers who score high on Social Fun, playing board games is first and foremost about **having a good time with other people**. The board game itself is simply a convenient prop around which friends and family can gather and have fun together. They enjoy the chatting, the social interaction, and especially the shared laughter and funny interactions that games (especially party games) can elicit. For them, board games are a great catalyst for a fun social gathering.

Gamers who score low on Social Fun prefer games that don't encourage or reward "extraneous" social interactions and set a more serious tone around the game.

Cooperation

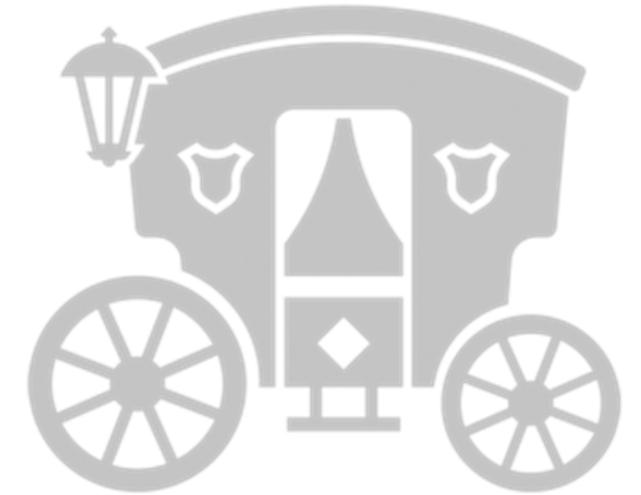
Gamers who score high on Cooperation enjoy board games where they can **work with others players towards a common goal**. They would rather team up with other players instead of beating them up. This aligns with Social Fun because it's easier to have a good time when people aren't focused on attacking each other or focused on individual victories.

In contrast, gamers who score low on Cooperation prefer games that focus on individual decisions, achievements, and outcomes.



SOCIAL FUN CLUSTER (CONTINUED)

Chance	Accessibility
<p>Gamers who score high on Chance enjoy <u>luck elements</u> in their board games, usually in the form of <u>card drawing or dice rolling mechanics</u>. These gamers enjoy chance mechanics that impact their opportunity space (e.g., drawing your starting hand in Agricola) as well as those that determine action outcomes (e.g., rolling dice to determine whether an attack was successful). The appeal of Chance and Social Fun go together because chance elements often lower the entry barrier to a game, level the playing field somewhat between novices and veterans, and create unexpected and entertaining outcomes thereby increasing the likelihood that everyone is having fun.</p> <p>Gamers who score low on Chance prefer clear and concrete outcomes to their actions with luck playing a minimal role.</p>	<p>Gamers who score high on Accessibility prefer games that <u>a broad range of people can pick up and enjoy</u>. After all, if you like playing board games with other people, then it's helpful to have games that a lot of people can get into. Thus, these players favor games that are easy to teach, easy to learn, and accessible even to people with very little board gaming experience. And if they enjoy board games as part of family gatherings, then family-friendly themes are also a plus.</p> <p>In contrast, gamers who score low on Accessibility appreciate games with lots of weight and complexity. If they had monocles, they would hold them up while looking down on the unwashed noobs.</p>





BOARD GAME **EXAMPLES**

To make it easier to understand the motivations, we used our large data set to identify the games with the highest and lowest scores for each motivation.

The examples in the following slides are intended to provide concrete game titles for each motivation, and to make it easier to compare what scoring high vs. low on each motivation means.

CONFLICT

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Here I Stand	Amerigo
Diplomacy	Finca
Virgin Queen	At the Gates of Loyang
Runewars	Signorie
Rex: Final Days of an Empire	Hawaii
Forbidden Stars	Ginkgopolis
The Republic of Rome	Rococo
Fief: France 1429	Steam Time
A Game of Thrones (First Edition)	Apples to Apples
A Game of Thrones: The Board Game (Second Edition)	Marrying Mr. Darcy



SOCIAL MANIPULATION

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Ultimate Werewolf: Deluxe Edition	ZhanGuo
Diplomacy	Snowdonia
Mafia de Cuba	Ginkgopolis
One Night Ultimate Vampire	Discoveries
The Resistance: Avalon	Macao
Nothing Personal	Hawaii
Mafia	Signorie
The Resistance	Galaxy Defenders
Chinatown	Madeira
Sheriff of Nottingham	Steam Time



STRATEGY

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Roads & Boats	Taboo
Arkwright	Scattergories
Paths of Glory	Pictionary
1830: Railways & Robber Barons	Telestrations After Dark
Madeira	Cranium
Kanban: Automotive Revolution	Family Game Night Book and Game Set: Scrabble, Clue, Sorry, Yahtzee
Antiquity	Trivial Pursuit
Indonesia	Apples to Apples
Ora et Labora	UNO
Sid Meier's Civilization: The Board Game	Roll For It!



Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Cry Havoc	Taboo
Gold West	Balderdash
Guilds of London	Yahtzee
Akrotiri	Articulate!
51st State: Master Set	Trivial Pursuit
Nippon	Boggle
Carson City: Big Box	Apples to Apples
Kanban: Automotive Revolution	Pictionary
Islebound	Scattergories
The Prodigals Club	Cranium



NEED TO WIN

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
3D Risk	Fiasco
Stratego	Dungeon!
Puerto Rico: Limited Anniversary Edition	Dawn of the Zeds
A Game of Thrones: The Card Game	Onirim
Axis & Allies: 1942	Defenders of the Realm
Diplomacy	The Ravens of Thri Sahashri
Chess	Shadows of Brimstone: Swamps of Death
Age of Renaissance	Rick and Morty: Total Rickall Card Game
Monopoly	Hostage Negotiator
Titan	Tides of Time



IMMERSION

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Warhammer: Age of Sigmar	Indonesia
Call of Cthulhu: The Card Game	Roads & Boats
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons	Container
Warhammer Quest: Silver Tower	Chicago Express
Kings of War	Navegador
Mansions of Madness	Goa
Wiz-War	Qwixx
Shadows of Brimstone: City of the Ancients	Age of Steam
Lord of the Rings	Ginkgopolis
Pathfinder	Ra



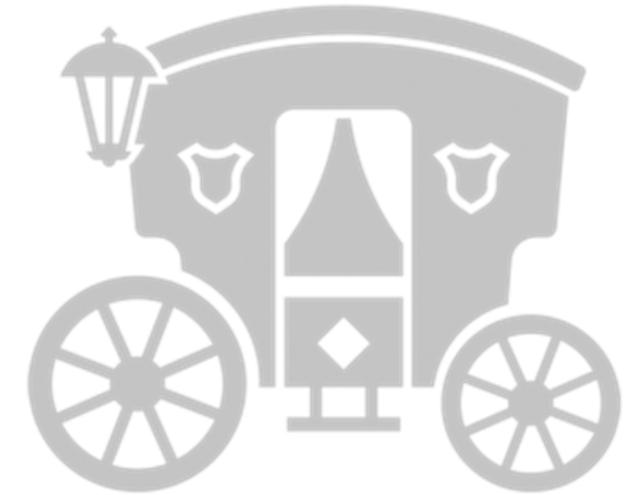
AESTHETICS

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Rick and Morty: Total Rickall Card Game	Chicago Express
Rum & Bones	1830: Railways & Robber Barons
Wiz-War	Roads & Boats
Saloon Tycoon	Mafia
Tokaido Deluxe Edition	Indonesia
City of Iron: Second Edition	Catan Histories: Settlers of America – Trails to Rails
Lord of the Rings: The Adventure Deck Game	Iron Dragon
Camp Grizzly	Eurorails
Super Dungeon Explore	Age of Steam
Warhammer: Age of Sigmar	Scattergories



SOCIAL FUN

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Quelf	Roads & Boats
Telestrations After Dark	Labyrinth: The War on Terror, 2001 – ?
Monikers	Paths of Glory
Cranium	Indonesia
Telestrations: 12 Player Party Pack	Ora et Labora
Taboo	1830: Railways & Robber Barons
Time's Up!	Age of Steam
A Fake Artist Goes to New York	Steam
Munchkin Zombies	ZhanGuo
Balderdash	Arkwright



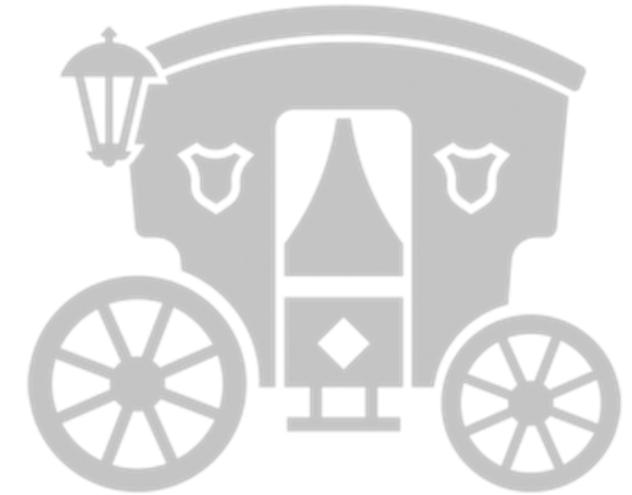
COOPERATION

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Lord of the Rings	Roads & Boats
Dungeon Fighter	Chicago Express
Dungeons & Dragons: Temple of Elemental Evil Board Game	Hawaii
Burgle Bros.	Indonesia
Shadowrun: Crossfire	Signorie
Galaxy Defenders	1830: Railways & Robber Barons
Camp Grizzly	Age of Steam
Gears of War: The Board Game	Navegador
Forbidden Desert	Macao
Zombicide Season 2: Prison Outbreak	Steam



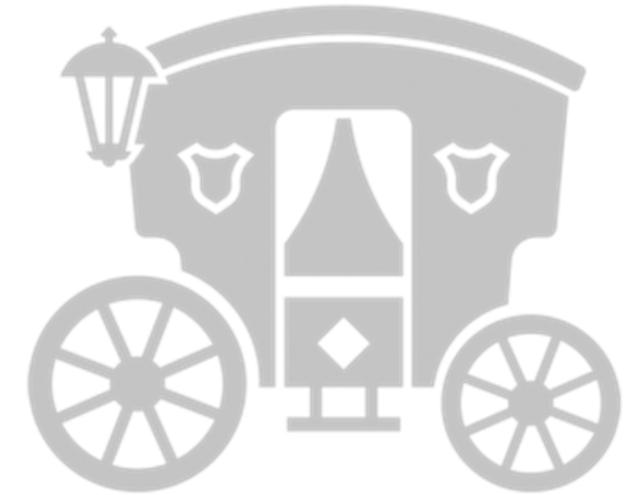
CHANCE

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Camp Grizzly	Indonesia
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons	Arkwright
Roll For It!	Antiquity
Marvel Dice Masters: Avengers vs. X-Men	1830: Railways & Robber Barons
Resident Evil Deck Building Game	Myrmes
Zombie Dice	Imperial
Quarriors!	Madeira
Firefly Fluxx	Nippon
Flux	Goa
Pirate Fluxx	Caylus



ACCESSIBILITY

Games w/ Highest Scores	Games w/ Lowest Scores
Sorry!	Roads & Boats
UNO	Indonesia
Cranium	1830: Railways & Robber Barons
Family Game Night Book and Game Set: Scrabble, Clue, Sorry, Yahtzee	Antiquity
Pictionary	Pax Porfiriana
Apples to Apples	Fire in the Lake
Zombie Fluxx	Age of Steam
Taboo	Madeira
Wits & Wagers	Falling Sky: The Gallic Revolt Against Caesar
Scattergories	High Frontier





QUANTIC
FOUNDRY

