



# Analysis of Digital Games Containing Islamophobia on the Grounds of Religion and Perception

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## Abstract

The development of digital technologies, new media has become one of the areas that affect the social structure and fabric the most. The rapid development of the new media has been reflected in all areas of production, leading it to become a tool for the dissemination or activation of cultural policies in addition to its news and entertainment dimension. One of the most effective and voluminous fields of new media is the digital gaming industry. Just as Islamophobia can be advocated through many mediums such as media, social media, newspapers, TV series and movies, this is also done through digital games. This study is a descriptive study in terms of identifying Islamophobic elements in digital games.

The main purpose of the research is to identify the elements in digital games that conflict with religious and moral rules and feed Islamophobic perception. For this purpose, thematic content analysis method, one of the research methods within the scope of qualitative research method, was applied to the issues found in the games. Although digital games are ostensibly a purely entertainment activity, they have also formed a cultural influence and guidance function over time. Within the scope of this study, digital games with Islamophobic content have been analyzed in detail on the basis of religion and perception. It is concluded that the elements identified in the study cause prejudice about Islam and this feeds the perception of Islamophobia.

## Keywords

Digital Game, Islamophobia, Islamophobic Game, Social Media, Forum

## METHOD

Thematic content analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was applied in this study conducted to understand the impact of Islamophobic games on the spread of Islamophobia. Qualitative research is a type of research that tries to understand what is thought about a personal or social issue based on some assumptions and how individuals or groups attribute meaning to this issue (Punch, 2016, p. 142). Thematic content analysis, on the other hand, is the study of reaching various semantic elements by categorizing the contents determined from a source such as books, newspapers, magazines, websites, etc. according to their subjects based on coding units (Bilgin, 2014, p. 65).A

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the research, as a result of the games included in the content titled "Islamophobia in Computer Games" and the scans made on the internet sites, games with Islamophobic elements were identified. The computer games included in the study titled "Islamophobia in Computer Games" have been our guide to identify Islamophobic frames in games. However, our research is not limited to this study. Since our subject is within the scope of digital games, the games played on console and mobile platforms were also analyzed by expanding the framework. The most played and preferred games among the games on the websites were also determined. Among the games identified, the games that are suitable for our limitation were determined.

While identifying the frames containing Islamophobic elements in the selected games, videos related to the selected games on the youtube platform were also watched in the study mentioned above. However, no Islamophobic elements other than those mentioned in the Call of duty and Resident evil series were found. While identifying the frames in the Pubg game, live broadcasts made by users playing the game on the Facebook platform and videos on the youtube platform were analyzed. Since the Pubg game was recently released and is a preferred and played game today, live broadcasts about it could be accessed. However, no content other than videos and pictures related to the other games we have included could be found.

## PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Today, with the advancement of technology and the development of opportunities, there have been changes in our lifestyle and the issues we are interested in. While traditional games were played when technology did not yet exist or when it was just beginning to develop, there have been changes in preferences with the existence and development of technology. Traditional games are not preferred for playing games and electronic devices such as computers, tablets and phones are preferred instead. Digital games have started to fill the leisure time and entertainment pursuits of individuals today and to influence their behaviors and thoughts. The place of these games, which are preferred and continue to be preferred, in our lives is deepening and increasing. The fact that most of the player's time is spent in game environments has also increased the possibility of being influenced by them.

The impact of the events and behaviors in the game environments on the user's life will manifest itself after a while. The user is exposed to many situations in the game. These situations are sometimes positive and sometimes negative. Some of the tasks in the game or what needs to be done to complete a chapter may be contrary to established religious and moral values and may serve to create deliberate perceptions. These situations can confuse minds. On the basis of these reasons, the aim of our research is to identify the issues that are overtly or covertly processed in digital games that take place intensively in daily life, that conflict with religious and moral rules, and that feed Islamophobic perception.

In the literature review, it has been determined that the subject of “digital games” and the subject of “Islamophobia” are handled and evaluated separately and many studies have been conducted on these subjects. These studies reflect the different dimensions of digital games by addressing the various contexts of Islamophobia. In the researches conducted, English theses, books and articles on this subject were found. There are also Turkish articles among the articles. However, there is almost no Turkish research in which these two topics are examined together. The fact that there are no studies in which digital games and Islamophobia are examined together makes us think that this subject should be studied. It is thought that increasing the number of studies to be conducted in this field and revealing the issues in different dimensions will contribute to the comprehensive evaluation of the subject. For this reason, our study is also important in terms of contributing to the literature.

## INTRODUCTION

With the development of new communication technologies, human beings have had the opportunity to get to know and interact with each other more than ever before. Today, someone living on one side of the world can communicate with someone living on the other side of the world, receive education from them, trade, make friends, play games, gather around an idea together and make their voices heard more. In addition to all these positive opportunities, human beings can also fear and antagonize each other to a degree that they have never experienced before, they can marginalize each other, and beyond the conflict of ideas, they can get into a fight with someone they may never meet in life. Otherization and hate speech have become a common occurrence with the dominance of new communication technologies in daily life. “Islamophobia”, which encompasses a discriminatory, marginalizing and even hostile attitude towards Islam as a religion and Muslims, is a phenomenon in which this situation is frequently experienced. Islamophobic content, which is frequently pumped in conventional media through various news reports, TV series and movies, also appears in the channels where new communication technologies are used, sometimes as a video, sometimes as an article, sometimes as a visual. One of these new channels where Islamophobia is embodied is digital games. First with arcade-style games connected to television, then with computers and advanced game consoles, digital games are an entertainment commodity used not only by children but also by adults.

Today, digital games have transcended the format of simply playing against the artificial intelligence in the game and have become a format where people from all over the world can play games together or mutually with internet technologies. The technical devices on which the games are played have also changed, and with mobile phones and tablets, it has become possible to play these games at any time, sometimes through a social media network, sometimes as an application, without time and space restrictions. Even with virtual and augmented reality technologies, digital games are again in a transformation.

Simulators in which people play as the protagonist in the game are available today; however, they are not practical enough to be easily produced and put into service, and they have not yet been commercialized in terms of the demand-cost relationship. We are waiting for the coming years for these technological toys to become simplified and affordable, and thus to increase demand and replace these technological toys in daily life.

The most important feature that distinguishes digital games from other channels of new media is that they involve the player in the game. In these games, the person does not just look at a photo or watch a video as in a social networking site, but gets excited by playing the game himself/herself, gets happy when he/she succeeds in the game, gets upset when he/she loses, sometimes gets ambitious, and sometimes gets angry enough to kick the device he/she is playing with and throw it against the wall. The fact that people experience digital games to such an extent and reflect them on their behavior makes the content of these games important. These games, which have a wide range of content from violence to racism, have been subjected to a number of regulations in most countries, from age restrictions to bans; however, in today's world where everyone has access to everything, these games have not and cannot be prevented from reaching millions.

Islamophobia is also processed in digital games, some directly and some indirectly, and the environment is prepared for the formation of an attitude, attitude or behavior in this direction in the masses who play games. The subject of this study is the effect of Islamophobic content in digital games on the people who play these games. It is tried to understand how players who play games with Islamophobic content view such content, how much they support or oppose it. In this context, the comments of foreign players who played the game with Islamophobic content put forward by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2016 were analyzed through thematic content analysis.

## ISLAMOPHOBIA

Anti-Islamism is hostility, hatred, discrimination, resentment and otherization against Islam or Muslims. According to Bauman (2003), marginalization is when modern societies see other societies that are not like them as weak and exclude them (Bauman, 2003).

The September 11 incident in the United States of America and the association of al-Qaeda, which claimed responsibility for this incident, with Islam have led to an increase in anti-Islamic sentiment. Today, Western countries see the concepts of radical fundamentalism, violence and terrorism as the most important agenda items related to Islam (Kuyucuoğlu, 2016). This misperception causes problems for many Muslims, especially in the USA and Europe.

According to a survey of 23,500 people in 27 countries in the European Union, one in three Muslims living there reported experiencing discrimination and one in ten Muslims reported being attacked. The rate of discrimination varies depending on whether one is a citizen or not. Muslims are discriminated against at a rate of 27% if they are citizens of the country they live in and 41% if they are not (as cited in Aktaş, 2014). The impact of the global media on this negative situation is undeniable. The fact that terrorist incidents in the Middle East-indexed news are reported and given together with the Islamic Religion may cause anti-Islamic sentiment to be fueled. Thus, Islam is paired with terrorism and the image of “Muslim terrorist” is engraved in the memory. According to a 2017 study, Westerners describe Muslims as “fanatical”, “violent”, “intolerant”, “disrespectful to women” and “selfish” (Muslims and Islam: Key Findings in the US and Around the World, Analysis, 2017). This perspective has a negative impact on attitudes towards Muslims.

In the countries they live in, Muslims are seen as an obstacle for Westerners to act in accordance with the constitution and laws due to their religious identity (Kalin, 2018). As a matter of fact, after 9/11, new legal regulations were introduced against Muslims in the US, primarily the Patriot Act, within the scope of the fight against terrorism. Within the scope of these legal regulations, Muslims were imprisoned without a court order, their personal data was recorded, mosques were searched for radiation, the confidentiality of attorney-client meetings was violated, and even some people were kidnapped and interrogated with bullying methods (Cesari, 2018). Abdullah Zekri, President of the French Islamophobia Observatory affiliated to the Islamic Council of France (CFCM), stated that there were 235 attacks against Muslims in 2019, and that the number of attacks increased by 53% compared to the previous year, reaching 154 (Anti-Islamic Attacks in France Increased by 53% in 2020, 2021).

## DİGİTAL GAMES

Digital game is the display of the result of the user's interaction with the electronic system or computer through a screen or similar display system (OYUNDER, 2020). Digital games are games played on various devices such as computers, consoles, arcade or cell phones. It refers to all games played in digital tools or environments that allow individuals from all over the world to play with each other in the same game at the same time, and even enable the individual to participate in the game in the environment in which the individual is in with the effect of augmented technologies. Such games, which were first defined as computer, video and electronic games, are now referred to as digital games. The change in technology brings with it the change in the game. Games that traditionally take place in our lives continue to exist in our lives as digital games by changing with the development of technology. With the intervention of mass communication tools in our lives, games have also moved to the virtual environment. The fact that digital games offer the opportunity to be played both inside and outside the country allows them to reach people from all segments and societies. Individuals who socialize with technology position themselves in virtual environments.

Islamophobia is simply defined as the fear of Islam and Muslims. This fear has deepened over time and has been replaced by hatred and hostility (Lean, 2019). As a result, Islamophobia emerges. This concept, which is used by Western and non-Western countries, is an attitude against the religion of Islam, but Islamophobia is a negation against religion. Human rights violations, racism and Islamophobia against Islam/Muslims are examples of these negative behaviors. Traditional media and digital games are important environments that are used to create prejudice and anti-discourse against the religion of Islam (Kalaycı: 2018: 38). Through hidden or overt perception content placed in media and digital games, individuals are tried to be given feelings such as prejudice, fear and suspicion.

The media is an important and powerful tool used to spread Islamophobia in the Western world. Television channels, radio, websites and similar mass media have an important role in explaining Islamophobia and advertising it (Okumuş, 2017: 39). Another important tool is digital games. Through the visuals presented to the user in the games, issues that are incompatible and contrary to Islam can be presented. The information about Islam in digital games is open to discussion. Situations that undermine the religion of Islam, which are tried to be promoted through various digital games, can arouse negative ideas and emotions in individuals. Although the impact of Islamophobia is predominantly seen in the Western American world, its effects also manifest themselves in non-Western societies. Islamophobia also finds a place in digital games designed by non-Western countries (Kalaycı: 2018: 36).

When we look at the best-selling games in the world, we see that every second of these games is full of blood, broken bones, severed limbs, dismembered bodies, severed heads, scary aliens, fights, guns, thieves, wizards and many other negative content, hateful discourse and indirect messages such as marginalization. While it is possible to make propaganda for the adoption of a culture, religion, race or ideology through digital games, it is also possible to do the opposite, i.e. defamation. Islamophobia is the embodiment of this situation. It is observed that Islamophobic elements are frequently included in the most played and selling games (Cingi, 2018: 56). Since game users are generally composed of children and young people, it is thought that it is aimed to raise them as Islamophobes or at least as individuals who are afraid and afraid of Islam through digital games during the most active periods when they form their world of ideas. By placing Islamophobic elements in various games that are not suitable for Islam, it is tried to give negative information about Islam to the users subtly and indirectly.

Digital games, which have a large audience in the global market, are becoming environments where anti-Islamic discourses are made overtly or covertly. The content, which is given indirectly and prepared without making it explicit, attacks the conceptual world of the individual by appealing to the subconscious of the individual. Every visual that exists in the user's mind and that he considers important for himself is destroyed by establishing a similarity with another visual in the game. This is done without the user being aware of it (Kalaycı: 2018: 38). Sacred elements of the Islamic religion are placed in the games in ways that users may not notice when they first look at them.

The desired message is given indirectly by hiding inside any object or auditory element. Messages are sent directly to the subconscious mind through shapes, writings, sounds and messages that only the subconscious mind can recognize. These messages, which are incompatible with ethical values, can negatively affect individuals and society.

## **DIGITAL GAMES AND ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Islamophobia, which is the fear of Islam, has deepened over time and turned into hatred and hostility (Lean, 2019: 46). These feelings feed Islamophobia. Islamophobia, a concept produced by the West, negates the religion of Islam. Violation of human rights, racism and Islamophobia can be given as examples of negative situations (Kalaycı: 2018: 38).

Digital games are among the environments where religions, races, ideologies, discourses and ideas are presented to individuals. Through digital games, these issues can be disseminated to users. In the messages conveyed in these games, situations related to racism can be observed. In this context, digital games are one of the environments where Islamophobic elements are presented to society. It is observed that the perception of Islamophobia is frequently included in the most preferred, played and sold games (Cingi, 2018: 56). Islamophobic elements in games can be presented to players in a hidden or overt manner. Islamophobic issues in digital games are open to criticism. The elements that are presented to the users in the game may be incompatible with the religion of Islam and contradict its practices. By including Islamophobic elements in games, it may be attempted to create a negative perception of Islam indirectly and directly. With the content placed in digital games, it can be aimed to give users feelings such as fear, suspicion and prejudice (Sarıaslan, 2018: 183).

The issues that feed Islamophobic perception in digital games can affect and change the conceptual world of the individual. Established religious and moral values in users can be humiliated or negated by comparing them to another situation in the game. The messages intended to be given to the masses in the game can be hidden in an object or audio element and presented to the users. Most of the time, users do not realize these situations. (Kalaycı: 2018: 36). The subconscious contains impulses, motives and desires that are effective in making many of our emotions, thoughts and behaviors that we are not aware of. The subconscious, which is the deepest layer of the mental structure, can be threatening for the individual as it contains repressed thoughts and memories (İnanç, 2014: 19). This situation comes to light in the events encountered in daily life and shapes the user. Islamophobic elements in digital games are incompatible with the moral principles of Islam. These issues may lead to the loss or deterioration of the usual form of moral principles in the users who will play the game.

Especially the events of September 11 in the United States of America and the association of Al-Qaeda with Islam have increased anti-Islamic sentiment across the world, especially in Europe. In fact, many Muslims in Europe suffer from this general perception. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which conducted a comprehensive survey of 23,500 people in the 27 countries of the European Union, published a survey showing that one in three Muslims living in these countries have experienced discrimination in the last year alone and one in ten Muslims have been attacked or humiliated. One out of every four people surveyed stated that they had been checked by the police in the last 12 months. (Aktaş, 2014). While the traditional media is the main reason for this prejudice and increasing anti-Muslim discourse across the world, another reason can be shown as the digital world. Digital games, which appeal to a wide audience in the global market and have billions of users, are also becoming environments where anti-Islamic discourse is secretly practiced. The content, which is prepared without explicitly revealing it to the users, attacks the conceptual world of the individual by appealing to the subconscious world of the individual. In other words, every image that exists in the mental world of the user who directs a character in the game and attributes importance to him/her is destroyed by likening it to another image in the game, and this is done without the user's own awareness.

### **The Game Called Devil May Cry**

Developed on February 17, 2005 in the United States by Ubisoft and Capcom game companies, Devil May Cry is available on operating systems such as Playstation, Mac Os, Microsoft Windows. In the game, the character guided by the



user arrives in front of the door in Photograph 1. This part is depicted as a place belonging to evil forces in the story of the game and the door in the image is a place where evil forces enter and exit. When the visual, which is not understood at first glance, is examined more closely, it is noticeable that the visuals on the door bear a striking resemblance to the cover of the Kaaba, which is considered sacred by people of the Islamic religion.

### **The Game Called Resident Evil 5**

Released on March 5, 2009 by Japan and supported by many platforms, Resident Evil is one of the games that reflects anti-Islamism. In the game, which has a significant player base worldwide, the character enters a library and sees the Holy Quran, which is considered sacred by Islam, on the floor. When the exterior of the book is examined, it is understood that it is closely related to the Holy Quran.

The computer, one of the most important tools of the twentieth century's technological development speed, has taken its place among the indispensables of humanity in parallel with the expansion of its usage areas day by day (Şelimen, 2016). Computer games used in conjunction with computers also appeal to crowded groups, as in Resident Evil, and can be Islamophobic just like the current game. On June 19, 1999, Counter Strike, a game designed by the United Kingdom, was released on the market, in which Islamophobia was expressed not only visually, as in other games, but also audibly. According to the story contained in the game, there are two groups that are in conflict with each other. One of them is the terrorists and the other is the counter-terrorism team fighting the terrorists. Game users take part in the counter-terrorism team and try to kill the terrorists. Destroyed terrorists shout Allah-u Akbar and La Ilahle Illallah when they are attacked. The fact that this Islamic discourse, which means “Allah is one” and “There is no god but Allah”, is uttered by terrorists in the game reveals that Muslims are labeled as terrorists around the world.

### **The Game Called Bomb Gaza**

Created on July 29, 2014 by Israel, the game, as the name suggests, has a fiction in which users direct planes bombing Gaza. The planes with the Israeli flag aim to destroy the city of Gaza and Muslims by trying to kill them. In the light of the political developments in the Middle East, it is quite meaningful for Israel to design a game targeting Gaza.

On October 27, 2018, Resident Evil 4, a digital game produced by Japan, also contains Islamophobia. In the third-person progressive action game, the door belonging to the tomb of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad is depicted as the entrance door where the evil characters in the game are located. In the game, which has millions of users, the door of the Prophet Muhammad's tomb is portrayed as the source of the chaotic environment of evil where enemies come in armies (Tuzcu, 2016).

### **The Game Called Playerunknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG)**

PUBG has been found to have elements that are contrary to Islamic principles. In the game, there is a place called the waiting area before moving to the main area where the battle takes place. In this section, players do not have any tasks to perform. In the waiting area, users attack each other, hit each other, and throw different objects at each other. It is the game developers who allow players to hit each other before moving to the play area. Allowing this situation can impose aggression and violence on the user. The existence of a ground for players to attack each other when no task has yet been given in the game can cause acts such as violence and aggression to become commonplace.

Providing players with the opportunity to attack and fight can negatively affect their socialization. Physical attacks can be an obstacle to the communication between them. This kind of behavior can make players feel negative emotions. These negative emotions may manifest themselves in the form of ignoring the message from the source of communication (Certel, 2008: 150). Attacking, hitting and fighting behaviors can be perceived as normal in individuals who play the game. However, this situation is not in accordance with the moral values of Islam. Behaviors such as fighting, chaos and violence can be ordinaryized on gaming platforms and can be perceived as a natural element of daily life. Such games have an effect on the increase in the number of individuals who prefer these ways. Islam forbids physically attacking another person through violence (Kayadibi, 2011: 17). Players are given the perception that these actions, which are not deemed appropriate by religion, can be done in daily life.

Another situation encountered is related to the choice of clothing. Although it is not compulsory to choose clothes for the character to dress up before entering the playground, the choice of clothes is left to the individual's will. In the absence of clothing selection, it is seen that the characters are not fully dressed, that is, they are in their underwear.

In cases where there is no choice of clothing in the game, there may be differences in the opinions of players who encounter such a situation. It may cause these images to be perceived as a normal situation by the players. Within the scope of gender socialization, this situation may have a negative reflection. To explain this situation through an example, let's take a player wearing a hijab. A player wearing a hijab may want to identify herself in the game. When she cannot find an outfit that suits her dressing style during the character design process, she may feel a sense of exclusion. The player who cannot find an outfit of her choice may not feel like she belongs there. On the one hand, he may want to play the game, but on the other hand, he may not want to play because he cannot position himself in the game. They may experience a state of contradiction within themselves.

A child who is not fully aware of this situation encountered in the game may have different effects. The child's encounter with clothes that are not fully clothed may have a negative psychological impact on him/her. It may have an impact on their perception of sexuality. Sexuality is an informative process that starts with birth and continues until

adolescence and even continues throughout life (Razon, 2022). Parents play an important role in this process. Parents are the ones who provide the first sexual information and model the child (Çalışandemir, 2008: 14-27). The attitudes of parents, who have a serious role in informing these issues, are extremely important. Since sexuality education is not completed as a concept that has just begun to be given in childhood, the child may not have sufficient information about his/her sexual organs. It is possible that these images, which are also encountered in the game, may have a negative impact on the player.

Another element is the health equipment in the game. Medical equipment includes first aid kits, painkillers, energy drinks, health kits and bandages. The health equipment helps the player to gain extra health and health in case of injury or near death. The medkit in the game restores the dying player to the level of health they had at the start of the game. In this game, which is a race with seconds, the health bag makes full health in a short time and puts the player back into the game.

When the word Allah is typed in the chat section in the game, there is no equivalent, instead the dot sign appears in front of the player. This indicates that the word Allah is not included in the game. When a player who wants to use the word Allah when communicating with other users types it in, the other player cannot see it. The player who wants to use the word may feel excluded and discriminated against.

The last point we will mention in the PUBG game is the frames with idols. There is an idol worship ritual in the PUBG game (Webhakim, 2022). There are weapons inside the idols at some points in the game. In order to get these weapons, users go in front of the idols and press the button they normally press to get weapons, the phrase “being worshipped” appears on the screen and the act of worship is displayed. As players worship the idol, the game gives various weapons and armor materials. Players who want to win the game must buy these materials that provide an advantage in the game. For this, it becomes obligatory to perform a kind of idol worship.

These issues mentioned in the PUBG game are situations that indirectly strengthen the perception of Islamophobia. Users who are intensely confronted with visuals and messages that contradict the principles of Islam in the game may develop a perception that religious values and principles become trivialized or trivialized over time.

### **The Game Called Call of Duty**

Another game is Call of Duty Black ops 2. Black OPS 2, the ninth game in the series, is a game developed by Treyarch and published by Activision. The US based game was released on November 12, 2012. The game can be played on many platforms such as Microsoft Windows, Wii U67, Xbox 360, PlayStation 368, PS Vita69. It is an action type game. The fact that Muslim people are portrayed as terrorists is the Islamophobic issue in the game. In the game, Muslims use their technology as a threat to the future of the world. The words Allah and Muhammad in Arabic appear in many places in the game. As can be seen in Appendix 7, there is a work of illumination in a round frame. Here the player aims at the word Allah.

Aiming at the word Allah in the game may lead to prejudice and negative opinions against Islam. Furthermore, the game portrays Muslims using technology as a threat to the future of the world. This may be intended to convey the message that Muslims can threaten the world. The fact that the game makes the user aim at the names of Allah and the Prophet brings to mind the idea that it aims to create a negative perception towards the basic elements of Islam. These issues may cause a prejudiced perspective towards Islam. Different thoughts may emerge in users against Islam, which is presented as a threat in the game, and this may lead to a different understanding and interpretation of Islam. These elements, which foster a prejudiced and discriminatory perspective against Islam, strengthen the Islamophobic perception. Another game in the series with Islamophobic elements is Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2. It is a game produced by Infinity Ward. The US based game was released on November 12, 2009. Developed by Infinity Ward, this action-type game was published and released by Activision. It is a type of game that can be played on Microsoft Windows, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, Nintendo DS73 and BlackBerry74 platforms.

The Islamophobic element in the play is that while the player is touring the rooms of the house, in the bathroom of the house, on a dirty toilet bowl in the frame of a picture, the hadith 'Allah is beautiful. He loves the beautiful' hadith is written in Arabic. Here the player enters the bathroom with a rifle in his hand. What he encounters is a picture frame with the hadith written on the toilet bowl.

In one episode of the play, the picture frame with the hadith written on it, which the character encounters in the bathroom of the house he enters, brings to mind the idea that the words of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) can be found in places such as bathrooms and toilets. In addition, the frame with the hadith in the game is located in the bathroom, but it is placed on a dirty wall. This may cause prejudice against the hadith or devaluation of the hadith in the users who play the game. The fact that hadiths, which have an important place in Islam, are treated in such a way in the game brings to mind the idea that it may be done to reduce their value. A prejudiced attitude towards hadith in users may lead to an exclusionist conception of hadith.

The attack on the minaret of a mosque, which is the holy place of Islam, the portrayal of Muslims as terrorists, the insult and devaluation of the word Allah, one of the names of the Creator, and the hadiths, which have an important place in religion, which are detected in three games of the Call of Duty series, strengthen the Islamophobic perception. Users who are exposed to these frames in the game may experience differences in the way they perceive religion. A prejudice against Islam may form in the minds of users.

## OTHER DIGITAL GAMES WITH ISLAMOPHOBIC CONTENT

**Zack & Wiki:** In this pirate-themed game, the characters circumambulate the treasure chest in the flames in the opposite direction of the Kaaba, prostrating themselves to the chest after hearing "Allahu Akbar" from outside.

**Tekken Tag Tournament:** In the "Saudi" scene in this game, the platform on which the characters fight is surrounded by the porticoes of the Kaaba, and some of the stones on the ground are inscribed with the word "Allah".

**Serious Sam:** In the game, the tomb of Hz. Ali, the fourth caliph of the Muslims, is designed exactly like the tomb of the Prophet Ali, from which alien creatures are constantly spawning and attacking the player.

**Muslim Massacre:** The game starts with newspaper reports about the terrorist activities of Muslims and then moves on to the game itself. The hero (!) in the game kills thousands of people in burqas and chadors who approach and attack him. In the later levels of the game, the attacks of the people in robes turn into suicide bombings and rocket attacks. At the end of the game, the Prophet Muhammad and Allah are fought against and asked to be killed.

**Ayo Dance:** In this play about characters dancing, the dancing character has the Holy Quran under his feet.

**Command Conquer Generals Zero Hour:** In the game, there is an Islamic terrorist organization called the GLA. This organization uses suicide bombers and chemical weapons in its attacks and carries out mass killings.

**Clive Barkers Undying:** In the game, the hadith is written on the surface of the platform on which the devil stands during the struggle with the devil.

**Counter Strike:** Some of the battlefields in the game are designed as Muslim neighborhoods with Arabic texts on the walls. Before the developer's update, terrorists shouted "Allahu Akbar" and "La ilahe Illallah" as they died. These sounds were removed due to the backlash. - Devil May Cry 3 Dante's Awakening: The doors of the Kaaba, the Qiblah of the Muslims, with verses inscribed on them are designed as the gateways for the forces of evil in the game.

**Faith Fighter:** In the game, Allah, gods of various faiths, Jesus Christ, Buddha and the Prophet Muhammad are pitted against each other. Due to the reactions, the face of the Prophet Muhammad, which was previously open, has been censored, but the character, who is designed with a turban on his head and a sword at his waist and sandals on his feet, shouts "Allahu Akbar" when he defeats his opponent, as often heard in the media.

**Guitar Hero 3:** In some scenes in the play, the characters playing the guitar have the word Allah under their feet.

**Little Big Planet 3:** Although there is no Islamophobic content in the gameplay of the game, the fact that the music of the game starts with the words "küllü nafsın zaikatül mevt" from the 57th verse of Surah Ankebût, which literally means "Every living thing will taste death", and then continues with the words "küllü men aleyha fân" from the 26th verse of Surah Rahman, which literally means "Every living thing will perish", has caused the game to be evaluated as Islamophobic. It is thought that the verses are mocked as a result of the fact that the verses are given in a melodic song form in a way that is contrary to the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, accompanied by the guitar notes at the bottom, making fun of the holy book of Muslims.

**Minarett Attack:** Released on both Android and iOS before the 2009 referendum<sup>5</sup> to ban the construction of minarets in Switzerland. In the game, Switzerland, with its tranquil settlements, churches and mountains with the Swiss flag on their summits, is suddenly filled with minarets and muezzins reciting the call to prayer. In the game, these minarets are targeted and shot.

## CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND DISCUSSION

As many things have changed and differentiated in our lives from past to present, this change and transformation also manifests itself in games. The game, which is used as a means of entertainment by individuals, becomes digital with the effect of advancing technology. It is similar to traditional games in terms of features such as the game having a certain systematics and the rules must be followed. However, digital games differ from traditional games in that they can be played in a network environment and offer the opportunity to play simultaneously with more than one player at a time. In addition to this, since digital games provide the player with the opportunity to meet different circles of friends and various groups, and the opportunity to communicate with people from all over the world, the number of preferences for these games is increasing day by day.

While a race, religion, ideology can be advocated through digital games that offer a digital environment to the individual, the opposite of this, such as negation, exclusion, discrimination, can also be done. When we look at the best-selling games around the world, it is seen that there are broken bones, severed heads, flowing blood and many other negative contents in each part of the games, sometimes in every second of the games. It is stated that these situations have an effect on the formation of issues such as fear, hatred and hostility. Digital games, which are one of the places that offer an environment for socialization, are one of the places where individuals can express themselves.

The individual can easily reveal the attitudes and behaviors that he/she cannot perform in the game because he/she thinks that he/she will be excluded by the society in daily life, that is, because he/she is socially hesitant. The reason for this may be that the people on the other side cannot understand who they are in the game. Users who are exposed to situations such as fights, violence and hostility in games may see them as normal and want to apply them in daily life.

Since the games progress in competition, there may be tension and arguments between the players. Competition can create states such as ambition and anger. It is possible that these attitudes may find a permanent place in the personality of a user who constantly plays games. Individuals who find a place to express themselves affect their socialization in this direction by including the behaviors that they cannot reveal in society in the game.

These attitudes can also find a place in the social lives of users who exhibit aggressive, violence-oriented, aggressive attitudes. The concept of time will disappear in the game played together with users from different places and even countries. The user who has made a certain group of friends will try to adjust his/her time to play with them.

Due to the time difference between different countries, the game can be played early or late. The increase in the time difference may cause the user to change the day and night phenomenon.

Among the most preferred and sold games, the subject of Islamophobia is mostly covered. Since the game audience is generally composed of children and young people, efforts are made to influence them with these issues presented to the players. It is normal for them to be influenced by a person, group or ideology during these periods when they are shaping their world of ideas. With the Islamophobic elements they are exposed to in the game, it is possible that individuals who harbor hatred, hostility, prejudice and negative thoughts against the religion of Islam may emerge. Islamophobia is a concept produced by Christianity, which sees Islam as a rival. This concept is tried to be imposed on society through tools such as media, social media, newspapers, magazines and digital games. The fact that the player unknowingly performs this process through games creates an opportunity for them. The reason why we use the term "without realizing it" is that the user often fails to understand these situations while struggling to defeat his opponent and win the game.

This research is a mirror in terms of identifying and trying to explain the Islamophobic elements in the games. It has been determined that Islamophobic situations exist in these games. The Islamophobic elements found were identified, their effects on the socialization of users were revealed, and how these elements feed Islamophobic perception was expressed and examined in the context of Islam. Since the study was handled specifically on the issues containing Islamophobic elements in digital games, the elements in the frames included were also evaluated in terms of compliance with the principles of Islam. Within the scope of our main problem, Islamophobic elements in digital games are discussed through the sacred objects, places, religious and moral values, and basic principles of Islam.

Based on these, we can list the results obtained in the research as follows:

Situations involving Islamophobic elements in digital games are processed through the elements, places, principles and values that Islam attaches importance to. The frequency of Islamophobic elements in these games is as follows: There are five Islamophobic elements in the Pubg game, three in the Call of duty series and two in the Resident evil series. As a result, it is understood that Islamophobic elements are included in digital games. Islamophobic situations detected in digital games can play a role in the formation of Islamic prejudice. It was concluded that the detected elements directly and indirectly feed the perception of Islamophobia. Islamophobic elements in digital games contradict some Islamic principles. The situations in the games contradict the perceptions of hijab, death and worship adopted by Islam. In addition, the fighting in the game, the attack on the minaret, the treatment of the word Allah and hadiths are situations that are not in the practices of Islam. Making a door similar to the door of the masjid, which has an important place in Islam, and depicting it as a door opening to evil and the treatment of the Qur'an are also issues that have no place in Islam.

Based on the results of this study, the following suggestions have been developed:

During the research process, it was realized that there were not enough studies on this subject. In this context, more academic studies can be conducted to contribute to the literature and provide the opportunity for comparison. Our research has shown that digital games can create a very large social virtual world. Changing the issues included in these games, which provide access to large masses, in a way that appeals to all players, can offer everyone the opportunity to play on equal terms. The suggestion of designing games that can create a positive perspective about the religion of Islam can be presented to game developers. An empirical study can be conducted to investigate the effects of these games on individuals. This research can reveal the effects of games on individuals in different segments or in various age groups.

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