Journal of Qualitative Research in Education

# A Semiotic Analysis of Digital Educational Games with Religious Themes for Children

Hasan Hüseyin AYGÜL*
Gamze GÜRBÜZ**

To cite this article:

Aygul, H. H., & Gurbuz, G. (2021). A semiotic analysis of digital educational games with religious themes for children. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Education*, 25, 51-75. doi: 10.14689/enad.25.3

**Abstract.** Digital educational games with religious themes designed for children are examined in this study. Some of these digital games have educational content which can help in the learning of religious knowledge through the game experience and turning it into practice. Digital games of a religious theme are also designed and offered to consumers on digital platforms in Turkey. In this context, four games named "Path of Heaven", "Power of Religion", "Hereafter Quiz" and "Treasure Island" were analysed using Roland Barthes' semiological method. The children's religious (digital) socialization is discussed through signs which have the denotation and connotation meanings in these games. It is found that educational digital games with religious themes are functional for children's religious socialization, but the signs and content need to be pedagogically controlled. It also seems that it is important for parents to check (tracking digital footprints) whether the games are sterile or not.

**Keywords:** Religion, digital educational game, religious socialization

Article Info

Received: 24 Jun. 2020
Revised: 12 Oct. 2020
Accepted: 29 Dec. 2020

© 2021 ANI Publishing. All rights reserved.

* *Correspondence:* Akdeniz University, Turkey, hasanhuseyinaygul@gmail.com
** Akdeniz University, Turkey, gamzegurbuz970@gmail.com

## Introduction

Digital games have become an important part of the daily flow for "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001). Digital natives who spend a significant part of their time experiencing digital games, both consume and produce a digital gaming culture via many technological vehicles (such as desktops or laptops, tablets, smartphones and games consoles) and with the online movement possibility provided by the Internet (Aygul & Apak, 2019, 143-144). Playing games has functions such as increasing cognitive capacity, supporting social behaviours, arousing curiosity and improving awareness. According to Huizinga (2006, 17), a game is a meaning establisher and carrier in the social structure. A game has a functional position in learning, repeating and internalizing certain roles in the course of the socialization processes of children. Games that open to interaction inherently and have a competitive environment from time to time are performed using certain rules and ultimately this ensures that social roles are learned (Berger & Luckmann, 2018, 193). Do the things stated regarding the social functions of traditional games also apply to children who socialize in a virtual environment/space and spend a significant part of their time playing digital / video/computer games? In other words, can children who experience digital games participate in society with the knowledge and skills they have acquired and ensure regeneration of society?

While digital technologies and the possibility of online mobility have created various opportunities for children, they can also bring with them certain risks. On the one hand, "victim children", who are captured by computer games, can be exposed to pornographic visual and other images of violence, while on the other hand, it gives rise to "new digital generations" who learn and discover through information and communication technologies. The individual and social ties which are experienced between hope and fear stem from a fundamental distinction between "education" and "entertainment" in the digital world. While the educational promise of digital technologies is a reality that is accepted by many people without question, the entertainment part can be generally seen as morally damaging and culturally worthless (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1999, 5). Thus, digital games can have both benefits and harms for children who build their identities and socialize through digital culture.

Playing digital/video/computer games for children is known to have many negative effects. Numerous medical, psychological and social effects, such as detachment from reality, loss of the social environment, alienation from the family, increase in aggressive behaviours, eye disorders and headaches can be seen, as a result of addiction to digital gaming (see Irmak & Erdogan, 2016). On the other hand, it is also claimed that digital games improve hand-eye coordination, increase players' self-esteem and contribute to educational potential/success (Griffiths, 2002, 47). Parents, on the one hand, don't want their children to spend too much time in this area, but on the other hand do want their children to have 21 st century skills, develop talents such as problem-solving, be able to make decisions and collaborate (see Aygul & Eke, 2019). In recent years, educators, game designers and developers, taking these

concerns of parents into account, have looked for ways digital games can be used for educational purposes and have eventually shown that digital educational culture can also be developed by means of gaming.

The subjects of discovering the positive potential of digital games and using it for educational purposes have been discussed in the literature since the early 2000's. For instance, Prensky (2001) states that "digital natives" have more distinctive learning methods than their parents (digital immigrants), the manner of learning has changed and games should be used for educational purposes. According to Prensky, "digital game-based learning" motivates the student by making learning processes shorter and easier. Gee (2003) states that schools, workplaces and families should use games and game technologies to encourage and develop learning. According to Gee, digital games allow children to not only be consumers but also producers. The use of digital games in education and training to meet the needs of the "Net generation", has ensured that this field has in time become recognised as "serious games" (Annetta, 2008, 229-230; Becker, 2008, 49); later, digital educational games (DEG) have been integrated into children's learning experiences and also been labelled as "edu-tainment" (Griffiths, 2002, 47).

There are various games offered by digital educational game creators and developers to the liking of religious parents and children concerning religious beliefs and practices. When it comes to digital educational games, the aim is to improve children's characteristics, such as logic, memory, critical thinking skills, visualization and discovery, as well as to increase their sense of wonder and motivation (Annetta, 2008, 231). Similarly, in the religion-themed digital educational games, it is aimed that children learn religious knowledge and practices by having fun, get to know religious values and are able to transfer this information into their daily life. In this study the most popular four games, "Path of Heaven", "Power of Religion", "Hereafter Quiz" and "Treasure Island", which have been designed for children and are included in Turkish online gaming sites were analysed using Roland Barthes' semiological method. An attempt was made to discuss the religious socialization of children in virtual space through signs which have denotation and connotation meanings in religious-themed digital educational games. Prior to this, is a discussion related to religion and digitalization, as well as information on the religious socialization of children in the digital world.

## Digital Religion and Digital Religious Socialization

It is claimed that religious traditions and practices have an unchangeable and strict nature. However, religions have a dynamic structure rather than a static one. Accordingly, religions are constantly changing, transforming, adapting and developing based on the changes in the social world. With the development of the Internet and new media, there have been ongoing transformations in religious beliefs and practices. At the most basic level, the internet has affected religious communities, authorities and identities. Along with this, the new media has also led to changes in the

practice of religious rituals, religious information-seeking behaviors and even the types of religious experiences individuals and groups have (Helland, 2015, 1-2).

The online religious environment is comprised of two equally powerful forces. One of these is the "end-user" and the other is the "content/service provider". There is a unique relationship between these two groups, much like the relationship between religion and the media. The first heuristic classification used to investigate the levels of religious participation through this environment was performed in the early 2000s. The provision of information related to religion on the web explorer and/or its use for information-propaganda is known as religion-online, and the use of the internet as an interactive environment in terms of religious participation is known as online-religion (Young, 2013, 93; Helland, 2015, 3). In other words, religion-online refers to the use of the internet as a communication tool, while online-religion refers to the use of the internet and similar tools to create an interactive environment. Campbell's (2012) definitions of "networked religion", and "digital religion" are also prevalent uses accepted in this context.

As discussed in this study, digital religion is defined as a bridge that connects and expands online religious practices and spaces into offline religious contexts. Accordingly, digital religion means the intertwining of the new and the established or the intersection of both the traits of online culture and traditional religion (Campbell, 2013, 4). Digital religion has many traits, such as learning and talking about religion, discussing religious beliefs and practices, sharing religious feelings and concerns, sending prayer requests, chatting, undertaking religious charitable activities and even participating in online rituals. At the same time, it is also used to handle and discuss online and offline religious participation, the impact of digital networks on religious authority and religious rituals and beliefs which have become different with new media.

Digital gaming and religious interaction correspond to a small part of the digital religious debate. The distant approach of religions to games has prevented the study of games for many years. There are some typical reasons for this; Primarily, games are widely considered simply as a form of entertainment for children and young people; secondly, digital games are often seen as artificial or unvalued forms of expression; a third reason is that technology is seen as a secular field and virtual games worlds are considered to be unreal (Grieve & Campbell, 2014, 53). However, for children and young people who were born in a digital age and socialize in digital culture, the digital game world is an activity/field of activity that takes up a significant part of their daily lives. In this space, children take part in digital culture and become carriers of that culture.

It can be seen that religion is used in various ways within the digital game culture. For instance, religious matters can be used as a background to increase originality in a game or create a special atmosphere. In such a case, the symbols/icons/signs used in the game may have a rarely traceable effect in the game itself or its general narrative. The second way in which to use religion in digital games is the fictionalization of the story/context of a game. In a digital game, characters, environments, images and

stories can be nourished by religious content, or created entirely on top of it. The third way of interaction between religion and digital games is to present certain religious-themed beliefs, doctrines and practices aimed at gamers. In other words, digital games can be used as a tool to present some kind of propaganda or a certain ideology related to religion (Wiemker & Wysocki, 2014, 206-207).

Aside from these three uses of digital game culture produced on religious issues, it is seen that religious-themed digital educational games are produced by game developers with the support of educators, pedagogues, psychologists and experts in the field of religious education. As in other digital games, they involve interacting with the gamer through feedback to achieve a certain aim, ultimately having fun and competing, accessing knowledge and applying the content of religious-themed digital educational games. In this way, parents can both enable their children to learn/reinforce religious knowledge and practices through their playing experience in the virtual space and make the virtual space sterile for their children.

## Digital Parentage and Childhood

The transformation of social realities and interactions into a digital form/digitization over data, content and networks, and their transfer to a virtual reality ultimately makes it possible to call the lived period a "digital age/network society". Information and communication technologies connected with internet networks have provided the opportunity for online mobility and social networks. This situation has brought with it a new logic of social relations, a globalized economy and the formation of a virtual cultural structure over time. So much so that in a social plane, with digital culture, the forms of relationships established by individuals and groups change, socialization practices become differentiated and new norms and values are produced (see Castells, 2008; Boyd, 2014; Dijk, 2018; Lupton, 2015).

Discussing the effects of the digitization phase on children is a remarkable issue in this sense. As discussed in this article, one of the effects of digitalization on children is related to the differentiation of family interactions. Being intertwined with a digital world inevitably limits family interactions and transforms or eliminates the quality of togetherness. The reason "digital parents" are as visible as "digital childhood" is that the constant rush of being connected also negatively affects domestic relationships and interactions. As such, it is observed that digital technologies are used to try to meet some parenting roles. Therefore, the socialization processes of children, who have opened their eyes to a digital world, are also different (see Aygul & Eke, 2019).

In the most general sense, media affects the development of the child as a social entity. It spreads its logic and culture by infiltrating its family and narrow environment. Thus, it is included in the child's socialisation process (Berger & Luckman, 2018, 197-198). For this reason, parents intensely demand and use the educational aspects of both traditional/old media and new media. At this point, parents transfer their educational and instructive roles to the media, almost constructing "digital parentage" with their

own hands. Thus, attempts are made to try to compensate for religious education and values that need to be given by the parents with the educational aspect of the media as in other issues.

The basis of individuals' religious beliefs, feelings, attitudes and behaviors develops significantly during childhood. The easy faith/persuasion of children also makes them prepared for religion (Koylu, 2004, 137-138). On top of this, "... religion is the religion that families tell their children." (Mardin, 1992, 64). In the traditional socialization process, the teaching of religion and values was provided by parents to a considerable extent. "Being a parent means taking on the roles of constituent and protector of the world. Undoubtedly, in the most obvious sense, this is by offering the child the environment to socialize and it emerges by acting as a mediator between the whole world of society and the child." (Berger, 2012, 90). However, it is observed that parenting roles have been considerably given up to digital technologies. So much so that digital tools for parents function as an "e-caregiver" where appropriate, and are used for their children to have a good time/ be happy, quiet/to calm down, eat, distract and even sleep. In a way, the interaction between parent-child becomes limited and encounters in the physical space decrease while the boundaries of the interaction between media and children expand and the time spent in the virtual space increases.

As children's time spent in the virtual space increases, parents' concerns about the digital world also increases. Parents - conscious parents - track and control their children's footprints in the digital world through various software programs (filtering, blocking, tracking). In this way, the dangers in the virtual space are minimized and an attempt is made to create a sterile place of use. On the other hand, parents also demand digital educational games to help their children learn while having fun. In this sense, educational games, which are also offered to religious parents, are designed. Thus, children can compensate for their religious socialization while having fun in digital game culture. *

* Very little research has been conducted into digital games related to religious education. When analyzing digital/video/computer games, it can be seen that two extents are important. The first is the narrative extent. The story, fiction and themes of the game are at the forefront here. The second is the gamer's role. It covers the possibility of affecting the course of the game and the things experienced during the game (Scholtz, 2005, 176). In recent studies, digital games have been discussed culturally based on three factors: the production of games, game text, and the achievement/acceptance signs of a game. Game designers and developers can produce a game based on specific themes and topics, and retell that theme and topic within the game. Therefore, the researcher's examination of the topics and themes used by game designers and developers in game production will be one of the first steps to understanding and explaining the game. Secondly, it is the determination of the ideas, philosophies and ideologies contained in the content of the game text. Finally, different forms of experiences that gamers have when experiencing games can be analyzed (Wiemker & Wysocki, 2014, 199-203). According to Ferdig (2014, 69-78), who is one of the limited number of people acting/producing in the relevant field, religion and digital games have four basic components: "Game content", which means providing information / instruction / assignment concerning a certain religion or teaching the characteristics of one or more religions that fit the desired characteristics; "game context", which refers to symbols, signs, rules and characters representing religious tones that are explicitly or implicitly found in the game; "game challenge", which has meanings such as taking the role of a god presented in the game, being good or bad, or representing the characteristics of the god of a religion presented in the game; and finally, "personal capital" (gamer's capital), which refers to moral beliefs, the explicit and implicit feedback of others and the religious foundations/knowledge a gamer brings/possesses as an inspector

## Studies in Literature

While there is widespread participation in digital culture among children, few studies in this field have analyzed the effects of games and social networking activities on children's spirituality, religious culture and belief (see Scholtz, 2005, 174; Yust, 2014, 134). When this reality is discussed in the context of the Islamic religion and religious games, it can be said that there are even more limited studies. An important part of these studies is related to the representation of the religion of Islam and Muslim identity in digital games. Anti-Islamism (Islamophobia as discussed in the literature) is present in games, either implicitly or explicitly. Fictionalizing Muslims as terrorists/enemies and after all, the otherizing/externalizing of Muslim identities in games inevitably leads to the academia studying this field (see Cingi, 2018; Kalayci & National 2018; Temel, 2019; Yorulmaz, 2018).

The fact that digital game and religion interaction has been discussed since the 2010s has limited the discussions in the literature. On the other hand, there are various studies conducted on the relationship between media and religion in Turkish academia (see Sener, 2019). Some of these studies have been carried out specifically for media and religious education. In her article, "Media and Religion Studies in Religious Education Literature in Turkey" Furat (2019, 32), is said to have carried out 49 studies in this field, in Turkey. According to Furat, when these studies were evaluated in terms of content and extent, three basic areas of questions came to the forefront: Media perception, effect and functionality. Media and religious education were initially addressed with regard to the perception and/or affect of mass media such as television, movies, TV series and cartoon series. Afterwards, with the spread of social media, academia focused on the impact of the internet and social media on the teaching of religion and values. Also, in recent years there have been discussions concerning how traditional and new media can be used in the teaching of religion and values (see Furat, 2015; 2019).

In the related literature, there are a limited number of studies on religious-themed digital educational games. One of these is the master's thesis entitled “Religious Education in Preschool Education Through Computer Games”, written by Sevket Mert (2015). The author states that digital educational games with religious content are functional for the religious socialization of preschool children and introduces computer games (memory cards, matching games and puzzle games) prepared for preschool children. The chapter entitled "Religion in Digital Games and the Possibility of Using Digital Games in Religious Education", in the Book by Bilal Yorulmaz (2015) is another of the limited studies in this field. The author in this study discusses religious games, religion in games and the experience of playing games in relation to religion. Each

independent of the game. Ferdig states that, through these four components, questions such as, "How does religion affect the game?", "How do designers use religious symbols to improve the plausibility of the game?" or "How are religious, moral and ethical principles placed in the general game goals?" can be answered.

issue has been discussed in the current literature and through specimen games. Although it's content is different, Recep Vardi's (2012) article, "Internet User's Habits of the Usage of the Religious Concepts", can also be shown as an example in this regard. Vardi tried to understand adult individuals' knowledge of religious content usage on the internet. He determined that the number of individuals who play religious computer games is low. This situation may be due to computer games with religious content not being very well-known. This study differs from the other three studies in terms of both the way the issue is discussed and its method.

## The Purpose of the Study

Religion-themed digital educational games have been chosen as the subject in this study to understand and interpret the interaction between religion and the media and the levels of differentiation resulting from this interaction. The purpose of the study is to reveal the effects and functions of educational digital games with religious themes on children's religious socialization.

This study aims to answer the following questions.

- What are the general features of educational digital games with religious themes?
- What are the contents of educational digital games with religious themes?
- What is the impact of educational digital games with religious themes on children's religious socialization?

Determining the possible effects of religion-themed digital educational games on children's spirituality, religious culture and belief exceeds the limits of the study, but putting forth the effects of the produced content on religious socialization practices is the main aim that this study desires to achieve. Accordingly, religion-themed digital educational games designed/developed for children and produced in Turkey are included in the scope of the study.

# Method

## Research Design

A qualitative research design has been used to understand and analyze the contents of religion-themed digital educational games developed/designed for children. In qualitative research, the researcher analyzes certain events from various aspects, placing them in the center of the study, making sense of the data which has been obtained, interpreting it and attempting to make it understandable (Neuman, 2014, 237). Accordingly, semiological analysis, which is one of the qualitative research

designs, has been used in the analysis of religion-themed digital educational games designed for children in Turkish online gaming sites.

In the study of Saussure entitled, "Course in General Linguistics", which was first published by his students in 1916, he designed semiotics as a "science to examine the life of signs in society" (Saussure, 1998, 46). According to Barthes (1993, 72), semiotics is used "to determine and reveal the functioning of meaning systems other than language, in accordance with the design of all manner of structural events to create a draft of the observed issues." In semiotic studies, the sign is defined as a whole, arising from a signifier combined with a signified (Saussure, 1998, 111). The signifier represents the concrete direction of the sign. The signified means the design that an object creates in the mind. The signs can be handled in different ways linguistically, visually and symbolically (Barthes, 1993, 40-44). The changes experienced by societies, the diversity of the cultural structure, the position of religion in this structure and the attempt to understand social events ensure that sociology and semiotics studies meet on common ground (Okutan, 2019, 217).

## Study Group

There are hundreds of games on Turkish online gaming sites. A small part of these games constitutes digital educational games with religious themes. In accordance with the purpose of the study, "purposeful sampling" was used; this means choosing information-rich situations. For the research problem, within the types of purposive sampling the "typical case sampling" method, which is the selection of the typical/average case from many cases in the universe, was used (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005, 107, 110).

Some of the religion-themed digital games consist of games informing about/aiming to teach the principles and rituals of a religion such as puzzles, matching and quiz. In addition, there are also social impact games aiming to direct the player to take a sensitive stand and develop ethical behaviors by inducing empathy (see Yorulmaz, 2015, 372). The selection of the games, which are the subject of the sample of this study, is based on three criteria. One of these is that the game is designed for children, another is that it is religion-themed and lastly that it has educational content. Ultimately, the idea is to represent the subject matter best among many games, aiming to teach and/or reinforce religious knowledge and practices. The most commonly played four games entitled, "Path of Heaven", "Power of Religion", "Hereafter Quiz" and "Treasure Island" were chosen as the sample of the study.

## Limitations of the Study

Since each study is conducted on a certain place/time/issue, it has certain limitations. Including all games in the category of religious games within the scope of this study would make it impossible to look at and holistically evaluate the issue. For this reason, this study is limited to the four games it discusses.

## Data Collection

Religion-themed digital educational games produced, sourced and developed/designed for children in Turkey are included in the scope of the study. For this purpose, the Turkish games websites were reviewed and an attempt was made to understand the dynamism on these platforms.

- The games that are considered to have religious themes and which are under the "religious games" tab on certain games websites were investigated.
- The researchers made their decisions by playing/experiencing the games in order to determine whether they were suitable for the subject.
- Alexa Statistics (https://www.domainsorgulama.net/site-analiz/alexa-istatistikleri/) were used to consider the status, number of visitors and number of clicks received by the games websites.
- According to these statistics, the four most commonly played games with religious content were included in the scope of the study and examined and analyzed.

## Data Analysis

In this study, a research model for the semiological method of religion-themed digital educational games was designed and at this point, the basic variables in the Roland Barthes' semiological method were utilized. According to this;

- Firstly, the content information of the games and their websites selected were examined.
- Secondly, the formal features of the games were described in terms of graphics and language and were evaluated in the context of the written and presentation codes.
- In Semiotics it is revealed that every sign can have different motifs, symbols, and functions. On that account, thirdly, the sign, signifier and the signified in the games were determined and semiotic analyses of the games were performed. In addition to this, the relationship between the sign, the signifier and the signified are presented in a table.
- To understand the subject in-depth, finally, myths, denotation, and connotation meanings in the games' contents were interpreted by using narrative analyses. Due to Barthes' interest in exploring and interpreting the world, a central position for "meaning" has been given on the basis of Barthes' semiotic approach. According to Barthes, a sign can be evaluated in the context of denotation, and connotation and myths. Denotation occurs by comprehending and explaining the sign directly. The connotation is an interpretation of signs according to special values and functional differences (as cited in Guiraud, 1994, 45). Denotations are more universal and common ideas in people's minds. The connotation is an intellectual

element and more scattered compared to denotation. Myths are a cultural analysis of the connotation (Barthes, 1993, 70).

## Findings

In this part of the study, the games, which are the subject of the study, were analyzed semiotically. For this, firstly, information about the game was presented; it was evaluated in terms of graphical language, semiotic analysis and then the narrative analysis of the game was performed.

### Game 1: Path of Heaven

- *Game Site and Game Content Information:* This game was selected from the website www.dinioyunlar.net and included in the scope of the study. On the website, some games are mostly preferred by children such as "Iftar Table "I am Learning the Quran", "Religious Knowledge Test", "How to Perform Wudu", "Finding Fard of Prayer". The game "Path of Heaven" received 4.55 points out of 5 from users.
- *Evaluation of the Path of Heaven Game in terms of Graphical Language:* There are visual elements of natural life such as flowers and a lake in the game. The game is fictionalized on a platform using predominantly the color green as the presentation code. As a written code, different questions are asked to individuals. The human figure in the game is on the ground when viewed from above, at the very beginning of the platform. Thus, an apparent image is not initially present. This figure is located next to the flowers and the lake at the end of the game. A piece of wood and hedges are positioned as various obstacles during the game.

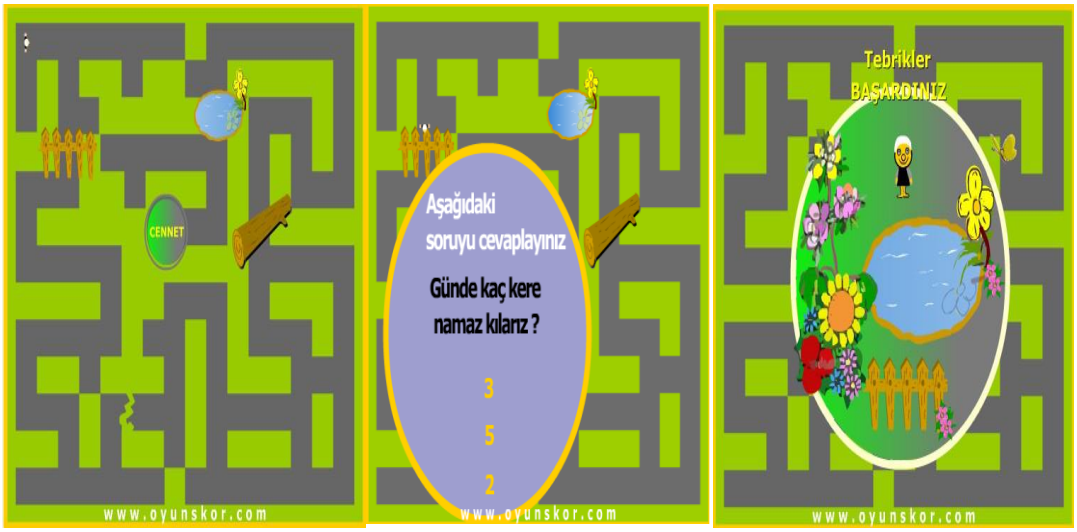


*Image 1.1.* *Image 1.2.* *Image 1.3.*

- ***Semiotic Analysis of the Path of Heaven Game:*** The signifier of the location sign in the game consists of flowers and a lake. This part feels like a peaceful place with natural beauty. The signifier of the object sign is the piece of wood and the hedges. It represents challenges and obstacles to overcome. The signifier of the writing sign is the competition questions, "Heaven" and "Congratulations You have done it". This represents the measurement of religious knowledge and the goal which has been reached. The signifier of the human sign is a man. It is seen that he has clothes which are appropriate to the Muslim identity. The smile on his face gives the impression of happiness.

Table 1.1.

*Semiotic Analysis of the Path of Heaven Game*

| The Type of Sign | Sign | Signifier | Signified |
|---|---|---|---|
| Iconic | Location | Flowers and a lake | Peaceful place |
| Iconic | Object | Hedges and piece of wood | Obstacles |
| Iconic | Writing | Heaven | Goal |
| Iconic | Writing | Religious questions | Measuring religious knowledge |
| Iconic | Writing | Congratulations, You have done it | Achievement |
| Iconic | Human | Human figure | Muslim gamer |

- ***The Narrative Analysis of the Path of Heaven Game***

  - ***Denotation Meaning:*** The game is a maze game, in which the first human figure is expected to overcome various obstacles in turn. When the gamer comes to obstacles, he encounters questions with religious content. If he answers these questions correctly the obstacles disappear. The gamer who has overcome all the obstacles reaches heaven.

  - ***Connotation Meaning:*** The game aims to teach basic Islamic knowledge and practices such as prayer, fasting and giving "zakat" to the gamer. The use of the color green as a presentation code signifies more peace, calmness and happiness. Reaching heaven can be associated with the meanings of the color green, because green is depicted as the basic color of sanctuary and spaces in Islam (Mazlum, 2015, 134). Koc (2008), in his study based on the 7-15 age group, made children draw pictures of heaven and hell and evaluated these pictures using the method of semiotics. It was determined that the children who drew heaven predominantly used the color green and associated paradise with the elements of nature. Children can design abstract concepts with different fictions, motifs and models in their minds. The depiction of heaven seen at the end of the game can help the child provide an idea of the supernatural world with descriptions in the imaginary world. At the end of the game, an expression of happiness appears on the face of the gamer figure who has reached heaven.

The message given here is that individuals will be satisfied and find peace if they perform their religious worship and practices. Apart from this, the clothes of the human figure in the game are designed in accordance with Muslim attire. In childhood, games can be utilized to teach religious knowledge, words and concepts. Using religious and moral motifs and indicating spiritual values in games can affect the child's mental descriptions related to religion (Simsek, 2004, 216). The game both aims to teach the gamer basic religious knowledge and refresh existing knowledge with religious questions, and to mentally describe the concept of heaven in the holy books.

- *The Myth* Reaching heaven is a demanding process.

## Game 2: Hereafter Quiz

- *Game Site and Game Content Information*: This game was selected from the website www.oyunyelpazesi.net and included in the scope of the study. There are many religious games in the "religious games" category of the site. There are games such as "Perform Wudu", "Arabic Letters", "Complete Hadith", "Perform Prayer", "Find the Names of the Companions", "Learn Prayer and Rosary" and "Find the Kiblah", which aim to teach religious knowledge and practices. In addition to games, there are religious puzzles, coloring and memory games. The game "Hereafter Quiz" received 3.9 points out of 5 from users.

- *Evaluation of the Hereafter Quiz Game in terms of Graphical Language:* Written code was used predominantly in the game. As a presentation code, various shades of the color blue are placed in the background. There is a white character in the right corner of the platform and a red character in the left corner. At the same time, there are images of mosques and minarets in the middle of the playground. However, it is seen that these images are not very obvious.

*Image 2.1*

*Image 2.2*

- *Semiotic Analysis of the Hereafter Quiz Game:* The signifier of the location sign in the game consists of a mosque and minarets. This symbolizes the places of worship of the Islamic religion. The signifier of the object sign is the trident. This represents a symbol belonging to the devil. The signifiers of the writing sign are the

competition questions. The aim is to measure religious knowledge. The signifiers of the character sign are the red and white figures. They are thought to represent the devil and the angel.

Table 2.1.

*Semiotic Analysis of the Hereafter Quiz*

| The Type of Sign | Sign | Signifier | Signified |
|---|---|---|---|
| Iconic | Location | Mosque and minarets | Places of worship |
| Iconic | Object | Trident | Devil's pitchfork |
| Iconic | Writing | Religious questions | Measuring religious knowledge |
| Iconic | Character | Red figure | Devil |

- ***The Narrative Analysis of the Hereafter Quiz Game:***

  - ***Denotation Meaning:*** The game is a quiz with questions that address different aspects of religion. The gamer is expected to give the correct answer by asking various questions. In this way, the aim is to measure the level of religious knowledge of individuals. At the end of the game, the following feedback is given according to the number of correct answers obtained: "Your religion knowledge is very bad, you need to solve more questions and improve.", "You are God's beloved servant, but work a little more.", "May God grant all servants to be like you, you are Heavenly."

  - ***Connotation Meaning:*** In the left corner of the game, there is a red devil figure holding a three-toothed spear at its long handle. It is stated in the holy books that the devil was created from fire. Therefore, it can be said that the devil is depicted using the color red in the game. On the right, a white angel figure with wings is depicted. It is believed that the color white symbolizes purity. At the same time, it is stated in the Quran (Surah Kâf, 16-17, 18; İnfitâr, 10-11; Zuhruf, 80) angels observing people and recording their actions, do exist (https://kuran.diyanet.gov.tr/tefsir). Based on this information, which is supported by folklore, it is seen that the devil figure is placed on the left side and the angel figure is placed on the right. Content such as pictures, posters and photographs designed for children can be used as an active tool to reveal their thoughts and mental world (Koc, 2008, 262). In the games, as an intangible value, religion can be presented to children in tangible visual terms and can be seen as mechanisms that support intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

  - Feedback is given to the gamer in the game according to the success achieved. In this way, the message is given to the gamer that religious teachings should be known, effort should be made and that to reach heaven, strong devotion to religion and being a good servant needs to be realized through religion. A questioning and curious personality of the child, in addition to rapid access to all kinds of information in the digital age, can accelerate the process of learning

religious representations. Hence, in games with religious content, a gamer character can make contact with religion.

- In the knowledge competition titled "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire", which has different versions on the television and internet, the contestant is given both "50:50" joker and "ask the audience" joker rights to make it easier to get the correct answer. In the Hereafter Quiz contest, the "half-half" joker right has been changed to "ask for intercession" and "ask the audience" joker right has been converted to "ask the congregation". The transfer of the joker rights used in the game to the gamer by using religious expressions is an indication that religion protects its language to a certain extent while meeting the digital platform and that religious sensitivities are observed while adapting the game to the platform. Thus, these games can function as a sterile entertainment environment for parents who want their children to learn religious knowledge and practices from digital media. On the other hand, a liking culture that takes into account religious sensitivities could be built in the digital world for both parents and children.

- *The Myth* It is important to know religious information.

## Game 3: Power of Religion

- *Game Site and Game Content Information*: This game was selected from the website www.dostoyun.com and included in the scope of the study. Compared to the above two websites, games with religious content are very limited on this site. In addition to the game discussed, there are also games such as "Learning My Religion", "Religious Question Competition" and "Religious Treasure Island". The game "Power of Religion" received 3.68 points out of 5 from users.

- *Evaluation of the Power of Religion Game in terms of Graphical Language:* In the background of the game, houses, mosques and minarets are depicted predominantly in grey color as the presentation code. In this way, this represents worldly life. The sky is depicted with the color yellow, reflecting the sunlight. The meaning of the colors, the way they are used, the psychological effects and perception styles can differ according to the cultural values in society (Bodur, 2006, 83). The game takes place on a bridge over the sea. On the bridge is the image of a flying monster with a grey body, red eyes and sharp teeth. There is a human figure directly opposite it waiting with a canister in hand. These two figures are positioned mutually on the bridge. Different words with religious content are used as the written code.

*Image 3.1.*

*Image 3.2.*

*Image 3.3.*

*Image 3.4.*

- *Semiotic Analysis of the Power of Religion Game*: In the game location signs are predominantly used. The houses symbolise the life of the city; the mosques and minarets, symbolise the places of worship in the city; the water in the sea, the sky, the clouds and the sun symbolise the natural elements of the atmosphere and represent the signifiers. The signifiers of the object sign are materials such as bridges and bottles. The bridge symbolizes the mutual challenge, and the materials symbolise the tools of the challenge. The signifiers of the writing sign are religious words. The aim is to teach religious content. The signifier of the character sign is the monster figure. It is thought to evoke the devil in terms of its formal features. The signifier of the human sign is a man. It is seen that he is ready to challenge with the materials he has.

Table 3.1.

*Semiotic Analysis of the Power of Religion*

| The Type of Sign | Sign | Signifier | Signified |
|---|---|---|---|
| Iconic | Location | Houses | Worldly life |
| Iconic | Location | Mosque and minarets | Places of worship in the city |
| Iconic | Location | Water | Sea |
| Iconic | Location | Sky, clouds, sun | Atmosphere |
| Iconic | Object | Bridge | Come across |
| Iconic | Object | Materials such as bottles | Challenge tools |
| Iconic | Writing | Religious words | Measuring religious knowledge |
| Iconic | Character | Monster figure | Devil |
| Iconic | Human | Human figure | Muslim gamer |

- *The Narrative Analysis of the Power of Religion Game*

  - *Denotation Meaning:* By showing various religious words in the game, the gamer is expected to write these words correctly. If the religious word is written correctly, the human figure throws the materials in his hand at the monster. Thus, the aim is for the monster to fall into the sea. The gamer who writes religious words completely and correctly wins the game. Any incorrect spelling of each letter of the words causes the monster figure to approach the human figure. If the entire religious word is written incorrectly, the monster figure captures and kills the human figure.

  - *Connotation Meaning:* With reference to the religious knowledge that the devil was created from fire, in this game it is thought that the monster figure represents the devil due to its red eyes. The positioning of the human figure right across the devil represents the existence of a field of challenge. The city in the background of the game symbolizes worldly life and refers to the field of challenge of the devil and the human. The bridge in the game symbolizes the "Sirat Bridge". Signs such as the Sirat bridge, the devil, the colors red and black can create depictions about the punishment of evil and hell, in children's minds (Koc, 2008, 282).

  - Presenting the words to measure religious knowledge to the gamer and defeating the devil with the correct spelling of each word, in terms of the game challenge, it both shows the importance of religious knowledge and ensures that it is reinforced. The misspelled letters mean the inadequacy of religious knowledge. The message in the game is that religious knowledge and practices will help individuals to challenge the devil/desires in worldly life and that otherwise, s/he will succumb and will pay a price for it.

  - Religious content games on digital platforms can contain different depictions of gods, religious symbols and figures according to their themes and can discuss the challenge between good and evil forces. The gamer believes that if s/he plays the game well, s/he can achieve success against evil forces. Thus,

religious doctrines are thought to be an effective factor in providing justice (Scholtz, 2005, 173-180).

- The child's internalization of religious feelings may differ depending on the phraseology used in teaching religious knowledge. Children experiencing fear-based learning process may not be able to demonstrate good religious development (Oruc, 2010, 81). In the game, the monster figure catches and destroys the human figure, spilling blood. This may cause a negative psychological effect on the child. For this reason, while introducing basic notions of religion, especially in early childhood, the child's way of evaluating the events in the world of feelings and thoughts may differ.

- According to the meanings of the game, religion can affect the actions of individuals. If the individual shapes their behavior with the rules of his/her religion, s/he can survive in social life. At the same time, it can be said that religion is a control mechanism in social life and emphasis is placed on its disciplinary aspect.

- *The Myth:* It is necessary to struggle with the devil.

## Game 4: Treasure Island

- ***Game Site and Game Content Information***: This game was selected from the website www.kraloyun.com and included in the scope of the study. Although the site has many types of games, those with religious content are very limited. In addition to the game discussed, there are also games such as "Religious History Wheel", "Religious Knowledge Competition", "Islamic Knowledge Competition", "Breaking and Not Breaking The Wudu Spell" and "Ramadan Puzzle". The game "Treasure Island" received 4.2 points out of 5 from users.

- ***Evaluation of the Treasure Island Game in terms of Graphical Language:*** The game is fictionalized on a platform consisting of the elements of natural life. As the presentation code, the sky and the sea are blue, the trees are green, and the mountains are brown. The game takes place on an island. Therefore, the sea and the color blue were used more predominantly. The figures of three children – two boys and a girl are positioned at the beginning of the island. Various questions are asked of the gamer as the written code. At the same time, animals are also clearly seen. Gamers play an active role during the game, both by answering the questions posed and passing from one obstacle to another. At the end of the island, there is a treasure chest that can be reached if the game is won.

*Image 4.1.*

*Image 4.2.*

- ***Semiotic Analysis of the Treasure Island Game***: In the game, the signifiers of the location sign are mountains and islets, height, distance and the places to be overcome; the forests full of trees, the water in the sea, the sky and the clouds represent the natural elements of the atmosphere. The signifiers of the animal signs are the turtle, rabbit, mouse, bird and frog. During the game, the turtle directs the gamer by carrying him/her on its back, the bird by helping the gamer to fly and the frog by assisting the gamer to jump. The signifier of the object sign is the treasure chest. It symbolises reaching the target and winning. The signifier of the writing sign consists of competition questions. The aim is to measure religious knowledge. The

signifiers of the human sign are the two boys and the girl. It is seen that the clothes of the girl figure are designed in accordance with the Muslim identity.

Table 4.1.

*Semiotic Analysis of the Treasure Island*

| The Type of Sign | Sign | Signifier | Signified |
|---|---|---|---|
| Iconic | Location | Mountain and islets | Living place |
| Iconic | Location | Trees | Forest |
| Iconic | Location | Water | Sea |
| Iconic | Location | Sky, clouds | Atmosphere |
| Iconic | Animal | Turtle, rabbit, mouse, bird, frog | Animals that ask questions |
| Iconic | Object | Treasure chest | Award |
| Iconic | Writing | Religious questions | Measuring religious knowledge |
| Iconic | Human | Girl | Muslim gamer |
| Iconic | Human | Two boys | Muslim gamer |

- *The Narrative Analysis of the Treasure Island Game:*

  - *Denotation Meaning:* There are various obstacles from the beginning of the island. In the game, animal figures are waiting in certain parts of the island and they ask the human figures questions about the Quran. If these questions are answered correctly, the obstacles are overcome and the treasure chest is reached.

  - *Connotation Meaning:* The game is an educational game that is aimed at teaching all kinds of knowledge about the Quran. It is seen that the clothes of the girl figure in the game are designed according to the Muslim identity. Children have the ability to imitate everything they see from their environment, parents and peer groups in the learning process of early childhood. At this point, they may feel a desire to be curious and experience religious signs in games. Games are seen as the signature of childhood. They are vivid and visible manifestations of imagination and learning. Games and rituals are thought to be effective in religious development. That is because rituals can shape human consciousness and behaviors through games (Bellah, 2011, 89).

  - Each animal asks three questions, and if the questions are answered correctly the animals carry the children to the next obstacle. If the wrong answers are given to the questions the game starts again from the beginning. Thus, the aim is to ensure/reinforce religious information permanently. At the end of the game if all questions have been answered correctly the treasure at the end of the island is reached, and there are various hadiths about the importance of learning the Quran. Religion can promise to satisfy certain aspirations and desires of individuals, and offer alternatives (Scholtz, 2005, 179). The treasure reached at the end of the game ensures that the gamer is symbolically satisfied and religious teachings are used while doing this.

- ***The Myth:*** Living as necessitated by religion is the gift/treasure of life.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The ongoing discussions in the literature on the possible effects of digitalization on religion and religiosity demonstrate that Muslims have an intense desire for information and communication technologies and in addition, can exhibit their own identities in a virtual space with the opportunity for online movement provided by the internet, being able to take part in a digital religious culture. Nevertheless, the digitalization of religion inevitably serves the culture industry, consumer society, culture and ideology, so the content produced can be detached from its context (Haberli, 2014, 163; Kararaslan, 2015, 40; Menekse, 2015, 158; Akgul, 2017, 203; Haberli, 2019, 311-312).

The scope and speed of information and communication technologies have spread through all areas of the social sphere. Religion is one of the social institutions that has entered the digital environment. This environment has been under the influence of capitalism and the consumer society, culture and ideology created by capitalism. Consequently, as well as the transfer of religious objects, symbols, and signs into digital worlds, virtual environments are designed for the consumer to have fun and obtain religious knowledge and practices. From the standpoint of Islam, the door to a world which is considered as being non-sterile has opened slightly and Muslims are also endeavoring to discover the limits of this "fascinating" environment. The presentation of religious knowledge and practices in the form of entertainment and competitions through digital games is one of the new aspects of "digitalized religion".

When the general features of the religion-themed digital educational games are analyzed, it is seen that colors, visuals, symbols and clothes that reflect the religion of Islam and Muslim identity are used. The visuals and symbols in the games make it possible to present intangible values such as heaven, hell, the devil and angels to children through tangible visuals. Using religious and moral motifs in the games both affects the child's spirituality, religious culture and belief, and can also affect the child's mental descriptions concerning religion.

When the contents produced in the religious-themed digital educational games are analyzed it is seen that basic Islamic knowledge and rituals/practices are presented. In addition to this, there are also social impact games that emphasize the appearance/importance of religion in social life, and the individual taking a sensitive stance and developing ethical behaviors by inducing empathy. Employing the game, the aim is for children to learn/reinforce their knowledge and practices of the Islamic religion, while at the same time having fun, as well as learning religious and moral values, ensuring religious participation in a virtual space and transferring this knowledge/rituals/worship to their daily lives. The inquisitive and curious nature of the child is taken into account in reinforcing religious knowledge and practices. In addition, the gamer's act of playing the game is supported by feedback and awards. Thus, the

motivation of the gamer is to overcome certain obstacles/know the answers to the questions and, ultimately, increase the awards they obtain. The examples of challenge between good and evil forces and the myths in the games give the impression to the child that this is a long and difficult process. Moreover, this demonstrates that a fear-based learning process is used in games.

When the effects of religious-themed digital educational games on the religious socialization process of children are analyzed, it is seen that a new socialization practice is being established. "We usually earn and internalize our religion from other people, especially people with whom we are personally close or whom we have a sense of commitment to through strong ties." (Zuckerman, 2006, 91). However, for children born and growing up in a digital age, religious socialization occurs in a virtual space, as in other socialization practices. In particular, leaving the parenting roles to digital technologies can lead to children spending more time in online environments/spaces, and the internet environment and tools, which are a secondary socialization tool, and can thus turn into a primary socialization agent. The religious-themed digital educational games discussed are functional in the religious socialization of children in terms of both their general features and content.

Children are the most affected and most vulnerable from content produced in the digital media. Therefore, it is important to investigate how childhood is designed with digital games and how children are positioned (Alver, 2004, 140) and to what extent digital educational games have effected children's religious knowledge and spirituality. Like traditional games, educational digital games seep into the socialization processes of children and ensure the learning of various pieces of knowledge and practices, through repetition and internalization through the game experience. At this point, it is understood that digital educational games with religious themes are also a form of religious socialization. When considered as a new socialization practice, this process can be called “digital religious socialization”. This study reveals that these games are functional for children to ensure they learn and reinforce religious knowledge and practices. However, it also suggests that these games have some negative effects (such as violent images) pedagogically. Therefore, the content, signs, symbols and characters should be designed by obtaining the opinions of the relevant experts. Presenting educational games in entertainment formats may lead children to spend long hours playing games and ultimately lead to digital addiction. For this reason, it seems that it is important for parents to check whether digital educational games are sterile or not (tracking digital footprints) and allow children to use them only for limited periods.

## References


Akgul, M. (2017). Dijitallesme ve din. *Marife*, 17(2), 191-208.

Alver, F. (2004). Neil Postman'in cocuklugun yok olus surecinde iletisim teknolojisi elestirisinin elestirisi. *İletisim Arastirmalari Dergisi,* 2(2), 129-141.

Annetta, L. A. (2008). Video games in education: Why they should be used and how they are being used. *Theory into Practice*, 47(3), 229-239.

Aygul, H. H., & Eke, E. (Eds.) (2019). *Dijital cocukluk ve dijital ebeveynler: Dijital nesillerin teknoloji bagimliligi*. Nobel Akademik Yayincilik.

Aygul, H. H., & Apak, F. (2019). Degisen sosyallikler ve yeni sosyallesme pratikleri ekseninde Youtube ve cocuk Youtuberler. H. H. Aygul & E. Eke (Eds.). *Dijital cocukluk ve dijital ebeveynler: Dijital nesillerin teknoloji bagimliligi* (143-176). Nobel Akademik Yayincilik.

Barthes R. (1993). *Gostergebilimsel seruven*. M. Rifat & S. Rifat, (Cev.), Yapi Kredi Yayinlari.

Becker, K. (2008). *The invention of good games: Understanding learning design in commercial video games*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Calgary). http://dx.doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/13933

Bellah, R. N. (2011). *Religion in human evolution: From the paleolithic to the axial age*. The Belknap Press.

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann T. (2008). *Gercekligin sosyal insasi: Bir bilgi sosyolojisi incelemesi*. V. S. Ogutle (Cev.), Paradigma Yayinlari.

Berger, P. L. (2012). *Melekler hakkinda soylenti*. A. Coskun & N. Ozmen (Cev.), Ragbet Yayinlari.

Bodur, F. (2006). Fotograf ve renk: "Fotograftaki renklerin iletilerin algilanmasindaki rolleri." *C.U. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu Dergisi*, 15(1), 77-86.

Boyd, D. (2014). *It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens*. Yale University Press.

Buckingham, D., & Sefton-Green, J. (1999). Children, young people and digital technology. *Convergence*, 5(4), 5–7.

Campbell, H. A. (2013). Introduction: The rise of the study of digital religion. *Digital religion: Understanding religious practice in new media worlds* (pp.1-21). Routledge.

Campbell, H. A. (2012). Understanding the relationship between religion online and offline in a networked society. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 80(1), 64-93. https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfr074

Castells, M. (2008). *Enformasyon cagi: Ekonomi, toplum kultur*. Birinci cilt: *Ag toplumunun yukselisi*. E. Kilinc (Cev.), Bilgi Universitesi Yayinlari.

Cingi, M. (2018). Dijital oyunseverlerin Islamofobi icerikli oyunlara bakisi. *Medya ve Din Arastirmalari Dergisi*, 1(1), 49-72.

Dijk, J. V. (2018). *Ag toplumu*. O. Sakin (Cev.), Kafka Yayinevi.

Ferdig, R. E. (2014). Developing a framework for understanding the relationship between religion and video games. *Online-Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, 5. https://doi.org/10.11588/rel.2014.0.12158

Furat, A. Z. (2015). Medya ve din: Din egitimi acisindan yeni bir imkân alani mi tehdit mi? M. Camdereli, B. O. Dogan & N. Kocabay Sener (Eds.) *Dijitallesen Din [Medya ve Din 2]* (325-363). Kopru Kitaplari.

Furat, A. Z. (2019). Din egitimi ekseninde Turkiye'de medya ve din arastirmalari. *Medya ve Din Arastirmalari Dergisi*, 2(1), 29-51.

Gee, J. P. (2003). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*? Palgrave Macmillan.

Grieve, G. P., & Campbell, H. A. (2014). Studying religion in digital gaming. A critical review of an emerging field. *Online-Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, 5, 51-68.

Griffiths, M. D. (2002). The educational benefits of video games. *Education and Health*, 20(3), 47-51.

Guiraud, P. (1994). *Gostergebilim*. M. Yalcin (Cev.), Imge Yayinevi.

Haberli, M. (2014). *Sanal din: Tarihsel, kuramsal ve pratik boyutlariyla internet ve din*. Acilim kitap.

Haberli, M. (2019). Dijital cagda din ve dindarligin donusumu. *Medya ve Din Arastirmalari Dergisi*, 2(2), 307-315.

Helland, C. (2015). Virtual religion: A case study of virtual Tibet. *Oxford Handbooks Online*, https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935420.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935420-e-43?print=pdf

Huizinga, J. (2006). *Homo ludens: Oyunun toplumsal islevleri uzerine bir deneme.* M. A. Kilicbay (Cev.), Ayrinti Yayinevi.
Irmak, A. Y., & Erdogan, S. (2016). Ergen ve genc eriskinlerde dijital oyun bagimliligi: Guncel bir bakis. *Turk Psikiyatri Dergisi,* 27(2), 128-137.
Kalayci, B. & Ulusal, D. (2018). Bilgisayar oyunlarinda Islamafobi. *International Journal of Social Science*, 1(2), 36-42.
Karaarslan, F. (2015). Post sekuler din halleri ve dinin dijitallesmesi. M. Camdereli, B. O. Dogan & N. Kocabay Sener (Eds.) *Dijitallesen Din [Medya ve Din 2]* (13-44). Kopru Kitaplari.
Koc, B. (2008). Gostergebilimsel bir cozumleme: Cocuk resimlerinde cennet ve cehennem. *Dini Arastirmalar,* 11(31), 259-282.
Koylu, M. (2004). Cocukluk donemi dini inanc gelisimi ve din egitimi. *Ankara Universitesi İlahiyat Fakultesi Dergisi*, 45(2), 137-154.
Lupton, D. (2015). *Digital sociology*. Routledge.
Mardin, S. (1997). *Din ve ideoloji.* Iletisim Yayinlari.
Mazlum, O. (2015). "Rengin kulturel cagrisimlari". *Dumlupinar Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi,* 31(4), 125-137.
Mert, S. (2015). Bilgisayar oyunlari yoluyla okul oncesi donemde din egitimi. Yuksek Lisans Tezi, Hitit Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu, Corum.
Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Toplumsal arastirma yontemleri.* S. Ozge (Cev.), Yayinodasi.
Okutan, B. B. (2019). Din sosyolojisi calismalarinda gostergebilimin imkâni: Pratik bir calisma. *Muhafazakar Dusunce Dergisi,* 15(56), 211-234.
Oruc, C. (2010). Okul oncesi donemde dini duygunun kokenleri ve gelisimi. *Dinbilimleri Akademik Arastirma Dergisi,* 10(3), 75-96.
Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants part 1. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1-6.
Saussure, F. D. (1998). *Genel dilbilim dersleri.* B. Vardar (Cev.), Multilingual.
Scholtz, C. P. (2005). Fascinating technology: Computer games as an issue for religious education. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 27(2), 173-184.
Sener, N. K. (2019). Turkiye'de medya ve din arastirmalarini yeniden dusunmek: Eksiklikler nasil doldurulabilir? *Medya ve Din Arastirmalari Dergisi*, 2(1), 53-69.
Simsek, E. (2004). Cocukluk donemi dini gelisim ozellikleri ve din egitimi. *Dinbilimleri Akademik Arastirma Dergisi,* 4(1), 207-220.
Temel, M. (2019). Turkiye'de medya ve İslamofobi arastirmalari. *Medya ve Din Arastirmalari Dergisi*, 2(1), 93-121.
Vardi R. (2012). İnternet kullanicilarinin dini icerikli kullanim aliskanliklari. *Harran Universitesi İlahiyat Fakultesi Dergisi*. 17(28), 101-138.
Wiemker, M. & Wysocki, J. (2014). 'When people pray, a god is born... This god is you!' An introduction to religion and god in digital games. *Online-Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, 5, 197-223.
Yildirim, A. & Simsek, H. (2005). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel arastirma yontemleri.* Seckin Yayinlari.
Yorulmaz, B. (2015). Dijital oyunlardaki din ve din egitiminde dijital oyunlarin kullanilma imkâni. M. Camdereli, B.O. Dogan & N. Kocabay Sener (Eds.) *Dijitallesen Din [Medya ve Din 2]* (365-410). Kopru Kitaplari.
Yorulmaz, B. (2018). Dijital oyunlarda Musluman temsili. *Medya ve Din Arastirmalari Dergisi*, 1(2), 275-286.
Young, G. (2013). Reading and praying online: The continuity of religion online and online religion in Internet Christianity. In *Religion Online* (pp. 101-114). Routledge.
Yust, K. M. (2014). Digital power: Exploring the effects of social media on children's spirituality. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 19(2), 133-143.
Zuckerman, P. (2006). *Din sosyolojisine giris.* İ. Capcioglu & H. Aydinalp (Cev.), Birlesik Kitabevi.

**Authors**

Hasan Hüseyin AYGÜL is a faculty member in the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Literature at Akdeniz University and the Head of the Department of Mediterranean Migration Studies. He completed his undergraduate and graduate degrees at Suleyman Demirel University, Department of Sociology, and his PhD in Philosophy and Religious Sciences (Sociology of Religion) at the same university. Fields of research: International migration mobility, refugee labor, new religious movements, the consumption culture of religious individuals, secularization theories.

*Contact*

Assoc. Prof. Hasan Hüseyin AYGÜL, Akdeniz University, Faculty of Literature, Sociology Department, Mediterranean Civilizations Research Institute

E-mail: hasanhuseyinaygul@gmail.com

Gamze GÜRBÜZ completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees in the Department of Sociology at Akdeniz University and continues her PhD education in the same department. Fields of research: Consumption culture and religion, digitization and religion, new religious movements.

Gamze GÜRBÜZ

E-mail: gamzegurbuz970@gmail.com