

YouTube addiction scale (YAS): Adaptation to Turkish culture, validity and reliability study

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Highlights:

- The Turkish version of the YouTube addiction scale has valid psychometric properties.
- The original factor structure of the YouTube addiction scale was validated in Turkish culture.
- The Turkish version of the YouTube scale has concurrent validity.

Abstract

In the current research, the YouTube Addiction Scale (YAS) developed by Pakpour et al. (2023) was adapted to Turkish culture, and the scale's psychometric properties were examined. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 779 Turkish adults ($M_{age} = 25.16$ years, 56% female). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to validate whether the original factor structure of the YAS was retained in the Turkish version. In addition, tests of internal consistency, concurrent validity with external criterion measures (Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale, Smartphone Application-Based Addiction Scale), and gender differences were analyzed. Jeffrey's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) version 0.19.0 was used for CFA and internal consistency analyses, while IBM SPSS version 25.0 was employed for the remaining analyses. The Turkish version of the YAS consists of six items, indicating that the original unidimensional structure aligns well with Turkish culture. The Turkish version of the YAS indicates good psychometric properties for both internal and external validity. It shows acceptable levels of internal consistency and concurrent validity and can be used as a reliable tool to assess YouTube addiction in future studies.

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1. Introduction

With the increasing use of the Internet in today's world, daily life is becoming easier in many aspects, such as accessing information, exchanging information, communicating, researching, having fun, and doing daily life tasks quickly and comfortably (Zeybekoğlu-Akbaş & Dursun, 2020). With the development of technology, smartphones, tablets, computers, and other technological tools make it easier for us to communicate, increase access to information, and diversify entertainment sources. However, while such technological developments provide benefits, they also create a remarkable problem, such as technology addiction. Technology addiction can turn into an increasing need and an uncontrollable desire (Coşkuntürk et al., 2023). The internet, social media, mobile applications, and different digital tools constitute a part of many people's daily lives (Ziyadin et al., 2019). As a result of technological advances, the Internet enables individuals to relax in their work, education, and social lives, leading to an increasing curiosity about the Internet (Şimşek et al., 2023). Individuals are constantly involved in digital activities during the day, such as surfing the internet, checking incoming mail, watching videos, playing games, texting, or making phone calls. While new media technology responds to the interests and desires of individuals with constant connectivity, instant notification, and ease of use, some users show excessive commitment to the media environment created by these technologies (Khang et al., 2013). This attachment can become a kind of addiction in terms of the excessive level of time spent in the media tools or applications used or in terms of keeping the individual mentally busy by distracting them from their daily life routines. According to Sayan & Karahan (2023), addiction is a condition that people initially turn to for pleasure or avoidance in negative situations, can relapse and then lose control. According to Egger & Rauterberg (1996), situations such as the compulsory presence of a substance or behavior in an individual's life, being busy with this substance or behavior in such a way that he/she cannot control his/her daily life activities, and its reappearance as soon as it is tried to be given up constitute addictive behavior.

Technology addiction, which is one of the types of behavioral addiction, is associated with individuals spending more time than necessary with technological tools, using these tools and virtual platforms unconsciously, or incorporating technology into their lives at a level that affects their quality of life negatively. In active technology addictions, addictive behaviors that are mostly shown in digital environments come to mind, and individuals' excessive and uncontrolled use of digital media tools comes to mind. According to Durmaz (2023), the use of technological tools in daily life and educational life more than before can lead to the emergence of digital addiction behavior in individuals, especially children and adolescents. Today, addictions to the internet, computers, social media, videos, digital games, and smartphones are generally seen as digital addictions (Bağcı, 2019). Since many people feel a sense of pleasure while spending time with digital devices, the brain releases dopamine every time these devices come to mind, and this process continues with the individual's longing for these devices, which paves the way for digital addiction (Güldemir, 2023). Digital addiction has emerged with the great rise of digital technologies and the integration of mass media and digital media types, spreading increasingly (Arslan et al., 2015). Digital addiction can occur against technological tools such as tablets, phones, and computers. It can also be categorized into subcategories related to different platforms, such as the Internet and social media (Arslan, 2019). Internet addiction, which constitutes one of these categories, is becoming increasingly common and is increasing with the diversification of Internet applications.

The Internet constitutes an important part of social life all over the world. It is also effective regarding social interaction and occupies ample space because it constitutes a worldwide area (Nalwa & Anand, 2003). Internet use in the campus environment and social life has recently increased remarkably. Although the use of the Internet for academic purposes, especially for learning and research, the place of the Internet in the lives of students in general is extremely important (Chou et al., 2005). Although it is primarily designed for research, accessing information, facilitating interpersonal communication, and economic relations, for some Internet users, it has become the center of their lives. It becomes a tool that is difficult to give up. As a result of the increasing importance of the Internet daily and the increasing prevalence of virtual environments, Internet addiction tends to become widespread in society. As a result of the studies, it has been concluded that young and adult individuals express that they feel uncomfortable and incomplete when they do not use their phones, do not check their e-mails, and do not share their social media accounts (Çokkeser & Kızıltan, 2023). Internet addiction also creates a basis for negative situations such as depression, social isolation, stress, domestic violence, deterioration in communication, bullying, feelings of orphanhood, and a decrease in educational status (Aksoy-Akbaş & Gökbulut, 2023). Internet addiction can also lead to social isolation, marital problems, or financial difficulties, which can often be ignored by society (Shaw & Black, 2008). Internet addiction is also

related to psychological factors. An individual experiencing a sense of loneliness finds a way to get rid of loneliness in the internet environment and attaches importance to virtual communication (Arslan et al., 2015).

With the widespread use of Web 2.0 tools, the use of social media has become more prominent. Today, the Internet is mainly used only to access one of the social media tools (Acar, 2024). Digital communication tools influence and change our ideas, ways of thinking, actions, and lifestyles. Especially social media, where the thoughts and feelings of others are witnessed, has a powerful aspect that directs and changes the behavior of individuals (Uluç & Yarcı, 2017). What distinguishes social media from other mass media tools is that it enables users to stay in touch with each other and create various connections (Weeks & Holbert, 2013). For social media to be used effectively, it is sufficient for many people to have quick access to information in their daily and professional lives. However, if this situation becomes an addiction, individuals become detached from their daily lives, and this situation causes them to feel lonely (Arıbaş & Özşahin, 2022). Young people, middle-aged people, and sometimes even the elderly can be affected by social media addiction (SMA), which can be seen in people of all ages and is a global problem (Bhargava & Velasquez, 2021). Andreassen (2015) listed the criteria that lead to SMA as spending much longer than the planned amount of time on social networks, using social networks to forget their problems by trying to get away from anxiety, guilt, restlessness, helplessness, and depression feelings; feeling stressed, anxious and tense in case of inaccessibility to social media; putting leisure activities, personal interests, or sports activities in the background; and negatively affecting health status, sleep quality, and social relationships. While SMA resulting from excessive social media use has a positive relationship with leisure time or entertainment, it can also increase individuals' psychological and social problems (Çömlekçi & Başol, 2019). Excessive use of social media can negatively affect mental skills and cause individuals to feel fatigued (Dhir et al., 2018). Excessive use of social media can also negatively affect the life satisfaction level of individuals, causing users to have a low sense of self-confidence when they compare themselves with individuals on that platform during the time they spend on social media and think that they do not look as good as them (Longstreet & Brooks, 2017; Pellegrino et al., 2022). Malak et al. (2022) revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between students' SMAs and their stress and anxiety levels in their study with university students. Sujarwoto et al. (2021) concluded that students with higher SMA scores were more likely to experience mild depression as a result of a study conducted with university students. Huang et al. (2023) revealed that there is a relationship between social media addiction and food addiction and that psychological distress plays a mediating role in this relationship as a result of a study conducted with students from a university in Taiwan.

Today, SMA can be found in many applications, such as social media channels. Depending on their interests, age group, or the content they offer, the platforms where social media users spend the most time vary. According to the current data in the We Are Social report, the number of users on social networks increased significantly in 2024, exceeding five billion. It was found that an internet user spends 6 hours and 40 minutes a day connected to the internet, while the daily internet usage in Türkiye is 6 hours and 57 minutes. It was determined that social media users in Türkiye spend close to 2 hours and 44 minutes daily on social media, compared to 2 hours and 23 minutes worldwide. According to the report analysis, YouTube is the second most used social media platform after TikTok. It is also stated that YouTube users spend more than 28 hours on the YouTube application monthly (Kemp, 2024).

YouTube is a website that offers video hosting services. Today, it is a social media platform with a millions-user base, offering the opportunity to share and watch videos. In December 2007, the Queen of England launched "The Royal Channel" on YouTube. In April 2011, the Royal Wedding in England - the wedding ceremony of Prince William and Catherine (Kate) Middleton - was watched live on YouTube in 188 countries (Uluç & Yarcı, 2017). YouTube is a free service where subscribers can shoot and upload videos of any quality within their means (including cell phones) and share them with hundreds of millions of potential viewers (Freeman & Chapman, 2007). In this respect, YouTube is a platform that provides content and a media tool that supports content producers and enables them to earn financially from the platform. While motivating YouTubers economically, followers are encouraged to use YouTube differently. YouTube offers its users a unilateral communication channel with the videos it presents and allows followers to actively communicate on YouTube by allowing them to comment (Dynel, 2014). YouTube is a social media channel that offers its users many opportunities to create a virtual identity. It is an area where individuals can create a channel and broadcast without paying any fee while addressing its users with the slogan 'broadcast yourself'. Individuals who create a channel for themselves and produce content on this channel at specific intervals are called YouTubers (Zinderen, 2020). The interesting, exciting, and entertaining lifestyle offered by YouTubers encourages viewers to find commonalities in their own lives with the lives of these individuals. To fulfill this need, viewers tend to watch

more content and videos. They are at risk of some SMA (Çömlekçi & Başol, 2019). The fact that young people devote too much time to YouTubers' content may cause them to withdraw from social life, interrupt their work and social ties, and cause SMA (Yurdakul, 2022). The problematic level of YouTube use brings psychosocial risks for children and young people. It forms the basis for game and internet addiction, violence and bullying orientation, pressure on fashion and beauty issues, and unrealistic future expectations (Şen-Karadağ, 2022). According to the 2024 data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), it was seen that the most commonly used social media and messaging applications among the 16-74 age groups were 86.2 %, YouTube at 71.3 %, and Instagram at 65.4 %. The social media platforms used most by the 6-15 age group are YouTube 96.3 %, Instagram 41.5 %, TikTok 26.2 %, Snapchat 21.4 %, and 13.6 %. Pinterest was followed by Facebook 9.5 % and X platform 4.9 %. Spending time on this platform with the fear of missing the videos of the channels they subscribe to, watching the videos of YouTubers who have something in common with them for a long time, or repeatedly because they identify with them negatively affects users' social activities and academic and business success. This situation triggers an addiction to YouTube. Since the measurement tools used to measure SMA in the literature (Andreassen et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2017) have a general structure, there is a need for a tool that only measures the level of addiction specific to YouTube. Pakpour et al. (2023) developed the YouTube Addiction Scale (YAS) in line with this need. This study adapted YAS to Turkish culture to reveal the structure of YAS in Turkish culture, and validity and reliability studies of the Turkish version of the scale were conducted.

2. Method

2.1. Participants, Procedure, and Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with 779 adults (female: 56%) in Türkiye. A convenience sampling technique was used to select the participants. Data were collected through social networking platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp) using an online survey program. All participants read and agreed to the consent form before participating in the online survey. Participants responded anonymously. No compensation was provided to the participants. All survey questions were mandatory, so there was no missing data. The instructions emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers and that each answer reflected the views and beliefs of the participants. This research was approved by the Anadolu University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with the decision dated 14/02/2024 and numbered 696904. Data were collected in April 2024 after ethical approval was obtained. Information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' characteristics (N = 779)

	Mean or n	SD or %
Age	25.16	8.28
Gender		
Female	436	56
Male	343	44
Education Level		
High School	87	11.2
Ungraduated	405	52
Graduated	202	25.9
Post-graduate	85	10.9
Time on social media use (hours/day)	3.65	2

Note. SD = standard deviation

As seen in Table 1, the participants were young adults (M: 25.16, SD: 8.28). Regarding gender, more than half of the participants were female (56%). Almost half of the participants are still attending college. Approximately one-quarter of the participants are college graduates. The proportion of high school graduates and postgraduates is close to each other. The average daily social media usage time of the participants is 3.65.

2.2. Scale Adaptation Process

Developed by Pakpour et al. (2023) and adapted to Turkish culture, the YAS consists of a single dimension and six items (See Appendix). The scale's adaptation process was carried out according to the principles suggested by Hambleton and Patsula (1998). Firstly, permission to adapt the scale to Turkish culture was obtained from the scale owner via e-mail. Then, ethical approval was obtained from the Anadolu University Social Sciences Ethics Committee. The translation and language validity were tested. For the translation of the scale into Turkish, the English version was sent to two independent linguists who are proficient in both

languages and knowledgeable in the field. The Turkish version of the scale was then finalized by adopting the translations that best reflected the true meaning of each item, as determined by a third language expert. The original five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 [never] to 5 [very often]) was retained. Lastly, the scale's construct validity, criterion validity, and reliability were analyzed over 779 participants.

2.3. Measures

Two external criterion measures, which will be introduced in the following section, were used to examine the YAS's concurrent validity.

2.3.1. Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS)

Andreassen et al. (2016) developed the BSMAS to measure SMA. The BSMAS consists of one dimension and six items (Sample item: "You become restless or troubled if you are prohibited from using social media"). All items were rated using a five-point Likert scale (1: very rarely, 5: very often), with higher BSMAS scores reflecting higher addiction severity. The current study assessed the internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's α coefficients reported as 0.883.

2.3.2. Smartphone Application-Based Addiction Scale (SABAS)

Csibi et al. (2018) developed the SABAS to measure smartphone application-based addiction. The SABAS consists of one dimension and six items (Sample item: "If I try to cut the time I use my smartphone, I manage to do so for a while, but then I end up using it as much or more than before"). All items were rated using a six-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree, 6: strongly agree), with higher SABAS scores reflecting higher smartphone application-based addiction severity. The current study assessed the internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's α coefficients reported as 0.851.

2.4. Data Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to verify whether the original factor structure of the YAS was maintained in the Turkish version. Additionally, tests for internal consistency, concurrent validity with external criterion measures, and gender differences were conducted. The CFA and internal consistency analyses were carried out using Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) version 0.19.3, while IBM SPSS version 25.0 was utilized for the rest of the analyses. Maximum likelihood estimation was used in CFA.

The YAS was analyzed for internal consistency using Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω . According to George & Mallery (2019), values between $0.60 \leq \alpha$ and $\omega < 0.80$ in Cronbach's α or McDonald's ω indicate acceptable internal consistency. The following fit indices calculated from CFA were used to describe whether the factor structure of the original scale was confirmed: comparative fit index (CFI) > 0.9 , incremental fit index (IFI) > 0.9 , root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08 , Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) > 0.9 , and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) < 0.08 , and (Byrne, 2016). The YAS was examined for concurrent validity with relevant measures (i.e., the external criterion measures of the BSMAS and SABAS).

Pearson correlations (r) were used for concurrent validity. According to Cohen (1988), Pearson correlation coefficients $r < 0.30$ indicate that low correlations are expected, while coefficients $r > 0.30$ indicate that moderate or more vigorous correlations are expected. Lastly, the YAS was examined to see if their scores significantly differed in gender groups (i.e., female vs. male). Independent samples t-test was used to compare the differences between males and females.

3. Results

Table 2 presents the CFA results for the YAS. The one structure of the YAS was confirmed by the perfect fit obtained from the CFA fit indices obtained from the sample (i.e., $N = 779$). In addition, the internal consistency of the YAS was calculated and presented in Table 2. The YAS was found to be reliable.

Table 3 presents the correlations between the YAS, the BSMAS, and the SABAS. YAS has moderately positive and significant relationships with both BSMAS and SABAS. Accordingly, the YAS has concurrent validity.

Table 4 presents the differentiation of YAS according to gender. The mean scores obtained from YAS do not differ statistically significantly between genders ($p > .05$). This finding indicates that male and female participants' YAS levels are similar.

Table 2. Scale properties of the Youtube Addiction Scale (YAS)

	YAS
Cronbach's α	.806
McDonald's ω	.813
CFA	
χ^2 (df)	23.582 (7)
p-value	< .001
CFI	.977
TLI	.957
IFI	.977
RMSEA	.071
SRMR	.029

Note. CFA=confirmatory factor analysis; CFI=comparative fit index; TLI=Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation; IFI: incremental fit index; SRMR=standardized root mean square residual;

Table 3. Concurrent validity of the YAS

YAS	Pearson correlation with an external criterion measure	
	BSMAS	SABAS
	.661	.571

Note. All $p < .01$.

Table 4. Comparing the YAS between gender

YAS	Mean (SD) in gender		t (p)
	Male (n =436)	Female (n = 343)	
	2.54 (.87)	2.52 (.74)	-0.419 (.675)

Note. SD = Standard Deviation

4. Discussion and Conclusion

As a result of the fact that the factors that cause YouTube addiction can be affected by cultural differences, the YAS was adapted to Turkish culture. It was concluded that the Turkish version of the scale was compatible with the structure of the original scale and could provide a valid and reliable measurement to determine the level of YouTube addiction of adults. The YAS was designed according to the addiction component model conceptualized by Griffiths (2005) (Pakpour et al., 2023). As in previous scales developed according to the addiction components model such as BSMAS (Andreassen et al., 2016) and SABAS (Csibi et al., 2018) and studies using these scales (Ahorsu, 2024; Huang et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Stirnberg et al., 2024), the Turkish version of YAS, like the original scale, is psychometrically good and provides clear definitions of each component contributing to addiction in line with the theoretical structure. Balakrishnan and Griffiths (2017) found that creating content on YouTube has a closer relationship with YouTube addiction than viewing content. In a study conducted by Clark and Moloney (2017) with adults, it was determined that older adults use social media more. This is thought to be because these individuals meet their socialization needs with social media tools due to the decreased mobility in older individuals. The study on social media use and socialization of young people shows that young people with higher levels of addiction to smartphones and social media may have more social interaction with their friends in real life. However, those with high levels of addiction to online games may have less social interaction with their friends in real life (Yang et al., 2022). Işık and Kaptangil (2018) concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between students' personality traits, smartphone addiction, and social media use. At the same time, social media use increases smartphone addiction. Yanık and Özçiçek (2021) concluded that the use of social media in their study is a positive determinant of smartphone addiction. If we look at the studies on whether social media addiction in the literature varies according to gender as well as there are studies that show female students spend more time than male students on social media (Ayaz & Barış, 2024; Deniz & Gürültü, 2018), there are also studies that show that male students spend more time than female students on social media (Tanrıverdi & Sağır, 2014; Seferoğlu & Yıldız, 2013).

When the studies on the development of a Turkish culture-specific scale for SMA are examined, it is seen that there are studies on university students (Ağyar-Bakır & Uzun, 2018; Tutgun-Ünal, 2015) and adults (Şahin & Yağcı, 2017). YAS contributes to obtaining more comprehensive results when used with other scales. YouTube addiction is a type of SMA that is seen in many parts of the world and needs to be researched. It is thought that research on this addiction is important in terms of both taking relevant measures and intervening in existing addictions, and conducting remedial studies. In this context, it is thought that a scale that can be applied in the future, especially in studies conducted in Türkiye on the subject, will be useful. This study, in which the YAS was

adapted to Turkish culture, is limited to adults living in Türkiye. In this direction, researchers may need to apply the YAS to adults in different countries. In addition, it may be recommended to examine the factors affecting the YouTube addiction levels of adults with quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition, it may be suggested that this scale applied to adults should also be applied to adolescents at different educational levels. YAS is thought to contribute to future research on adults' YouTube use.

Statement of Researchers

Researchers' contribution rate statement:

Conceptualization: ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Data curation:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Formal analysis:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Investigation:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Methodology:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Resources:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Software:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Supervision:** ED, I-HC; **Validation:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Visualization:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Writing- original draft:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW; **Writing- editing & review:** ED, RK, AK, I-HC; AK, XLW

Conflict statement:

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

Data Availability Statement:

The data supporting this study's findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Use of AI Statement:

The authors submit that no generative AI tools or models were not used in any part of this study.

Ethical Considerations:

"All procedures followed were by the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national) and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000. Informed consent was obtained from all participants for being included in the study."

This research was approved by the Anadolu University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee, whose decision was dated 14/02/2024 and numbered 696904.

Author Biographies

Erkan Dinç is a professor of history and social studies education at Anadolu University, Türkiye. His research focuses on historical consciousness and the development of the learners' epistemological beliefs in relation to history. He is also interested in democratic citizenship, human rights education, museum education, oral history, and qualitative social research. He authored many publications and took part in several research projects, including the Democracy Education Project, funded and jointly implemented by the Council of Europe. Currently, he is a member of the Scientific and Advisory Council of the Observatory on History Education in Europe. He also acts as a country coordinator for the Korean War Legacy Foundation.

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Ayşe Karaduman is an English teacher at a secondary school in Eskişehir, Türkiye. She completed her master's degree with a thesis in the Curriculum and Instruction program at Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Türkiye. She has a paper presentation on the interactive board derived from her thesis work. In addition, she participated in trainings and seminars specific to her professional field and worked in these fields.

Xue Lian Wang from Yancheng, Jiangsu Province, is a Ph.D. candidate at Krirk University in Thailand and an Associate Professor at the Yancheng Mechatronic Branch, Jiangsu Union Technical Institute. Her research interests focus on creativity development, mental health in educational settings, and applying innovative teaching methodologies in vocational education. Professor Wang has contributed to several studies examining how vocational education can incorporate creative problem-solving methodologies to enhance student outcomes while supporting positive mental health practices.

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Appendix

YouTube Addiction Scale's Turkish Version

	Asla (1)	Nadiren (2)	Bazen (3)	Çoğu zaman (4)	Her zaman (5)
1. YouTube videoları izlemenin günlük yaşam etkinliklerinizi engellediğini düşünüyor musunuz?					
2. Zamanınızın ne kadarını YouTube'da planlamadığınız videoları veya kanalları izleyerek geçiriyorsunuz?					
3. Kendinizdeki kaygı, depresyon, stres veya suçluluk duygusunu azaltmak istediğinizde YouTube'da video veya kanal izliyor musunuz?					
4. Youtube'da video izleme sürenizi azaltmaya çalıştınız ama başarısız oldunuz mu?					
5. Herhangi bir nedenle YouTube videolarına erişemediğinizde huzursuz veya endişeli hissediyor musunuz?					
6. Youtube videoları izlediğiniz için iş, okul, üniversite, arkadaşlarınız ve ailenizle sorun yaşadınız mı?					