

Thumbs up? : An assessment of clicking-on-thumb-button behavior as a measure of attitudes

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Abstract

Despite the fact that clicks on thumb buttons on Internet sites are used increasingly as performance indicators by practitioners, and as independent and dependent variables by academic researchers, it is unclear which theoretical constructs such clicks capture. Intuitively, however, clicking on a thumb can be seen as the expression of an evaluation, which researchers typically conceptualize in attitudinal terms. The present study examined if it is reasonable to view clicking-on-a-thumb-button behavior in relation to an object as an attitude towards the object. The assessment, involving ten empirical studies (both experiments and surveys), and comprising thumb button-based measures as well as traditional measures of attitudes and intentions, showed that clicking-on-a-thumb-button behavior was a poor indicator of attitudes (and of intentions) when strict criteria for convergent validity are applied.

Keywords: *Liking; attitudes; convergent validity*

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