

The art of shopping: more online shopping, fewer shopping trips?

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Searching product information and buying goods online are becoming increasingly popular and this could affect shopping trips. However, little empirical evidence about the relationships between e-shopping and in-store shopping is available. The aim of this study is to investigate how the frequencies of online searching, online buying, and non-daily shopping trips relate to each other, and how these frequencies are influenced by shopping attitudes and behaviour, Internet behaviour, sociodemographics, land use features, and lifestyle/personality characteristics. Questionnaire data were collected from 826 respondents residing in four municipalities (one urban, three suburban) in the center of the Netherlands. Structural equation modeling was used to understand the multiple and complex relationships among variables. The findings show that urban residents shop online more often than suburban residents, because they tend to have a faster Internet connection. The more stores one can reach within ten minutes by bicycle, the less often one searches online. Searching online positively affects the frequency of shopping trips, which in its turn positively influences buying online. An indirect positive effect of time-pressure on online buying was found and an indirect negative effect of online searching on shopping duration. These findings suggest that e-shopping could be functional (a time-saving strategy) for some, and recreational for others.