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Entertainment is growing in UAE shopping malls

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More shopping malls in the UAE are including entertainment centers, according to retail experts at the Middle East Retail forum.

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GULF NEWS

Dubai: More shopping malls in the UAE are including entertainment centres, according to retail experts at the Middle East Retail forum.

Senior experts from the region's entertainment sector said the retail industry is witnessing a shift in consumer preferences, and this is having a direct effect on the design of shopping malls. They said consumers do not go to malls just to shop anymore, but more are going to entertain themselves. Malls are seeing this change and some are catering to it by opening entertainment centres, including cinemas, bowling centres, and other activities for families and children.

Consumers go to malls not just because they "have the right stores, but the right experiences and stores,"

Silvio Liedtke, COO of Fun City. Entertainment experience is a key component in a mall's design, he added.

In Mena, 64 per cent of consumers go to malls to get cool experiences while the rest go to buy cool products, according to a survey by IPSOS, an online research service for businesses.

Unlike traditional malls that usually offer only stores and restaurants, malls with entertainment centres gain the advantage of having consumers spend more dwell time, said Prakash Vivekanand, director of Amusement Services International.

A challenge faced by the retail sector is the lack of entertainment centres catering for older children between the ages of 12 to 17. According to Tim Jones, COO of Lamcy Plaza and Arabian Centre, most of these centres are targeted at young children. "There is a gap in the market for older children," he added.

Some entertainment centres need to improve their marketing strategies, Vishal Pandey, principal consultant of Glasgow Consulting Group told Gulf News. If they do not position themselves, they may not attract enough consumers, he added.

However, Narrain Jashanmal, general manager of Jashanmal Bookstores said his company is trying to position itself to its target audience. The company has partnered with Vox cinemas and opened pop-up stores selling books on film opening weekends, he said.

Shopping malls today are all about convenience, said Pandey.

Sarah Algethami is a trainee at Gulf News.