

Over the past few years, it is more and more common for people to own pets in Taiwan, and pets are now playing a role far different from what they used to be in people's lives. In the first picture, it illustrates that people view pets equally as important as their own kids. The dogs and children are placed in a similar trolley going out for a walk. Trolleys are typically thought to be for babies unable to walk, but now dogs are put in trolleys or even carried around in their owners' arms despite their amazing sprinting abilities. This shows that people treat their pets like human children, and they are viewed more than just an animal. The second photo takes a bigger step forward, which demonstrates that couples are now fully replacing the role of children with pets. Instead of tutoring and feeding kids, couples now take care of pets as if they gave birth to them, feeding them food on their laps. This phenomenon may be the cause of the low fertility rate in Taiwan, as married couples now have an alternative choice to showcase their love and responsibility as parents.

Many newly weds that I personally know are not considering having children but rather interested in owning pets. Due to the unstable economic state, they find it hard to stay financially stable and save enough money to support another month to feed. The cost of raising a child is increasing year by year, putting great financial pressure on their shoulders. Owning a pet, on the other hand, costs way less as the only costs include food and annual vaccines. Raising a child is also a huge responsibility, and parents have to make sure the child grows up to have correct morals and become a responsible adult, while pet dogs and cats are more obedient and easier to train. This phenomenon may have several affects. Without a doubt, the birth rate in Taiwan may drop even lower, causing schools to close due to the lack of students. This may lead to a society with a high percentage of elders without children taking care of them, resulting in an increase of the demand for nursing homes. Luckily, this may also raise more awareness to set certain laws to protect animals and pets from people who abuse them for fun. Overall, the trend of owning pets seems to continue, and I look forward to see more loving human and animal families.