

In recent years, pets have become an indispensable part of our lives, even replacing children as the focus of family attention with their liveliness and charm. The two pictures display common situations in modern family life. In the left picture, people are shown strolling through a lush park. However, only one father is tending to his children, pushing them with a wagon. The remaining few people are carrying puppies in their arms or strolling instead of kids, looking just as joyous with wide grins stretched across their faces. The right picture, on the other hand, illustrates different family leisure times. In one family, four people are shown engaging in intimate family time as the father helps his son in his homework and the mother feeds a baby. In the other family, no kids are in sight as the couple feed their pet dogs with delicately-prepared meals.

The gradual decrease of child conception and increase of pets is as a result of these two reasons. Firstly, rising prices on life necessities and real estate have put newly-wed couples on a tight budget. With less resources at hand, they are more hesitant to try for a child. In addition, social expectations have dramatically transformed. Individuals are now more focused on personal growth and achievement instead of meeting social standards, leading to later marriage and less willingness

to have children. Instead, they may turn to adopting pets to satisfy their need for intimacy, as pets are relatively cheap to look after and easy to obtain. However, this change in family structure is prone to affect the society drastically. To start, with less children and more elders, the balance of future population is at risk as less people will be able to support the country and economy. Moreover, these children will also face a larger burden than past generations. For example, I am an only child, and my father is too, meaning that by the time I reach adulthood, the needs of two generations will be mounted on my shoulders, consequently causing mental stress and breakdown. All in all, while pets can be a wonderful alternative to having children, the long-term effects can be lethal. Therefore, it's imperative to deliberate closely before welcoming a new member into the family.