

Factors Influencing Thai Teenagers' Interest in Keeping Exotic Pets

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Abstract: The popularity of exotic pets in Thailand is growing quite fast, especially among teenagers, and keeping pets is not only dogs and cats anymore. The number of exotic animals being kept as pets has increased in recent years. Many Thai teenagers are becoming interested in animals such as reptiles, rabbits, hamsters, fish, sugar gliders, and hedgehogs because they see them as unique and suitable for modern lifestyles. This study was conducted to explore the factors influencing Thai teenagers' interest in keeping exotic pets. A survey was collected from 100 Thai teenagers 10-21 years old. The results show that although 52% of respondents do not currently own any pets, 69% would like to have an exotic pet in the future. Small exotic mammals (27%) and reptiles (21%) were the most popular choices. Social media was found to be the biggest factor (75%), followed by family support (61%) and cost considerations (51%). However, some teenagers are still not interested because they worry about expenses, safety risks, and limited access to veterinary services. Even so, overall interest continues to increase, and this trend is expected to grow further in the future as information and awareness about exotic pets continue to expand.

Keywords: exotic pets, exotic animals, Thai teenagers, veterinary services, factors influencing.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, pet ownership in Thailand has clearly changed. Many teenagers are no longer interested in keeping only common pets like dogs and cats. Instead, they are becoming more curious about exotic animals. One reason for this growing interest may be social media. A study found that when celebrities posted pictures of exotic animals online, most of the public reactions were positive, which could encourage interest in owning these animals (Spee et al., 2019). Another study also showed that the way animals are presented on social media can affect how people see them. For example, when the same animal was shown with different captions, people's perceptions and feelings about the animal changed (Riddle & MacKay, 2020). In Thailand, this trend can also be seen at events such as Pet Expo Thailand, where many types of animals are displayed to the public. Because of these changes, this study aims to explore the main factors that influence Thai teenagers' interest in keeping exotic pets, including social media, cost, safety, family opinions, and access to veterinary services.

2. HYPOTHESIS

H1: Thai teenagers show a continuing increase in interest in keeping exotic pets.

H2: Thai teenagers who are influenced by social media are more likely to be interested in keeping exotic pets.

H3: Family support is positively related to teenagers' intention to own exotic pets in the future.

H4: Higher concerns about cost and care difficulty are related to lower interest in keeping exotic pets.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research was a quantitative, non-experimental study. The purpose was to study Thai teenagers' interest in keeping exotic pets and the factors related to that interest. There were no independent or dependent variables because this study only collected opinions and did not control or change any conditions. The data were collected using a questionnaire made on Google Forms. The questionnaire had 15 questions, including general information questions (age and gender), questions

about current pet ownership and level of interest, and questions about possible factors that help in making decisions for keeping exotic pets, such as social media, family support, cost, and access to veterinary services. Most questions were multiple-choice, and some used a 1–5 rating scale. A total of 100 Thai teenagers answered the questionnaire. The results were summarized using percentages to see overall patterns and understand what factors influence their interest in exotic pets.

4. RESULTS

The demographic characteristics and pet ownership information of the respondents (n = 100) are presented in Table 1–4.

TABLE 1: Age

Age	Number of teenagers	Percentage
10-13	21	21.0
14-16	41	41.0
17-21	38	38.0

TABLE 2: Gender

Gender	Number of teenagers	Percentage
Female	44	44.0
Male	44	44.0
Other	12	12.0

TABLE 3: What pets do you currently have? (Select one)

Type of pets	Number of teenagers	Percentage
None	52	52.0
Dog / Cat	25	25.0
Fish	7	7.0
Rabbit / Hamster	6	6.0
Other exotic pet	6	6.0
Bird	4	4.0

From the question, “What pets do you currently have?” knowing that from 100 answers, None 52 respondents amounts to 52.0%, Dog / Cat 25 respondents amounts to 25.0%, Fish 7 respondents amounts to 7.0%, Rabbit / Hamster 6 respondents amounts to 6.0%, Other exotic pet 6 respondents amounts to 6.0%, and Bird 4 respondents amounts to 4.0%.

TABLE 4: Do you currently own an exotic pet?

Response	Number of teenagers	Percentage
Yes	85	85.0
No	15	15.0

From the question, “Do you currently own an exotic pet?” knowing that from 100 answers, Yes 85 respondents amounts to 85.0%, and No 15 respondents amounts to 15.0%.

TABLE 5: How interested are you in keeping an exotic pet?

Interest level	Score range	n	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	38	38.0
Agree	4	29	29.0
Neutral	3	15	15.0
Disagree	2	8	8.0
Strongly disagree	1	10	10.0

From the question, “How interested are you in keeping an exotic pet?” knowing that from 100 answers, it represents: Strongly agree 38 answers amounts to 38.0%, Agree 29 answers amounts to 29.0%, Neutral 15 answers amounts to 15.0%, Disagree 8 answers amounts to 8.0%, and Strongly disagree 10 answers amounts to 10.0%.

TABLE 6: Would you like to own an exotic pet in the future?

Response	Number of teenagers	Percentage
Yes	69	69.0
No	22	22.0
Not sure	9	9.0

From the question, “Would you like to own an exotic pet in the future?” knowing that from 100 answers, it represents: Yes 69 answers amounts to 69.0%, No 22 answers amounts to 22.0%, and Not sure 9 answers amounts to 9.0%.

TABLE 7: If you were to keep a pet, which one would you choose most?

Type of pets	Number of teenagers	Percentage
Exotic small mammal (e.g., sugar glider, hedgehog, ferret)	27	27.0
Reptile (e.g., snake, gecko, turtle)	21	21.0
None	14	14.0
Fish / Aquatic animals	10	10.0
Bird	9	9.0
Invertebrate (e.g., tarantula, scorpion)	7	7.0
Rabbit / Hamster	6	6.0
Dog / Cat	6	6.0

From the question, “If you were to keep a pet, which one would you choose most?” knowing that from 100 answers, it represents: Exotic small mammal 27 answers amounts to 27.0%, Reptile 21 answers amounts to 21.0%, None 14 answers amounts to 14.0%, Fish / Aquatic animals 10 answers amounts to 10.0%, Bird 9 answers amounts to 9.0%, Invertebrate 7 answers amounts to 7.0%, Rabbit / Hamster 6 answers amounts to 6.0%, and Dog / Cat 6 answers amounts to 6.0%.

TABLE 8: Factor Influencing in Keeping Exotic Pets

Question	Answer		
	Yes	No	Not sure
Does social media influence your interest in exotic pets?	75 (75.0%)	24 (24.0%)	1 (1.0%)
Does your family support the idea of you keeping an exotic pet?	61 (61.0%)	24 (24.0%)	15 (15.0%)
Does the cost of an exotic pet affect your decision?	51 (51.0%)	49 (49.0%)	0 (0%)
Do you think keeping exotic pets is too expensive?	47 (47.0%)	36 (36.0%)	17 (17.0%)
Do you think there are enough veterinary clinics near your home that can treat exotic pets?	40 (40.0%)	40 (40.0%)	20 (20.0%)
Would you still want an exotic pet if it required daily care?	70 (70.0%)	29 (29.0%)	1 (1.0%)
Do you feel confident that you can care for an exotic pet properly?	70 (70.0%)	25 (25.0%)	5 (5.0%)
Are you worried about safety risks from exotic pets (bites, disease)?	42 (42.0%)	57 (57.0%)	1 (1.0%)

From the results of the factors influencing interest, in the question “Does social media influence your interest in exotic pets?” knowing that from 100 answers, 75 teenagers answered Yes (75.0%), 24 teenagers answered No (24.0%), and 1 teenager was Not sure (1.0%). In the question “Does your family support the idea of you keeping an exotic pet?” 61 teenagers answered Yes (61.0%), 24 teenagers answered No (24.0%), and 15 teenagers were Not sure (15.0%). Regarding the question “Does the cost of an exotic pet affect your decision?” 51 teenagers answered Yes (51.0%) and 49 teenagers answered No (49.0%). For the question “Do you think keeping exotic pets is too expensive?” 47 teenagers answered Yes (47.0%), 36 teenagers answered No (36.0%), and 17 teenagers were Not sure (17.0%). In the question “Do you think there are enough veterinary clinics near your home that can treat exotic pets?” 40 teenagers answered Yes (40.0%), 40 teenagers answered No (40.0%), and 20 teenagers were Not sure (20.0%). For the question “Would you still want an exotic pet if it required daily care?” 70 teenagers answered Yes (70.0%), 29 teenagers answered No (29.0%), and 1 teenager was Not sure (1.0%). In the question “Do you feel confident that you can care for an exotic pet properly?” 70 teenagers answered Yes (70.0%), 25 teenagers answered No (25.0%), and 5 teenagers were Not sure (5.0%). Finally, for the question “Are you worried about safety risks from exotic pets (bites, disease)?” 42 teenagers answered Yes (42.0%), 57 teenagers answered No (57.0%), and 1 teenager was Not sure (1.0%).

5. DISCUSSION

From the results of this study, interest in exotic pets among Thai teenagers is quite high and shows a possible increasing trend. Although most of the participants do not currently own exotic pets, 69% said they would like to have one in the future, which suggests that curiosity and desire are growing. Many teenagers see exotic pets as unique, special, and different from common pets like dogs and cats, which makes them more attractive. Social media likely plays an important role because teenagers are frequently exposed to photos and videos of exotic animals that look cute or interesting. Seeing this type of content repeatedly may make owning an exotic pet seem normal or exciting. At the same time, practical factors such as financial cost, difficulty of care, and finding specialized veterinarians still affect their decisions. Some participants feel unsure because they think exotic pets require more responsibility and knowledge. However, these concerns do not completely reduce their interest. Overall, the findings suggest that even with certain challenges, the number of teenagers who are interested in exotic pets may continue to grow in the future, especially as social influence and online exposure remain strong in their daily lives.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study shows that many Thai teenagers are interested in exotic pets. From the survey of 100 Thai teenagers 10-21 years old, many of them do not own exotic pets right now, but 69% said they would like to have an exotic pet in the future. This shows that interest is quite high. The results also show that things around them matter a lot. What they see on social media, what their family thinks, and how much money it costs all affect their decision. Some teenagers decide not to keep exotic pets because they think it is expensive or difficult to take care of. Others are worried about finding special veterinarians. Even with these problems, the number of teenagers who are interested in exotic pets is still increasing. Many of them think exotic pets are unique and different from normal pets like dogs and cats. Because of this, it is possible that more Thai teenagers will become interested in exotic pets in the future.

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