

I am Closer to Friends, I Feel Worthy: Santri's Peer-Attachment and Self-Esteem

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Abstract / Abstrak

The environment in Islamic boarding schools makes students feel closer to their peers. When students have closeness with peers, they will feel good emotional attachment and affect their self-esteem. This study aims to determine the effect of peer-attachment on students' self-esteem. This study used a correlational quantitative approach. The participants were 174 students aged 12-19 years from Islamic boarding schools in the city of Palembang, obtained through a purposive sampling technique. Data analysis used a simple linear regression technique. This study found that peer-attachment affects self-esteem by $\Delta R^2 = 3.96\%$. Therefore, teachers and pesantren authorities must pay attention to peer attachment to increase self-esteem among students, because good peer attachment will increase students' self-esteem. The results show a significant positive effect and emphasize that students who have attachment to peers can have a more positive self-assessment.

Keywords / Kata kunci

*Self-esteem;
Boarding school;
Peer-attachment;
Santri*

Lingkungan di pesantren membuat santri merasa lebih dekat dengan teman sebayanya. Ketika santri memiliki kedekatan dengan teman sebaya, mereka akan merasakan keterikatan emosional yang baik dan akan memengaruhi harga diri mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh peer-attachment terhadap harga diri santri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif korelasional. Subjek penelitian sebanyak 174 santri berusia 12 – 19 tahun yang berasal dari pondok pesantren di kota Palembang, diperoleh melalui teknik purposive sampling. Analisis data menggunakan teknik regresi linier sederhana. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa peer-attachment memengaruhi harga diri sebesar $\Delta R^2 = 3.96\%$. Oleh karena itu, guru dan pihak pesantren yang berwenang harus memperhatikan keterikatan teman sebaya untuk meningkatkan harga diri di kalangan santri, karena peer attachment yang baik akan meningkatkan self esteem santri. Hasil yang menunjukkan adanya pengaruh positif signifikan, menegaskan bahwa santri yang memiliki keterikatan dengan teman sebaya dapat memengaruhi penilaian diri yang lebih positif.

Harga diri;
Pondok pesantren;
Teman sebaya;
Santri

Introduction

Islamic boarding schools are considered one of Indonesia's national education subsystems (Syafe'i, 2017). The learning model in modern Islamic boarding schools is divided into two curricula: a national education curriculum and a traditional curriculum based on Islamic religious values (Rahmawati, 2020). Traditional Islamic boarding schools' learning process focuses on developing Islamic religious knowledge, while modern boarding schools emphasize combining Islamic religious knowledge and general science (Putri et al., 2022). The difference with regular inclusive schools is that Islamic inclusive schools

are based on the values of Islamic character values (Hanifah & Hamdan, 2021). Social learning and interaction activities are carried out in the same scope as a large population (Rasyid, 2012).

In the process, some problems arise, such as boredom caused by the pattern of activities carried out by the same *santri* every day (Rasyid, 2012). Kusaini (2021) found that the problems that most often occur in Islamic boarding schools are social relations, the personal self, and the field of physical health. In line with that, *santri* must also be able to adapt themselves to the pesantren environment such as sharing bedrooms,

bathrooms, and other public facilities (Mudzkiyyah et al., 2022).

Activities made by Islamic boarding schools must be complied with from the beginning of the activity to the end of the activity so that a conducive environment is created in the Islamic boarding school (Kusaini, 2021). Living in a boarding school for 24 hours is challenging and a problem for *santri* (Mudzkiyyah et al., 2022). The similarity of situations and tasks experienced by *santri* makes them feel the same feelings so that they can build trust in one another (Luthfi & Husni, 2020). When *santri* build good relationships with parents, peers, and school, their mental health will also improve (Oldfield et al., 2016). Good peer relationships affect self-esteem (Mota & Matos, 2013). That is because formed from the environment and behavior patterns of people around. Individuals will establish friendly relationships with peers when entering school, spend much time together, and share fun things with peers (Prasetyaningrum & Rahma, 2016).

Experimental research conducted by Srisayekti and Setiady (2015) showed a tendency to provide feedback from the environment that can affect an individual. Peterson et al. (2004) suggested that individual who can establish relationships with friends can work together when carrying out assignments so that they can solve problems when they feel confused and frustrated during the task completion process. *Santri* tends to seek connection and comfort through suggestions or advice to their peers when they feel they need it (Laghi et al., 2009). Friends influence the decision-making process (Sari & Abidin, 2022). The environment around positive individuals and vice versa influences high self-esteem. If the individual's environment is hostile, self-esteem will become negative (Duchesne & Larose, 2007; Refnadi, 2018). A good relationship between parents and peers will play an essential role in the adjustment of *santri* (Kustanti, 2017).

Self-esteem is how individuals see themselves, which is reflected in other people's assessment of the individual (Rosenberg et al., 1995). Self-esteem influences motivation, functional behavior, and life satisfaction and are

significantly related to well-being throughout life (Guindon, 2009). One of the determining factors for individual success in life is a high level of self-esteem. Self-esteem is one of the factors that influence how individuals view themselves. *Santri* with high self-esteem can respect and love themselves and adjust to the environment. The level of individual self-esteem also plays a role in social interaction (Orth et al., 2018). Individuals with high self-esteem are more resistant to life changes, optimistic, persistent in the face of failure, handle negative feelings, happier, and more optimistic, and having a lower of depression (Abdel-khalek, 2016). The higher self-esteem score the obtained, the more positive individual assesses and evaluates themselves (Darmayanti et al., 2022).

From the Islamic perspective, the concept of self-esteem is related to the aspect of Allah because the perspective of Islamic psychological scientists relates that everything is inseparable from the elements of God and is sourced from the Quran and Sunnah (Arroisi & Badi', 2022). Because sticking to the Quran will lead to the good of the world and the hereafter (Fauziyyah et al., 2018). Islam refers to self-esteem as *murū'ah*, which is defined as maintaining the behavior of a Muslim to prioritize goodness and keep away from badness (Arroisi & Badi', 2022). In the Islamic perspective, a person with high *murū'ah* will notice that his self-esteem is higher when the orientation of his life is not based on material things, but it strengthens faith and piety to Allah (Arroisi & Badi', 2022).

Yunita (2021) found that high self-esteem will bring positive behavior and the ability to face the problems of life that are faced when *santri* succeeds in overcoming all problems. *Santri* will be independent in their lives, and it will increase *santri's* ability to survive in pesantren, and vice versa, if *santri* with lower self-esteem will not be able to survive in Islamic boarding school life (Yunita, 2021). Self-esteem influences self-adjustment to common problems among adolescents, and this also impacts on self-esteem by the quality of friendship (Sa'ari & Harun, 2018; Antonopoulou et al., 2019).

The process of developing self-esteem in adolescence is expected to be able to find a positive self-concept (Refnadi, 2018). School-age children's self-esteem is influenced by the people around them (Refnadi, 2018). Individual who has low self-esteem will tend to bond with their peer group with the aim that they are recognized and recognized in their group environment (Ceilindri & Budiani, 2016). High self-esteem help *santri* to solve all problems faced, can feel safe, protected, appreciated, and supported by others to achieve optimal results in learning achievement (Aisyah et al., 2015). In other side, high self-esteem will prevent students from doing harmful things in achieving learning achievement (Refnadi, 2018). Thohiroh et al. (2019) show that the perception of social support from friends plays a significant role in subjective well-being at school. Hikmawati et al. (2022) shows that religiosity and social support have a significant effect on subjective well-being.

Self-esteem is indicated by a sense of worth, self-confidence, confidence in one's abilities, pride in oneself, and self-acceptance (Triwahyuningsih, 2017). Meanwhile, low self-esteem has a negative view of self and its environment. It has feelings of shame, loneliness, alienation, depression, and academic difficulties, impacting productivity and individual careers going forward (Lopez et al., 2003).

Factors that affect self-esteem, according to Yudiono and Sulisty (2020) are such as: 1) learning environment and students' ability to interact with teachers and others; 2) thinking ability and self-development; and 3) affective factors. Magro et al. (2019) found that high self-esteem is influenced by the environment, especially peers and family. Meta-analysis study of 24 studies regarding the relationship between peer-attachment and self-esteem in adolescents by Gorrese and Ruggieri (2013) found a significant effect of peer-attachment on self-esteem. The findings in this study explain that when adolescents have an emotional bond with peers, they will feel accepted in the environment, which will increase adolescent self-esteem. This is because trust and alienation affect adolescent self-esteem more than the quality of communication.

Meanwhile Rosenberg (1965) explained that there are three aspects of self-esteem: 1) physical self-esteem (acceptance of an individual's physical condition); 2) social self-esteem (individual's ability to socialize and also relates to how individuals can communicate with their surroundings); and 3) performance self-esteem (individual abilities and achievements).

According to Wilkinson (2004), the dynamics of the influence between peer-attachment on adolescents can occur directly and can also be mediated by self-esteem. In line with Mota and Matos (2013), safe attachment with peers can increase self-esteem and social skills. Relationships with peers who support each other have emotional ties and provide positive feedback will increase self-esteem in individuals. It was found that there is a relationship between peer-attachment and emotional regulation among *santri* (Luthfi & Husni, 2020).

Attachment is a psychic relationship carried out continuously between individuals throughout their lives (Giddens & Bowlby, 1970). Meanwhile, Armsden and Greenberg (1987) defined attachment as an enduring bond of affection characterized by feelings of security, trust, good communication, and acceptance. Not only with parents but also with peers and adults around individuals when entering the adolescent phase (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Peer-attachment is a close relationship that is formed between individuals and their friends through good communication (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). During adolescence, individuals begin to form closer bonds with their peers. This close bond arises because of a good communication and trust system (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). The inability to communicate effectively can make it difficult for adolescents to cope with emerging stressors (Jembarwati, 2016). Individuals who never communicate with others will be isolated from their environment (Erlangga, 2017).

The attachment theory put forward by Ainsworth (1989) showed that close and strong relationships with peers can be said to be affectionate or attachment closeness when individuals go through adolescence. When

individuals are in a community or group, the relationship between individuals creates social interaction (Ubaidillah et al., 2022). One source of social support obtained by individuals comes from interactions within the community or group (Ubaidillah et al., 2022). Therefore, *santri* in a boarding school has a source of social support from fellow *santri* (Ubaidillah et al., 2022). Thus, they can build attachments with other *santri* (Ubaidillah et al., 2022). Attachments that are established in adolescence will generate and form friendships. *Santri* who have close friendships, can express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions (Luthfi & Husni, 2020). *Santri's* self-esteem will increase when they build good peer relationships (Gorrese & Ruggieri, 2013). Thus, good interpersonal relationships between *santri* are a source of self-esteem. Armsden and Greenberg (1987) found that the quality of peer-attachment in adolescents has a high relationship with self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Kustanti (2017) found a relationship between attachment and self-esteem with social adjustment in bullying victimization. Then, a meta-analysis of the relationship between peer attachment and self-esteem conducted by Gorrese & Ruggieri (2013) with 8,876 participants showed a significant correlation between peer attachment and self-esteem. Beigi et al. (2022) conducted a study with 314 participants from high school students in Tehran and found that self-esteem is significantly related to parental and peer attachment. In line with research from Kecaj et al. (2021), showed a significant positive correlation between attachment to parents and peers and self-esteem with a sample of 387 adolescents who attended high school in Shkoder Municipality. This research has novelty because the subjects come from among *santri*, while most previous studies have chosen adolescent subjects in general. Based on some of the research above, no single study discusses the effect of peer attachment on self-esteem among *santri*.

Based on the explanation above, *santri* far from their parents will be closer to their peers. The peer-attachment built between *santri* gives them a safe and comfortable place as a substitute for their

relationship with their parents. Further, peer-attachment affects individual self-esteem. Therefore, this study purposed to determine the effect of peer-attachment on self-esteem among *santri* in the city of Palembang.

Method

This research design is quantitative correlational approach with simple linear regression analysis. This study purposed to find the effect between variables, but there are no manipulation. Independent variable is peer-attachment and dependent variable is self-esteem.

The population in this study is *santri*, who lived in pesantren in Palembang. Palembang chosed as a place to research because in Palembang City, many of Pesantren have *santri* with diverse backgrounds, characteristics, and ethnicities. It is because in addition to the indigenous people, there are also migrants and descents, such as from Java, Minangkabau, Madura, Bugis, and Banjar (Anisah, 2016). Descent people who live in Palembang are Chinese, Arabs, and Indians (Anisah, 2016). Students of various kinds of differences will adjust to their new social environment. The characteristics of the population were 12 to 19-years-old. The sampling technique used purposive sampling technique (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018). The researcher determined that the participants were students from Islamic boarding schools in Palembang who fit the participant criteria. The sample obtained was 174 participants.

Peer-attachment was measured using the Inventory of Parent and Peer-Attachment Revisited (IPPA-R) developed by Armsden and Greenberg (1987). This study only focuses on peer attachment. Furthermore, Kusumawardani (2019) adapted IPPA-R in Indonesian with three dimensions: trust, communication, and alienation. The IPPA-R, which concentrates only on peer attachment consists of 24 items (example: "I like to get my friend's point of view on things I'm concerned about"; "My friends can tell when I'm upset about something") with 4-point Likert scale (1 = very inappropriate, 4 = very appropriate). Meanwhile, self-esteem is measured using

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) modified by Maroqi (2019) with five favorable (example: “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”) and five unfavorable aspects (example: “At times I think I am no good at all”). The number of valuable items is 4-point Likert scale (1 = very inappropriate, 4 = very appropriate). The test results on 60 santri for RSES obtained nine valid items with a reliability .670, whereas the IPPA-R obtained 14 valid items with a reliability .838. Reference validity and reliability is based on $r_{crit} \geq .20$ (Aiken & Groth-Marnat, 2006) and $\alpha \geq .60$ (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

We first prepared a measuring instrument and asked for a permit for data collection at Islamic boarding schools in Palembang. Then, we collected data using a questionnaire distributed directly by visiting *santri* at Islamic boarding schools. After that, *santri* were asked to fill out informed consent. *Santri*, who has agreed, then fills out the prepared questionnaire.

Data analysis methods using a simple linear regression technique assisted by software jamovi version 2.3.18 (The Jamovi Project, 2022). Besides analyzing using simple linear, we conducted descriptive and correlation analysis to find out each variable's mean and standard deviation and the correlation among variables. The correlation test is carried out to test the initial assumptions before conducting regression analysis (Hinton, 1995).

Results

The results are shown in three tables. Table 1 contains an overview of the participants, table 2 shows the correlation among variables, and table 3 shows the results of a simple regression analysis of peer-attachment and self-esteem. Based on table 1, it can be explained that of the 174 participants, most of the respondents came from 2 different huts. Participants were divided into characteristics: school, gender, age, parents' income, father's education, and mother's education.

Table 2 shows that the correlation analysis between variables indicates a significant relationship between peer-attachment and self-esteem ($r = .212$; $p\text{-value} = .005$). These results indicated that an increase of peer-attachment will be followed by an increase of self-esteem.

Table 1
Characteristics of Participants

Characteristics	f	%
School Based		
MA Thawalib	22	12.6 %
MA Jamiatul Qurro	29	16.7 %
MTs Thawalib Sriwijaya	20	11.5 %
MTs Jamiatul Qurro	103	59.2 %
Gender		
Man	132	76.3 %
Woman	41	23.7 %
Age		
12	103	59.5 %
13	18	10.4 %
14	7	4.0 %
15	25	14.5 %
16	11	6.4 %
17	7	4.0 %
18	2	1.2 %
Parents Income		
< IDR 500.000	12	6.9 %
IDR 500.000 – IDR 1.000.000	34	19.7 %
IDR 1.000.000 – IDR 2.000.000	49	28.3 %
>IDR 2.000.000	78	45.1 %
Fathers' Education		
Elementary School	17	9.8%
Junior High School	10	5.8%
Senior High School	91	52.6%
Vocational High School	1	.6%
Diploma Three	50	28.9%
Undergraduate	2	1.2%
Master Degree	2	1.2%
Mothers' Education		
Elementary School	15	8.7%
Junior High School	14	8.1%
Senior High School	94	54.3%
Vocational High School	1	.6%
Diploma Three	3	1.7%
Undergraduate	37	21.4%
Master Degree	7	4.0%
Doctoral Degree	2	1.2%

Table 2
Correlation between Variables

	M	SD	Age	Gender	Self-Esteem	Peer-Attachments
Age	3.04	.371	—			
Gender	2.65	.309	.530***	—		
Self-Esteem	13.1	1.65	-.155*	-.192*	—	
Peer-Attachments	1.24	.426	.003	.120	.212**	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3
Simple Regression Analysis Results

	B	SE	β	t	95% Confidence Intervals		p
					LB	UB	
Intercepts	2.365	.2384	-	9.92	18.944	2.836	< .001
Peer-Attachment	.255	.0893	.212	2.85	.0784	.431	.005

$F(1, 172) = 8.13$; $p\text{-value} = .005$; $R = .212$; $R^2 = .0451$; $\Delta R^2 = .0396$

The data normality test is carried out by looking at the result of the skewness value (-1.86328), and the kurtosis value (.923519). This can be seen from Z Skewness and Z Kurtosis, which are still in the range of -2 to 2 (Field, 2018). The linearity test is carried out by looking at the deviation from linearity with a value of .200, so it can be concluded that the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable is linear (Garson, 2012). Thus, the classical assumption test for simple linear regression analysis is fulfilled. Next, test the hypothesis by doing a simple linear regression.

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In table 3, the results of the simple regression analysis show that peer-attachment positively and significantly affects self-esteem. In addition, the results of the simple regression analysis indicate that peer-attachment affects the self-esteem of *santri* in Palembang ($B = .255$; $p\text{-value} = .005$) with $F(1, 172) = 8.13$ and $p\text{-value} = .005$ (table 3). Moreover, peer-attachment affects 3.96% on *santri*'s self-esteem.

Discussion

The correlation results show a correlation between self-esteem and peer attachment variables. The higher the peer attachment, the higher the students' self-esteem. Also, the results indicate that peer-attachment influences self-esteem. This means that only 3.96% of self-esteem is explained by peer attachment, while 96.04% is by other factors. There are two factors that influence self-esteem among *santri*, both of which are internal factors (cognitive, religion, and behavior) and external factors (environment, intensity of meeting parents, and peers) (Mualfiah & Indrijati, 2014). The high level of peer-attachment will affect the level of self-esteem in *santri*. The findings of this study are supported by previous studies that have been conducted. These results are supported by research from Kecaj et al. (2021) involving well-being late adolescents with an age range of 16-18 years and involving comparisons between genders showed significant results in the effect of peer-attachment on late adolescent self-esteem. In line with research conducted by Mota and Matos (2013), the quality of peer relations can increase adolescent self-esteem because they will feel when have someone who supports them and provides personal support, so they can share everything their feel.

Santri can share thoughts and feelings with their peers when they faced emotionally stressed

(Rasyid, 2012). *Santri* will talk to close friends who can understand their feelings (Rasyid, 2012). Communication in peer-attachment plays a significant role in establishing good related between adolescent (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Rasyid (2012) showed that *santri* have an attachment to their peers because they have more time to interact. Intense interaction between *santri* requires them to communicate with peers. Intensive communication between *santri* occurs because they live in pesantren (Ismail & Yudianta, 2020).

Good communication will form attachments. *Santri*, who form attachments with peers, will be able to express thoughts, feelings, and emotions more openly, and *santri* will feel comfortable and safe so that they can reduce emotional feelings (Lestari & Satwika, 2018). A study by Beigi et al. (2022) with participants of 314 high school found that self-esteem has a significantly positive correlation with trust and communication with peers and a negative correlation with alienation from peers. A safe source of attachment other than parents is peers, in which adolescents who receive adequate care and support during childhood tend to be able to build good self-esteem (Beigi et al., 2022). Thus, the role of peer-attachment in adolescence is essential for developing self-esteem (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Pribadi and Erdiansyah (2020) found that communication skills significantly affect self-esteem. Brochu et al. (2018) revealed from his research that high levels of alienation in peer relationships are positively related to low self-esteem. Self-esteem is positively correlated with social adaptation (Xin et al., 2019). Xin et al. (2019) also found that high trust between peers correlates with high self-esteem and impacts good social transformation, and vice versa low self-esteem will affect the ability to adapt to the environment.

According to Arroisi and Badi' (2022) the definition of self-esteem in Islam is *muru'ah*. *Muru'ah* is evaluative which aims to improve oneself and impacts a person to become better and more practical (Arroisi & Badi', 2022). Arroisi and Badi' (2022) explained that *muru'ah* is influenced by the nobility of the soul and its

benefits in this world and the hereafter. When a *santri* has high self-esteem, the *santri* will be optimistic in carrying out their life in pesantren. Nathania and Edwina (2018) found that optimistic students tend to have good self-adjustment. In Islam, it is explained that the relationship between fellow humans is called *hablumminannas* the values related to *hablumminannas* are values that regulate the rights and obligations in human relations and aim to achieve a harmonious life (Al Isra, 2016). When students can achieve good relationships between peers, friendship ties between peers will be formed. In line with research conducted by Luthfi and Husni (2020) found that the bond of friendship between students was formed because students needed other people to find solutions to any problems faced while in the pesantren. Finally, it formed a friendship bond between peers because students felt safe and comfortable when they found someone they could trust. The laws governing *hablumminannas* are sourced from the Quran and Sunnah (Marzuki, 2009). Purwanto (2014) explains that the principle of religion directs the view on social piety, and faith becomes the basis for good behavior in the context of relationships with fellow human beings. A Muslim must have noble character towards fellow human beings, both towards himself, towards his family, friends and the surrounding community (Marzuki, 2009).

Xu et al. (2022) found that peer-attachment affects the emotions of junior high school on self-esteem as a mediator. Huang (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of longitudinal studies examining changes in self-esteem throughout life. The results showed that self-esteem increases throughout childhood to young adulthood (Huang, 2010). This study reveals how peer-attachment engagement and self-esteem develop dynamically and reciprocally over time (Huang, 2010). In line with research conducted by Suzuki and Tomoda (2015) on the impact of early life stress on depressive symptoms among Japanese children with attachment and self-esteem roles. A total of 342 samples in the study with an age range of 9-18 years revealed that safe attachment and high self-esteem represent factors of quality of life.

Father figure is one of the essential aspects in the development of adolescent self-esteem, with an influence of 38% (Risnawati et al., 2021).

Peer-attachment between *santri* can develop a sense of self-worth. Increased interaction between friends will create a conducive climate for students to learn and develop themselves (Darminto, 2013). *Santri* will feel more prepared to express thoughts and feelings and be more open with others. Thus, peer-attachment and self-esteem can reinforce each other over time (Gorrese & Ruggieri, 2013). Foster et al. (2007) showed that anxiety is associated with low self-esteem in both men and women. The findings in that study indicate that low self-esteem will be responsive to rejection. Low levels of self-esteem are a contributing factor to psychological problems (Passanisi et al., 2015). Self-esteem is associated with anxiety, depression, and academic stress, which shows results that significantly affect quality of life and their relation to suicidal ideation (Nguyen et al., 2019).

The limitations of this study focus on peer attachment and self-esteem. The research participants were male and female students living at boarding schools. In this case, students enter adolescence with an age range of 12-19 years.

Conclusion

The study about effect of peer-attachment on the self-esteem among *santri* in Palembang indicated that peer-attachment had a significant positive effect on the self-esteem among *santri*. It indicated that the increase on *santri*'s peer-attachment will affect on the level on *santri*'s self-esteem. Besides, peer-attachment have a positively significant relationship with self-esteem. That is, the more the peer-attachment of *santri* increases, the more self-esteem is possessed by *santri*, and vice versa. The lower the peer-attachment of *santri*, the lower their self-esteem is owned by *santri*.

Referring to the results, psychologists should conduct psychological interventions to increase *santri*'s self-esteem. They need to study it from the peer-attachment level among *santri*. If the peer-attachment of *santri* increases, this will affect the

quality of their self-esteem. Therefore, the module and implementation of psychological interventions or practices should pay attention to peer attachment. Thus, from this intervention, *santri*'s self-esteem can increase.

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