Generalizations Of Second Submodules

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\textbf{Abstract.} In this paper, we introduce and study some new generalizations of second submodules via a function $\phi$ on the set of all submodules of a module. Let $R$ be a ring with non-zero identity, $M$ be an $R$-module and $\phi : S(M) \to S(M)$ be a function where $S(M)$ is the set of all submodules of $M$. A non-zero submodule $N$ of $M$ is said to be a $\phi$-second submodule if, for any element $a$ of $R$ and a submodule $K$ of $M$, $aN \subseteq K$ and $a \phi(N) \not\subseteq K$ imply either $N \subseteq K$ or $a \in \text{ann}_R(N)$. Let $n \geq 2$ be an integer and $\phi_n : S(M) \to S(M)$ be the function defined by $\phi_n(L) = (L :_{\text{ann}_R(L)} n^{-1})$ for every $L \in S(M)$. Then a $\phi_n$-second submodule of $M$ is said to be an $n$-almost second submodule of $M$. We determine various algebraic properties of these submodules and investigate their relationships with other known submodule classes such as second, prime and semisimple submodules. We study the structure of $n$-almost second submodules of modules over ZPI-rings and Dedekind domains. We also give some characterizations of modules and submodules by using $n$-almost second submodules.

1. Introduction

In commutative ring theory, it is an important matter whether all proper ideals of a ring can be written as a product (or intersection) of some special ideals. This is because the structure of an ideal can be more easily determined by using favorable properties of the ideals in the product (or intersection). The most basic tools used in research on this subject are prime ideals and their various generalizations. For example, Dedekind domains are the integral domains in which every proper ideal is a product of prime ideals and this ring class is a fundamental tool for many studies in algebraic geometry and algebraic number theory. As another example, Laskerian rings are the rings in which every proper ideal is a finite intersection of primary ideals and they have an important role in commutative algebra since they generalize Noetherian rings. Therefore, in order to expand the scope of prime ideals and to study with larger ring classes, many different generalizations of prime ideals have been introduced and the rings in which all proper ideals are a product (or intersection) of these generalized prime ideals have been tried to be characterized (see [2], [3], [12], [19], [21]). In this paper we use the concept of $\phi$-prime ideal which was defined in [2]. This concept generalizes prime ideals by the following way. Let $I(R)$ denote the set of all ideals of $R$ and $\phi : I(R) \to I(R) \cup \{\emptyset\}$ be a function. A proper ideal $I$ of $R$ is called a $\phi$-prime ideal of $R$ if, for $x, y \in R$, $xy \in I \implies x \in I$ or $y \in I$ [2]. Let $\phi_n : I(R) \to I(R)$ be the function defined by $\phi_n(I) = I^n$ for an

\textbf{2010 Mathematics Subject Classification.} 13C13; 13C99

\textbf{Keywords.} Second submodule, $\phi$-second submodule, $n$-almost second submodule, almost second submodule

Received: 16 December 2019; Revised: 30 August 2020; Accepted: 09 September 2020

Communicated by Dijana Mosić

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integer \( n > 1 \). Any \( \varphi_n \)-ideal of \( R \) is called an \( n \)-almost prime ideal of \( R \) [2]. In particular, for \( n = 2 \), a 2-almost prime ideal of \( R \) is called an almost prime ideal of \( R \) [12].

Prime submodules are the module theoretic versions of prime ideals. The class of prime submodules has an important role in commutative ring theory as it gives characterizations of important ring classes such as Dedekind domains, Prüfer domains, arithmetical rings. The concept of prime submodule was first introduced in 1965 by E. H. Feller and E. W. Swokowski [23]. Let \( R \) be a commutative ring with non-zero identity. A proper submodule \( P \) of \( M \) is called a prime submodule if whenever \( rm \in P \), where \( r \in R \), \( m \in M \), we have either \( r \in (P:R_M) \) or \( m \in P \). If \( P \) is a prime submodule of \( M \), then \( P = (P:R_M) \) is a prime ideal of \( R \) and in this case \( P \) is called a \( p \)-prime submodule \([27]\). If \((0)\) is a prime submodule of \( M \), then \( M \) is called a prime module. It can be easily seen that \( M \) is a prime module if and only if \( \text{ann}_R(N) = \text{ann}_R(M) \) for every non-zero submodule \( N \) of \( M \) [27].

Besides the prime submodules, module theoretic versions of generalizations of prime ideals have been investigated since the beginning of 2000s (see for example [11], [20], [25], [28], [29], [32]). In [32], the author introduced the concept of \( \varphi \)-prime submodule as follows. Let \( R \) be a commutative ring with non-zero identity, \( M \) be an \( R \)-module, \( S(M) \) be the set of all submodules of \( M \), and \( \varphi : S(M) \to S(M) \cup \{\emptyset\} \) be a function. A proper submodule \( P \) of \( M \) is called a \( \varphi \)-prime submodule if for all \( a \in R \) and \( x \in M \) with \( ax \in P \varphi(P) \) implies that \( a \in (P:R_M) \) or \( x \in P \). Let \( n \geq 2 \) be an integer and \( \varphi_n : S(M) \to S(M) \cup \{\emptyset\} \) be the function defined by \( \varphi_n(N) = (N : R_M)^{n-1}N \) for every \( N \in S(M) \). Then a \( \varphi_n \)-prime submodule of \( M \) is said to be an \( n \)-almost prime submodule of \( M \). In particular, for \( n = 2 \), a 2-almost prime submodule of \( M \) is called an almost prime submodule of \( M \). In this article we introduce and study the dual notion of these submodule classes.

Second submodules of modules over commutative rings were introduced in [31] as the dual notion of prime submodules. According to this definition a non-zero submodule \( N \) of an \( R \)-module \( M \) is said to be a second submodule if for all \( r \in R \), either \( rN = 0 \) or \( rN = N \). If \( N \) is a second submodule of \( M \), then \( p = \text{ann}_R(N) \) is a prime ideal of \( R \). In this case, \( N \) is called a \( p \)-second submodule of \( M \) [31]. In recent years, second submodules have attracted the attention of many researchers and it has been understood that this submodule class has an important role in determining characterizations of modules and rings (see for example [9], [13], [14], [15]). Along with the increased work on the second submodules, generalization of these submodules has begun to be investigated and it has been seen that these generalized second submodules also have interesting and important algebraic properties (see for example [7], [16], [17], [18], [22]).

In this paper, we study some generalizations of second submodules via a function \( \varphi \) on the set of all submodules of a module. We investigate \( \varphi \)-second and \( n \)-almost second submodules which were defined in [22]. We determine various algebraic properties of these submodules and give some characterizations of modules and submodules by using these submodule classes (see Theorems 3.2, 3.5, 3.8, 3.14). We characterize \( \varphi \)-second submodules of a comultiplication module (see Proposition 2.6). We investigate the relationships of \( \varphi \)-second and \( n \)-almost second submodules with other known submodule classes such as second, prime and semisimple submodules (see Theorems 2.3, 3.3 and Proposition 3.1). We study the structure of \( n \)-almost second submodules of modules over ZPI-rings and Dedekind domains (see Theorem 3.13). We introduce the notion of almost second radical of a submodule as a generalization of the second radical of a submodule which was defined in [14]. We also define the concept of almost \( m^* \)-system and we give a characterization of almost second radical of a module via almost \( m^* \)-systems (see Theorem 3.19).

Throughout this paper all rings will be commutative with non-zero identity and all modules will be unital left modules. Unless otherwise stated \( R \) will denote a ring.

2. \( \varphi \)-Second Submodules

In this section we study \( \varphi \)-second submodules where \( \varphi \) is a function on the set of all submodules of a module. In the rest of the paper \( S(M) \) will denote the set of all submodules of an \( R \)-module \( M \) and \( \varphi : S(M) \to S(M) \) will be a function.

**Definition 2.1.** [22, Definition 2.1] Let \( M \) be an \( R \)-module and \( N \) be a non-zero submodule of \( M \). If, for any element \( a \) of \( R \) and a submodule \( K \) of \( M \), \( aN \subseteq K \) and \( a\varphi(N) \not\subseteq K \) imply either \( N \subseteq K \) or \( a \in \text{ann}_R(N) \), then \( N \) is said to be a...
Let \( \varphi_M : S(M) \rightarrow S(M) \) be the function defined by \( \varphi_M(L) = M \) for every \( L \in S(M) \). Then a \( \varphi_M \)-second submodule of \( M \) is said to be a weak second submodule of \( M \).

Let \( n \geq 2 \) be an integer and \( \varphi_n : S(M) \rightarrow S(M) \) be the function defined by \( \varphi_n(L) = (L :_M \text{ann}_L(L)^{n-1}) \) for every \( L \in S(M) \). Then a \( \varphi_n \)-second submodule of \( M \) is said to be an \( n \)-almost second submodule of \( M \). In particular, for \( n = 2 \), a 2-almost second submodule of \( M \) is called an almost second submodule of \( M \).

Let \( M \) be an \( R \)-module and \( N \) be a submodule of \( M \). Since \( \varphi(N) \setminus N = (\varphi(N) \cup N) \setminus N \), without loss of generality, throughout this paper we will assume that \( N \subseteq \varphi(N) \).

It is clear from the definition that every \( R \)-module \( M \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of itself for any function \( \varphi : S(M) \rightarrow S(M) \). But not every \( R \)-module is a second submodule of itself. For example, \( Z \) is not a second \( \varphi \)-submodule of itself but \( Z \) is \( \varphi \)-second \( Z \)-submodule of itself.

**Theorem 2.2.** [22, Theorem 2.16] Let \( M \) be an \( R \)-module and \( Q \) be a non-zero submodule of \( M \). Then the following are equivalent.

1. \( Q \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \).
2. \( (X :_R Q) = \text{ann}_R(Q) \cup (X :_R \varphi(Q)) \) for every submodule \( X \) of \( M \) with \( Q \not\subseteq X \).
3. \( (X :_R Q) = \text{ann}_R(Q) \cup (X :_R \varphi(Q)) \) for every submodule \( X \) of \( M \) with \( Q \not\subseteq X \).
4. For any ideal \( I \) of \( R \) and any submodule \( L \) of \( M \), \( IQ \subseteq L \) and \( \varphi(Q) \not\subseteq L \) imply either \( I \subseteq \text{ann}_R(Q) \) or \( N \subseteq L \).
5. \( IQ = Q \) or \( IQ = \varphi(Q) \) for every ideal \( I \) of \( R \) with \( I \not\subseteq \text{ann}_R(Q) \).

**Theorem 2.3.** Let \( N \) be a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \) such that \( N = M_1 + ... + M_k \) where \( M_1, ..., M_k \) are submodules of \( M \) such that \( \text{ann}_R(M_i) \) is a maximal ideal of \( R \) for each \( i \) (\( 1 \leq i \leq k \)). Then either \( N \) is second or \( N = \varphi(N) \).

**Proof.** Without loss of generality we may assume that \( N \not\subseteq \sum_{j \neq i}^k M_j \) for any \( i \) (\( 1 \leq i \leq k \)). By Theorem 2.2,

\[
(\sum_{j \neq i}^k M_j :_R N) = \text{ann}_R(N) \text{ or } (\sum_{j \neq i}^k M_j :_R N) = (\sum_{j = i}^k M_j :_R \varphi(N)).
\]

If the first case holds for some \( i \) (\( 1 \leq i \leq k \)), then \( \text{ann}_R(M_i) \subseteq (\sum_{j = i}^k M_j :_R N) = \text{ann}_R(N) \) and so \( \text{ann}_R(M_i) = \text{ann}_R(N) \). This implies that \( N \) is a second submodule as \( \text{ann}_R(N) \) is a maximal ideal of \( R \).

Now suppose that for each \( i \) (\( 1 \leq i \leq k \)), \( (\sum_{j \neq i}^k M_j :_R N) \neq \text{ann}_R(N) \). So we have \( (\sum_{j \neq i}^k M_j :_R N) = (\sum_{j \neq i}^k M_j :_R (\varphi(N))) \) for each \( i \) (\( 1 \leq i \leq k \)). If \( \text{ann}_R(M_i) \subseteq \text{ann}_R(N) \), then \( \text{ann}_R(N) \) is a maximal ideal and so \( N \) is a second submodule. So we may assume that \( \text{ann}_R(M_i) \not\subseteq \text{ann}_R(N) \). Take an element \( r \in \text{ann}_R(M_i) \setminus \text{ann}_R(N) \). Then \( r \not\in \text{ann}_R(M_i) \) for some \( i \) (\( 2 \leq i \leq k \)). Since \( \text{ann}_R(M_i) \) is a maximal ideal, \( Rr + \text{ann}_R(M_i) = R \). On the other hand we have \( r \in \text{ann}_R(M_i) \subseteq (\sum_{j = 2}^k M_j :_R N) = (\sum_{j = 2}^k M_j :_R \varphi(N)) \). Therefore, \( R = (\sum_{j = 2}^k M_j :_R \varphi(N)) + \text{ann}_R(M_i) \). It follows that \( \varphi(N) \subseteq \sum_{j = 2}^k M_j + \text{ann}_R(M_i)\varphi(N) \subseteq \sum_{j = 2}^k M_j + (\sum_{j = 1}^k M_j :_R N)\varphi(N) \). Since

\[
(\sum_{j = 1}^k M_j :_R N) \not\subseteq \text{ann}_R(N) \text{ and } (\sum_{j = 1}^k M_j :_R N) \neq N, \quad \text{Theorem 2.2 implies that } (\sum_{j = 1}^k M_j :_R N)\varphi(N) = (\sum_{j = 1}^k M_j :_R N)N.
\]

It follows that \( \varphi(N) \subseteq \sum_{j = 2}^k M_j + (\sum_{j = 1}^k M_j :_R N) \subseteq \sum_{j = 2}^k M_j + \sum_{j = 1}^k M_j = M_1 + ... + M_k = N \). Thus we get that \( N = \varphi(N) \). \( \square \)

Recall that an \( R \)-module \( M \) is called co-semisimple if each proper submodule of \( M \) is an intersection of maximal submodules [30].

**Corollary 2.4.** Let \( M \) be an \( R \)-module and \( N \) be a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \). If one of the following holds, then either \( N \) is second or \( N = \varphi(N) \).

1. \( M \) is a finitely generated semisimple \( R \)-module.
2. \( M \) is a finitely cogenerated co-semisimple \( R \)-module.
Proof. (1) This follows from the fact that \( \text{ann}_R(S) \) is a maximal ideal of \( R \) for every simple submodule \( S \) of \( M \).

(2) A finitely cogenerated co-semisimple module \( M \) is semisimple by [30, 23.1]. \( M \) is also finitely generated by [1, Proposition 10.6]. So the result follows from part (1).

Recall from [4] that an \( R \)-module \( M \) is said to be a comultiplication module if for every submodule \( N \) of \( M \) there exists an ideal \( I \) of \( R \) such that \( N = (0 :_M I) \). It also follows that \( M \) is a comultiplication module if and only if \( N = (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(N)) \) for every submodule \( N \) of \( M \) [4].

In [22], the authors gave a characterization of \( \varphi \)-second submodules of a comultiplication module as follows.

**Proposition 2.5.** [22, Theorem 2.9] Let \( \varphi : \mathcal{I}(R) \rightarrow \mathcal{I}(R) \cup \{\emptyset\} \) be a function and \( N \) be a non-zero submodule of an \( R \)-module \( M \).

(1) If \( \text{ann}_R(\varphi(N)) \subseteq \varphi(\text{ann}_R(N)) \) and \( N \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \), then \( \text{ann}_R(N) \) is a \( \varphi \)-prime ideal of \( R \).

(2) Let \( \text{ann}_R(\varphi(N)) = \varphi(\text{ann}_R(N)) \) and \( M \) be a comultiplication \( R \)-module. Then \( N \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \) if and only if \( \text{ann}_R(N) \) is a \( \varphi \)-prime ideal of \( R \).

Let \( M \) be an \( R \)-module and \( N, K \) be submodules of \( M \). The coproduct of \( N \) and \( K \) is defined by \( (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(N)\text{ann}_R(K)) \) and it is denoted by \( C(NK) \).

In the following proposition we give a characterization of \( \varphi \)-second submodules of a comultiplication module via coproduct.

**Proposition 2.6.** Let \( M \) be a comultiplication \( R \)-module and \( N \) be a non-zero submodule of \( M \). Then the following are equivalent.

(1) \( N \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \).

(2) Let \( K \) and \( L \) be two submodules of \( M \) such that \( N \subseteq C(KL) \) and \( \varphi(N) \nsubseteq C(KL) \), then \( N \subseteq K \) or \( N \subseteq L \).

Proof. (1) \( \Rightarrow \) (2) Let \( N \subseteq C(KL) = (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(K)\text{ann}_R(L)) \) and \( \varphi(N) \nsubseteq C(KL) \). Then \( \text{ann}_R(N) \subseteq (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(K)) = K \) and \( \text{ann}_R(L)\varphi(N) \nsubseteq (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(K)) = K \). Since \( N \) is \( \varphi \)-second, \( \text{ann}_R(L) \subseteq \text{ann}_R(N) \) or \( N \subseteq K \). Thus \( N = (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(N)) \subseteq (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(L)) = L \) or \( N \subseteq K \), as desired.

(2) \( \Rightarrow \) (1) Let \( I \) be an ideal of \( R \) and \( K \) be a submodule of \( M \) such that \( IN \subseteq K \) and \( I\varphi(N) \nsubseteq K \). Since \( M \) is comultiplication, \( K = (0 :_M I) \) for some ideal \( I \) of \( R \). Then \( IN = 0 \) and \( I\varphi(N) \neq 0 \). It follows that \( N \subseteq (0 :_M I) \subseteq C((0 :_M I)K) \) and \( \varphi(N) \nsubseteq C((0 :_M I)K) \). By (2), we have either \( N \subseteq K \) or \( N \subseteq (0 :_M I) \). Thus \( N \subseteq K \) or \( I \subseteq \text{ann}_R(N) \) as needed.

**Proposition 2.7.** Let \( M \) be an \( R \)-module and \( K \) be a submodule of \( M \). Let \( \varphi^K : S(K) \rightarrow S(K) \) be the function defined by \( \varphi^K(L) = \varphi(L) \cap K \) for every \( L \in S(K) \). Then the following hold for a submodule \( N \) of \( K \).

(1) If \( N \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \), then \( N \) is a \( \varphi^K \)-second submodule of \( K \).

(2) Let \( \varphi(N) \nsubseteq K \). Then \( N \) is a \( \varphi^K \)-second submodule of \( K \) if and only if \( N \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \).

(3) If \( K \subseteq \varphi(N) \) and \( N \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \), then \( N \) is a weak second submodule of \( K \).

(4) If \( \varphi(N) \subseteq \varphi(K) \), \( K \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \) and \( N \) is a weak second submodule of \( M \), then \( N \) is a \( \varphi \)-second submodule of \( M \).

Proof. (1) Let \( aN \subseteq L \) and \( a\varphi^K(N) \nsubseteq L \) for a \( a \in R \) and a submodule \( L \) of \( K \). Then \( a(\varphi(N) \cap K) \nsubseteq L \) and so \( a\varphi(N) \nsubseteq L \). Thus \( a \in \text{ann}_R(N) \) or \( N \subseteq L \), as needed.

(2) If \( \varphi(N) \nsubseteq K \), then \( \varphi^K(N) = \varphi(N) \) and the result follows.

(3) If \( K \subseteq \varphi(N) \), then \( \varphi^K(N) = K \) and the result follows.

(4) Let \( aN \subseteq L \) and \( a\varphi(N) \nsubseteq L \) for an ideal \( I \) of \( R \) and a submodule \( L \) of \( M \). Then \( a\varphi(K) \nsubseteq L \) by the hypothesis. If \( aK \subseteq L \), then \( a \in \text{ann}_R(K) \subseteq \text{ann}_R(N) \) or \( N \subseteq K \subseteq L \) and we are done. If \( aK \nsubseteq L \), then \( aK = a\varphi^K(N) \nsubseteq L \cap K \) and \( aN \nsubseteq L \cap K \) imply that \( a \in \text{ann}_R(N) \) or \( N \subseteq L \) as needed.

Let \( R_i \) be a ring and \( M_i \) be an \( R_i \)-module for \( i = 1, \ldots, n \). Denote \( R := R_1 \times \cdots \times R_n \) and \( M := M_1 \times \cdots \times M_n \). Then \( M \) is an \( R \)-module and it is well-known that each \( R \)-submodule \( N \) of \( M \) is of the form \( N = N_1 \times \cdots \times N_n \) for some submodules \( N_i \) of \( M_i \) (\( 1 \leq i \leq n \)).
Proposition 2.8. Let $R_i$ be a ring and $M_i$ be an $R_i$-module for $i = 1, 2$. Denote $R = R_1 \times R_2$ and $M = M_1 \times M_2$. Suppose that $N_i$ is a weak second submodule of $M_1$ such that $\varphi(N_1 \times \{0\}) \subseteq M_1 \times \{0\}$. Then $N_1 \times \{0\}$ is a $\varphi$-second submodule of $M$.

Proof. Clearly, $N_1 \times \{0\} \neq \{0\}_M$. Let $(r_1, r_2) \in R$ and $K_1 \times K_2$ be a submodule of $M$ such that $(r_1, r_2)(N_1 \times \{0\}) \subseteq K_1 \times K_2$ and $(r_1, r_2)\varphi(N_1 \times \{0\}) \nsubseteq K_1 \times K_2$. Then $(r_1, r_2)(M_1 \times \{0\}) \nsubseteq K_1 \times K_2$ and so $r_1M_1 \nsubseteq K_1$. Since $N_1$ is a weak second submodule of $M_1$, we have $r_1 \in \text{ann}_{R_1}(N_1)$ or $N_1 \nsubseteq K_1$. This implies that $(r_1, r_2) \in \text{ann}_{R_i}(N_1) \times R_2 = \text{ann}_R(N_1 \times \{0\})$ or $N_1 \times \{0\} \subseteq K_1 \times K_2$ as desired. □

Let $M$ be an $R$-module. We define the function $\varphi_o : S(M) \to S(M)$ as $\varphi_o(L) = \sum_{i \in \mathbb{Z}} (L : \cdot \text{ann}_R(L))$ for every $L \in S(M)$.

Let $M$ be an $R$-module, $\varphi : S(M) \to S(M)$ and $\psi : S(M) \to S(M)$ be two functions. If $\varphi(N) \subseteq \psi(N)$ for every $N \in S(M)$, then we will write $\varphi \leq \psi$.

Corollary 2.9. Let $R_i$ be a ring, $M_i$ be an $R_i$-module for $i = 1, 2$. Denote $R = R_1 \times R_2$ and $M = M_1 \times M_2$. Suppose that $\varphi : S(M) \to S(M)$ is a function with $\varphi \leq \varphi_o$. Then, $N_1 \times \{0\}$ is a $\varphi$-second submodule of $M$ for any weak second submodule $N_1$ of $M_1$.

Proof. $\varphi(N_1 \times \{0\}) \subseteq \varphi_o(N_1 \times \{0\}) = \sum_{i \in \mathbb{Z}} (N_1 \times \{0\} : \cdot \text{ann}_R(N_1 \times \{0\})) = \sum_{i \in \mathbb{Z}} (N_1 : \cdot \text{ann}_{R_1}(N_1)) \times \{0\} : \cdot \text{ann}_R(\{0\} : \cdot \text{ann}_R(\{0\} : \cdot \text{ann}_R(\{0\})) \times \{0\}) \subseteq M_1 \times \{0\}$. Thus the result follows from Proposition 2.8. □

3. n-Almost Second Submodules and Almost Second Radical of a Module

In this section we investigate $n$-almost second submodules and we give a generalization of the second radical of a submodule which was defined in [14].

Proposition 3.1. Let $M$ be a prime $R$-module and $N$ be a proper almost second submodule of $M$. Then $N$ is a prime submodule of $M$.

Proof. Let $r \in R$, $m \in M$ and $rm \in N$. Since $M$ is a prime $R$-module, $\text{ann}_R(N) = \text{ann}_R(M)$. If $r \in \text{ann}_R(N)$, then $r \in \text{ann}_R(M)$. Then, by Theorem 2.2.2, we have either $rN = N$ or $rN = (N : \cdot \text{ann}_R(N)) = \text{ann}_R(M) = M$. If $rN = N$, then $rm \in N$ for some $n \in N$. It follows that $r(m - n) = 0$. Since $M$ is a prime $R$-module and $r \notin \text{ann}_R(M)$, we have $m = n \in N$. If $rN = M$, then $rm \in rN$. This implies that $m \in N$ as in the previous case. Thus $N$ is a prime submodule of $M$. □

Theorem 3.2. Let $M$ be an $R$-module. If there exist maximal ideals $P_1, \ldots, P_n$ of $R$ such that $P_1 \cap \ldots \cap P_n \subseteq \text{ann}_R(M)$, then for any ideal $I$ of $R$, $(0 : \cdot M : I) = 0$ or $(0 : \cdot M : I)$ is an almost second submodule of $M$.

Proof. Suppose that $(0 : \cdot M : I) \neq 0$. First we show that $(0 : \cdot M : I) \neq (0 : \cdot M : I)^2$. Clearly, $(0 : \cdot M : I) \subseteq (0 : \cdot M : I)^2$. Let $m \in (0 : \cdot M : I)^2$ and $a \in I$. Without loss of generality, we may assume that there exists $t$ ($0 \leq t \leq n$) such that $a \in P_1 \cap \ldots \cap P_t$ and $a \notin P_{t+1} \cup \ldots \cup P_n$. Now, for any $t + 1 \leq i \leq n$, $r_i = P_i + Ra$ and so $1 = x_1 + \sum_{i=1}^n r_i M_1$ where $x_i \in P_i$ and $r_i \in R$. Thus there exists $b \in I$ such that $1 = x_1 + \sum_{i=1}^n r_i M_1$ and hence $a = ax_1 + \sum_{i=1}^n r_i M_1$. Since $ax_1 + \sum_{i=1}^n r_i M_1 \in \text{ann}_R(M)$ and $abm = 0$, we have $am = 0$. Thus $lm = 0$ and so $m \in (0 : \cdot M : I)$. Hence $(0 : \cdot M : I) = (0 : \cdot M : I)^2$.

Now, clearly, $(0 : \cdot M : I) \subseteq (0 : \cdot M : I) \cdot \text{ann}_R(0 : \cdot M : I)$. On the other hand, $(0 : \cdot M : I) \cdot \text{ann}_R(0 : \cdot M : I) \subseteq (0 : \cdot M : I)$ and $(0 : \cdot M : I)$ is an almost second submodule of $M$. □

Theorem 3.3. Let $M$ be an $R$-module, $a \in R$, $(0 : \cdot M : a) \neq (0 : \cdot M : a)$ and $aM$. Then $(0 : \cdot M : a)$ is an almost second submodule of $M$ if and only if it is a second submodule of $M$.

Proof. If $(0 : \cdot M : a)$ is a second submodule, then clearly it is an almost second submodule. Suppose that $(0 : \cdot M : a)$ is an almost second submodule of $M$. Let $b(0 : \cdot M : a) \subseteq K$ for $b \in R$ and a submodule $K$ of $M$. If $b((0 : \cdot M : a)) \subseteq (0 : \cdot M : a) \subseteq K$, then we are done. So we may assume that $bM \nsubseteq K$. Now, $(b + a)(0 : \cdot M : a) \subseteq K$. If $(b + a)M \nsubseteq K$, then we have $(0 : \cdot M : a) \subseteq K$ or $b \in \text{ann}_R((0 : \cdot M : a)$ as $(0 : \cdot M : a)$ is almost second. So assume that $(b + a)M \subseteq K$. $bM \subseteq K$ gives that $aM \subseteq K$. Since $(0 : \cdot M : a) \subseteq aM$, we have $(0 : \cdot M : a) \subseteq K$ which shows that $(0 : \cdot M : a)$ is a second submodule of $M$. □
Recall from [8] that an R-module $M$ is said to be fully coidempotent if $N = C(N^2)$ for every submodule $N$ of $M$.

**Lemma 3.4.** An $R$-module $M$ is fully coidempotent if and only if $N = (N :_M \text{ann}_R(N))^m$ for every submodule $N$ of $M$ and positive integer $m$.

**Proof.** Suppose that $M$ is a fully coidempotent $R$-module. Let $N$ be a submodule of $M$ and $m$ be a positive integer. It is sufficient to show that $N = (N :_M \text{ann}_R(N))$. We have $N = C(N^2) = (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(N)^2)$. Also, $N \subseteq (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(N))$ implies that $(N :_M \text{ann}_R(N)) \subseteq (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(N)) \subseteq N$ and so $(N :_M \text{ann}_R(N)) \subseteq N$. Since the other inclusion always holds we have $(N :_M \text{ann}_R(N)) = N$ and hence $N = (N :_M \text{ann}_R(N)^m)$ for all $m \geq 1$.

Conversely, suppose that $N = (N :_M \text{ann}_R(N)^m)$ for every submodule $N$ of $M$ and positive integer $m$. Then $N = (N :_M \text{ann}_R(N))$. We have $C(N^2) = (0 :_M \text{ann}_R(N)^2) \subseteq (N :_M \text{ann}_R(N)^2) = ((N :_M \text{ann}_R(N)) :_M \text{ann}_R(N)) = (N :_M \text{ann}_R(N)) = N$. Thus we get that $C(N^2) \subseteq N$ and so $N = C(N^2)$. □

**Theorem 3.5.** Let $R = R_1 \times \ldots \times R_n$ and $M = M_1 \times \ldots \times M_m$ where $R_i$ is a ring, $0 \neq M_i$ is an $R_i$-module for all $i \in [1, \ldots, m]$ and $n, m \geq 2$. Then every non-zero submodule of $M$ is $n$-almost second if and only if $M$ is a fully coidempotent $R$-module.

**Proof.** Suppose that every non-zero submodule of $M$ is $n$-almost second. So every non-zero submodule of $M$ is almost second. We will show that $M_i$ is fully coidempotent for each $i \in [1, \ldots, m]$, hence $M$ will be fully coidempotent. Suppose on the contrary that $M_i$ is not fully coidempotent. Then there exists a non-zero submodule $N_i$ of $M_i$ such that $N_i \cap M_i \neq N_i$ and $N_i \cap M_i \neq N_i$. We have $(1, 0, \ldots, 0)(N_1 \times M_1 \times \ldots \times M_m) \subseteq N_1 \times 0 \times \ldots \times 0$ and $(1, 0, \ldots, 0)(N_1 \times M_1 \times \ldots \times M_m :_M \text{ann}_R(N_1 \times M_1 \times \ldots \times M_m)) \subseteq N_1 \times 0 \times \ldots \times 0$. By hypothesis, $N_1 \times M_1 \times \ldots \times M_m$ is almost second. So $(1, 0, \ldots, 0) \in \text{ann}_R(N_1 \times M_1 \times \ldots \times M_m)$ or $N_1 \times M_1 \times \ldots \times M_m \subseteq N_1 \times 0 \times \ldots \times 0$ which are both contradictions. Similarly, $M_i$ is fully coidempotent for each $i \in [2, \ldots, m]$. The converse is clear. □

**Corollary 3.6.** Let $R = R_1 \times \ldots \times R_n$ and $M = M_1 \times \ldots \times M_m$ where $R_i$ is a ring, $0 \neq M_i$ is an $R_i$-module for all $i \in [1, \ldots, m]$ and $n, m \geq 2$. Then every non-zero submodule of $M$ is $n$-almost second if and only if every non-zero submodule of $M$ is $(n+1)$-almost second.

**Proof.** Suppose that every non-zero submodule of $M$ is $n$-almost second. Then $M$ is fully coidempotent by Theorem 3.5. Since $n + 1 > 2$, every non-zero submodule of $M$ is $(n+1)$-almost second again by Theorem 3.5. □

**Lemma 3.7.** Let $M$ be an $R$-module, $N$ be a submodule of $M$ and $I$ be an ideal of $R$. Suppose that $(0 :_M I) \neq (N :_M I)$ and $(N :_M I) \neq N$. Then $K := (N :_M I)$ is an almost second submodule of $M$ if and only if $K = (K :_M \text{ann}_R(K))$.

**Proof.** If $K = (K :_M \text{ann}_R(K))$, then clearly, $K$ is an almost second submodule of $M$. Conversely, assume that $K$ is an almost second submodule of $M$. If $I \subseteq \text{ann}_R(K)$, then we have $(0 :_M I) = (N :_M I)$, a contradiction. Thus $I \not\subseteq \text{ann}_R(K)$. By Theorem 2.2, $IK = K$ or $IK = I(K :_M \text{ann}_R(K))$. If $IK = K$, then $IK = I(N :_M I) \subseteq N$ and hence $N = K$, a contradiction. Therefore, $IK = I(K :_M \text{ann}_R(K)) \subseteq N$ and hence $(K :_M \text{ann}_R(K)) \subseteq (N :_M I) = K$. Thus $K = (K :_M \text{ann}_R(K))$ as desired. □

**Theorem 3.8.** Let $M$ be an Artinian $R$-module, $I \subseteq \text{Jac}(R)$ and $N$ be a submodule of $M$ such that $(N :_R M) = 0$ and $(0 :_M I) \neq (N :_M I)$. Then $(N :_M I)$ is not an $n$-almost second submodule of $M$ for any integer $n > 1$.

**Proof.** We have $(N :_M I) \neq N$, otherwise, if $(N :_M I) = N$ then, by [24, Proposition 3.5], $N = M$ which is a contradiction. Note that $(N :_M I) \subseteq (N :_M \text{ann}_R(N :_M I))$. If $(N :_M I)$ is almost second, then it is almost second and Lemma 3.7 implies that $(N :_M I) = (N :_M I :_M \text{ann}_R(N :_M I))$. It follows that $(N :_M I)^2 = (N :_M I :_M \text{ann}_R(N :_M I)) \subseteq (N :_M \text{ann}_R(N :_M I) :_M I) = (N :_M I :_M \text{ann}_R(N :_M I)) = (N :_M I)$. Since the other inclusion always holds, we have $(N :_M I) = (N :_M I)^2 = (N :_M I :_M I)$. By [24, Proposition 3.5], we get that $(N :_M I) = M$ and so $I \not\subseteq (N :_R M) = 0$. This is a contradiction since $(0 :_M I) \neq (N :_M I)$. □
Lemma 3.9. Let I be an ideal of R and M be an R-module. Then $(0:_{M} (\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I))^n) = (0:_{M} I^n)$ for every integer $n > 1$. In particular, $(0:_{M} (\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I)^n)^{-1}) = (0:_{M} I^n)$.

Proof. Since $I \subseteq \text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I)$, we have $I^n \subseteq (\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I))^n$ and hence $(0:_{M} (\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I))^n) \subseteq (0:_{M} I^n)$. Let $m \in (0:_{M} I^n)$. Take an element $r \in \text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I)$. Then $m \text{ann}^{-1} R \subseteq (0:_{M} I) = 0$. Since $(0:_{M} I^n) = 0$. By Lemma 3.9, $(0:_{M} I^n) = (0:_{M} I^n)$. Therefore, $(0:_{M} I^n) \subseteq (0:_{M} (\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I)^n))$. For the second part,

$((0:_{M} I^n) : (\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I)^n)^{-1}) = ((0:_{M} (\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I)^n))^{-1} : (0:_{M} I^n)) = (0:_{M} I^n) = (0:_{M} I^n)$. □

It is well-known that a commutative ring R is a Von Neumann regular ring if and only if $I^2 = I$ for each ideal I of R [1, p. 176]. Lemma 3.9 implies that if M is a module over a Von Neumann regular ring R and I is an ideal of R with $(0:_{M} I) \neq 0$, then $(0:_{M} I)$ is an n-almost second submodule of M.

Recall from [6] that an R-module M is called a strong comultiplication module if M is a comultiplication R-module and $\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I) = I$ for every ideal I of R.

Proposition 3.10. Let M be a strong comultiplication R-module and I be an ideal of R. Then, I is an n-almost prime ideal of R if and only if $(0:_{M} I)$ is an n-almost second submodule of M.

Proof. By Lemma 3.9, $\phi_n((0:_{M} I)) = ((0:_{M} I) : \text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I)^n)^{-1} = (0:_{M} I^n)$. Since M is strong comultiplication, $\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I^n) = I^n$ and $\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I) = I$. Thus $\text{ann}_R(\phi_n((0:_{M} I))) = \phi_n(\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I))$. By Proposition 2.5-(2), I is an n-almost prime ideal of R if and only if $(0:_{M} I)$ is an n-almost second submodule of M.

Example 3.11. Let $R = F[[X^3, X^4, X^5]]$ where $F$ is a field, and $I = RX^3 + RX^4$. Then I is an almost prime ideal of R which is not a 3-almost prime ideal by [2, Example 11]. Let M be a strong comultiplication R-module. By Proposition 3.10, $(0:_{M} I)$ is an almost second submodule of M which is not a 3-almost second submodule of M.

Example 3.12. Let M be a co-semisimple R-module. Then [7, Theorem 4.8] and [10, Theorem 2.3] imply that $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} I^n)$ for every ideal I of R and an integer $n > 1$. By Lemma 3.9, $(0:_{M} I)$ is an n-almost second submodule of M for each integer $n > 1$.

A ring R is called a ZPI-ring if every proper ideal of R can be written as a product of prime ideals of R [26].

Theorem 3.13. Let $n > 1$ be an integer, M be an R-module and I be an ideal of R with $(0:_{M} I) \neq 0$.

(i) If R is a ZPI-ring and $(0:_{M} I)$ is an n-almost second submodule of M, then $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} I^n)$ or $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} I^n)$ for some prime ideal P of R.

(ii) If R is a Dedekind domain, then $(0:_{M} I)$ is an n-almost second submodule of M if and only if $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} I^n)$ or $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} I^n)$ is a second submodule of M.

(iii) If $(R, m)$ is a local ZPI-ring and $(0:_{M} I)$ is finitely cogenerated, then $(0:_{M} I)$ is an n-almost second submodule of M if and only if $(0:_{M} I) = M$ or $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} m)$.

Proof. (i) Since R is a ZPI-ring, $I = P_1 \cdots P_k$ for some distinct prime ideals of R and positive integers $t_i$. Suppose that $(0:_{M} I) \neq (0:_{M} I)$ for every prime ideal P of R. We have $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} P_1 \cdots P_k)$. Without loss of generality we may assume that $(0:_{M} I) \neq (0:_{M} P_1 \cdots P_{k-1})$ and $(t_1 - 1) + t_2 + \ldots + t_k > 0$. Put $N := (0:_{M} P_1 \cdots P_{k-1})$ and $K := (0:_{M} I)$. Then $K = (N:_{M} P_1)$, $(0:_{M} P_1) \neq K$ and $K \neq N$. By Lemma 3.7, we have $K = (K:_{M} \text{ann}_R(K)^{n-1})$, that is $(0:_{M} I) = ((0:_{M} I) : (\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I)^n)^{-1})$. By Lemma 3.9, $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} I^n)$.

(ii) Suppose that $(0:_{M} I)$ is an n-almost second submodule of M. By part (i), $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} I^n)$ or $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} I^n)$ for some prime ideal P of R. If $(0:_{M} I) = (0:_{M} I^n)$ where P is a prime ideal of R, then $P = 0$ or P is a maximal ideal of R. Clearly, $P = 0$ implies that $(0:_{M} 0) = (0:_{M} I) = M$ and so $(0:_{M} I^n) = M$. If P is a maximal ideal of R, then $\text{ann}_R(0:_{M} P) = \text{ann}_R(0:_{M} I) = P$ since $(0:_{M} I) \neq 0$. This implies that $(0:_{M} I) = I$ is a second submodule of M.
For the converse, suppose that \((0 :_M I)\) is a second submodule of \(M\) or \((0 :_M I) = (0 :_M P^r)\). If \((0 :_M I)\) is a second submodule, clearly, it is \(n\)-almost second. If \((0 :_M I) = (0 :_M P^r)\), then the result follows from Lemma 3.9.

(iii) If \((0 :_M I) = (0 :_M m)\), then \((0 :_M I)\) is a second submodule since \(\text{ann}_R(0 :_M I) = m\) is a maximal ideal of \(R\). If \((0 :_M I) = M\), then clearly it is \(n\)-almost second.

Conversely, suppose that \((0 :_M I)\) is an \(n\)-almost second submodule of \(M\). By [26, Theorem 9.10], \(R\) is a Noetherian ring. If \(m = m^2\), Nakayama’s Lemma implies that \(m = 0\) and so \(R\) is a field. Thus \((0 :_M I) = (0 :_M 0) = M\). Let \(m^2 = m\). Take an element \(a \in m \setminus m^2\). Then \(m^2 \subseteq m^2 + m^r \subseteq m\). By [26, Theorem 9.10], there are no ideals of \(R\) strictly between \(m^2\) and \(m\). So \(m^2 + Ra = m\) and by Nakayama’s Lemma \(m = Ra\). Now let \(P\) be a non-zero prime ideal of \(R\) and \(0 \neq b \in P\). By the Krull’s intersection theorem, we have \(\cap_{i=1}^{\infty} m^i = 0\). Thus there is a positive integer \(k\) such that \(b \in m^k\) and \(b \notin m^{k+1}\). Since \(b \in m^k = Ra^k\), there exists an element \(u \in R\) such that \(b = au^k\) and \(b \notin m^{k+1}\) if \(u \notin m\). Thus \(u\) is a unit in \(R\). Hence \(a^k = u^{-1} \in P\) and so \(a \notin P\), that is \(m = P\). Thus \(m\) is the only non-zero prime ideal of \(R\). Now by part (i), \((0 :_M I) = (0 :_M P^r)\) or \((0 :_M I) = (0 :_M 0) = M\) or \((0 :_M I) = (0 :_M m)\). If \((0 :_M I) = (0 :_M P^r)\), then \((0 :_M I)/(0 :_M I) = ((0 :_M I) :_M P^{r-1})/(0 :_M I) = ((0 :_M I) :_M (0 :_M P^r)/P^{r-1})\). By [24, Proposition 3.5], we have \((0 :_M I) = M\).

Let \(S\) be a multiplicatively closed subset of \(R\) and \(P\) be a prime ideal of \(R\) with \(S \cap P = \emptyset\). Recall from [29] that \(S\) is called \(P\)-essential, if \(S \cap P = \emptyset\), for each ideal \(P\) with \(J \notin P\).

**Theorem 3.14.** Let \(N\) be an \(n\)-almost second submodule of an \(R\)-module \(M\) and \(I = \text{ann}_R(N)\). Then \(S = [(R\setminus J) \cup \text{ann}_R(N :_M P^{r-1})](P)\) is a \(P\)-essential multiplicatively closed subset of \(R\) for each prime ideal \(P\) of \(R\).

**Proof.** First, we show that \(S\) is a multiplicatively closed subset of \(R\). Let \(r, s \in S\). If \(r \in \text{ann}_R(N :_M P^{r-1})\) or \(s \in \text{ann}_R(N :_M P^{r-1})\), then \(rs = \text{ann}_R(N :_M P^{r-1})\) and so \(rs \in S\). Suppose on the contrary that \(rs \notin S\). Then \(rs \in J\). Also, \(rs \notin P\), for if \(rs \in P\), \(r \in S \cap P\) or \(s \in S \cap P\), a contradiction. Since \(rs \notin \text{ann}_R(N :_M P^{r-1})\), we have \(r \in \text{ann}_R(N :_M P^{r-1}) \notin (0 :_M s)\) and \(s \in (0 :_M s)\). Since \(n\) is \(n\)-almost second, we have \(r \in I \) or \(s \in I\), a contradiction. Thus \(rs \in S\) and so \(S\) is a multiplicatively closed subset of \(R\). Now we show that \(S\) is \(P\)-essential. Let \(J \) be an ideal of \(R\) with \(J \notin P\). If \(J \subseteq P\), then \(S = R \setminus P\) and clearly \(S\) is \(P\)-essential. Suppose that \(J \cap S = \emptyset\). Then one can see that \(J \cap [(R\setminus J) \cup \text{ann}_R(N :_M P^{r-1})] \subseteq P\) and \(I \subseteq J \cup P\). Therefore, \(J \subseteq I\). On the other hand, \(N \subseteq (0 :_M I)\) implies that \((N :_M P^{r-1}) \subseteq (0 :_M P^r)\) and so \(P^r \subseteq \text{ann}_R((0 :_M P^r) \subseteq \text{ann}_R(N :_M P^{r-1})\). Hence \(P^r \subseteq P \cap J \subseteq J \cap \text{ann}_R(N :_M P^r) \subseteq P\) and so \(J \subseteq P\), a contradiction. Thus \(J \cap S = \emptyset\) and hence \(S\) is \(P\)-essential.

Let \(M\) be an \(R\)-module and \(N\) be a submodule of \(M\). The sum of all second submodules of \(N\) is called the second radical of \(N\) and denoted by \(\text{sec}(N)\). If there is no second submodule of \(N\), then we define \(\text{sec}(N) = 0\) [14]. A subset \(S \subseteq M\setminus\{0\}\) is called an \(m^*\)-system if, for each ideal \(A\) of \(R\) and for all submodules \(K \subseteq M\), \((0 :_M A) \cup S = M\) and \((K \cap L)A \subseteq S = M\) imply that \((K \cap L) \cup S = M\). In [14, Theorem 2.13] it was proved that \(\text{sec}(N) = \{x \in N : \text{there is an \(m^*\)-system \(S\) such that \(x \notin S\) and \(N \cup S = M\}\)\). As generalizations of these concepts we define almost second radical of a submodule and almost \(m^*\)-system as follows. Then we give a characterization of almost second radical of a submodule via almost \(m^*\)-systems.

**Definition 3.15.** Let \(M\) be an \(R\)-module, \(N\) be a submodule of \(M\) and \(T :=\{Q \subseteq N : Q\) is almost second and \(N :_M \text{ann}_R(N) = (Q :_M \text{ann}_R(Q))\}\). Then almost second radical of \(N\) is defined as the submodule \(a\text{-sec}(N) := \sum_{Q \in T} Q\) if \(T \neq \emptyset\). If \(T = \emptyset\), then \(a\text{-sec}(N)\) is defined as \(0\).

**Definition 3.16.** Let \(M\) be an \(R\)-module and \(S\) be a proper subset of \(M\). If, for any submodules \(K, L \subseteq M\) and any ideal \(I\) of \(R\), \((K \cap L) \cup S \neq M\), \((K \cap (0 :_M I)) \cup S \neq M\) and \((S :_M \text{ann}_R(S)) \subseteq (L :_M I)\) imply that \((K \cap (L :_M I)) \cup S \neq M\), then \(S\) is called an almost \(m^*\)-system.

**Proposition 3.17.** Let \(M\) be an \(R\)-module, \(Q\) be a non-zero submodule of \(M\). Then, \(Q\) is an almost second submodule of \(M\) if and only if \(S := M \setminus Q\) is an almost \(m^*\)-system.
Proof. Let \( Q \) be an almost second submodule of \( M \). Suppose that \((K \cap L) \cup S \neq M\), \((K \cap (0:_{LM} I)) \cup S \neq M\) and \((S^c:_{LM} ann_L(S^c)) \not\subseteq (L:_{LM} I)\) where \( K, L \) are submodules of \( M \) and \( I \) is an ideal of \( R \). Assume that \((K (L:_{LM} I)) \cup S = M\). Then \( Q \subseteq (K \cap (L:_{LM} I)) \cup S \subseteq K \cap (L:_{LM} I)\). So \( IQ \subseteq L \) and \( Q \subseteq K\). Since \( Q \) is almost second, we have \( I \subseteq ann_L(Q) \) or \( Q \subseteq L\). If \( I \subseteq ann_L(Q) \), then \( Q \subseteq (0:_{LM} I)\) and so \( Q \subseteq K \cap (0:_{LM} I)\), this contradicts with \((K \cap (0:_{LM} I)) \cup S \neq M\). If \( Q \subseteq L\), then \( Q \subseteq K \cap L\) and this contradicts with \((K \cap L) \cup S \neq M\). Therefore, \((K \cap (L:_{LM} I)) \cup S \neq M\) and so \( S \) is an almost \( m^*\)-system.

Conversely, suppose that \( S \) is an almost \( m^*\)-system. Let \( IQ \subseteq K \) and \( I(Q:_{LM} ann_R(Q)) \not\subseteq K \) for an ideal \( I \) of \( R \) and a submodule \( K \) of \( M \). Assume that \( Q \not\subseteq K \) and \( I \not\subseteq ann_R(Q) \). Then \( K \cap U S \neq M\) and \((0:_{LM} I) \cup S \neq M\). Since \( S \) is an almost \( m^*\)-system \((K:_{LM} I) \cup S \neq M\) and so \( Q \not\subseteq (K:_{LM} I)\) which is a contradiction. Therefore \( Q \) is an almost second submodule of \( M\). \( \square \)

Theorem 3.18. Let \( S \) be an almost \( m^*\)-system in \( M \) and \( Q \) be a non-zero submodule of \( M \) minimal with respect to the properties that \( Q \cup S = M \) and \((Q:_{LM} ann_R(Q)) = (S^c:_{LM} ann_R(S^c))\). Then \( Q \) is an almost second submodule of \( M \).

Proof. Let \( IQ \subseteq L \) and \((Q:_{LM} ann_R(Q)) \not\subseteq L\) where \( L \) is a submodule of \( M \) and \( I \) is an ideal of \( R \). Suppose that \( Q \not\subseteq L\) and \( I \not\subseteq ann_R(Q)\). Since \( Q \not\subseteq L\), \( Q \cap L \subseteq Q\). We claim that \((Q \cap L) \cup S \neq M\). Otherwise, \((S^c \cap L :_{LM} ann_L(S^c)) \subseteq (Q \cap L :_{LM} ann_L(S)) \subseteq (Q \cap L :_{LM} ann_L(S^c)) \subseteq (Q \cap L :_{LM} ann_L(S))\). So \( Q \cap L :_{LM} ann_L(S)\) being a contradiction with the minimality of \( Q \). Thus \((Q \cap L) \cup S \neq M\). Similarly, since \( I \not\subseteq ann_R(Q)\), we have \((Q \cap (0:_{LM} I)) \cup S \neq M\). Since \( S \) is an almost \( m^*\)-system, we have \((Q \cap (L :_{LM} I)) \cup S \neq M\). Since \( IQ \subseteq L\), we have \( Q \subseteq (L:_{LM} I)\) and so \( Q \cup S = M\), a contradiction. \( \square \)

Theorem 3.19. Let \( M \) be an \( R\)-module and \( N \) be a submodule of \( M \). If there exists an almost second submodule \( Q \) of \( N \) with \((N:_{LM} ann_R(N)) = (Q:_{LM} ann_R(Q))\), then \( a-sec(N) = \{x \in N : x \notin S, N \cup S = M\( and (N:_{LM} ann_R(N)) = (S^c:_{LM} ann_R(S^c))\) for some almost \( m^*\)-system \( S \) in \( M\).

Proof. Denote \( \sqrt{\sqrt{N}} := \{x \in N : x \notin S, N \cup S = M\) and \((N:_{LM} ann_R(N)) = (S^c:_{LM} ann_R(S^c))\) for some almost \( m^*\)-system \( S \) in \( M\). Take an element \( x \in \sqrt{\sqrt{N}}\). Consider the set \( \Psi = \{Q \subseteq N : Q \cup S = M, (Q:_{LM} ann_R(Q)) = (S^c:_{LM} ann_R(S^c))\}\). Since \( N \subseteq \Psi \), we have \( \Psi \neq \emptyset\). \( \Psi \) is a partially ordered set with respect to reverse inclusion. Let \((Q_i)_{i \in I}\) be a chain in \( \Psi\). Clearly, \((\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i) \cup S = M\). Also, \((\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i:_{LM} ann_R(\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i)) = (\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i:_{LM} ann_R(\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i)) \subseteq (\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i:_{LM} ann_R(\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i)) \subseteq (\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i:_{LM} ann_R(\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i)))\). Thus \(\bigcap_{i \in I} Q_i\) is an upper bound for \( M\). By Zorn’s Lemma, \( M\) has a minimal element \( Q \) with respect to inclusion. By Theorem 3.19, \( Q \) is an almost second submodule of \( M\). Since \( x \in Q \subseteq a-sec(N)\), we have \( \sqrt{\sqrt{N}} \subseteq a-sec(N)\). Let \( Q \) be an almost second submodule of \( N \) with \((Q:_{LM} ann_R(Q)) = (N:_{LM} ann_R(N))\). By Proposition 3.17, \( S := M\cap Q \) is an \( m^*\)-system. Also, \( N \cup S = M\) and \( x \notin S\) for every \( x \in Q\). Thus \( Q \subseteq \sqrt{\sqrt{N}}\) and so \( a-sec(N) \subseteq \sqrt{\sqrt{N}}\). \( \square \)

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