Sports Participation of Faculty of Commerce and Management Students in Eastern University, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

There were different perceptions among the students of Faculty of Commerce and Management (FCM) in Eastern University, Sri Lanka (EUSL) regarding sports participation, general perception towards sports participation, and contribution of sports to achieve graduate profile, application of Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity (AMO) theory in sports context and the reasons for poor sports participation. These perceptions establish empirical as well as theoretical knowledge gaps in this study area. In order to fill these gaps, this study is designed with appropriate objectives. The objectives of this study were to explore the sports participation trends of FCM students, general perception towards sports participation and the perceived contribution of sports participation to achieve the graduate profile of FCM. Further, it was intended to test the application of AMO theory in sports context and to explore the reasons for poor sports participation. In order to achieve the objectives, primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data were collected through questionnaires and interview while the secondary data were collected from past records of the EUSL. Findings showed that the sports participation trends of FCM, EUSL has been falling over the years from 2010. It was revealed that sports participation contributed at high level in physical and mental health, social and discipline advancements, and skills and attributes development. Further it was found out that AMO theory is applicable and can be used in sports context. Study and sports balance, social and cultural aspects, physical education management, personal factor, climate and weather, and economic factor were figured out as the reasons for poor sports participation.

Keywords: sport, participation, graduate profile, and AMO theory

Introduction

Sports participation is generally accepted that there are many psychological benefits offered by regular exercise such as promoting feelings of well-being and self-efficacy. Much of modern sport involves learning to control emotions, of disciplining the self and managing emotional lives (Coakley & Dunning, 2000). Sport experiences can enrich emotional development by cultivating capacities for care, self-worth, strength of will, good judgment, compassion, understanding, love and friendship. With so much research

pointing to many psychological benefits like healthy bodies producing healthy minds, sport boosting school spirit and participation in school sport increasing students' self-esteem, it is then disconcerting to see many students, especially at university level, being less interested or developing a negative attitude towards sport. The sport of this country is one of the most important factors in the development. In this sense the government has given priority to the development of sports which will create the climate for the development. Sri Lankan people got rewards for international level and Olympics for instance. Sri Lankan Cricket Team 1996 World Cup and 2012 T-20 World Cup, Damayanthy Dharsha, Sriyani Kulawansa, and Susanthika Jayasinge.

Education is defined as the ongoing process of learning that occurs thought our lifespan. Self-reference, self-knowledge, self-control these three things alone lead life to sovereign power. And self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings. That's why every educational sector such as schools, colleges, and universities have given priority to sports in their educational programs. A student succeeds in his/her education but fails in his/her life without sports sometime. We strongly feel that the graduation should not be confined to only curricular activities. Extracurricular activities especially "Sports" help the students to develop their characters and perfect their personalities as well. Sports are not only limited in improving the body fitness and strength in our students but also extended to the acquisition of values for social development, friendship, enriched dialogue and maintenance of contacts between races, culture and people. Sports would be way to promote cultural and religious understanding; harmony patience and cooperation. Sports also develop the personal quality which will carry more weight when you all enter into the professional employment.

Over the many sports activities have been facilitating by many educational institutions to enhance physical and mental fitness of the students and ensure the socialization and wellbeing of an individual with their colleagues. Hence most of the educational institutions are spending much amount of money to provide better sports facilities to the students. Even though there are some kind of factors are influencing to the students in the participation in the performance of the sports activities during their academic period. Eastern University, Sri Lanka (EUSL) also has been spending some of money to improve the sports skills of the students. According to the annual report for the past five years (2010-2015) of EUSL (0.84%, 0.87%, 0.89%, 1.12%, 0.97%, 1.08%), though the physical education. In that way sports activities are also considered in measuring the overall performance of students. Therefore the administration is also considering to develop the sports activities among the students.

There are many types of sports in university level. Indoor sports such as Carom, Table tennis, Weightlifting, Wrestling, Volleyball, Chess, Basketball, Tennis, Badminton, Swimming, etc. Outdoor spots Cricket, Football, Elle, Netball, Hockey, Road race, Rugby, etc. In EUSL, Faculty of Commerce and Management (FCM) is a leading faculty among other faculty in past years. We have observed that most of the students of FCM, EUSL are not participating in sports activities during their university career because they

think that, involvement in sports activities may disturb their studies. Department of Physical Education complains to the Sports Union of students that students do not normally volunteer to join sporting or extracurricular activities at university. They always have to be cajoled to join even though they should be aware of the health and social benefits of such activities. When compared with previous period with current situation, Faculty of Commerce and Management students' participation of sports activities decline from 2010 to 2015 (13.55%, 5.24%, 4.72%, 9.16%, 5.44%, and 5.39%).

In this context, this investigation is about to explore the sports participation trends of Faculty of Commerce and Management Students in the Eastern University, Sri Lanka during the period of 2010-2015 in detailed manner and to identify the general perception towards sports participation, contribution of sports participation to achieve the graduate profile of the FCM, and application of ability motivation opportunity (AMO) theory in improving sports participation. There are few researches that have been conducted so far regarding this topic in University level. Even though those researches were conducted regarding sports and character development of undergraduates, no any research investigates about the achievement of graduate profile through the participation in sports.

Further, AMO theory has been incorporated by several researchers to find out the relationships or link between human resource management (HRM) practices and performance (individual and firm). However, it is difficult to find research works regarding the application of AMO theory in sports context. Hence, this research considered these are the empirical and theoretical knowledge gaps in this field and try to address these gaps through this study. The study was guided by the five research questions and objectives which are formulated from the light of the above mentioned research gaps. The research questions are: (1) what are the sports participation trends of Faculty of Commerce and Management Students in the Eastern University, Sri Lanka during the period of 2010-2015?, (2) what is the general perception of the Faculty of Commerce and Management Students towards sports participation during the University career?, (3) what is the perceived contribution of the sports participation to achieve the Graduate Profile of the Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University, Sri Lanka?, (4) what is the application of ability motivation opportunity (AMO) theory in improving sports participation of FCM students, EUSL?, and what are the reasons for the poor sports participation of Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University, Sri Lanka?

Based on the research questions, the objectives are formulated. The research objectives of this study are: (1) to explore the sports participation trends of Faculty of Commerce and Management Students in the Eastern University, Sri Lanka during the period of 2010-2015, (2) to explore the general perception of the Faculty of Commerce and Management Students towards sports participation during the University career, (3) to explore the perceived contribution of the sports participation to achieve the Graduate Profile of the Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University, Sri Lanka, (4)

to test the application of ability motivation opportunity (AMO) theory in improving sports participation of FCM students, EUSL, and (5) to explore the reasons for the poor sports participation of Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

Generally Sport consists of physical and mentally competitive activities carried out with a recreational purpose for competition, for self-enjoyment, to attain excellence, for the development of a skill, or some combination of these. Sport was also defined by the London Sports Council (Mhuircheartaigh, 1999, p. 6) as "an activity which offers the individual the opportunity of self-knowledge, self-expression and fulfillment; personal achievement, skill acquisition and demonstration of ability; social integration, enjoyment, good health and well-being." General benefits of athletic participation are improving health and exerting students' surplus energies, expanding life experience and making more friends and fun and enjoyment (Blinde, Taub & Han, 1993; Coakley, 2007; Eitzen & Sage, 2008; Hudson, 2000; Joperd, 2004; Shaffer, & Wittes, 2006; Woods, 2006; Woodruff & Schallert, 2008). Recent psychological and social psychological research appears to confirm a relationship between sports participation and both mental health and self-esteem (Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell & Sabo, 2005; Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005). Health benefits associated with physical activity, is not the main reason for sports participation. Other factors such as weight management, enjoyment, social interaction and support are more common reasons for people being physically active (Allender, Cowburn, & Foster, 2006).

Many studies state that sports have become an important part of the social and cultural profiles of many societies around the world (Subba & Banerjee, 2015). Educational role of sports that teach the youngsters respect for authority. Sports are valuable because they teach self-discipline and builds personality (Omar-Fauzee, Nazarudin, Saputra, Sutresna, Taweesuk, Chansem, & Geok, 2012). Sociologists have begun to explore the role that sports participation plays in community involvement and the cultivation of social capital more generally (Perks, 2007; Harvey, Levesque & Donnolly, 2007; McHale, Vinden, Bush, Richer, Shaw, & Smith, 2005). Aries and Richards (1999, p. 211)"Claim that athletics provide students with a social identity, with clarity about themselves and their place at the university, and membership in a valued social group".

According to Ryan (1989, p. 127), "athletic activity may provide a positive balance between physical and mental exertion, which may prove to be better for the overall health and attitude of the student". Physical education is an educational process that uses physical activity as a means to help people acquire skills, fitness, knowledge and attitudes that contribute to their optimal development and well-being (Lion-Cachet, 1997). In most educational systems, physical education is a course which promotes

physical activity and various sports. The intent is generally to promote fitness and health, as well as the benefits of team-building, teamwork, sportsmanship and fair play.

Tomori and Zalar (2000) conducted a study whose results showed that among girls and boys, suicide attempts are linked to the attitude that sport is not important for health, and to non-involvement in sport as a coping style in distress. These studies point to the need for greater emphasis among girls and boys to have a positive attitude toward sport. There is a need to regard sport and exercise as important parts of our lifestyle. Hanson and Kraus (1998, p. 95) "extracurricular activities like sports give students the opportunity to learn and practice the attitudes, skill, and values that are important for future status success". Hanson and Kraus (1998, p. 96) "Women who are athletes have been found to be more achievement oriented, independent, self-confident, and inner controlled than those who are not".

AMO theory is originally developed by (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg, 2000). It is a performance theory suggested that individual's performance depends on the abilities, motivation and opportunities. AMO several researchers have adopted AMO theory to explain performance levels of employees in different sectors. For examples Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2013) adopted AMO theory to reveal the role that green human resource management (GHRM) processes play in people-management practice. They found out that understanding of how GHRM practices influence employee motivation to become involved in environmental activities lags behind that of how organizations develop green abilities and provide employees with opportunities to be involved in environmental management (EM) organizational efforts. Similarly, Bos-nehles, Riemsdijk, and Looise (2013) applied AMO theory to find out whether line managers' performance will depend on their ability to apply human resource management (HRM) practices, and that their motivation and the opportunity provided will enhance this effect. Consequently they found ability to be the best predictor of a line manager's HRM performance. Motivation did not moderate the effect of ability on performance as predicted. Opportunity did enhance the effect of ability on HRM implementation effectiveness.

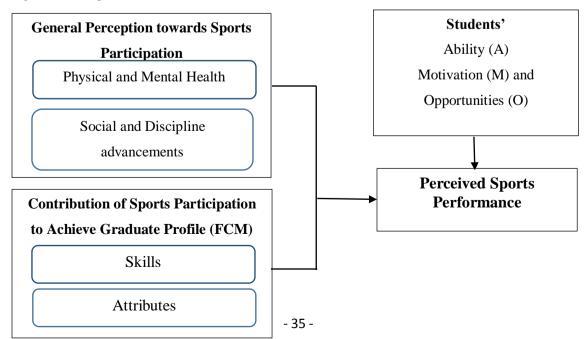
Therefore, they recommended that HRM departments should aim to enhance line managers' abilities and provide adequate opportunities for them to carry out the expected HRM duties. Recently, Vermeeren (2015) examined the effects of ability, motivation and opportunity enhancing human resources practices on the effectiveness, efficiency and fairness of public organizations, with job satisfaction considered as a mediating variable. Their analysis showed that the three human resources components heterogeneously impact upon the three performance outcomes. Further, the results showed that ability enhancing and opportunity-enhancing human resources practices are more strongly related to performance outcomes than motivation-enhancing human resources practices. The above mentioned are some examples of application AMO theory to measure the performances of employees. In the same manner, an attempt was made in this research to find out the sports performance of students of Faculty of Commerce and Management

using AMO theory. The next part of the literature review deals with reason for non-participation in sport.

The research done by Orlick (1973) concluded that at times overemphasis placed on winning and a fear of failure predominantly influenced some students' decision to withdraw from sport. Other reasons cited for the decline in sport participation were: sport is too demanding and time consuming; too much pressure; dislike for the coach; 'conflict of interests' as students wanted to try other non-sport activities and were not having fun (Bar-Or, 1995). Orlick's findings were important in that they suggested that the structure and climate in which sports were held were inadequate in meeting the needs of students and this might have a bearing on non-participation. On a simple level, barriers to participation in physical activity include high costs, poor access to facilities and unsafe environments. Other more complex issues relating to identity and shifting social networks also have a great influence. There were no studies reporting on the barriers to participation in sport and physical activity facing young children. A number of studies (Porter, 2002; Coakley & White, 1992; Orme, 1991) showed that tight, ill-fitting PE uniforms were major impediments to girls participating in school sport. These concerns over image and relationships with peers led to an increased interest in non-active leisure.

Arthur and Finch (1999) study of adults with disabilities found that few relevant or positive role models existed. Disabled men reported a lack of knowledge about the appropriate types or levels of activity in relation to their disability. Additionally there were few opportunities to meet other people who were active and disabled. This study also found that the dominance of masculine stereotypes in sport was a particular challenge to participation among gay men. These men expressed concerns about not fitting in and not being one of the 'lads'. Gay men reported withdrawing from organized sport due to feeling uncomfortable in the associated social situations (Robertson, 2003). Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



(Developed by the Authors)

This research study aims to find the levels of general perception towards sports participation and the contribution of sports participation to achieve graduate profile. Therefore, to measure the general perception towards sports participation two dimensions such as physical and mental health, and social and discipline advancements were chosen whereas skills and attributes of students were chosen as two dimensions to measure the contribution of sports participation to achieve graduate profile. On the other hand, AMO theory was adopted to test its applicability in sports context. The three main constructs (sports related ability, motivation and opportunity) of this theory were tested with perceived sports performance.

Research Method

In order to achieve the objectives, primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data were collected through questionnaires and interview while the secondary data were collected from past records of Physical Education Center, Welfare Office, Examination Branch and Office of the Dean, FCM EUSL. Disproportionate stratified sampling method was used to select 200 respondents to issue the questionnaire and purposive sampling method was used to conduct 120 semi-structured interviews. Descriptive, correlation, multiple regression and transcribing analysis were carried out to find out the results.

Results and Discussion

The first objective of this study is to explore the sports participation trends of Faculty of Commerce and Management Students in the Eastern University, Sri Lanka during the period of 2010-2015. Tables 1 shows results for this objective.

Table 1: Student Sports Participation-FCM and EUSL

	F	Faculty of Co	ommerce an	d Managem	Eastern University, Sri Lanka			of all ation	
	No. of Participation						s		ntion of overall rticipati
Year	No. of Students	Male	Female	Overall	(%)	No. of Students	No. of Participants	(%)	Contribution of FCM in overall spots participati of EUSL (%)
2010	487	54	12	66	13.55	1940	236	12.16	27.97
2011	611	27	05	32	5.24	2229	142	06.37	22.54
2012	742	29	06	35	4.72	3085	172	05.58	20.35

2013	808	59	15	74	9.16	3415	251	07.35	29.48
2014	883	37	11	48	5.44	3960	236	05.96	30.34
2015	853	37	09	46	5.39	4237	222	05.24	20.72

(Source: Office of the Dean-FCM, Examination Branch & Record Book of Physical Education of EUSL)

Table 1 indicates that even though the number of students either in FCM or EUSL increase each year, the sports participation level decline from 13.55% to 5.39% in FCM and from 12.16% to 5.24% in EUSL during the years 2010 to 2015. Further it was found out that the highest contribution in overall sports is provided by FCM students but the contribution percentage has been decreasing from 2010 to 2015. However, university expenditures continuously increase while physical education expenditures also increase from 2010 to 2015 as 0.84% to 1.08%.

The second objective of this study is to explore the general perception of the Faculty of Commerce and Management Students towards sports participation during the University career. The general perception consists of two dimensions such as physical and mental health, and social and discipline advancements. It was found out that the dimension "Physical and Mental Health" was at high level (Mean = 4.45 & SD = 0.41) and the dimension "Social and Discipline Advancement" was also at high level (Mean = 4.38 & SD = 0.39). Consecutively, it was explored that the variable "General perception towards sports participation" was at high level (Mean = 4.42 & SD = 0.37). In addition to that it is clearly revealed from the above mentioned standard deviations that most of the respondents expressed common feeling with respect to two dimensions of "General perception towards sports participation" (see Table 2).

Table 2: General Perception towards Sports Participation (GPSP)

Description	Dir	GPSP	
	Physical and mental		
	health	advancements	
Mean	4.45	4.38	4.42
Std.D	0.41	0.39	0.37

(Source: Survey Data)

The third objective of this study is to explore the perceived contribution of the sports participation to achieve the Graduate Profile of FCM, EUSL. The perceived contribution consists of two dimensions such as skills and attributes. It was found out that the dimension "Skills" was at high level (Mean = 3.83 & SD = 0.30) and the dimension "Attributes" was also at high level (Mean = 3.90 & SD = 0.34). Consecutively, it was explored that the variable "Contribution of sports participation to achieve graduate profile" was at high level (Mean = 3.87 & SD = 0.29). In addition to that it is clearly revealed from the above mentioned standard deviations that most of the respondents expressed common feeling with respect to two dimensions of "contribution of sports participation to achieve graduate profile" (see Table 3).

Table 3: Contribution of Sports Participation to Achieve the Graduate Profile (CSPAGP)

Description	Di	CSPAGP	
	Skills		
Mean	4.45	4.38	4.42
Std.D	0.41	0.39	0.37

(Source: Survey Data)

The fourth objective of this study is to test the application of ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) theory in improving sports participation of FCM students, EUSL. This objective was about both finding relationships between sports ability, motivation opportunities, and sports performance, and finding out the impact of sports ability, motivation and opportunities on sports performance. Strong positive correlations were found out between sports ability, motivation and sports performance. But, there was moderate positive correlation between sports opportunities and sports performance. All the above correlations were significant at 0.01 level (see Table 4).

Correlation between sports performance and academic performance. It found that -0.057 correlation between this two variables. However if the range of r is: -0.1 < r < 0.1 there is no relationship. Therefore correlation matrix says that there is no relationship between sports performance and academic performance. A significant level is shows 0.420, it greater than 0.01 there is no significant.

Table 4: Correlations-Ability, Motivation, Opportunity and Performance

Constructs	Sports Performance					
	Pearson	Sig.				
	Correlation	(2-tailed)				
Sports Ability	0.784**	0.000				
Sports Motivation	0.718**	0.000				
Sports Opportunity	0.323**	0.000				
Perceived Academic Performance	- 0.057	0.420				
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

(Source: Survey Data)

From the stepwise multiple regression analysis, it was found out that sports ability, motivation and opportunities have significant influence on sports performance. 74.4% in sports performance is explained by sports ability, motivation and opportunity among which "Ability" alone explains 61.4% of variance, while the other dimensions add less (sports motivation and sports opportunities in descending order) (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.784ª	.614	.612	.666
2	.853 ^b	.728	.726	.560

3	0.862 ^c	.744	.740	.545				
a. Predict	a. Predictors: (Constant), ability							
b. Predictors: (Constant), ability, motivation								
c. Predictors: (Constant), ability, motivation, opportunity								

(Source: Survey Data)

Table 6: Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized			99.0%	
	Coefficients		Coefficients			Confi	dence
				T	Sig.	Interva	ıl for B
	В	Std.	Beta			Lower	Upper
		Error				Bound	Bound
(Constant)	-1.979	.218		-9.094	.000	-2.544	-1.413
Ability	.689	.055	.550	12.603	.000	.546	.831
Motivation	.620	.073	.378	8.533	.000	.431	.809
Opportunity	.206	.060	.129	3.444	.001	.050	.362
a. Dependent Variable: Sports performance							

(Source: Survey Data)

Objective five was to explore the reasons for the poor sports participation of FCM students of EUSL. As far as students' opinions are considered, 30% of students' opinions were related with Study and Sport Balance, 20% of students' opinions were related with Social and Cultural Aspect, 21% of students' opinions were related with Physical Education Management, 17% of students' opinions were related with Personal Factor, 2% of students' opinions were related with Climate and Weather and 10% of students' opinions were related with Economic Factor.

In detailed analysis, the following reasons (top 10 dimensions) were found out as the main ten reasons for poor sports participation; Impact on academy (19%), Attendance problem (13%), Feeling (11%), Culture (11%), Lack of knowledge (10%), Management (8%), Time problem (8%), Conflict (7%), Economic (7%) and Part time jobs (6%).

This study preliminarily investigated the trends of FCM student's sport participation and it was revealed that even though the number of students and the sports expenditure increase every year, the sports participation of both FCM students and EUSL students decrease over the years. This was the main research problem of this study. Before finding out the reasons for the poor sports participation, students' sports related perception levels such as general perceptions towards sports participation and perceptions related to the contribution of the sports participation to achieve the Graduate Profile were explored. From the descriptive analysis it was explored that FCM students highly perceived that sports participation will contribute to their physical and mental health, and lead to social and discipline advancements. This finding is consistent with studies by Richardson, Faulkner, McDevitt, Skrinar, Hutchinson, and Piette (2005); Pate, Trost, Levin, and Dowda (2000); Subba and Banerjee (2015). Similarly, FCM students highly perceived

that sports participation will lead to skills and attributes developments. This finding is consistent with the study by Omar-Fauzee et al. (2012).

Thus, it is confirmed that the FCM students' general perceptions towards sports participation was at high level and their perception related to the contribution of the sports participation to achieve the Graduate Profile was also at high level. On the contrary, they poorly participate in the sports activities having high level of perceptions about sports. Hence, the reasons for poor sports participation were then analyzed using interview data. Six major reasons were identified for the poor sports participation of FCM students. Those are study and sport balance, social and cultural aspect, physical education management, personal factor, climate and weather, and economic factor. These main six reasons were then analyzed further and were divided into several elements. From those sub elements, the following ten reasons were found out as the major reasons; impact on academic activities, attendance problem, feelings, culture, lack of knowledge, management problem, time problem, conflicts, economic status and part time jobs. This finding is consistent with studies by Mchunu (2008); Weiss and Weiss (2004).

Among the above mentioned ten major reasons, the first reason was impact on academic activities. To find the accuracy of this claim that the sports participation negatively impacts on academic activities, correlation analysis was carried out between sports performance and academic performance. The analysis showed that there is no relationship between sports performance and academic performance. It is consistent with study by Melnick, Sabo, and Vanfossen (1992).

Finally, it was needed to check whether AMO theory can be applied in sports context. Therefore, AMO theory was used to predict the important elements that contributes to sports performance. Sports ability, motivation and opportunity were significant contributors to sports participation and among them sports ability was the most significant contributor followed by motivation and opportunities. It is consistent with studies by Moreno, Gonzalez-Cutre, Martin-Albo, and Cervello (2010); Kane (1971). It should be noted that the sports opportunity is the least contributing factor for sports performance. This finding was confirmed by correlation analysis conducted between and among sports ability, motivation and sports, and sports performance. Analysis showed that sports ability and motivation have strong positive relationship with sports performance while sports opportunities has moderate positive relationship with sports performance. Further, it was confirmed that the AMO theory is applicable to be used in sports context to predict the sports performance.

Conclusion

This research was carried out to fill several identified empirical gaps in Eastern University, Sri Lanka and theoretical gap in sports context. Non-evidenced sports participation trend of FCM students, unexplored level of general perceptions towards sports participation and perception related to the contribution of the sports participation

to achieve the Graduate Profile, and unidentified reasons for poor sports participation of FCM students were the empirical gaps whereas the unexplored applicability of AMO theory in sports context was the theoretical gap of this research.

It was concluded from this research that the sports participation trend of FCM students is decreasing over the years even though the students have high level of general perceptions towards sports participation and high level of perception related to the contribution of the sports participation to achieve the Graduate Profile. Further this research identified six main reasons for the poor sports participation of FCM students. From these findings, the identified empirical gaps have been fulfilled. In addition to that, this research confirmed that AMO theory can be applicable to be used in sports context, and from this finding the identified theoretical gap has been fulfilled.

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