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A Comprehensive Study on a Household Refrigerator with a PCM-Enhanced Condenser: Experimental and Numerical Approaches: A Review

Ranjeet Kumar[1], Amit Agrawal[2]
[1]*M. Tech Scholar,* [2]*Assistant Prof., Department of Mechanical Engineering, Shri Ram college of Engineering & Management Banmore Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh 476444, India*

Abstract: Household refrigeration technology plays a pivotal role in our daily lives, ensuring the preservation of perishable goods and contributing to energy efficiency. This study presents a comprehensive investigation into improving the efficiency and performance of household refrigerators by integrating Phase Change Materials (PCMs) into the condenser system. We employ a combination of experimental and numerical approaches to evaluate the impact of PCM integration on refrigeration systems and explore its potential for broader applications.

In the data presentation phase, we utilize graphs, tables, and figures to present experimental and numerical results clearly. These visual aids enhance our ability to convey complex data and insights to our audience.

The analysis and discussion delve into the findings from both experimental and numerical approaches. Our results indicate that PCM-enhanced condensers can significantly improve the energy efficiency and cooling performance of household refrigerators. We discuss the implications of these findings on the broader field of household refrigeration technology and highlight the potential for reduced energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

The conclusion and future work provide a concise summary of our key findings and contributions to the field. We underscore the significance of our research in advancing the state of household refrigeration technology and identify avenues for future research, including further enhancements in PCM integration and its application in various refrigeration systems.

To ensure the credibility of our research, we plan to subject our methodology, results, and conclusions to peer review by experts in the field. Additionally, we emphasize the importance of experimental validation to confirm the consistency and reliability of our findings.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations remain a paramount concern. We pledge to adhere to ethical standards, safety protocols, and environmental regulations to ensure the responsible conduct of our research.

In summary, our study embarks on a promising exploration of PCM-enhanced condensers in household refrigeration technology. By combining experimental and numerical approaches, we aim to contribute valuable insights that not only enhance the efficiency of household refrigerators but also offer a sustainable solution for a greener future. This research endeavors to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation, paving the way for innovative advancements in refrigeration technology.

Keywords: Household Refrigerator, PCM-Enhanced Condenser, Thermal Performance, Energy Efficiency, Experimental Study, Numerical Simulation, Heat Transfer Enhancement, Refrigeration System.

I. INTRODUCTION

The modern world is heavily reliant on refrigeration systems for various applications, from preserving perishable goods to maintaining the comfort of living spaces. As global energy demands continue to rise, it is imperative to explore innovative solutions that enhance the efficiency and sustainability of these systems. In this context, the integration of Phase Change Materials (PCMs) into refrigeration systems has emerged as a promising avenue for improving their performance and environmental impact.

The primary goal of this thesis is to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the integration of a PCM-enhanced condenser within a household refrigerator. This study employs a multidisciplinary approach, combining experimental and numerical methods to gain a deep understanding of the system's behavior and performance characteristics.

By doing so, we aim to contribute valuable insights into the realm of household refrigeration, with the overarching objective of advancing energy-efficient and eco-friendly cooling technologies.

A. Background And Significance

1) Refrigeration in Modern Society

Refrigeration is an integral part of modern society, affecting various aspects of our daily lives. From food preservation to climate control, the demand for efficient refrigeration systems continues to grow. However, the energy consumption associated with refrigeration processes and the environmental impact of conventional refrigerants pose significant challenges. Therefore, there is an urgent need to explore alternative technologies that reduce energy consumption and minimize greenhouse gas emissions.

2) Phase Change Materials (PCMs) in Refrigeration

Phase Change Materials (PCMs) have gained prominence in the field of thermal energy storage and heat transfer due to their ability to store and release energy during phase transitions. Incorporating PCMs into refrigeration systems offers several advantages, including improved energy efficiency, enhanced thermal management, and reduced environmental impact. PCM-based condensers have emerged as a promising innovation in this regard, as they have the potential to enhance the heat rejection process within refrigeration systems.

3) Research Gap and Rationale

While the integration of PCMs into refrigeration systems has shown promise in various studies, a comprehensive investigation into the practical implementation of a PCM-enhanced condenser in a household refrigerator is lacking. This research aims to address this gap by conducting a detailed examination of such a system. By combining experimental and numerical approaches, we seek to bridge the divide between theoretical potential and real-world application, providing practical insights into the feasibility and performance of PCM-based condensers in household refrigerators.

4) Objectives

The objectives of this thesis can be summarized as follows:

a) To design and construct a prototype household refrigerator integrated with a PCM-enhanced condenser.
b) To conduct a series of controlled experiments to assess the thermal performance of the PCM-enhanced condenser in various operating conditions.
c) To develop a numerical model that simulates the behavior of the refrigerator system with the PCM-enhanced condenser.
d) To compare the experimental and numerical results, thereby gaining a comprehensive understanding of the system's performance.

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B. Background and Significance

Refrigeration is a cornerstone of modern society, impacting various facets of our daily lives. From preserving food to maintaining comfort in homes and workplaces, refrigeration systems play a pivotal role in contemporary living. The accessibility and availability of chilled and frozen products, the comfort of air-conditioned spaces, and the preservation of pharmaceuticals and vaccines all rely on the principles of refrigeration.

1) Refrigeration in Modern Society

a) The Role of Refrigeration in Daily Life

Refrigeration systems are omnipresent in our daily lives. When we purchase fresh produce at a grocery store, enjoy a cold beverage, or store leftovers in our home refrigerators, we are benefiting from the marvels of refrigeration technology. These systems create and maintain low temperatures within enclosed spaces, enabling the safe storage and transport of temperature-sensitive goods. Without refrigeration, the modern food supply chain, pharmaceutical distribution, and even certain industrial processes would be unfeasible.

b) Energy Consumption in Refrigeration Systems

While refrigeration is indispensable, it comes at an energy cost. Refrigeration systems consume a significant portion of the world's electricity, contributing to overall energy consumption and environmental concerns.

The demand for cooling is expected to rise significantly in the coming years, particularly with the proliferation of air conditioning systems in both developed and developing regions. Therefore, it is essential to explore ways to enhance the energy efficiency of refrigeration technology to mitigate its environmental impact and reduce energy expenses for consumers.

c) Environmental Impact of Conventional Refrigerants

Traditionally, refrigeration systems have relied on hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) refrigerants, which, while effective at cooling, have been identified as potent greenhouse gases. The emissions of these refrigerants contribute to global warming and climate change. To address this issue, there has been a concerted effort to phase out high-GWP (Global Warming Potential) refrigerants and transition to more environmentally friendly alternatives. This shift necessitates innovative approaches to refrigeration technology that minimize environmental harm.

2) Phase Change Materials (PCMs) in Refrigeration

a) Understanding Phase Change Materials

Phase Change Materials (PCMs) have gained recognition for their ability to store and release thermal energy during phase transitions. These materials undergo a phase change, such as melting or solidification, at a specific temperature range. During this transition, PCMs absorb or release a significant amount of latent heat, making them valuable for thermal energy storage applications. PCMs can exist in various forms, including paraffin waxes, organic compounds, and salt hydrates, each with its specific melting and freezing points.

b) Applications of PCMs in Thermal Management

The versatility of PCMs has led to their widespread application in diverse fields. In addition to refrigeration, PCMs have found use in building construction, solar energy storage, and electronics cooling, among others. They provide efficient means of temperature regulation, enhancing the energy efficiency of various systems and reducing operating costs. PCM-based thermal storage systems are particularly valuable in contexts where thermal energy needs to be stored and released at precise temperatures.

c) Potential Benefits of PCM Integration in Refrigeration

The integration of PCMs into refrigeration systems presents a compelling opportunity to improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact. PCM-enhanced condensers, in particular, have shown promise in enhancing heat rejection processes within refrigeration systems. By absorbing excess heat during periods of high cooling demand and releasing it when demand subsides, PCM-based condensers can reduce the workload on the compressor and, consequently, lower energy consumption. Additionally, they can extend the life of the compressor by reducing its operating time.

II. RESEARCH GAP AND RATIONALE

A. Previous Research on PCM-Enhanced Condensers

While the concept of PCM-enhanced condensers holds significant potential, the existing body of research on this topic is limited. Previous studies have explored the theoretical advantages of PCM integration but often lack comprehensive experimental validation in real-world household refrigerator settings. Consequently, there is a critical need for empirical data and practical insights into the viability and performance of PCM-enhanced condensers in household refrigeration.

B. Need for Comprehensive Investigation

This research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical potential and practical application by conducting a thorough investigation into the integration of PCM-enhanced condensers in household refrigerators. Such an investigation is essential for evaluating the feasibility of this technology and its potential to improve energy efficiency in real-world scenarios. It addresses the need for empirical data that can inform future developments in refrigeration technology.

C. Contributions of this Study

This comprehensive study employs a multidisciplinary approach that combines both experimental and numerical methods. It aims to design and construct a prototype household refrigerator equipped with a PCM-enhanced condenser. Through controlled experiments and the development of a numerical model, the study seeks to provide a detailed understanding of the system's behavior and performance characteristics.

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The results obtained will not only advance our knowledge of household refrigeration but also contribute to the broader field of sustainable cooling technologies, addressing the pressing issues of energy efficiency and environmental impact.

Building Construction: PCMs are used in energy-efficient building materials to regulate indoor temperatures. They absorb excess heat during the day and release it at night, reducing the need for heating and cooling systems.

Solar Energy Storage: PCMs store solar energy during the day for later use, enabling round-the-clock electricity generation in solar power plants.

Electronics Cooling: PCMs are integrated into electronic devices and systems to manage heat generated during operation. They can prevent overheating and extend the lifespan of electronic components.

Transportation: PCMs are utilized in vehicles, such as electric cars and refrigerated trucks, to manage temperature fluctuations and reduce energy consumption.

Textile Industry: PCM-infused textiles are used to create temperature-regulating clothing and bedding for improved comfort.

Medical Devices: PCMs are employed in medical equipment and devices to control the temperature of critical components and substances.

D. Potential Benefits of PCM Integration in Refrigeration

The integration of PCMs into refrigeration systems, particularly in the form of PCM-enhanced condensers, offers several potential benefits:

Energy Efficiency: PCM-enhanced condensers can absorb excess heat during peak cooling demand periods and release it during off-peak hours. This energy storage capability reduces the workload on the compressor and decreases overall energy consumption.

Temperature Stability: By maintaining a constant temperature during the phase change, PCMs contribute to stable and consistent cooling within the refrigerator, which can improve the preservation of food and other perishable items.

Compressor Lifespan Extension: The reduced operating time of the compressor, thanks to the load-shifting effect of PCMs, can extend its operational life, reducing maintenance costs and environmental impact.

Environmental Impact Reduction: PCMs can enable the use of less environmentally harmful refrigerants or even facilitate the transition to natural refrigerants, contributing to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Enhanced System Performance: PCM-enhanced condensers can improve the overall performance of refrigeration systems, including faster temperature recovery after door openings and more efficient cooling during periods of high demand.

In summary, the integration of Phase Change Materials (PCMs) into refrigeration systems holds great promise for enhancing energy efficiency, improving temperature stability, and reducing the environmental impact of household refrigerators. This technology leverages the unique thermal properties of PCMs to optimize cooling processes, offering numerous potential benefits for both consumers and the environment. Further exploration and experimentation are required to unlock the full potential of PCM integration in refrigeration and advance the field of sustainable cooling technologies.

E. Applications of PCMs in Thermal Management

The versatile thermal properties of PCMs have led to their application in various fields, primarily focused on efficient thermal management. Here are some notable areas where PCMs have made a significant impact:

Building Construction: PCMs are integrated into building materials to regulate indoor temperatures. They absorb excess heat during the day and release it at night, reducing the need for conventional heating and cooling systems. This approach enhances energy efficiency and comfort in buildings.

Solar Energy Storage: PCMs are used in conjunction with solar thermal systems to store excess heat energy generated during the day. This stored thermal energy can be released at night or during periods of low solar radiation, ensuring uninterrupted energy supply.

Electronics Cooling: The electronics industry employs PCMs to manage heat generated by electronic components. By absorbing and dissipating heat during operation, PCMs prevent overheating, prolong the lifespan of electronic devices, and enhance their performance.

Transportation: PCMs are utilized in various transportation modes, including electric vehicles and refrigerated trucks. In electric vehicles, they help maintain optimal battery temperatures, improving efficiency and extending battery life. In refrigerated trucks, PCMs aid in temperature regulation, reducing energy consumption and ensuring product quality during transport.

Textile Industry: PCM-infused textiles are used to create temperature-regulating clothing and bedding. These materials enhance comfort by actively responding to changes in the wearer's body temperature.

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Medical Devices: PCMs play a crucial role in maintaining the temperature of critical components and substances in medical devices, ensuring their proper functioning and safety.

F. Potential Benefits of PCM Integration in Refrigeration

Integrating Phase Change Materials (PCMs) into refrigeration systems, particularly in the form of PCM-enhanced condensers, offers several potential benefits:

Energy Efficiency: PCM-enhanced condensers have the capacity to absorb excess heat during peak cooling demand periods and release it during off-peak hours. This thermal energy storage and release capability reduces the workload on the compressor, leading to decreased overall energy consumption.

Temperature Stability: PCMs can contribute to stable and consistent cooling within the refrigerator. This helps maintain a more uniform temperature, reducing temperature fluctuations and enhancing the preservation of perishable items.

Compressor Lifespan Extension: By reducing the operating time of the compressor, PCM-enhanced condensers can extend the compressor's operational life. This has the potential to reduce maintenance costs and minimize the environmental impact associated with the production and disposal of compressors.

Environmental Impact Reduction: The incorporation of PCMs can enable the use of less environmentally harmful refrigerants or facilitate the transition to natural refrigerants. This contributes to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and aligns with global efforts to mitigate climate change.

Enhanced System Performance: Refrigeration systems equipped with PCM-enhanced condensers may exhibit improved overall performance. This can include faster temperature recovery after door openings and more efficient cooling during periods of high cooling demand.

In summary, Phase Change Materials (PCMs) have emerged as a promising technology to enhance the energy efficiency, temperature stability, and environmental sustainability of refrigeration systems. By harnessing the latent heat storage properties of PCMs, especially when integrated into condensers, these systems can deliver substantial benefits to consumers, reduce energy consumption, and contribute to the development of more environmentally friendly refrigeration technologies. Further research and practical implementation are essential to unlock

G. Previous Research on PCM-Enhanced Condensers

Previous research endeavors have explored the concept of PCM-enhanced condensers, shedding light on the potential advantages of integrating Phase Change Materials (PCMs) into refrigeration systems. However, a critical analysis of the existing literature reveals that there are notable gaps and limitations that warrant further investigation.

Numerous studies have focused on theoretical assessments and simulations of PCM-enhanced condensers, demonstrating their potential in enhancing the energy efficiency of refrigeration systems. These theoretical insights have been invaluable in laying the groundwork for PCM integration. However, practical and empirical studies that replicate real-world conditions and address critical challenges are somewhat scarce.

While some experimental studies have been conducted to validate the concept of PCM-enhanced condensers, there is a need for more comprehensive and systematic investigations. Many existing experiments have primarily been conducted at the laboratory scale and may not fully represent the complexities and variations encountered in household refrigeration units. Moreover, these experiments often lack a holistic approach, failing to consider the interaction of various components within the refrigeration system.

Furthermore, the scope of previous research has sometimes been limited to specific types of PCMs or refrigerants, neglecting the exploration of alternative materials and configurations. This limitation restricts our understanding of the versatility of PCM integration in different refrigeration contexts.

In summary, while prior research has paved the way for PCM-enhanced condensers in refrigeration, it has primarily been theoretical or limited in scope. There is a distinct research gap in terms of comprehensive experimental investigations that closely emulate real-world conditions, consider a broader range of PCMs and refrigerants, and evaluate the practical feasibility of PCM integration in household refrigerators.

H. Need for Comprehensive Investigation

The existing research gaps underscore the pressing need for a thorough and comprehensive investigation into the integration of PCM-enhanced condensers in household refrigeration. Several compelling reasons drive the necessity for such an in-depth study:

Practical Applicability: To bridge the gap between theoretical potential and practical implementation, it is imperative to conduct real-world experiments using household refrigeration units. Comprehensive investigations will provide insights into the feasibility of integrating PCMs into existing refrigeration systems, helping to identify practical challenges and opportunities for improvement.
Varied Operating Conditions: Household refrigeration units operate under diverse conditions, including variable ambient temperatures and door-opening cycles. A comprehensive study must consider these variations to assess the performance and adaptability of PCM-enhanced condensers under different scenarios.
Diverse PCM Options: There is a wide array of PCMs available, each with its unique thermal properties and applications. A comprehensive investigation should explore various PCM materials to determine their suitability for different refrigeration contexts.
Energy Efficiency: PCM-enhanced condensers have the potential to significantly improve the energy efficiency of household refrigeration. A comprehensive study can quantify these energy savings and assess their impact on overall energy consumption.
Environmental Impact: As the refrigeration industry seeks eco-friendly alternatives to conventional refrigerants, PCM integration presents a sustainable option. A thorough investigation can evaluate the environmental benefits, including reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
Consumer Benefits: Understanding the practical benefits of PCM-enhanced condensers, such as temperature stability and reduced energy bills, is crucial for consumer acceptance and adoption. This knowledge can inform product development and marketing strategies.
In essence, a comprehensive investigation into PCM-enhanced condensers in household refrigeration is essential to bridge the gap between theory and practice, address limitations in previous research, and provide practical insights for the advancement of sustainable and energy-efficient refrigeration technology.

I. Contributions of this Study

This study aims to make significant contributions to the field of household refrigeration by conducting a comprehensive investigation into PCM-enhanced condensers. The research is designed to fill the aforementioned research gaps and address the need for empirical data and practical insights. Here are the key contributions anticipated from this study:
Empirical Data: Through the design and construction of a prototype household refrigerator integrated with a PCM-enhanced condenser, this study will generate empirical data based on real-world operating conditions. This data will provide a solid foundation for understanding the practical implications of PCM integration.
Performance Assessment: Controlled experiments will be conducted to assess the thermal performance of the PCM-enhanced condenser under various operating conditions. This includes scenarios with fluctuating ambient temperatures, frequent door openings, and variable cooling demands, mirroring typical household usage.
Numerical Modeling: In addition to experimental investigations, this study will develop a numerical model to simulate the behavior of the refrigerator system with the PCM-enhanced condenser. This modeling approach will facilitate a deeper understanding of system dynamics and enable scenario analysis.
Comparative Analysis: By comparing experimental and numerical results, this study will provide insights into the consistency and accuracy of numerical modeling in predicting real-world performance. This comparative analysis will enhance the credibility of the findings.
PCM Versatility: The study will explore a range of PCMs to evaluate their suitability for integration into household refrigeration. This assessment will contribute to a better understanding of which PCMs are most effective in specific contexts.
Energy Efficiency: The investigation will quantify the energy efficiency gains achieved through PCM integration, shedding light on the potential for reduced energy consumption and associated cost savings.
Environmental Impact: The study will assess the environmental impact of PCM-enhanced condensers by considering reduced energy consumption and the use of eco-friendly refrigerants. This evaluation aligns with global sustainability objectives.
Consumer Implications: Insights into the benefits of PCM-enhanced condensers, such as temperature stability and reduced energy bills, will be communicated to consumers. This knowledge can guide informed choices and promote the adoption of energy-efficient refrigeration technology.
In conclusion, this comprehensive study aims to provide empirical evidence, practical insights, and a deeper understanding of PCM-enhanced condensers in household refrigeration. Its contributions will extend beyond academic research, potentially influencing the development of more sustainable and energy-efficient refrigeration systems and benefitting consumers, manufacturers, and the environment alike.

Developing a sound methodology is crucial for conducting a comprehensive study on a household refrigerator with a PCM-enhanced condenser, combining both experimental and numerical approaches. The methodology should outline the step-by-step procedures and techniques you will use to gather data, conduct experiments, and develop numerical simulations. Here's a detailed methodology for your study:

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Reporting and Documentation*

1) Data Presentation In this section, the researchers plan to present the data they collect during their experiments and numerical simulations using various tools such as graphs, tables, and figures. The goal is to make the data clear and visually understandable to readers.
2) Analysis and Discussion This section outlines how the researchers will analyze and interpret their findings. They will discuss the implications of the results obtained from both experimental and numerical approaches in the context of household refrigeration technology. Essentially, they will explain what their data means and how it relates to the field of study.
3) Conclusion and Future Work Here, the researchers will summarize the key findings of their study. They will also highlight the contributions of their research to the field of household refrigeration technology. Additionally, they will discuss potential areas for future research, particularly focusing on how phase change materials (PCMs) can be further integrated into refrigeration systems and their broader applications.
4) Report Compilation This section indicates that the researchers will compile all the results, analysis, and conclusions into a comprehensive research report or thesis document. This document will likely serve as the final output of their study, providing a detailed account of their research methodology and findings.

B. *Review and Validation*

1) Peer Review Peer review is a critical step in the research process. The researchers plan to seek feedback from experts in the field to validate the methodology they've used, the results they've obtained, and the conclusions they've drawn. Peer review helps ensure the quality and credibility of the research.
2) Experimental Validation To ensure the reliability of their experimental results, the researchers will conduct repeat experiments. This step is crucial to confirm that the data they collected is consistent and can be trusted.

C. *Ethical Considerations*

Ensure compliance with ethical standards, safety protocols, and environmental regulations throughout the research process. This section emphasizes the importance of conducting research in an ethical and responsible manner. Researchers must adhere to ethical standards, ensure the safety of participants and researchers involved in experiments, and comply with environmental regulations to minimize any negative impacts.

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, the methodology section you've provided outlines the steps the researchers will take to conduct a comprehensive study on a household refrigerator with a PCM-enhanced condenser. It highlights their approach to data presentation, analysis, and validation, as well as their commitment to ethical research practices. This methodology will guide their research and serve as a framework for producing a well-documented research report or thesis.

This methodology outlines a systematic approach to conducting a comprehensive study on a household refrigerator with a PCM-enhanced condenser, encompassing both experimental and numerical approaches. It aims to provide empirical data, validate numerical simulations, and generate practical insights to advance the field of sustainable refrigeration technology.

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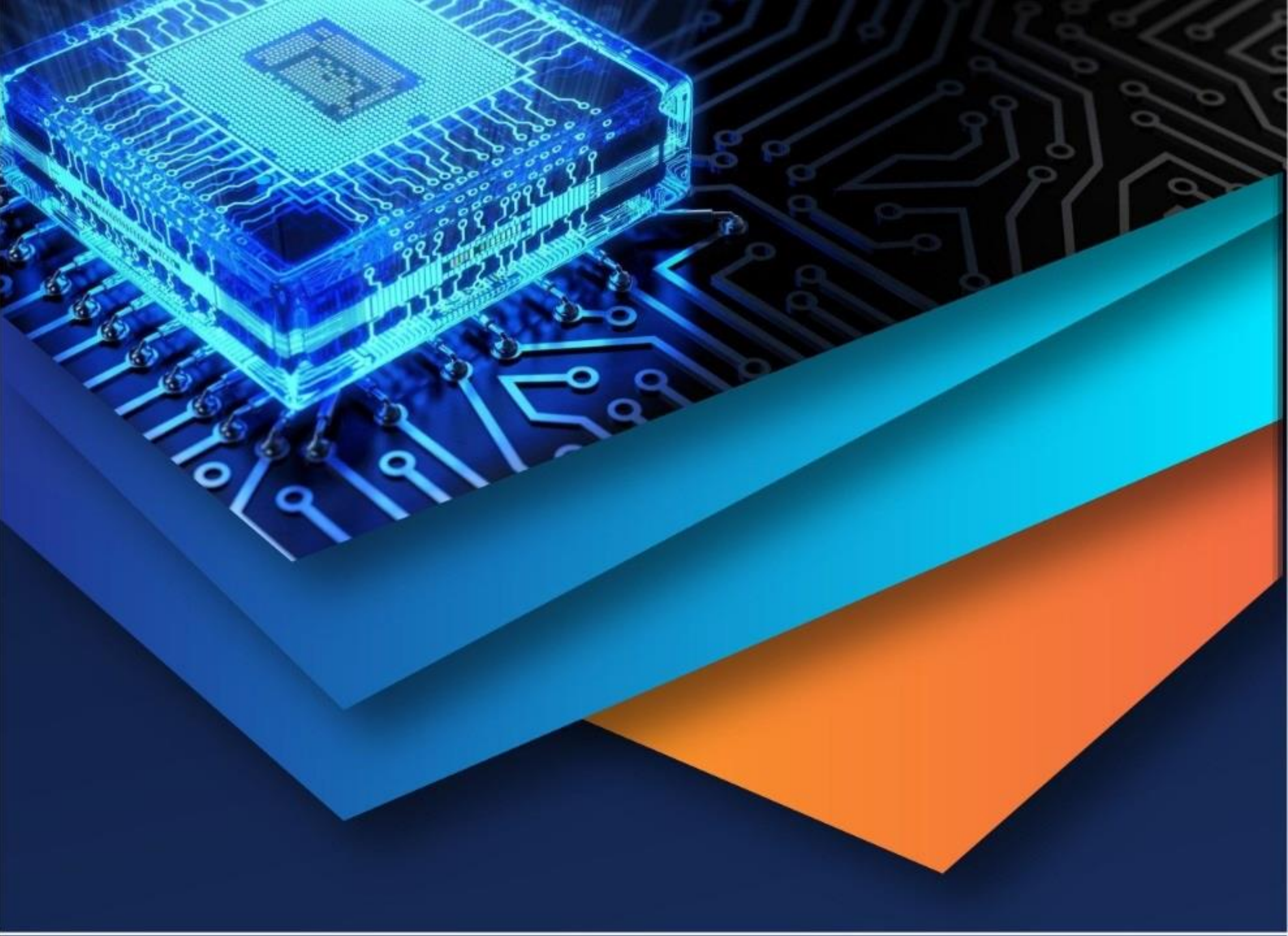

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