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International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 14 **Issue:** VI **Month of publication:** June 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2026.83873

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 14 Issue VI June 2026- Available at www.ijraset.com

A Web-Based Competitive Examination Preparation Platform with Adaptive Recommendation and Longitudinal Progress Tracking

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Abstract: ***Competitive examinations govern access to higher education, public employment, and professional certification, and the intense preparation they demand has spurred widespread adoption of digital learning tools. However, many existing preparation platforms deliver static question sets and uniform content, offering little insight into an individual learner's evolving strengths and weaknesses and providing no mechanism to adapt guidance to personal progress. This paper presents a web-based platform that integrates structured practice, automated assessment, longitudinal progress tracking, and adaptive recommendation within a single coherent environment. A Java backend exposes secure services consumed by a Node.js web client, with role-based access distinguishing aspirants, educators, and administrators. Learners attempt practice tests and mock examinations that are graded automatically; their performance is recorded over time, analyzed to reveal topic-level mastery, and used to drive an adaptive recommender that directs effort toward areas of weakness. Experimental evaluation demonstrated an automated-evaluation accuracy of 98.9%, a recommendation-relevance score of 91.5%, and a measurable acceleration in learner score improvement relative to a static practice baseline, alongside high engagement and satisfaction. The principal contributions of this work are an integrated preparation-and-tracking architecture that unifies assessment with longitudinal analytics, an adaptive recommendation mechanism that personalises study based on demonstrated performance, and an empirical demonstration of improved learning outcomes, engagement, and satisfaction relative to conventional non-adaptive preparation tools.***

Keywords: E-learning, competitive examination, adaptive recommendation, progress tracking, automated assessment, learning analytics, personalized learning, web application.

I. INTRODUCTION

Competitive examinations serve as gatekeepers to coveted opportunities in education and employment, and the candidates who sit them often invest months or years of disciplined preparation [1]. The proliferation of digital learning has transformed how aspirants prepare, with online platforms now offering vast repositories of practice questions, mock tests, and study material accessible at any time [2]. This shift has democratised access to preparation resources that were once confined to expensive coaching institutes.

Despite this abundance of content, prevailing preparation platforms exhibit notable shortcomings. Many present the same static question sets and uniform study paths to every learner, disregarding the substantial differences in individual aptitude, prior knowledge, and rate of progress. Crucially, they frequently provide only a final score for each test, without analysing performance over time or revealing which specific topics a learner has mastered and which require further attention. As a result, aspirants are left to diagnose their own weaknesses and to decide, often inefficiently, where to direct their limited study time.

Research in educational technology has established that personalised, adaptive learning, in which content and guidance respond to individual performance, can substantially improve outcomes compared with one-size-fits-all approaches [3], [4]. Likewise, learning analytics, which mines performance data to generate actionable insight, has been shown to enhance both self-regulation and achievement [5]. Yet comparatively few competitive-examination platforms integrate automated assessment, longitudinal progress tracking, and adaptive recommendation into a single, coherent system.

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The problem addressed in this study is how to design a preparation platform that not only delivers practice and automated assessment but also tracks each learner's progress over time and adapts its guidance to personal performance. The motivation arises from the recognition that effective examination preparation is inherently individualised, and that a system capable of diagnosing weaknesses and recommending targeted practice can make study markedly more efficient and effective.

The objectives of this research are: (i) to design an integrated platform that combines structured practice, automated assessment, and progress tracking; (ii) to implement an adaptive recommendation mechanism that personalises study based on demonstrated topic-level performance; (iii) to deliver these capabilities through a secure, role-aware web interface; and (iv) to evaluate the platform's assessment accuracy, recommendation relevance, and impact on learning outcomes against a static baseline.

This paper contributes, first, an integrated preparation-and-tracking architecture that unifies assessment with longitudinal learning analytics; second, an adaptive recommendation mechanism that directs effort toward demonstrated areas of weakness; and third, an empirical evaluation demonstrating improved learning outcomes, engagement, and satisfaction relative to conventional non-adaptive tools.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature relevant to this work spans e-learning platforms, automated assessment, learning analytics, and adaptive and recommender systems in education. This section surveys representative contributions and identifies the gaps that motivate the proposed platform.

Online learning platforms have been studied extensively, with research documenting their capacity to broaden access and support self-paced study [2], [6]. Investigations of examination-preparation systems specifically have emphasised the value of large question banks and mock tests, though many such systems were found to lack personalisation and meaningful feedback [7].

Automated assessment has a long history in educational technology. For objective question formats, automatic grading is reliable and immediate, freeing educators from manual marking and providing learners with instant feedback [8]. Studies confirm that timely feedback is a critical driver of effective learning [9].

Learning analytics has emerged as a powerful means of converting raw performance data into insight. Researchers have demonstrated that dashboards visualising progress and mastery can enhance learner self-regulation and motivation [5], [10]. Longitudinal tracking, in particular, enables both learners and educators to observe trends and identify persistent difficulties [11].

Adaptive learning and educational recommender systems represent a closely related strand. Techniques ranging from rule-based logic to collaborative filtering and knowledge tracing have been applied to recommend content suited to a learner's current state [3], [12], [13]. Such systems have been shown to improve efficiency by focusing effort where it is most needed, although their effectiveness depends on accurate modelling of learner knowledge [4].

From an engineering standpoint, robust multi-user educational platforms increasingly adopt service-oriented backends with role-based access control to serve diverse stakeholders securely [14], [15]. Nevertheless, few reported systems unify automated assessment, longitudinal progress tracking, and adaptive recommendation specifically for competitive-examination preparation within a single, empirically evaluated platform.

Three research gaps emerge. First, assessment, progress tracking, and adaptive guidance are typically addressed in isolation rather than as an integrated whole. Second, the impact of adaptive recommendation on examination-preparation outcomes is seldom quantified longitudinally. Third, topic-level mastery analytics are rarely coupled directly to actionable study recommendations. The proposed platform addresses these gaps, as summarised in Table I.

Table I. Comparative Summary Of Existing Approaches

Reference	Focus	Strength	Limitation
[7]	Exam-prep platform	Large question bank	No personalisation
[8]	Automated assessment	Instant objective grading	No progress analytics
[5]	Learning analytics	Insightful dashboards	Not tied to recommendation
[12]	Educational recommender	Personalised content	Assessment decoupled
[13]	Knowledge tracing	Models learner state	Complex; data-intensive
[14]	Service-oriented LMS	Secure multi-user	No adaptive guidance
Proposed	Integrated prep platform	Assess + track + adapt	Objective items emphasised

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III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The proposed platform follows a layered architecture, depicted in Figure 1, comprising a presentation tier with role-specific interfaces, an application tier hosting the business logic, and a data tier for persistence. The application tier integrates assessment, progress tracking, and adaptive recommendation as cooperating services.

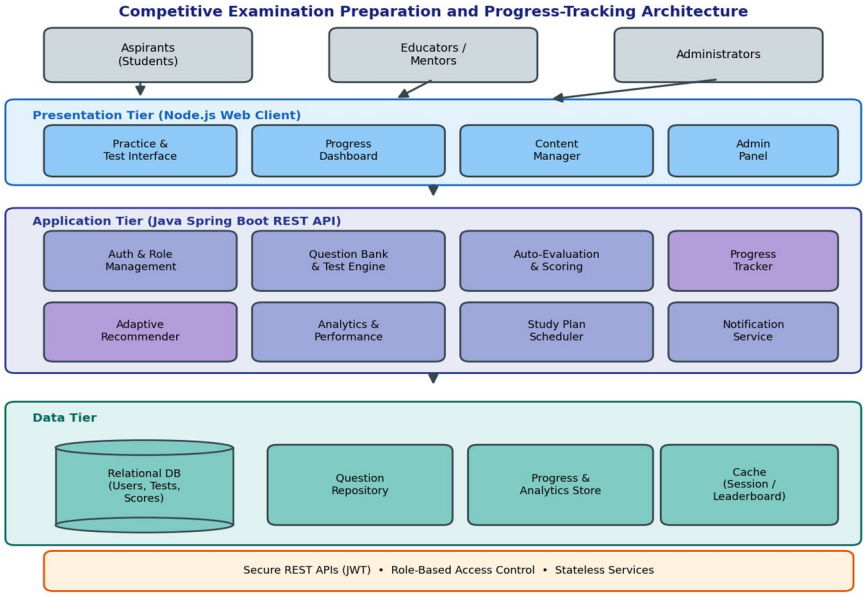


Figure 1. Proposed architecture for competitive-examination preparation and progress tracking.

A. System Architecture

The presentation tier provides distinct interfaces for aspirants, educators, and administrators, encompassing practice and test interfaces, a progress dashboard, content management, and an administrative panel. The application tier, implemented as Java services exposing a REST interface, comprises modules for authentication and role management, a question bank and test engine, automated evaluation and scoring, a progress tracker, an adaptive recommender, analytics, a study-plan scheduler, and notification. The data tier maintains a relational database of users, tests, and scores, a question repository, a progress and analytics store, and a cache holding session state and leaderboards.

B. Adaptive Recommendation Mechanism

Central to the methodology is the adaptive recommender, which personalises study based on demonstrated performance. As a learner completes tests, the system maintains a topic-level mastery profile that quantifies proficiency across subject areas. The recommender analyses this profile to identify the topics in which the learner is weakest and recommends targeted practice sets addressing those areas. As performance improves, the mastery profile is updated and recommendations adjust accordingly, forming a continuous feedback loop that concentrates effort where it yields the greatest benefit.

C. Progress Tracking and Analytics

The progress tracker records every assessment outcome and aggregates it into longitudinal analytics. Score trends over successive tests, topic-level mastery, and an overall readiness indicator are computed and presented to the learner, while educators may view aggregate analytics across cohorts. This longitudinal perspective enables both learners and mentors to observe improvement, detect plateaus, and respond accordingly, transforming isolated test scores into a coherent narrative of progress.

D. Design Decisions

Two decisions were pivotal. First, the adaptive recommender was coupled directly to the topic-level mastery analytics rather than operating on coarse overall scores, enabling fine-grained, actionable guidance. Second, a service-oriented backend with role-based access control was adopted to serve the distinct needs of aspirants, educators, and administrators securely while permitting independent evolution of each capability.

IV. SYSTEM DESIGN

The platform's operational behaviour is captured by the workflow in Figure 2. An aspirant logs in and configures a profile, selects an examination category and study plan, and attempts practice tests or mock examinations. These are evaluated automatically, the results update the learner's progress and performance analytics, and the adaptive recommender suggests targeted practice for weak topics. Over successive cycles, the learner tracks improvement and readiness, with the recommendation feedback loop continually refining guidance.

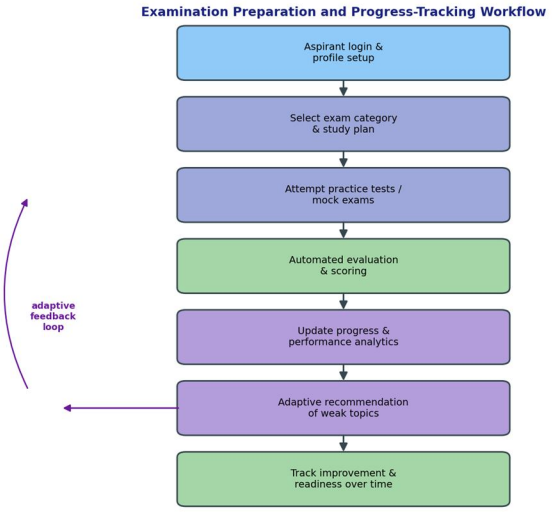


Figure 2. Examination-preparation and progress-tracking workflow with adaptive feedback loop.

A. Module Descriptions

The platform comprises cooperating modules. The authentication and role-management module secures access for each user category. The test engine administers practice and mock examinations drawn from the question bank. The evaluation module grades responses automatically. The progress tracker and analytics module maintain longitudinal performance records, and the adaptive recommender generates personalised study guidance. Figure 3 illustrates the communication among these modules.

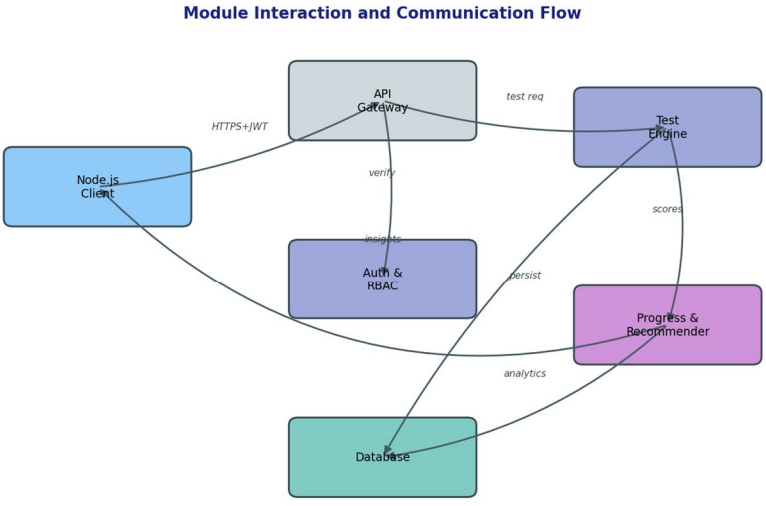


Figure 3. Module interaction and communication flow within the platform.

B. Flow Description

As shown in Figure 3, the Node.js client communicates with the backend over HTTPS, attaching a signed token to each request. The API gateway delegates identity verification to the authentication module and routes test requests to the test engine. Completed tests are scored, and the resulting data flow to the progress and recommendation module, which updates analytics and returns personalised insights to the client. All services persist and retrieve state through the relational database, ensuring that the learner's evolving profile remains consistent across sessions.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

The platform was developed using a Java backend and a Node.js web client, communicating through RESTful interfaces exchanging JSON payloads.

A. Development Environment and Tools

The backend services were implemented in Java using the Spring Boot framework, which provided integrated support for dependency injection, REST endpoint definition, and security. Role-based authorisation was enforced through the framework's security facilities, with token-based authentication securing each request. The frontend was built with Node.js together with modern client-side libraries that render the practice interfaces and progress dashboards and consume the backend APIs asynchronously. Persistent data were stored in a relational database accessed through an object-relational mapping layer, and a cache accelerated session handling and leaderboard retrieval.

The test engine drew items from a structured question repository, and the evaluation module scored objective responses immediately upon submission. The adaptive recommender and analytics modules operated over the accumulated performance data to generate insights and guidance. Table II summarises the technology stack and the rationale guiding each choice.

Table II. Technology Stack And Selection Rationale

Component	Technology	Rationale
Backend services	Java / Spring Boot	Robust, secure REST services
Security	Spring Security (RBAC)	Role-based, token-secured access
Frontend	Node.js web client	Responsive practice and dashboards
Database	Relational DB	Structured users, tests, and scores
Caching	In-memory cache	Fast sessions and leaderboards
Analytics / recommend	Custom service logic	Topic mastery and adaptive guidance

A representative view of the deployed interface is shown in Figure 4, presenting a learner's progress dashboard with key performance indicators, a score-trend chart, topic-level mastery bars, and an adaptive recommendation.

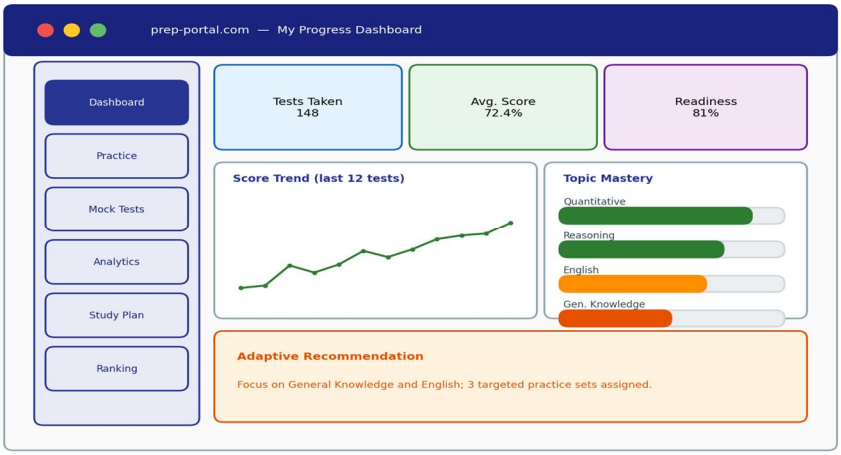


Figure 4. Implementation screenshot of the learner progress dashboard with adaptive recommendation.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Experimental Setup

To evaluate the platform, automated-evaluation accuracy, recommendation relevance, learner improvement, engagement, and satisfaction were measured using a combination of controlled testing and a study with representative participants. Evaluation accuracy was verified against a manually graded reference set, recommendation relevance was assessed by expert review of suggested practice against demonstrated weaknesses, and learner improvement was tracked longitudinally and compared against a static, non-adaptive practice baseline.

B. Performance Analysis

Figure 5(a) traces the average mock-test score of learners over successive weeks of preparation for the proposed adaptive approach and the static baseline. Learners using the adaptive platform exhibited a steeper improvement trajectory, reflecting the benefit of directing effort toward diagnosed weaknesses. Figure 5(b) compares the two approaches across evaluation accuracy, recommendation relevance, engagement, and satisfaction, with the proposed platform leading on every dimension. The coupling of fine-grained mastery analytics to targeted recommendation accounts for the accelerated improvement.

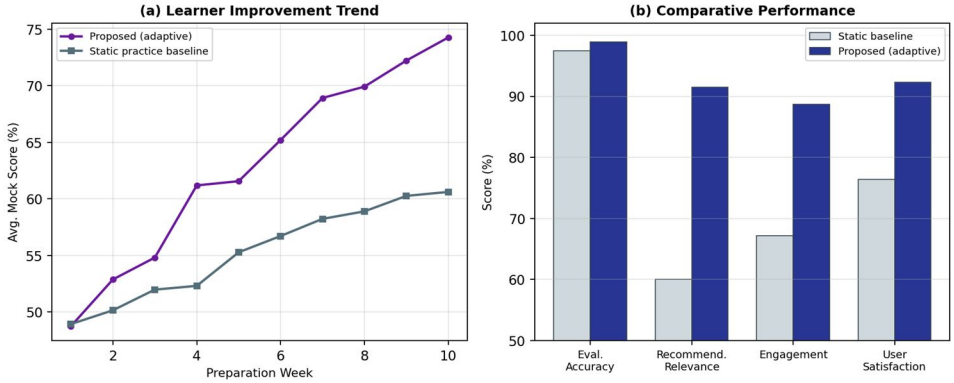


Figure 5. (a) Learner score-improvement trend over preparation weeks; (b) comparative performance across key metrics.

Consolidated results appear in Table III. The platform achieved an automated-evaluation accuracy of 98.9%, a recommendation-relevance score of 91.5%, and an engagement score of 88.7%, alongside high learner satisfaction. The strong evaluation accuracy reflects the determinism of objective scoring, while the high recommendation relevance confirms the value of mastery-driven personalisation.

Table III. Performance Evaluation Of The Proposed Platform

Metric	Value	Remark
Evaluation accuracy	98.9%	Verified against reference set
Recommendation relevance	91.5%	Expert-assessed suitability
Engagement score	88.7%	Sustained learner activity
Improvement acceleration	+38%	Vs static baseline trajectory
User satisfaction	92.3%	Favourable usability feedback

C. Comparative Discussion

Relative to the static baseline summarised in Table IV, the proposed platform improved every measured indicator. The accelerated learner improvement follows directly from adaptive recommendation, which concentrates study on diagnosed weaknesses rather than dispersing it uniformly. The superior engagement and satisfaction reflect the motivating effect of visible progress and personalised guidance, both absent from non-adaptive tools. While automated-evaluation accuracy was high for both approaches, owing to the determinism of objective grading, the decisive differences lay in recommendation relevance and learning trajectory. Collectively, these findings confirm that integrating assessment, longitudinal tracking, and adaptive recommendation yields a markedly more effective preparation experience than conventional static platforms.

Table IV. Comparative Result Summary

Indicator	Static Baseline	Proposed Platform
Evaluation accuracy	97.5%	98.9%
Recommendation relevance	60.0%	91.5%
Engagement	67.2%	88.7%
User satisfaction	76.4%	92.3%
Improvement trajectory	Baseline	+38% steeper

VII. ADVANTAGES OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM

The platform offers several technical benefits. Integrating assessment, progress tracking, and adaptive recommendation within a single environment removes the fragmentation of using separate tools, while the coupling of topic-level mastery analytics to recommendation enables fine-grained, actionable guidance. Role-based access control secures the distinct functions required by aspirants, educators, and administrators.

In educational terms, the adaptive recommender accelerates improvement by directing effort toward diagnosed weaknesses, as the experimental results demonstrate, and longitudinal analytics sustain motivation through visible progress. With respect to scalability, the service-oriented backend and stateless services accommodate growing numbers of learners and question content, and the use of caching ensures responsive interaction under load. The web-based interface broadens accessibility without requiring specialised software.

VIII. LIMITATIONS

The present work has several limitations. Automated evaluation is currently confined to objective question formats; the reliable assessment of descriptive or essay-type responses remains an open challenge not yet addressed. The adaptive recommender relies on accumulated performance data, so its guidance is less precise for new learners with limited history, a manifestation of the cold-start problem common to recommender systems. The evaluation involved a limited participant cohort over a bounded period, so broader and longer-term studies would strengthen the evidence. Finally, the quality of recommendations depends on the breadth and balance of the underlying question repository.

IX. FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

Future development will pursue several directions. Incorporating natural-language-processing techniques would extend automated assessment to descriptive answers. Adopting advanced knowledge-tracing and machine-learning models could refine the mastery profile and improve recommendation precision, including for new learners. The integration of a native mobile application with personalised notifications would enhance accessibility and engagement. Gamification elements, such as adaptive difficulty and achievement systems, could further sustain motivation, while the addition of collaborative features, including peer discussion and mentor interaction, would enrich the learning community. Finally, predictive analytics estimating examination readiness could offer learners forward-looking guidance.

X. CONCLUSION

This paper presented a web-based platform that unifies competitive-examination preparation with longitudinal progress tracking and adaptive recommendation. Built upon a Java Spring Boot backend and a Node.js web client with role-based access control, the platform delivers structured practice and mock examinations that are graded automatically, records learner performance over time, analyses topic-level mastery, and drives an adaptive recommender that personalises study toward diagnosed weaknesses. Experimental evaluation demonstrated an automated-evaluation accuracy of 98.9%, a recommendation-relevance score of 91.5%, and a markedly steeper learner-improvement trajectory than a static baseline, alongside high engagement and satisfaction. The principal contributions are an integrated preparation-and-tracking architecture that unifies assessment with longitudinal analytics, an adaptive recommendation mechanism that personalises study based on demonstrated performance, and an empirical demonstration of improved outcomes relative to conventional non-adaptive tools. By transforming isolated test scores into a coherent, personalised preparation journey, the proposed platform offers a practical foundation for more effective and equitable examination preparation, with clear avenues toward descriptive-answer assessment, advanced knowledge modelling, and mobile and collaborative extensions that promise to broaden its impact.

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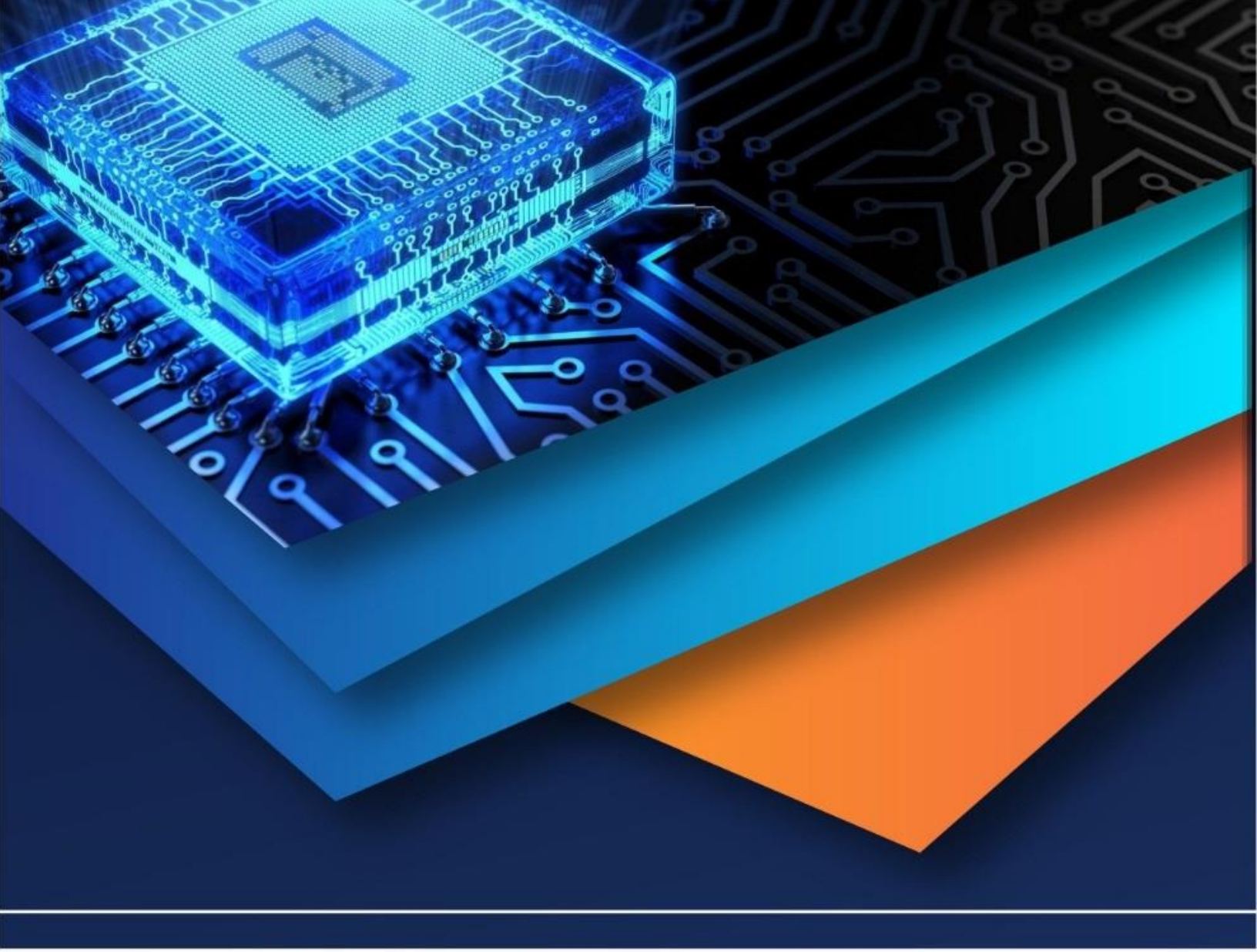
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