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An Empirical Investigation of the Relationship between Personality Traits and Fashion Consciousness among College going Students in India

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Abstract: Purpose: The purpose of the paper is to investigate the relationship between personality traits and fashion consciousness among college going students in India.
Design/me thodology/approach: Data were collected from 447 college going students. The age group of the students were between 16-25 years. A standardised questionnaire was used to get the responses from college going students in Delhi & NCR region in India. Confirmatory factor analysis was done using AMOS software version 22 and found that variables satisfy the criteria of path analysis. The hypothesized model in the study was also tested using AMOS Software
Findings: The findings revealed that all personality traits were found to be significantly associated with fashion consciousness. The findings of the study is contradicting the results of previous studies which is good to see that Indian consumers behave differently than other country nationals. The Big Five personality play an important role in understanding young consumers in our country.
Originality/value: The study enriches the personality traits and fashion consciousness literature by identifying and empirically establishing the relationship between various personality traits and fashion consciousness of college going students.
Keywords: Personality traits, Fashion consciousness, India, Young generation, Big Five personality.

I. INTRODUCTION

The growth of fashion industry in recent years can be attributed to consumers' changing attitudes towards fashion. Consumers are becoming more fashion-conscious and keeping themselves updated with the latest fashion trends (D'Aveni, 2010). Generation Y, in particular, was found to have a distinctive approach to shopping than any other generational cohorts (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003).As argued by Srinivas and Steven (2008), the distinctive characteristics of Generation Y differ across cultures.

Generation Y, popularly known as the millennial generation, has fascinated practitioners and academicians all over the world (Bolton et al., 2013). Born between the years of 1980 and 2000 (Weingarton, 2009), Generation Y is the world's second largest consumer cohort (Ordun, 2015), with highest levels of discretionary income at their disposal (Leask et al., 2013).

Fashion consciousness refers to ―a person‘s degree of involvement with the styles or fashion of clothing…characterized by an interest in clothing and fashion, and in one‘s appearance (Nam et al. 2007, p.103). Fashion consciousness has been identified as an important dimension of a person‘s lifestyle that affects purchase decision and consumption behavior (Sproles and Kendall 1986; Wells and Tigert 1971). People who are highly fashion conscious may pay more attention to the image portrayed by prestige brands and therefore may be more prestige-sensitive than those who are less fashion conscious. Despite the potential associations between fashion consciousness and prestige sensitivity, little studies have been devoted to examine the relationship between the two concepts.

Consumer personality plays an important role in fashion marketing as it is argued that consumers are highly influenced by their self-concept [which is a function of personality] when it comes to fashion shopping behavior (Piacentini and Mailer 2004). While studies in the past have attempted to use personality traits as a predictor of fashion shopping behavior (Goldsmith 2002b; McIntyre and Miller 1992; Summers, Belleau, and Xu 2006), little studies have been done to examine the role of consumer personality traits in affecting prestige preferences. With prestige sensitivity as the focal construct, this study seeks to propose a conceptual framework on the relationship between consumer personality traits, fashion consciousness, and prestige sensitivity.

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In train theory Big five model has a considered as a core benchmark in the theory of personality.
This model has allowed researchers to investigate individual personality differences associated with different traits that shows relationship with five different personality traits. It has examined the differences of individual personality on the basis of these traits. This study is done to examine the personality traits of consumers with respect to millennials and their fashion consciousness. It can be concluded like the study has attempted to investigate the differences of personality among consumers regarding their fashion consciousness.
This study has been done in India in the national capital region and can be generalised in Indian context.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

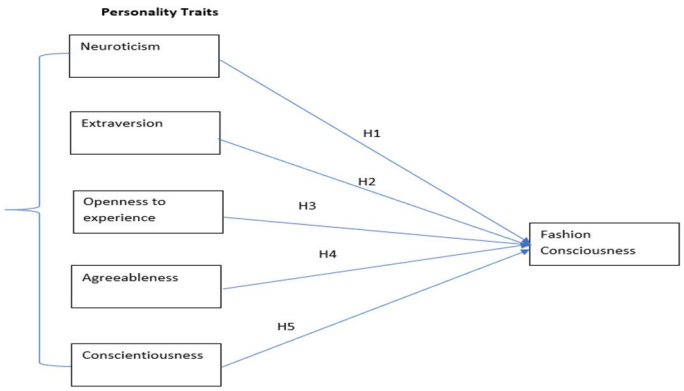
Personality is being in core since early 1960s among researchers to investigate their preference and choices keeping in mind different kind of products and services. Understanding the personality differences and consumer behaviour was biggest attraction among researchers. (Westfall, 1962; Birdwell, 1968). Researches by McIntyre and Miller (1992) recommended that personality has moderating effect between individual behaviour and their fashion consciousness. In the fashion market personality traits has much significant to understand the behaviour of consumers. The young generation has greater influence of their personality traits for shopping behaviour related with fashion consciousness (Piacentini and Mailer, 2004).
The studies in marketing have revealed mix results between the fashion consciousness and personality traits. Some of the studies have reflected that personality traits moderate between the relationship of fashion consciousness and consumer behaviours along with their consumption pattern. (Goldsmith, 2002; McIntyre and Miller, 1992). Some of the studies have indicated that individual personality traits and their purchase intention has no significant relation with respect to their fashion consciousness (Summers et al., 2006).
The Big Five personality traits have considered as benchmarked in personality related theory. The Big Five model supported researchers to evaluate and assess consumers on the basis of their personality traits. That has associated with different five personality aspects. These are as follows:

1) *Neuroticism:* It evaluates the emotional instability of an individual (e.g. calm vs. worried) (Goldberg, 1990).
2) *Extroversion:* It evaluates the way an individual interacts in his environment considering its quantity and intensity(e.g. reserved vs. sociable) (McCrae and Costa, 1990).
3) *Openness to Experience:* It evaluates the degree of proactive approach, have desire of appreciation, toleration and exploration of unknown terrain (e.g. conventional vs. curious) (McCrae and Costa, 1990; Piedmont, 1998)
4) *Agreeableness:* It evaluates interpersonal orientation of an individual in the qualitative way along with compassion to antagonism (e.g. suspicious vs. trusting) (McCrae and Costa, 1990).
5) *Conscientiousness:* Assesses an individual's degree of organization, persistence, and motivation in goal-directed behaviour (e.g. aimless vs. organized) (McCrae and Costa, 1990)

Despite the plethora of studies in the application of The Big Five, no studies have been done to explore whether significant differences exist between The Big Five personality traits in the fashion consciousness in Indian context.

H1;a,b,c,d,e: There is a significant relationship between personality traits and fashion consciousness.

Fig.1 Hypothesised Model



Source: Researcher's Own

III. RESEARCH METHODS

Fig 1. Shows the relationship between different variables used for the study and direction of relationship among the mentioned variables. In this study, six variables namely, Neuroticism, Extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness and fashion consciousness. The study has been conducted with an objective first, to find out the relationship between personality traits with fashion consciousness among youths in Delhi and NCR region in India. A well-structured questionnaire was adapted for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire comprises 22 items. There are three item statements in Neuroticism, extraversion comprises four statements. Openness to experience comprises two statements. Agreeableness comprises three statements. Conscientiousness includes five statements and finally fashion consciousness comprises of five statements. The reliability of variables was tested using these items and found that variables fulfil the criteria of reliability (i.e., alpha=.861) (Nunnally, 1970). Confirmatory factor analysis was done using AMOS software version 22 and found that variables satisfy the criteria of path analysis. The hypothesized model in the study was also tested using AMOS Software. The sample of the study was collected from college going students in Delhi & NCR region. The sample for this study includes both male and female young of between the age groups of 16-25 years of age. Data was collected form Delhi & NCR region through google from (online). Questionnaires were sent to more than 1000 of college going students. Total 567 responses were received in which only 447 responses were found suitable for the purpose of this study. The response rate was 44 % only.

IV. MEASURES

1) *Neuroticism:* It is measured using 3 statements holding a Cronbach value of 0.789 All measures are found suitable for the purpose of this study. Mean, standard deviation, factor loadings and standardised regression weight of all the statements used for the purpose of this study is also being mentioned in the table No.2. Likert seven scale has been used where '1=strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree'
2) *Extraversion:* It is measured using 3 statements holding a Cronbach value of 0.813 All measures are found suitable for the purpose of this study. Mean, standard deviation, factor loadings and standardised regression weight of all the statements used for the purpose of this study is also being mentioned in the table No.2. Likert seven scale has been used where '1=strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree'
3) *Openness to Experience:* It is measured using 2 statements holding a Cronbach value of 0.748 All measures are found suitable for the purpose of this study. Mean, standard deviation, factor loadings and standardised regression weight of all the statements used for the purpose of this study is also being mentioned in the table No.2. Likert seven scale has been used where '1=strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree'
4) *Agreeableness:* It is measured using 3 statements holding a Cronbach value of 0.797 All measures are found suitable for the purpose of this study. Mean, standard deviation, factor loadings and standardised regression weight of all the statements used for the purpose of this study is also being mentioned in the table No.2. Likert seven scale has been used where '1=strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree'

Table 1 Statistics of Construct Item

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	SRW
Neuroticism alpha = .789,				
NEU1	5.15	1.411	.736	0.799
NEU2	5.55	1.306	.839	0.863
NEU3	5.53	1.315	.742	0.611
Extraversion alpha= .813				
EXT1	5.45	1.204	.798	0.468
EXT2	5.18	1.443	.778	0.798
EXT3	4.89	1.498	.849	0.8
EXT4	5.03	1.425	.800	0.853
Openness to experience alpha= .748				
OP1	4.50	1.530	.707	0.195
OP2	4.13	1.551	.807	0.725

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Agreeableness alpha= .797				
AG1	4.00	1.549	.831	0.859
AG2	4.07	1.562	.854	0.796
AG3	4.44	1.497	.697	0.585
Conscientiousness alpha= .749				
CONS1	4.63	1.292	.595	0.544
CONS2	4.88	1.352	.752	0.684
CONS3	5.09	1.191	.728	0.683
CONS4	4.79	1.474	.696	0.586
CONS5	5.19	1.115	.799	0.607
Fashion Consciousness alpha= .794				
FCS1	5.16	1.104	.763	0.695
FCS2	5.23	1.080	.794	0.805
FCS3	5.28	1.160	.719	0.688
FCS4	5.27	1.101	.778	0.763
FCS5	4.89	1.237	.799	0.425

Source: Researcher's Own

5) *Conscientiousness:* It is measured using 5 statements holding a Cronbach value of 0.749 All measures are found suitable for the purpose of this study. Mean, standard deviation, factor loadings and standardised regression weight of all the statements used for the purpose of this study is also being mentioned in the table No.2. Likert seven scale has been used where '1=strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree'
6) *Fashion Consciousness:* It is measured using 5 statements holding a Cronbach value of 0.794 All measures are found suitable for the purpose of this study. Mean, standard deviation, factor loadings and standardised regression weight of all the statements used for the purpose of this study is also being mentioned in the table No.2. Likert seven scale has been used where '1=strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree'

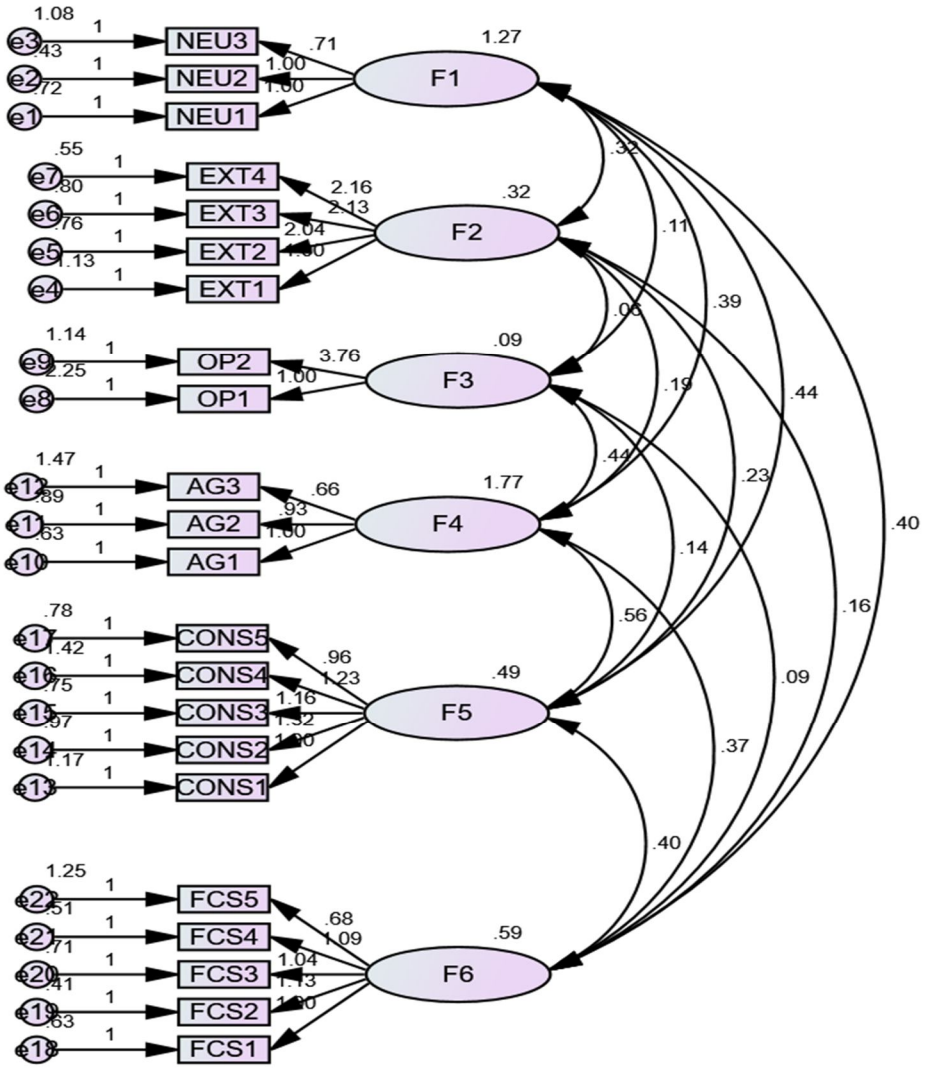
Table 2 Modification Indices

CMIN/df	CFI	GFI	TLI	RMSEA
3.87	.895	.882	.859	.095

Source: Researcher's Own

The CFA method primarily conclude that how specific factor in the model represent the data. That can be examined with the help of model fit indices. if parameters of model fits are found to be good the model get validated. The structural model was found to be a good fit having CMIN/DF = 3.87 (As high as 5.0, Kline, 1998), GFI = 0.882 (>.80, Mac Callum &Hing, 1997) CFI=0.895 (>.90, Hu and Bentler, 1999), TLI = 0.859 (>.90, Hooper et al., 2008) RMSEA = 0.095 (<0.07, Stinger, 1990 and between 0.08 to .10, Mac Callum et al., 1996),. The proposed structured model of the study indicates that all paths are significant statistically as p -value of all are less than .05.

Fig.2 Path Analysis



Source: Research Output

Table 3Regression Analysis

IDV><DV	Beta	se	t	sig	Hypothesis
NEU<>FCS	.363	.027	13.230	.000	Supported
AG<>FCS	.255	.029	8.871	.000	Supported
EXT<>FCS	.573	.058	9.893	.000	Supported
CONS<>FCS	.887	.029	30.809	.000	Supported
OP<>FCS	.362	.027	13.130	.000	supported

Source: Research Output

First, from the table 3 it is evident that Neuroticism (NEU) has insignificant impact on fashion consciousness (FCS). Where b (0.363), t (13.230) and p>0.05. Hence the hypothesis (H1) is supported.
Second, from the table 3 it is evident that agreeableness (AG) has insignificant impact on fashion consciousness (FCS). Where b (0.255), t (8.871) and p>0.05. Hence the hypothesis (H2) is supported.
Three, from the table 3 it is evident that Extraversion (EXT) has insignificant impact on fashion consciousness (FCS). Where b (.573), t (9.983) and p>0.05. Hence the hypothesis (H3) is supported.
Four, from the table 3 it is evident that conscientiousness (CONS) has insignificant impact on fashion consciousness (FCS). Where b (.887), t (30.809) and p>0.05. Hence the hypothesis (H4) is supported.
Fifth, from the table 3 it is evident that openness to experience (OP) has insignificant impact on fashion consciousness (FCS). Where b (.362), t (13.130) and p>0.05. Hence the hypothesis (H5) is supported.
Therefore, it is evident from the result of the study that all personality traits has significant impact on fashion consciousness.

V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The major purpose of the paper is to find out the impact of personality traits on fashion consciousness. The results of the study have revealed interesting facts. The study has fond that all Big Five personality traits have significant impact on fashion consciousness whereas in previous studies it is reflected that few personality traits have significant impact while others has no significant impact on fashion consciousness **(Casidy, 2012).**
It is evident from the result of the study that in Indian context it is surprising to see that all kind of personality traits has significant positive relationship with fashion consciousness. College going students in India largely get influenced by social factors rather than with their own personality. It is great to find out that what other factors which are affecting the decision making of college going students.
As the implication of this study is concerned, it can inspire managers to understand the importance of personality traits. Once the manager realizes the importance of this practice, they will provide customised services to the customers. Customers will be able to express their concern for different kinds of requirements. If it is going to be taken care of by the managers customers will stay with them and will help in improving the performance of the business. One important observation which can be suggested to the managers working in the fashion industry that it is not only young consumers but how nicely all staff members are behaving with them also play an important role. Therefore, it is suggested to the managers kindly practice customer friendly ways to improve their satisfaction.
However, this paper has made significant contributions to the existing literature. However, this study has certain limitations too. The sample was taken from the college going students from Delhi and NCR in India confined to national capital regions only. This research can be extended to the other parts of the country also. Similar data can be taken from other age groups people and results can be compared. There may be other important variables, which can mediate the relationship between personality traits and fashion consciousness. The variables can be materialism, sensitivity etc. it may be possible that both of the methods like quantitative and qualitative can be added in future research. Finally, similar study can be done in other sectors also.

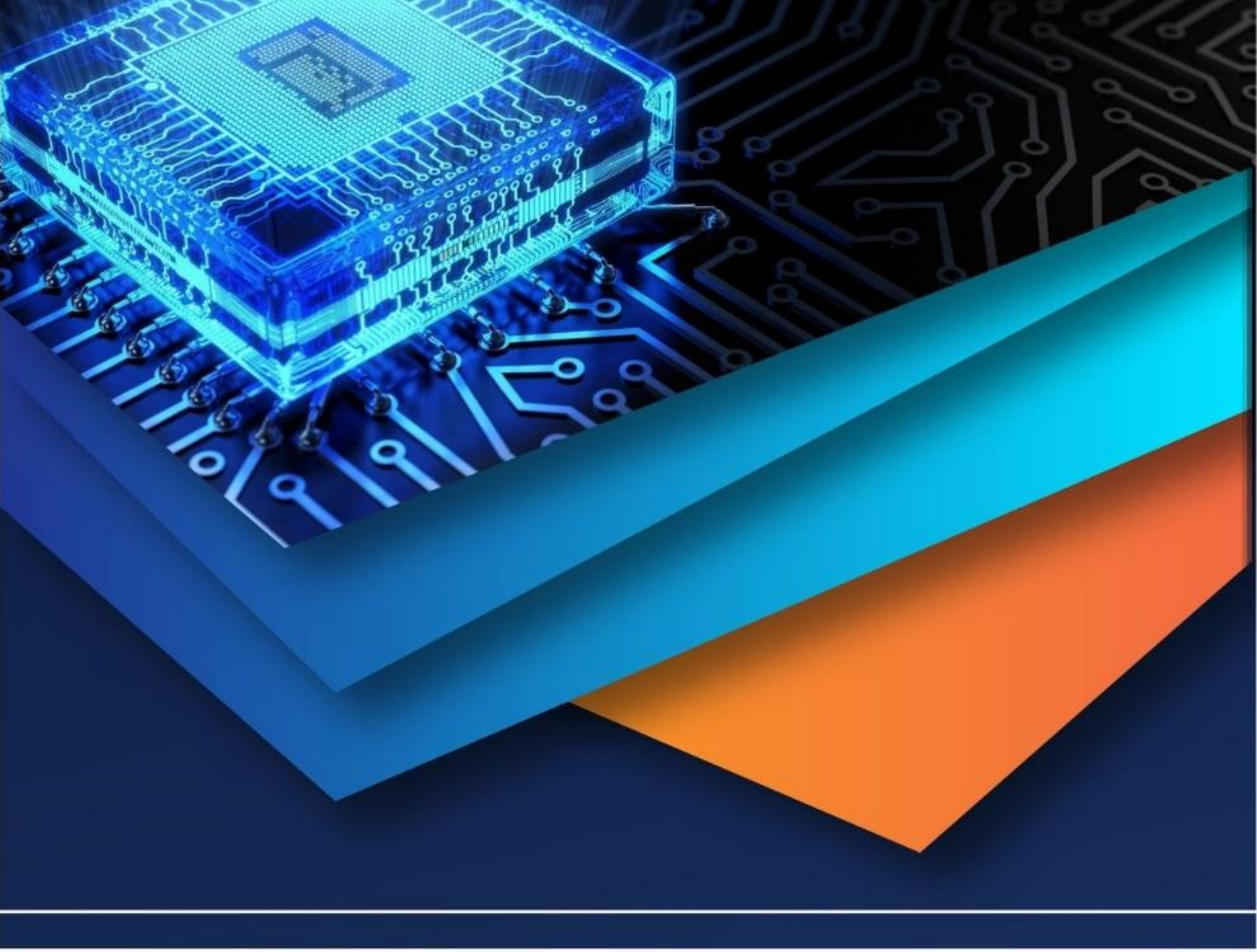
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