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Understanding Consumer Perceptions of Online Sales Promotions: A Factor Analysis of Large Appliance Purchases in India

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Abstract: ***This research investigates consumer attitudes toward online sales promotions in India, focusing on large appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, air conditioners, and dishwashers. The aim is to identify key factors shaping consumer perceptions, offering actionable insights for e-commerce platforms to craft effective promotional strategies. A quantitative methodology was employed, utilizing a survey of 467 Indian consumers with 17 Likert-scale statements to capture perceptions. Data reliability was validated through Cronbach's Alpha, while factor analysis identified five core factors influencing attitudes. These factors include Savings, emphasizing financial benefits and budget relief; Quality, which assures product excellence and brand upgrades; Convenience, highlighting ease and efficiency in purchases; Status, reflecting personal pride and emotional fulfilment from smart shopping; and Variety, offering access to diverse products and opportunities for brand exploration. Together, these factors account for 73.7% of the variance in consumer attitudes. This study is novel in its focus on large appliances within the Indian e-commerce context and introduces "status" and "variety" as new dimensions in understanding consumer perceptions, broadening established theoretical frameworks. While its reliance on convenience sampling and specific product focus may limit generalizability, the findings provide critical insights for optimizing digital marketing strategies. Practical implications include tailoring promotions to highlight savings, quality, convenience, and product diversity, particularly for price-sensitive consumers. Socially, the research underscores the role of online sales in enhancing accessibility to essential consumer durables, improving living standards, and promoting economic inclusivity in India.***

Keywords: E-commerce, Online Sales Promotions, Large Appliances, Consumer Perception, Consumer Purchase Behaviour, Promotional Benefits.

I. INTRODUCTION

The fundamental goal of any business is to enhance the sales of its goods or services [58]. Various methods such as advertising, direct selling, and affiliate marketing contribute to this objective, with sales promotions being a particularly well-researched tactic. Short-term promotional offers can attract new customers and increase market share (Liu et al., 2011); however, their misuse can jeopardize profitability (Ofoegbu & Udom, 2013; Pauwels et al., 2002). The growing competition in the retail sector forces marketers to implement strategies that establish their brands as leaders in the market [52]. While maintaining cost efficiency, businesses must balance efforts to acquire new customers and retain existing ones, as acquiring customers is often more expensive than retaining them [39].

In the current retail environment, effective consumer communication is paramount for showcasing available products and services, making the marketing communication mix—especially sales promotions—an indispensable element [51]. Sales promotions employ tactics to inform, persuade, and stimulate purchases [44]. Marketers strive to design captivating promotions that draw consumers' attention and boost their intent to buy [57], [66]. To influence consumer purchase decisions effectively, it is critical to adopt promotional strategies that align with the target audience's preferences [37]. Customers are often enticed by the promise of monetary savings, delivering utilitarian value [5], as well as by hedonic rewards like symbolic satisfaction and emotional gratification [35].

Recognizing how consumers perceive and benefit from sales promotions is essential to optimizing their success [19]. This study explores consumer attitudes toward online sales promotions for large appliances offered by Indian e-commerce platforms. By identifying the attributes that consumers value most, the research seeks to assist e-commerce companies in creating marketing campaigns that effectively resonate with their audiences.

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II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Sales Promotion

Sales promotion, an integral component of the promotional mix, plays a direct role in shaping consumer behavior and driving purchasing decisions. It serves as a cornerstone of contemporary marketing, where businesses utilize a variety of strategies to attract attention and prompt immediate purchases (Shimp, 2010). Broadly, sales promotions can be divided into two categories: monetary (price-based) and non-monetary approaches, both of which aim to increase brand visibility, stimulate purchase intentions, and encourage product trials [27], [17]. Sales promotions leverage a range of tools to elicit swift consumer responses across diverse products and services [42]. They perform critical functions, including enhancing brand image, increasing store traffic, creating favorable price perceptions, and clearing surplus inventory [13]. In online retail, sales promotions encourage immediate consumer engagement, often resulting in impulsive purchases that meet instant demands (Rook & Hoch, 1985). These promotions deliver both hedonic benefits, such as enjoyment and experience, and utilitarian benefits, including savings and convenience [19]. Leveraging these benefits in impulsive purchasing scenarios can significantly boost consumer engagement and sales.

B. Sales Promotion, Customer Acquisition And Retention

Sales promotions are widely acknowledged as a powerful tool for expanding customer bases and retaining existing clients. The increasing use of online coupons by U.S. households illustrates how digital sales promotions facilitate customer acquisition [28]. Internet-based tools also allow businesses to tailor promotions to individual customer preferences [38]. Techniques such as discounts and promotional suggestions can trigger impulsive buying behavior in online settings [23]. Research by Palazon and Ballester (2011) highlights how well-planned promotions effectively boost purchase intentions, with discounts often driving greater impulsivity (Liao et al., 2009; Tinne, 2011; Virvilaite et al., 2009).

C. Sales Promotion And Marketing Mix

Promotion is a fundamental aspect of the marketing mix, designed to inform, persuade, and remind consumers of a product's benefits to influence their attitudes and purchasing decisions [81]. Sales promotions offer a quick way to generate consumer responses and accelerate sales. As noted by Kotler and Keller [42], these promotions act as strong incentives for attracting consumers and boosting purchase volumes. Agrawal [1] emphasizes that promotions also help establish brand loyalty and deter customers from switching to competitors. Marketing managers frequently deploy price-based promotions, such as coupons and discounts, to appeal to price-sensitive consumers and drive revenue [22]. Today, heightened consumer awareness about deals ensures that promotional strategies are more effective, particularly among budget-conscious shoppers [85].

D. Monetary Sales Promotion

Price promotions, often referred to as monetary promotions, appeal to consumers by offering savings and convenience [19]. These promotions are particularly effective for task-focused shoppers with specific goals [16]. Studies reveal that monetary promotions tend to outperform non-monetary ones in driving purchase decisions [4], [32]. They are favored across both utilitarian and premium product categories [61], [46] and resonate strongly with consumers loyal to high-awareness brands [59]. Millennials, in particular, view monetary promotions like discounts as highly appealing due to their practical approach to shopping [6].

E. Non-Monetary Sales Promotion

Non-monetary promotions, offering added benefits such as gifts, bonuses, and contests, enhance brand value without reducing perceived quality. These promotions are often more effective in long-term brand building than monetary offers [86]. They are particularly advantageous for establishing product quality perceptions and are impactful for both utilitarian and hedonic products (Montaner & Pina, 2008a). Non-monetary promotions cater to consumers seeking enjoyment, exploration, and value expression, with such experiences often tied to activities like gaming or gambling [68].

F. Benefits Of Sales Promotion

Sales promotions deliver a wide array of advantages that shape consumer perceptions and behavior. These benefits can be classified into utilitarian (savings, quality assurance, and convenience) and hedonic (value expression, entertainment, and exploration) [19]. Utilitarian benefits align with rational decision-making by offering tangible value, while hedonic benefits evoke emotional satisfaction and self-expression. Both types of benefits significantly influence purchase intentions and foster customer loyalty (Chiu et al., 2014; Santini et al., 2016).

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G. Utilitarian Benefits Of Sales Promotion

Utilitarian benefits focus on practical and economic aspects, appealing to consumers driven by rational motivations [80]. Price-conscious shoppers particularly value savings, convenience, and quality assurance [25]. These benefits enhance perceived value by emphasizing practicality and affordability [71]. Millennials, known for relying on peer opinions, often view monetary savings as a key motivator for purchases [6].

H. Hedonic Benefits Of Sales Promotion

Hedonic benefits revolve around emotional gratification and sensory experiences during purchases. Hirschman and Holbrook [35] introduced the concept of hedonic consumption, emphasizing enjoyment and intrinsic satisfaction. Elements like value expression, exploration, and entertainment are key hedonic benefits that influence buying behavior [19]. Promotions for hedonic products often encourage impulsive purchases, as they appeal to the enjoyment factor [48].

I. Consumer Behavior And Purchase Decision

Consumer purchase decisions are driven by a blend of utilitarian and hedonic motives, necessitating promotional strategies that address both orientations [35], [41]. While utilitarian purchases cater to functional needs, hedonic purchases fulfill emotional desires and excitement [82]. Promotions that balance these aspects positively influence purchasing behavior [19]. Throughout the purchase decision process—from need recognition to post-purchase evaluation—marketers can guide consumers by providing relevant information and minimizing perceived risks [74].

J. Sales Promotion, Corporate Social Responsibility And Store Environment

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and store ambiance are increasingly recognized as significant factors influencing consumer purchase decisions. Studies suggest that these elements create a supportive shopping experience and strengthen positive perceptions [34]. Online retailers can enhance impulse buying tendencies by improving website quality and integrating promotional strategies with user-friendly credit card options [2]. By aligning sales promotions with CSR initiatives, brands can further enhance consumer trust and engagement.

III. RESEARCH GAP IDENTIFICATION

An investigation of literature suggests that there are very few studies focussing on sales promotion in E-commerce channel. Though, some of these emphasizes on consumer durables, almost a minuscule part of it relates to sale of large appliances on E-commerce sites and its relationship with online consumers. The role played by online sales promotion and the consumer conduct to monetary and non-monetary benefits are less explored areas, which warrants a thorough investigation. As the sales promotion tools used in E-tailing platforms assume significance in recent times, there is a need to study the consumer responses to these. Hence, the research aims to study this gap for relevance of sales promotion in purchase of large appliances in consumer durables segment specifically refrigerator, washing machine, air conditioner and dishwasher and attempts to provide evidences from the E-commerce industry.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Organization

A survey was conducted to assess consumer perceptions of online sales promotions implemented by e-commerce platforms in India. The study collected data from 467 respondents through a custom-designed questionnaire, which comprised of two sections: one focused on sales promotions and the other on socio-demographic details. The sales promotion section included 17 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "Completely disagree," 5 indicated "Completely agree," and 3 represented a neutral response. Convenience sampling was utilized for data collection, and the survey statements were adapted from several established sources, including Chandon et al. [19], Childers et al. [20], Garretson & Burton [30], Ivanova [36], Buil [15], Pilelienė & Bakanauskas [63], and Zhi-Kang & Ogawa [88]. The survey was administered online using Google Forms and conducted over a six-month period from January to June 2023 in India. The gathered data were subsequently analyzed using relevant statistical and analytical techniques to derive insights.

B. Relevance Of The Research Results

To assess the reliability of the gathered data for subsequent analysis, a reliability study was conducted, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.887. This value suggests that the constructs are dependable, given that it exceeds the threshold of 0.7, as depicted in Table 1.

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Table 1 – Reliability Statistics		
S. No	Reliability Method	Calculated Value
1	Cronbach's Alpha	.887

Source: Authors' own

Furthermore, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using the KMO measure and Bartlett's Test. Table 2 indicates that the KMO measure surpassed 0.5, and Bartlett's criterion ($p < 0.01$) supported the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0: The correlation matrix is an identity matrix).

Table 2 – KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.833
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3638.563
	df	136
	Sig.	.000

Source: Authors' own

After confirming the reliability and appropriateness of the data, the factor analysis can proceed.

V. FINDINGS

A study was undertaken to gauge consumer sentiment towards online sales promotions, an aspect that E-commerce firms in India should prioritize to enhance sales through their websites and apps. The main aim of the study was to assess attitudes toward online sales promotions, specifically focusing on consumer durables, particularly large appliances viz. refrigerator, washing machine, air conditioner and dishwasher.

Given that the fundamental statements representing the core of online sales promotions employed by E-commerce firms in India were utilized to gauge attitudes towards sales promotions, it became necessary to rearrange them using factor analysis. Initial Eigenvalues were calculated and then rotated to ascertain the proportion of variance in the total sample explained by each factor. Following Kaiser's criterion, only factors with Eigenvalues exceeding 1 were retained for further scrutiny. As depicted in Table 3, five factors elucidate 73.687 percent of the total variance. The Eigenvalues of the factors underwent changes post-rotation, refining the factor structure. Factor 1 contributed to 20.149 percent of the variance, factor 2 to 16.824 percent, factor 3 to 13.519 percent, factor 4 to 12.210 percent, and factor 5 to 10.984 percent of the variance.

Table 3 – Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.340	31.413	31.413	3.425	20.149	20.149
2	2.522	14.833	46.246	2.860	16.824	36.973
3	2.173	12.781	59.027	2.298	13.519	50.493
4	1.485	8.738	67.764	2.076	12.210	62.703
5	1.007	5.922	73.687	1.867	10.984	73.687
6	.568	3.341	77.028			
7	.554	3.259	80.286			
8	.496	2.916	83.203			
9	.451	2.653	85.855			
10	.443	2.606	88.461			
11	.395	2.323	90.785			
12	.332	1.954	92.739			
13	.301	1.772	94.510			
14	.288	1.692	96.202			
15	.260	1.529	97.731			
16	.216	1.272	99.003			
17	.170	.997	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis						

Source: Authors' own

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Table 4 illustrates the communalities, which reveal the portion of variance accounted for by each of the five factors across every component. Communalities of a variable signify the percentage of its variance ascribed to the common underlying factors among the variables. Components are deemed adequately informative when their communalities surpass 0.2. As depicted, all components exhibit communalities exceeding 0.2, suggesting their informativeness.

Table 4 – Communalities

Component	Extraction
Availing online sales promotion offers for consumer durable, gives me the impression of being a smart shopper	.777
With online sales promotion offers, I can remember what consumer durable products I need	.784
Online sales promotional offers for consumer durables relaxes the budget constraints on my family's spending	.737
I sense that I get good deals during consumer durable purchases made using online sales promotional offers	.798
During online sales promotion, I can have consumer durable products with excellent features	.626
When I shop for consumer durables using online sales promotion, I pride myself as a winner	.766
I save time for choosing the right consumer durable product with the use of online sales promotion	.764
Using online sales promotion would be convenient for me for purchasing consumer durable products	.689
I can buy consumer durable products of consistent quality, by availing online sales promotion offers	.727
By using online sales promotion offers, I can upgrade to a better consumer durable brand	.749
I can afford a better-than-usual consumer durable product through online sales promotion offers	.755
Availing online sales promotion offers, helps me to really spend less while buying the consumer durable goods	.789
I really save money, while purchasing consumer durables during online sales promotion offers	.815
When I make wise decisions on purchase of consumer durables using online sales promotion offers, I feel genuine joy	.628
I am reminded of the consumer durable products, during online sales promotion offers	.722
During online sales promotion offers, I can purchase consumer durable goods that are not dealt with in physical stores	.727
During online sales promotion offers, I get excited for trying new consumer durable brands	.674
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis	

Source: Authors' own

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The study outcomes facilitated the categorization of the 17 components representing consumer attitudes toward online sales promotion into five factors, explaining nearly 74% of the overall variance. Table 5 illustrates the allocation of components into factors utilizing the Rotated Component Matrix, employing the Varimax rotation method with Kaiser normalization.

Table 5 – Rotated component matrix

Component	Factor	Dimension
I really save money, while purchasing consumer durables during online sales promotion offers	1	Savings
I sense that I get good deals during consumer durable purchases made using online sales promotional offers		
Availing online sales promotion offers, helps me to really spend less while buying the consumer durable goods		
Online sales promotional offers for consumer durables relaxes the budget constraints on my family's spending		
I can afford a better-than-usual consumer durable product through online sales promotion offers	2	Quality
By using online sales promotion offers, I can upgrade to a better consumer durable brand		
I can buy consumer durable products of consistent quality, by availing online sales promotion offers		
During online sales promotion, I can have consumer durable products with excellent features		
With online sales promotion offers, I can remember what consumer durable products I need	3	Convenience
I save time for choosing the right consumer durable product with the use of online sales promotion		
Using online sales promotion would be convenient for me for purchasing consumer durable products		
Availing online sales promotion offers for consumer durable, gives me the impression of being a smart shopper	4	Status
When I shop for consumer durables using online sales promotion, I pride myself as a winner		
When I make wise decisions on purchase of consumer durables using online sales promotion offers, I feel genuine joy		
During online sales promotion offers, I can purchase consumer durable goods that are not dealt with in physical stores	5	Variety
I am reminded of the consumer durable products, during online sales promotion offers		
During online sales promotion offers, I get excited for trying new consumer durable brands		

Source: Authors' own

Table 5 illustrates how each factor encapsulates a distinct facet of consumer attitudes toward online sales promotion. These attitudes closely mirror the benefits delineated by Chandon et al. [19], albeit with some adjustments. Through factor analysis, it was revealed that components related to savings, quality, and convenience echoed Chandon et al.'s (2000) observations, while status and variety emerged as newly revised components, replacing value expression, exploration, and entertainment. Hence, the findings depicted in Table 5 indicate that consumer attitudes toward online sales promotion can be summarized by five fundamental benefits: savings, quality, convenience, status, and variety.

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VI. IMPLICATIONS

E-commerce companies can enhance engagement by tailoring promotional strategies to emphasize savings, quality assurance, seamless shopping experiences, and an extensive product range. These insights are particularly relevant for optimizing campaigns targeted at price-sensitive and digitally native consumers. The research highlights the potential of online sales promotions to make essential consumer durables accessible to a broader audience, contributing to improved living standards and economic inclusivity in India.

VII. LIMITATIONS

The study faces several limitations that impact the generalizability and scope of its findings. The use of convenience sampling may not fully represent the diverse Indian consumer base, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, limiting the applicability of insights across all demographics. Additionally, the research focuses exclusively on large appliances, which restricts its relevance to other product categories such as electronics, fashion, or FMCG, where consumer behavior and promotional strategies may differ significantly. Another limitation is the temporal scope of the study, which captures consumer attitudes during a specific time frame (January to June 2023) and does not account for potential seasonal or economic changes that could influence behavior.

Furthermore, while the study effectively examines traditional sales promotions, it overlooks the role of emerging digital innovations, such as AI, machine learning, and big data, in optimizing promotional strategies, which are increasingly critical in modern e-commerce. Finally, the reliance on quantitative data fails to delve into the deeper psychological motivations and barriers affecting consumer responses to promotions, missing the nuanced insights that qualitative approaches could provide. Addressing these limitations in future research could offer a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior, enhancing the effectiveness of sales promotion strategies in the evolving e-commerce landscape.

VIII. FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

This study identifies five core consumer benefit components—savings, quality, convenience, status, and variety—that shape attitudes toward online sales promotions. Future research could explore these elements in greater depth to understand their impact on consumer behavior, with comparative analyses across industries, longitudinal studies tracking changes in perceptions, and qualitative insights into consumer motivations. Examining contextual influences and testing managerial interventions could offer actionable guidance for e-commerce platforms to refine their promotional strategies. Overall, further research in this area promises to yield valuable insights and broaden understanding of consumer engagement with online promotions.

IX. CONCLUSION

Sales promotion is often seen by businesses as a direct approach to attract customers and boost sales, frequently proving more effective and persuasive than advertising or other marketing communications. For maximum effectiveness, however, sales promotions must be carefully tailored to meet customer needs. These promotions can be divided into price-based (monetary) and non-price-based (non-monetary) types, each impacting consumer perception differently. While the scholarly debate continues on which type is more effective, it is crucial for organizations to identify which promotion style resonates best with their customers. Understanding consumer attitudes toward sales promotions enables e-commerce companies to design more effective strategies. This study identified five primary consumer attitudes toward sales promotion: savings, quality, convenience, status, and variety. Based on these insights, Indian e-commerce firms should focus on highlighting monetary savings, reliable product quality, streamlined purchasing processes, an enjoyable shopping experience, and a diverse product selection in their promotional strategies to attract and retain customers.

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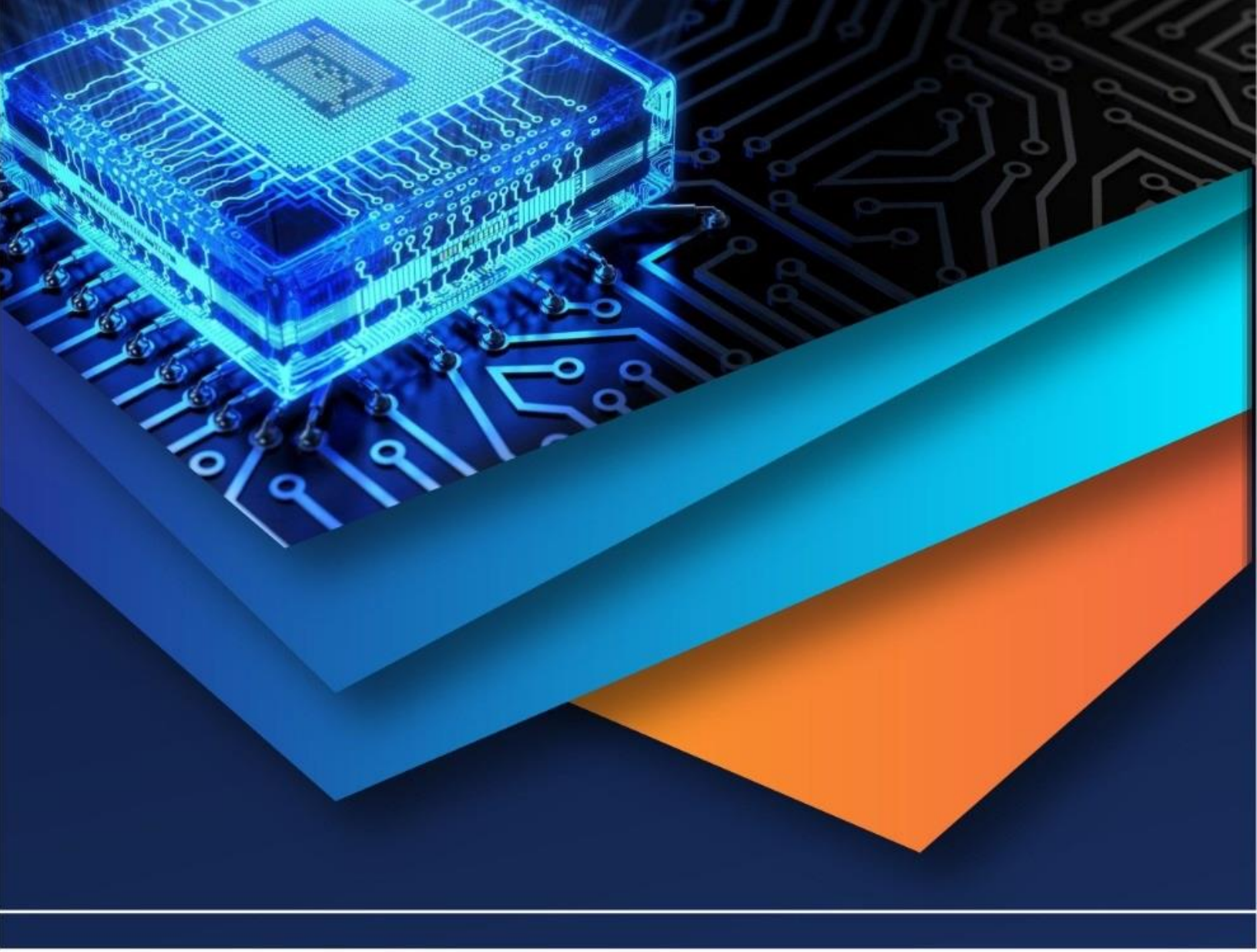
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