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Cloud-Based Blockchain for Secure Data Sharing and Collaboration

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Abstract: ***This study seeks to delve into the interrelation between user training and data security events in light of cloud-based blockchain technology improvement in terms of data security in collaborative contexts. A total of five firms was taken to collect data from a quantitative study, focusing more on variables that surrounded user training levels as well as data security events. This reflects that there exists a strong statistical negative correlation of frequency of security incidents and user training. Hence it has been established that the increase in the extent of training has considerably reduced vulnerabilities. Moreover, it was observed that there exists a positive relation between user participation and training. This means that to safe-guard data shared procedures, successful training activities can play an essential role. Such findings may be practically useful for firms who wish to take maximum advantage of their data security strategy.***
Keywords: Cloud-Based, Blockchain, Secure Data Sharing, Collaboration, Technology, Data Security Strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

Cloud-based blockchain technology is changing the game for safe data exchange and teamwork in the digital age. This technology addresses some of the most pressing issues regarding data privacy, security, and access control by fusing together the decentralized, immutable properties of blockchain and the scale and flexibility offered by cloud computing. Traditional means of sharing data are vulnerable to cyberattacks, data breaches, and unwanted access because they rely more than often on centralized systems. This would be an innovative replacement with cloud-based blockchain, as it decentralizes the data management and its storage. The decentralization would make sure that the data is encrypted, spread across multiple nodes, and then unapproachable.

A block-based cloud-based system for blockchain storage contains one cryptographic hash of the previous block per block in a chronological sequence of blocks in the chain. In this structure, the integrity of the data is preserved, which makes any alteration to one block invalid to the chain. Cloud infrastructure does allow scalability, which is an added advantage to manage high volumes, ideal for businesses and sectors requiring safe sharing of information, therefore allowing collaboration without compromising on security and control. The ease of accessibility and collaboration is offered without a compromise on either data security or control with blockchain technology in conjunction with cloud computing.

Most likely, one of the most important benefits that an organization can receive from using cloud-based blockchain in data sharing is improved access control mechanisms. In blockchain's permissioned and permission less networks, organizations can define roles and rights of users clearly. In this way, only the authorized personnel will be able to gain or modify access to data. The self-executing smart contracts in the blockchain even further improve security by way of preset rules automated for the system; in addition, the middlemen are removed from such a system while the risk of human mistakes decreased to zero.

Cloud-based blockchain systems make it easier for geographically scattered teams and partners to share data in real time and harmonize their books. Such sectors as supply chain management, healthcare, and finance need speed and accuracy in the sharing of data. Blockchain does not possess a central point of contact, ensuring that every party sees the same version of the truth- thereby reducing disagreements, increasing transparency, and enhancing stakeholder trust.

Cloud-based blockchain technology brings forth a secure and effective platform for collaboration and information sharing. Enhanced security, transparency, and efficiency in data management and sharing can be achieved by the integration of the scalability and decentralization of cloud computing with the immutability and decentralization of blockchain. This innovative approach may transform the entire working model of industries and businesses in a world where everything is connected increasingly.

A. Research Objectives

1) To examine how blockchain technology based on the cloud might improve data security in cooperative settings.

2) To look at the connection between the frequency of data security events in collaborative environments and the degree of user training provided by cloud-based blockchain technologies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Guo, Wang, and Huang (2021) It gives a framework that enhances the security and reliability of data exchange in distributed systems by using blockchain technology. Because they are decentralized, distributed systems can also face intrinsic problems such as data breaches, integrity difficulties, and trust issues. In this respect, blockchain technology can be used for an open and tamper-proof ledger to solve such problems. Their framework integrates smart contracts in such a way that the access and validation of data is automated, ensuring safe transactions and decreasing the requirement for middlemen. This and other important advances can be seen: Consensus techniques are applied here, which confirm immutability of data and confidence among users on the distributed network. Another advancement is that through applications of sharding approaches that allow large-scale data sharing without having to give away the pace, their architecture is scalable. As shown above, an example includes application within such domains as healthcare and banking where data sharing needs to be safe. The study has not considered potential computing overheads with regard to the deployment of blockchain or energy consumption, which would impede the use of the technology in systems with strict resource constraints.

Kumi, Lomotey, and Deters (2022) It details the construction of a blockchain-based platform providing safe and decentralized data handling such that it stresses in particular adaptation of blockchain into data administration and sharing. The authors purport that security breaches, data tampering, and privacy rights are also common in the existing traditional centralized data management solutions. In avoiding those concerns, this blockchain-based platform employs distributed ledger technology where every transaction gets validation through a consensus process by network users. Improving data openness, traceability, and auditability is what makes this platform so ideal for applications in various industries such as supply chain management, healthcare, and finance. Other smart contracts also automate data access rights; that is, only authorized entities can interact with sensitive data. Again, while the study promotes blockchain technology as promising to change the approach in the exchange and management of data, it shows there are also some integration problems by means of existing systems, in particular, legacy databases. Another problem that is identified is the scalability; it appears as a persistent issue that solutions based on blockchain are in need to improve on.

Marwan et al. (2020) Discuss the evolution of a blockchain-based system that presents a secure and decentralized way of managing data, with emphasis on usage of blockchain in data management and sharing. The authors believe most traditional centralised techniques in data management have indeed flopped abysmally in terms of security breaches, data manipulation, and privacy problems. Distributed ledger technology has the advantage that their blockchain-based platform avoids the above concerns since every transaction is validated by network users through a consensus process. The blockchain platform they offer is suitable for applications in such industries as supply chain management, healthcare, and finance because it enhances data openness, traceability, and auditability. The application of the blockchain also uses smart contracts to automatically administer data access rights and ensure that correct entities gain access to sensitive data. The preceding research is indicative that blockchain technology can revolutionize data exchange and management; however, there are also pretty significant integration problems when it comes to the use of current systems, especially legacy databases. Scalability is another frequent problem that needs to be improved in blockchain-based solutions.

Okegbile et al. (2022) It focuses on functionality in blockchain-enabled data-sharing systems in the context of cloud-edge computing networks for applications of the Internet of Things. Real-time IoT data processing and analytics are becoming much more popular in cloud-edge computing environments to facilitate real-time IoT data processing and analytics. Security, privacy, and data integrity are crucial issues in such contexts, and this paper addresses such important issues. A blockchain-enabled plan is proposed that would ensure trustworthy and safe transfer of data between the edge and the cloud devices. Using blockchain for control decentralization, they reduce reliance on a centralized authority that reduces the chance of single points of failure. Compared with traditional centralized methods, the performance analysis of their scheme shows that it is indeed efficient in enhancing data integrity and privacy with lower latency as well as higher computational efficiency. While, at the same time, the work underscores possible weaknesses at resource-poor sites as methods of PoW and other consensus may have problems due to excessive computational costs. The study provides information on the balance of security and performance in cloud-edge IoT systems; however, scaling and optimization in energy consumption remains an arduous problem to be solved.

Qin et al. (2021) Implementing a blockchain-based access control system, using various attribute authorities to enhance the security and privacy associated with sharing data through clouds. The work under study addresses the major challenge of cloud environments requiring the sharing of sensitive data in high-security ways.

The proposed plan makes use of blockchain technology for limited access, thus allowing only people allowed and possessing the required set of characteristics to get hold of the information. An interesting feature of the system is the usage of multiple attribute authorities as opposed to traditional models that usually rely on one attribute authority, thus providing much-needed flexibility and granularity in managing access to cloud data.

By wielding the advantage of blockchain technology, along with decentralized and immutable ledger properties, it gains access control records traceable and tamperproof. Simulation experiments demonstrate that it even prevents unwanted access and maintains privacy even if hostile actors try to compromise their implementation. The analysis further reveals that because of the complexity of managing a number of attribute authorities, there might be some overhead related to system maintenance and user cooperation which in turn implies a need for more research into ways of reducing such operational costs.

III. BLOCKCHAIN ARCHITECTURE FOR CLOUD-BASED SOLUTIONS

It is the application of basic attributes of blockchain, which are decentralization, transparency, immutability, and cryptographic security in a scalable and agile cloud environment. This architecture suits all applications of distributed data-sharing-based collaboration because of its features of secure and transparent data management. Its components offer a solid and secure framework for cloud-based services layered in that way.

A. Decentralized Network Layer

A decentralized network layer is the critical aspect of cloud-based solutions, which distinguishes blockchain from traditional and centralized cloud systems. It comprises multiple nodes that are distributed across varied locations or data centers and are deployed to avoid any entity having control over the system. The nodes not only store the data but also validate and propagate it. In the P2P communication model, direct data sharing between nodes increases robustness and eliminates the possibility of single points of failure. This architecture ensures data availability even in the event of the failure of a node and provides better reliability.

B. Data Layer (Blockchain Ledger)

At the data layer, all transactions are recorded in blocks that form the entire blockchain ledger. The blocks are all connected in the form of a chain by a timestamp, a cryptographic hash of the previous block, and a list of transactions within each block. It is such a structure that ensures the immutability of the data because any kind of alteration in any of the blocks would change its hash, which breaks the entire chain. This would entail replication of blockchain data across various cloud storage units in cloud environments, which would enhance data integrity, redundancy, and high availability. The checks enabled by Merkle Trees eliminate the downloading of the entire blockchain to efficiently verify sets of transactions for optimal verification.

C. Consensus Layer

The consensus layer of a cloud-based blockchain ensures that before a transaction is appended in the blockchain, all the nodes involved agree as to its legitimacy. Several techniques of consensus are employed, such as Practical Byzantine Fault Tolerance (PBFT), Proof of Stake (PoS), and Proof of Work (PoW). All of them have their advantages as per the system need. For instance, PoS is more energy-efficient and more cloud-friendly while being relatively less secure compared to PoW since PoW is relatively more secure but comes at a greater cost in resources. The technique of the agreement mechanism ensures that the integrity of a distributed system is ensured such that no malicious or incorrect transaction gets added into a system.

D. Smart Contract Layer

In the self-executing contracts, or smart contracts, conditions of a contract are defined within the code. This layer reduces middlemen dependency in a blockchain that is cloud-based because it automatically applies agreements and processes. Smart contracts make the agreed-upon actions, like shared data or payment, when certain predefined circumstances are met. Through the use of smart contracts, transparency in enforcing rules ensures efficiency. Because the cloud can scale up for high requirements, large deployments and managements of smart contracts can be achieved in a variety of industries, such as supply chain management, healthcare, finance, and many others.

E. Cryptographic Security Layer

The blockchain security framework relies on the strong cryptographic mechanisms that protect the data for its secrecy, integrity, and authenticity.

Each user is uniquely identified using a public and private key pair, of which the former is used for validation of signatures while the private one is to sign transactions; thus, only those who are authorized can initiate transactions. Blockchain also uses hashing algorithms like SHA-256 to make data irreversible. Data encryption further ensures safety for sensitive information, even in systems that may freely distribute it, within the cloud. The cryptographic foundation of such technologies also prevents cloud-based blockchain applications from being compromised with malicious attacks.

F. Cloud Integration Layer

These also require cloud infrastructure services such as networking, processing, and storage. Scalable cloud-based storage is permitted in the case of the storing of blockchain data because the management of even huge data bases is possible. Cloud computing resources execute the consensus process running and smart contract execution by the blockchain software. Hybrid cloud solutions provide the flexibility to manage the data because hybrid cloud combines on-premises infrastructure with public cloud services for business support. The cloud integration layer makes blockchain technology available to businesses in almost all industries and is designed to ensure that it can work and scale effectively.

G. Per missioning Layer (For Permissioned Blockchains)

In most enterprise applications, blockchain networks operate on a permissioned paradigm that limits access to specific parties. Within this scheme, the per missioning layer controls access to the blockchain, ensuring that only permitted users or nodes can approve transactions or otherwise be part of the consensus. Commercial applications of permissioned blockchains are those environments where mutual trust must be maintained while access to private information must be restricted. The layer also enforces role-based access control, such that access to sensitive information is restricted to only those authorized to do so. Users are granted different access levels, depending on their role.

H. Application Layer

It is also known as the user interface for interaction with the blockchain and its services. This is a cloud-based solution, where user interfaces enable asset management, data access, and execution of smart contracts, hence making it all very easy for users. It further contains middleware and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), easing the integration of blockchain services with existing cloud apps. This implies that firms need not fundamentally alter their systems currently in existence to incorporate blockchain technology. In assisting adoption, however, the application layer is useful for allowing developers and users to work with blockchain networks in a comprehendible manner.

This architecture integrates the decentralized strengths of blockchain technology with the scalability and flexibility of cloud computing. All aspects of smart contracts, cryptographic security, and all other constituent parts of the decentralized network come together to provide a safe, open, and effective platform for data interchange. It ensures better collaboration, greater automation, and increased scalability for various applications in areas such as supply chain, healthcare, and finance besides improving data security. Data has changed in the digital age with the integration of blockchain technology into cloud infrastructure; businesses manage and protect data in such a new dimension.

IV. BENEFITS OF CLOUD-BASED BLOCKCHAIN FOR DATA SECURITY

1) Enhanced Data Integrity and Immutability: In essence, the concept of blockchain involves the creation of a decentralized ledger with all the transactions or data entry in such a manner that it cannot be changed or tampered with. The integrity of data is ensured in this chain of trust by having a cryptographic hash of the previous block within each data block. This would prevent sensitive data within cloud environments from being altered without authorization because it is computationally infeasible to change any one block within the chain without changing every other block within the chain as well.
2) Decentralized Trust and Elimination of Single Points of Failure: Traditional cloud-based systems do the processing and storage of data on central servers. This centralization presents a system that then provides a point of failure prone to increasing vulnerability to hacks, outages, and breaches of data. Blockchain technology uses a peer-to-peer network for data sharing among several nodes. Because of this decentralization, it is very difficult for malicious actors to destroy the network entirely because it is extremely unlikely that an attacker would be able to alter data without controlling a majority of the nodes.
3) Improved Access Control and User Authentication: In the cloud, blockchain could supply superior methods of identification and access control. Blockchain ensures that only authorized people gain access to specific data with the use of cryptographic keys, where users remain in control of their private keys.

That provides another layer of security if the transactions are validated through a consensus mechanism. Blockchain improves the identity management within cloud-based systems in such a manner that the access to critical data is restricted to validated users alone.

4) Transparency and Auditability: Blockchain transactions and data interaction in the cloud are timestamped and, for integrity purposes, transparently stored throughout the network. At this high level of openness, auditing data access or modifications is more straightforward because blockchain provides a traceable record for each transaction. This process is particularly crucial in industries like healthcare and finance, where the regulatory framework is strictly enforced and there is a growing need to audit data access and exchange.
5) Protection Against Data Tampering and Cyberattacks: Most of the protocols employed by blockchain, including Proof of Work (PoW) and Proof of Stake (PoS), depend on the whole network of users verifying and validating transactions in order for them to appear in a blockchain. It is almost impossible for any party to change information or input something erring because of this method of decentralized consensus. Because the blockchain reduces the attack surface, it is capable of providing the much-needed security on cloud environments, which have been susceptible to cyber-attacks like Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks and data breaches.
6) Encryption and Secure Data Sharing: Blockchains have strong encryption techniques that create a safe haven for data both during transmission and storage. Blockchain ensures all data sent over the network are secure when dealing with cloud-related applications to avoid unwanted access or interception. Smart contracts, self-executing agreements whose terms are directly programmed into code are also used for secure sharing of confidential data. The smart contracts only make the information available to the relevant parties in accordance with certain mutually agreed upon terms.
7) Enhanced Data Availability and Redundancy: As such, blockchain technology enhances data redundancy and availability across nodes intrinsically, and that is the main advantage cloud-based blockchain systems enjoy about this. Even when failure occurs on a node or server, data is still available from other network nodes. As redundancy diminishes the possibility of data loss or unavailability due to hardware failure, blockchain-based systems prove more robust than conventional cloud configurations.
8) Compliance and Regulatory Alignment: It will pay off for organizations that want to be compliant with data security standards such as GDPR or HIPAA by virtue of its openness and traceability. Business operations can store perfect records of who accessed or changed data via blockchain and, consequently, allow businesses to have an audit trail for compliance in regulations. Another benefit of a decentralized structure of blockchain is the fact that it will help companies avoid fines and other penalties due to its penchant for making it easier to prove data hasn't been altered.
9) Enhanced Data Ownership and Control for Users: Users sometimes face restrictions in the control they can have over their data once it is stored by a third-party provider in typical cloud systems. For this reason, users are bound to enjoy increased data ownership because cloud-based blockchain systems give users authority over their cryptographic keys, which allow them to have exclusive access to their data. In other words, this offers better control to digital assets users as no intermediary-including the cloud providers-may access or modify data, except they have explicit permission from the user.
10) Efficient and Secure Data Sharing Across Organizations: Cloud-based blockchain technology is therefore a decentralized framework of safe data sharing among numerous parties. This is highly helpful in sectors such as supply chain management, healthcare, and financial services, where sectors are bound to cooperate with firms. Since blockchain lowers the need for middlemen, it reduces the possibility of data leaks by only those permitted accessing the shared data. Smart contracts can also make data-sharing procedures automated, which would guarantee that certain procedures are followed in accordance with set guidelines.
11) Cloud-hosted blockchain solutions are a revolutionary means for data security enhancement by applying immutability, encryption, and decentralization. An organization can take advantage of the tremendous scalability provided by cloud services while keeping sensitive information secure, stopping potential cyberattacks, and ensuring data regulations compliance by using the unique abilities of blockchain technology. The confluence of blockchain technology and the architecture of cloud computing will greatly contribute to the safe exchange and cooperation between different sectors.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Design*

A quantitative research approach was used in the study to determine how effective blockchain technology hosted by the cloud may be in ensuring the enhancement of data security while working harmoniously.

Selecting such a design made the quantitative data concerning user training, data security problems, and countless performance measurement metrics across various organizations easier to analyze. The approach taken was systematic, which helped to identify patterns and relationships explaining the link between user education and data security incidents. An approach like this was seen to provide some empirical insight into the potential benefits of cloud-based blockchain systems for secure data sharing.

B. Data Collection

Information was derived from five organizations widely acknowledged to operate within cloud-based blockchain systems. Sources include data that varied considerably in scope such as yearly incidence of data security breaches, levels of encryption, speeds in completing transactions, scores of user engagement, the level at which training is taken for users, average response time to events, and implementation costs. The information was collected through questionnaires sent to the IT and security staff of these firms, and internal reports and documents that already existed about security incidents and user training programs had also been used as additions. A rigorous collection of data ensured that it was based on actual experiences and procedures to be analyzed.

C. Statistical Analysis

The applied statistical research made use of correlation coefficients and analyzed the correlations between user engagement and data security events and variables on user training. Its aim was at identifying important correlations that shall guide recommended methods for improving data security in cooperative settings. Specifically, the nature and magnitude of linkages that exist between user engagement scores, average response times, and data security incidents have been ascertained through the computation of Pearson correlation coefficients. It was robust numerical evidence from this study that helped underpin conclusions drawn on the impact which user training has on security outcomes.

D. Ethical Consideration

Throughout the research process, ethical issues had to be of utmost importance. All participating organizations were searched for informed consent from the moment of data collection, ensuring that they were aware of the objective of the study and their rights in participation. All data collected during the research process had to be anonymised to protect the identities of the organizations taking part and the people who will be involved. In addition, the study followed all laws and regulations that referred to data privacy and confidentiality, thus ensuring that private information was handled sensibly and confidentially. Such commitment to ethical research practice fostered participant confidence and maintained the integrity of the study.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Blockchain Data Security Analysis via the Cloud

Organization Name	Data Security Incidents (per year)	Encryption Level (1-5)	Transaction Speed (ms)	Data Sharing Frequency (per week)	User Satisfaction (1-10)	Cost of Implementation (in USD)
Cloud Innovations Inc.	1	3	200	20	8	5000
Data Secure Ltd.	3	4	150	15	7	15000
Collaborative Systems	5	5	100	30	6	30000
Tech Partners Group	2	4	180	10	8	12000
Secure Share Inc.	0	4	220	18	9	6000

As presented in Table 1, data security incidents and subsidiary variables are analyzed in depth for different companies that use cloud-based blockchain technology. Concerning data security incidents, the lowest level of such incidents was reported by Cloud Innovations Inc at 1. However, the same company was also noted at the highest level of encryption levels at 3, in tandem with having a user satisfaction score of 8 and the lowest implementation cost at $5,000.

Indeed, Collaborative Systems had the highest number of incidents, with 5, and the highest encryption level, with 5; thus, it appears that the company may have traded-off frequency of incidents with the measures of security. On the other hand, both Tech Partners Group and Data Secure Ltd. demonstrated only moderate encryption levels at 4 and modest numbers of incidents at 3 and 2, respectively. Even though the transaction speed was faster by Tech Partners Group at 180 ms, a customer satisfaction score of 8 was much lower when compared to Data Secure Ltd.'s score of 7. Even though the transaction speed was slower by Secure Share Inc. at 220 ms and the installation cost was the lowest at $6,000, there were no problems faced and the customer satisfaction rating was extremely high at 9 with an encryption level of 4, which was at least satisfactory level.

Table 2: Analysis of Data Security Incidents and User Training

Organization Name	User Training Level (1-5)	Data Security Incidents (per year)	User Engagement Score (1-10)	Average Response Time to Incidents (ms)
Cloud Innovations Inc.	3	4	7	250
Data Secure Ltd.	5	1	9	150
Collaborative Systems	2	6	6	300
Tech Partners Group	4	2	8	200
Secure Share Inc.	1	8	5	400

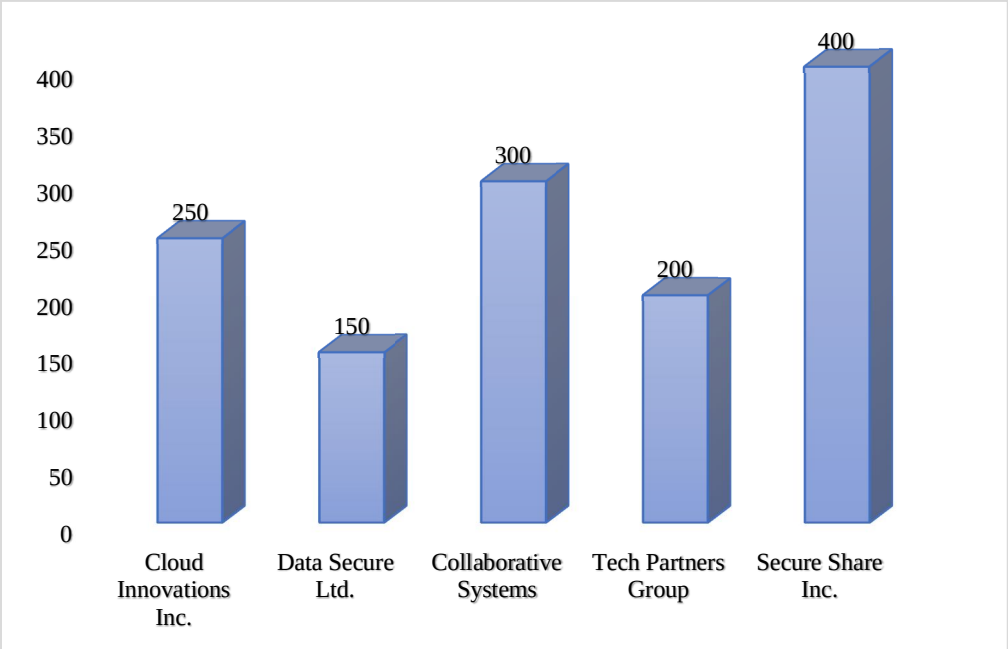

Figure 1: Average incident response time (in milliseconds)

Table 2 shows analysis of the correlation between user training levels and data security events across cloud-based blockchain systems using different enterprises. Data Secure Ltd. are the stand out group with the highest score for user engagement (9), lowest data security incidents at one, the fastest average response time to incidents (150 ms), and the highest user training level at 5. Secure Share Inc. had the lowest engagement score at 5, the slowest response time at 400 ms, largest number of incidents at 8, and lowest training level at 1, indicating possible linkage between low training and an increase in security vulnerability.

Cloud Innovations Inc. has a significant user engagement score of 7 and response time of 250 ms with Tech Partners Group scoring 8, and the response time is 200 ms. The user training is at a modest level of 3 for Cloud Innovations Inc. and 4 for Tech Partners Group. Furthermore, the number of data security incidents recorded is at a moderate level of 4 for Cloud Innovations Inc. and 2 for Tech Partners Group. These results suggest that effective training would positively influence security performance.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis between Data Security Incidents and User Training

Variable	User Training Level	Data Security Incidents	User Engagement Score	Average Response Time
User Training Level	1	-0.85	0.7	-0.6
Data Security Incidents	-0.85	1	-0.75	0.65
User Engagement Score	0.7	-0.75	1	-0.5
Average Response Time	-0.6	0.65	-0.5	1

A correlation analysis of a few dimensions regarding the incidence of data security events and levels of user training in cloud-based blockchain systems is given below in Table 3. There's a high level of negative correlation between incidences of data security incidents and the level of user training with a correlation coefficient of -0.85, indicating that as incidences of increases go up in the levels of user training, there is marked decline in the incidences of security events. Companies that are attacked more frequently tend to take more time to respond to attacks, as given by the correlation 0.65 between data security incidents and average response time to such incidents. Furthermore, there seems to exist a moderate positive link 0.7 between User Engagement Score and the User Training Level. This suggests that increasing levels of user training correspond with higher levels of user engagement, which would intuitively relate to better security outcomes. The -0.5 negative correlation discovered between the User Engagement Score and Average Response Time, however, also suggests that sometimes higher engagement is associated with quicker response times to incidents.

VII. CONCLUSION

This research conclusion focuses on the improvement of data security offered by cloud-based blockchain technology, particularly in collaboration settings-something that makes user training a critical point. From the significant negative association found between user training levels and data security events, adequate training programs reveal that proper training could significantly cut down vulnerabilities. Trained users contribute to safer data-sharing procedures as favorably correlated between user involvement and training, as seen. Results further emphasize the need to train users during the development of effective data security strategies about creating a security-aware culture when enterprises embrace cloud-based blockchain technology.

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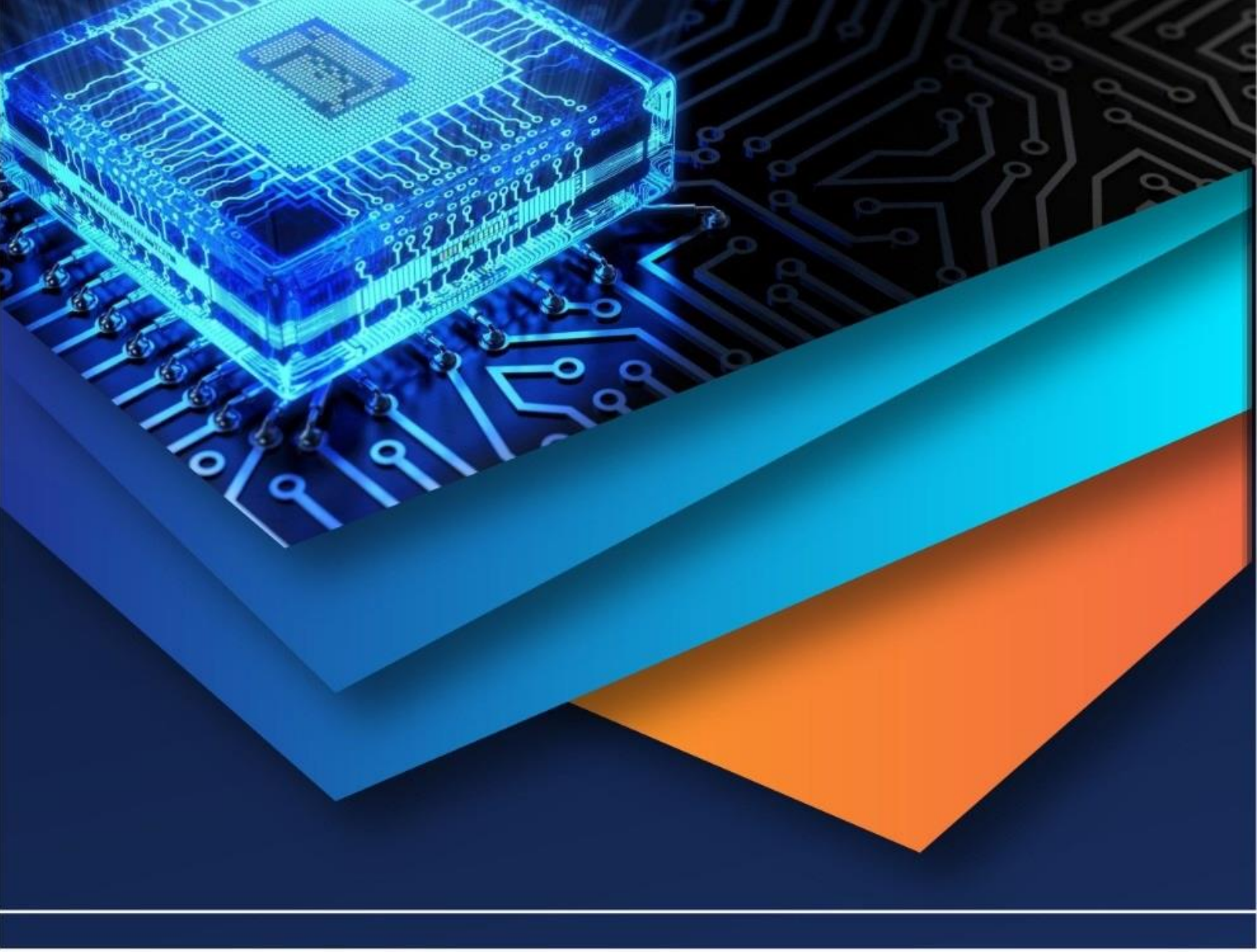

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