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Integrating ARCS-V and MST motivation models into AI-supported distance education design: A synergistic approach

Harun SERPİL[a]
Cemil ŞAHİN[b]

[a] Anadolu Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi ORCID: 0000-0002-6293-9385
[b] Anadolu Üniversitesi, YDYO ORCID: 0000-0001-8752-0006

Abstract

This article proposes a new framework that integrates the ARCS-V (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction, and Volition) model and Motivational Systems Theory (MST) into AI-supported distance learning environments. The proposed framework shows how the integration of these models can support AI-supported student motivation in a more holistic way. By combining AI tools with motivation assessment, adaptive interventions and synergistic support mechanisms, customized distance learning environments can be developed according to student needs. Combining the strengths of the ARCS-V model, which focuses on providing engaging and satisfying learning experiences, with MST, which emphasizes the importance of personal goals, emotions, and environmental factors, this new approach suggests a more holistic and effective way to sustain student motivation. The paper examines how the ARCS-V and MST models can be combined with the assessment, intervention and support dimensions of Artificial Intelligence in distance education settings. By integrating these two motivational models in ODL with the support of AI, not only effective presentation of content but also increased student engagement can be achieved.

Keywords: Motivation, ARCS-V Motivation Model, Motivational Systems Theory, Artificial Intelligence-Assisted Instructional Design

ARCS-V ve MST motivasyon modellerinin yapay zekâ destekli uzaktan eğitim tasarımıyla bütünleştirilmesi: Sinerjik bir yaklaşım

Özet

Bu çalışma, ARCS-V (Dikkat, Alaka, Güven, Memnuniyet ve İstek) modelini ve Motivasyon Sistemleri Teorisini (MST) yapay zekâ destekli uzaktan eğitim ortamlarına entegre eden yeni bir çerçeve önermektedir. Önerilen çerçeve ile bu modellerin entegrasyonunun, YZ destekli öğrenci motivasyonunu daha bütüncül bir şekilde nasıl destekleyebileceği gösterilmektedir. YZ araçları ile motivasyon değerlendirme, uyarlanabilir müdahaleler ve sinerjik destek mekanizmalarını birleştirerek öğrenci ihtiyaçlarına göre özelleştirilmiş uzaktan eğitim ortamları geliştirilebilir. İlgi çekici ve doyurucu öğrenme deneyimleri sağlamaya odaklanan ARCS-V modelinin güçlü yönlerini, kişisel hedeflerin, duyguların ve çevresel faktörlerin önemini vurgulayan MST ile birleştiren bu yeni yaklaşım, öğrenci motivasyonunu sürdürmek için daha bütünsel ve etkili bir yol önermektedir. ARCS-V ve MST modellerinin uzaktan eğitim ortamlarına Yapay Zekanın değerlendirme, müdahale ve destek boyutlarıyla nasıl birleştirilebileceği incelenmektedir. Uzaktan eğitimde bu iki motivasyon modelinin yapay zekâ desteğiyle bütünleştirilmesi ile yalnızca içeriğin etkili sunumu değil aynı zamanda öğrenci katılımının da arttırılması sağlanabilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Motivasyon, ARCS-V Motivasyon Modeli, Motivasyon Sistemleri Teorisi, Yapay Zekâ Destekli Öğretim Tasarımı

Kaynak Gösterme

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Introduction

The open and distance education environment has undergone a significant transformation with the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. This evolution presents both opportunities and challenges for maintaining student motivation, a critical factor in educational success (Garrison et al., 2010). Although a variety of motivational design models exist, two in particular are highlighted: Keller's ARCS-V model (Keller, 2016) and Ford's motivational systems theory (Ford, 1992). However, these models have traditionally been applied separately, limiting their effectiveness in AI-enhanced learning environments. The rapid advancement of AI in education has led to the need for more sophisticated approaches to motivational design that can leverage technological capabilities while addressing the unique challenges of distance learning. This paper proposes a novel integration of ARCS-V and MST models specifically tailored for AI-enhanced distance learning environments. With the emergence of open and distance education as an important component of modern learning systems, the educational landscape has undergone a profound transformation in recent years (Moore, 2023). This evolution has been further accelerated by technological developments, particularly in the field of AI, which offer new opportunities to personalize and enhance the learning experience (Holmes & Tuomi, 2022). However, as distance learning platforms become more sophisticated, maintaining learner motivation remains a challenge that requires innovative solutions. The ARCS-V model, an extension of Keller's original ARCS model, includes attention, relevance, confidence, satisfaction, and volition as key components of learner motivation (Keller, 2016), which has been successfully applied in various educational contexts with research demonstrating its effectiveness in both traditional and digital learning environments (Kim & Frick, 2011).

Recent research has shown that AI-powered systems can adapt to individual learning patterns, provide personalized feedback, and create engaging learning experiences that align with both ARCS-V and MST principles (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). For example, intelligent tutoring systems have demonstrated the ability to sustain learner attention through adaptive content delivery while supporting autonomy through personalized learning pathways (VanLehn, 2011). However, the effective integration of these motivational models with AI-supported distance learning systems requires careful consideration of both the theoretical foundations and practical implementation strategies. While existing research has examined various aspects of AI in education (Holmes & Tuomi, 2022) and the application of motivational theories in distance education (Moore, 2023), there is a need for comprehensive frameworks that specifically address the intersection of these fields. This study aims to address this gap by examining how the ARCS-V and MST motivation models can be effectively applied together in AI-enabled open and distance education design, and by synthesizing these models to deliver more effective and engaging distance learning experiences that leverage AI while maintaining the theoretical foundation of motivation. Understanding how motivational models can inform the integration of AI in distance learning is critical to developing systems that not only deliver content effectively, but also encourage student engagement. AI can provide adaptive learning environments by integrating motivational assessment, adaptive interventions, and synergistic support mechanisms. This study examines AI-driven frameworks that revolutionize student engagement through real-time monitoring, personalized content customization, and powerful self-regulation support, and presents several implications for distance education applications.

Motivation Design Models for Online Distance Learning Environments

One of the reasons for low student graduation rates (Pittenger & Doering, 2010), which is one of the weaknesses of distance education, is that motivational instructional design has not been sufficiently addressed and neglected by distance education institutions. However, the changing public perspective on higher education in recent years has led many institutions in our country, as well as around the world, to turn their attention to open and distance education and to take steps to increase the number of students and maintain the continuity of existing students in programs with academically and financially sound, sustainable, and innovative strategies. Motivational design models have become an important strategic goal around the world to increase student retention and graduation rates (Fang et al., 2023; Geary & Xu, 2022; Sung & Huang, 2022). An engaging instructional design that ensures learner motivation is key to successful distance education, and motivation should be integral to all stages of this instructional design process (Huett et al., 2008). When successfully implemented, motivational instructional design plays a critical role in both increasing the quality and depth of learning by building and sustaining learner motivation and increasing student satisfaction by positively contributing to learner self-efficacy and confidence (Keller, 2008; Keller & Suzuki, 2004).

Park and Choi (2009) stated that adult learners sometimes drop out of distance education programs due to extrinsic reasons such as heavy workload, lack of time to study, job change, and sometimes due to intrinsic reasons such as online course layout, instructional design, and learner motivation, and that proper course design and use of technology can mitigate the effects of extrinsic reasons, while intrinsic reasons such as course design and learner motivation should be considered as priority objectives in the course development stages to ensure and maintain student interest in the course. Considering that universities have no control over the extrinsic factors that affect program dropout rates, together with the feeling of loneliness caused by the lack of a campus, Fang et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of course design in terms of ensuring that learners actively participate in the course and addressing learner needs. However, if we look at the developments in the field of distance education and the advances in IT technologies in recent years, we can see that content delivery technologies have been strengthened, but systematic design and evaluation systems have not developed at the same pace (Garlinska et al., 2023; Gonzalez & Quiroz, 2019). In some ways, this has created the problem of what is technologically feasible taking precedence over what is pedagogically desirable in determining the content offered to learners. Similarly, while a great deal of time, energy, and resources are spent on content development and its implementation in learning environments, the analysis and evaluation processes that should take place in the context of whether the content achieves the goals set, its impact on learner motivation, and its pedagogical usefulness have not been adequately addressed.

However, the lack of clear instructional design guidelines (Martens et al., 2007), the inevitable involvement of intangible elements such as creativity, intuition, different perspectives, and the rapid changes in cultural, psychological, sociological, and technological factors that will affect learner motivation, make instructional design processes ineffective and inefficient in the educational sector as well as in the private sector. In this context, it would be appropriate to take a look at Keller's ARCS and Ford's MST motivational design models, which are widely used in open and distance learning environments as well as in face-to-face environments, and see what kind of design solutions they offer in terms of individual differences.

Keller's ARCS-V Motivation Model

Keller's ARCS-V Motivation Model (*Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction ve Volition)* is recognized as the most influential and widely used framework in motivation research. This model has been proposed as a solution to the problem of motivation in distance learning environments (Ucar & Kumtepe, 2020). These four categories represent the conditions necessary for a person to be fully motivated, and each has components or subcategories (Keller & Suzuki, 2004). These concepts also support the phenomenon of motivation by describing attitudes and behaviors that help learners overcome barriers to learning and continue to increase their efforts to achieve their goals (Keller, 2008). These four categories and 20 subcategories developed within *expectancy-value theory* synthesize behavioral, cognitive, and affective theories of learning and demonstrate that learner motivation can be influenced by external conditions (Huett et al., 2008; Wigfield, 1994). These categories also serve as a framework for developing instructional strategies to capture and maintain learner attention, determine the relevance of the material being taught, develop and maintain learner confidence, and increase learner satisfaction through intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

In addition to these four categories, Keller added "volition" as a fifth element to the ARCS model to address issues such as navigation problems, distractions, and cognitive load that are common in online learning environments, which Markus Deiman, a German professor, pointed out in the context of multimedia applications, and examined the reasons why individuals cannot maintain their behaviors in line with learning goals in such online learning environments and tried to produce effective solutions and strategies (Simsek, 2014). Keller and Suzuki (2004) state that the use of volition is important to keep learners interested in the learning activity in online environments where distractions are quite intense. Volition means "the tendency and determination of an individual to continue with the action he/she has started despite the existence of other highly attractive activities/actions to be performed" and its inclusion in the motivational design process is important to improve learners' attitudes toward the course, optimize their study habits, and increase their success (Keller, Deimann & Liu, 2005).

Attention: The curiosity of the learners should be directed to the lesson at the beginning with an unexpected simple interesting event. In addition, techniques such as mysteries and unsolved problems should be used to stimulate a sense of inquiry in the learner. Another important element is the diversification of learning activities in order to maintain sustained attention.

Relevance*:* The content should have a meaningful value for the learner that he/she can use in his/her future professional life or benefit academically. The examples and analogies given should be designed within the framework of the learners' own goals by relating them to the learners' interests and experiences.

Confidence*:* The goals must be clearly articulated so that learners have positive expectations of success and low self-confidence.

Satisfaction*:* Positive feelings about one's own achievements and learning experience. It can be supported by extrinsic rewards such as grades, promotions, certificates, etc., but it should also be supported by intrinsic motivators such as praise, expression of success, fair and equal treatment, etc., which increase student satisfaction.

The most important contribution of the ARCS-V model to the field of educational design is that the model not only identifies and classifies motivational elements (Kayak & Mahiroğlu, 2010), but also shows how and when to use the identified motivational tactics in the context of learners' individual characteristics and needs within a systematic motivational design process (Keller, 2008; Keller & Suzuki, 2004). ARCS Motivation proposes a 10-step systematic design process.

The first four stages of the ARCS-V design process involve gathering detailed information about the course content and the target audience, the learners, and identifying and analyzing existing motivation gaps. The fifth step is to decide what the motivational design goals will be as a result of these analyses and what evaluation methods will be used to measure the effectiveness of these goals. The next steps involve identifying possible solutions, deciding on the most appropriate tactics and design solutions given time, resources, and other constraints, and developing materials by integrating them with content. The final stage, as in all similar systems, is the process of evaluating the results of the design and planning changes as needed.

Although Keller's (2008) ARCS-V motivational design model has been shown to meet the motivational needs of students in online environments and increase retention rates in distance education (Huett et al., 2008; Pittinger & Doering, 2010), it also has some limitations. One of the main challenges in using the 10-step design process is that it is time consuming and not practical for small projects (Keller & Suzuki, 2004). More importantly, if a wrong or superficial start is made in the early stages of the design process, it is difficult to recover, even if the most rigorous methods are used in the later stages. Another important limitation of the ARCS-V design model is its inability to explain how information processing elements are integrated into the learning process and how these elements interact with motivation (Ghani et al., 2024; Woo, 2014). Specifically, in the context of Mayer's (2021) principles for designing multimedia content, it has been noted that the ARCS-V design model cannot produce valid solutions in environments where course content and information are not presented in a linear fashion with traditional methods, but are distributed online with various audio-visual multimedia applications (Ghani et al., 2024; Woo, 2014). One of the most important reasons for this situation is that in such multimedia-based learning environments, non-linear information presentation methods (sub-links, automatic links, etc.) are effective and learners use information access features randomly. In other words, learners prefer to access the content not in the way planned by the designer, but taking into account their own priorities and understanding.

Although the ARCS-V model has successfully synthesized the findings of many motivation researches such as Deci and Ryan's (1985) *Learner Motivation Framework*, Skinner's (1968) *Behavioral Management*, and Bandura's (1995) *Self-Efficacy Theory*, it does not adequately address important issues such as cooperative learning, social presence, flow theory, environmental factors and aesthetic approach (Robison & Watson, 2013; Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023). In addition, the ARCS-V model has also been criticized for its approach to social or academic identity formation and the effects of motivation on perception management. The ARCS-V model provides a complete model to guide educational designers in the field of practice with its ease of use, but it does not adequately address many factors that affect learners' motivation.

However, with today's digital development in recent years, ODL environments are also undergoing a major transformation. In other words, digital transformation is reshaping today's learning environments and providing an opportunity to incorporate motivational structures and learner support strategies into instructional design. Göksu and Bolat (2020) conducted a meta-analysis to examine the effects of the ARCS motivational model on student achievement, motivation, attention, relationship, confidence, and satisfaction. The analysis included 38 controlled experimental studies involving 8,690 students in K-12 and higher education. The overall effect of the ARCS model on academic achievement was moderate (ES = 0.74), while the effect on motivation was small (ES = 0.43). The effect on achievement varied by discipline, while the effect on motivation varied by educational level. It was observed that the ARCS model had strong effects on attention (very large ES), and positive results were obtained especially in the areas of blended learning, robotics, augmented reality, and STEM in undergraduate education. He also suggested that the ARCS model can increase both academic achievement and motivation, especially in STEM disciplines, and encouraged further use of the model in teaching computer technology and mathematical skills. Maiti et al. (2023) developed a modified version of the ARCS model called *ARCS-PC* to increase student motivation in online courses. "PC" stands for *professional competence*, and the model includes digital quizzes, assignments, and interactive activities using ICT tools offered through the

Microsoft Teams platform. Linear regression analysis was used to evaluate the effectiveness of this model. The results showed that the ARCS-PC model, which focuses on lifelong learning, collaborative learning, and a learner-centered approach, resulted in an 11.21% improvement in student performance compared to an 8.8% improvement in traditional models.

Ford's Motivational Systems Theory (MST)

Ford's theory of motivational systems builds on Keller's ARCS-V model to create a powerful model of motivation that educational designers can use. According to Ford, the field of motivation is like an orchestra in which each musician plays his or her own favorite piece, which contains very pleasant melodies but is dominated by dissonance, disharmony, and chaos. What needs to be done is to repair the disorder in a rational way by synthesizing the theories and data presented so far (Ford, 1992). Ford's Motivation Systems Theory defines the basic elements of motivation while linking these elements to other theories of motivation (Richardson, 2009). MST defines motivation not as a singular concept, but as a highly integrated system that directs, accelerates, and regulates goal-directed activity. In other words, motivation involves the interaction of personal goals, self-efficacy perceptions (perceptions of one's own abilities), contextual beliefs (perceptions of whether the environment provides the necessary support), and emotional arousal processes (the power to mobilize the individual to exert effort) (Colbeck & Weaver, 2008). Ford identifies the strengths and limitations of each of the 32 motivational theories he examines and integrates them into a comprehensive framework.

Like the ARCS-V model, Ford's MST focuses on the learner, but unlike ARCS-V, it considers the individual in a biological, social, and environmental, or ecological, context. Ford (1992) expresses this perspective with the concept of the individual in context. In other words, the concept of motivation is not only a concept related to the individual, but also an issue that should be addressed with the interaction of the individual with his/her environment (Robinson, 2013). Whenever someone wants to motivate someone else, that individual becomes a part of the environment of the person he/she wants to motivate and plays a role in his/her effective functioning. Ford symbolically describes the concept of motivation: *Performance/Competence = Motivation x Ability x Responsive Environment* (Campbell, 2007). Thus, those interested in using motivational techniques need to consider not only the techniques they use, but also their relationship to the individuals who will be using them and, in particular, their broader characteristics, including their contextual beliefs such as self-confidence (Ford, 1992).

Ford also formulated the processes that would contribute to the effective in-context functioning of the individual at a more general level as follows:

$$\boldsymbol{Performance/Competence} = \frac{\boldsymbol{Motivation} * \boldsymbol{Ability} * \boldsymbol{Responsive\ Environment}}{\boldsymbol{Biology}}$$

In this case, effective functioning requires the individual with biological and behavioral competencies to interact effectively with the information, materials, and resources around him/her on the way to achieving the set goals. If any of these elements are not present at a sufficient level, it will not be possible to fully realize success and thus achieve competence (Ford, 1992). Motivation Systems Theory does not attempt to replace or substitute existing theories, but rather attempts to organize various motivational structures from different theories into a single model. In short, in MST theory, motivation is a concept structured in the context of individual goals, affective stimulus processes, and self-determination. There are many studies that show that when individuals set clear and challenging goals, as opposed to vague and easy goals, they make more active efforts and show high performance (Jamison, 2003). The emotional energy level and affective experience associated with the goal will either drive the individual toward the goal or prevent him/her from taking action (Campbell, 2007). Motivation is also a concept closely related to the level of confidence in one's own effort and ability in the context of environmental factors in the process of achieving the goal. Ford (1992) states that the availability of environmental conditions, clear and challenging goals, and the possession of the necessary skills and abilities are not sufficient for success. According to Ford, individuals must also believe that these abilities and opportunities will lead them to success.

When examining the MST model, it becomes clear that the motivational design serving as a bridge to help learners achieve their learning competencies must be grounded in five key elements: the individual characteristics of learners, the nature of the learning activities, the attributes of the instructional delivery system, the characteristics of the content being taught, and the features of the learning environment. Design strategies that revolve around these elements involve complex processes, such as crafting and sequencing learning tasks that promote learner interaction, align with learning objectives, and match individual learner traits with the characteristics of the learning environment in the selection and organization of activities. The strength of MST is that it addresses the conceptual bottlenecks, inconsistencies, lack of consensus, and lack of practical benefits common to many other motivation theories. As a comprehensive model, MST provides a conceptual framework that combines the strengths of other motivation theories into a logical whole (Richardson, 2009). Unlike the ARCS-V model, the MST model takes a more systematic approach by integrating all environmental factors into a single structure, the "sensitive environment," but it cannot be said to match the ARCS model in providing the details that will help us make practical analysis and educational design.

Integration of ARCS-V and MST: A Synergistic Approach

The proposed integration framework here combines motivational assessment, adaptive intervention systems, and synergistic support mechanisms, drawing on the complementary strengths of ARCS-V and MST models. Through continuous monitoring, personalized content adjustments, and self-regulatory supports, AI systems can dynamically tailor educational content to students' motivations and capabilities. Song et al. (2024) underscore the effectiveness of these systems in adjusting the pace and sequence of content delivery, while Alqahtani et al. (2023) highlight the value of Natural Language Processing (NLP) in analyzing student engagement. Numerous studies have examined the positive impact of AI tools on student motivation in language learning. For instance, Ebadi and Amini (2024) demonstrated that AI tools enhanced motivation and engagement among students learning English as a foreign language. Yang et al. (2024) further emphasized that AI increased motivation by offering a more personalized and immersive learning experience. Additionally, Gupta (2024) found that gamification within AI-based environments bolstered motivation and engagement. Yuan and Liu (2025) observed that Duolingo's AI-driven tool significantly boosted motivation, engagement, and overall enjoyment of language learning among Chinese EFL students. Similarly, Kruk and Kałużna (2024) reported that students using AI exhibited heightened curiosity, excitement, and motivation during the translation process. Overall, AI tools contribute to more active student involvement in the educational process by enhancing motivation.

The ARCS-V and MST models can be integrated to create a more comprehensive framework for promoting motivation in AI-driven distance learning environments. By combining the process-oriented approach of ARCS-V with the holistic, context-aware perspective of MST, educators can design learning experiences that address both the mechanics of engagement and the individual needs of learners. One approach to integration is to use MST to inform the early stages of the ARCS-V design process. By considering individual students' characteristics, the nature of the learning activity, and the broader learning environment, educators can better understand the motivational challenges and opportunities of a course or program. This insight can then guide the selection of ARCS-V strategies, tailoring them to the specific needs and goals of the target audience. For example, understanding students' prior experiences, self-efficacy, and personal goals (MST elements) can help educators design activities and feedback mechanisms that promote relevance, confidence, and satisfaction.

AI can play a crucial role in boosting student engagement by monitoring motivation in real time and providing personalized support based on ARCS-V and MST principles. For instance, AI can analyze student behaviors, emotions, and progress to identify motivational challenges and then trigger automatic adjustments, such as tailored feedback, changes in content difficulty, or alternative learning paths. By adapting to shifts in motivation, AI helps maintain engagement, fostering both immediate satisfaction and long-term motivation.

AI can also enhance the integration of ARCS-V and MST by creating synergy between different motivational factors. For example, it can connect attention and emotion by adjusting content timing, difficulty, and engagement strategies based on real-time data. Similarly, AI can align relevance with personal goals by adapting learning paths, suggesting real-world applications, and tying content to career aspirations (Guo et al., 2024). These connections amplify the effectiveness of motivational strategies, supporting a more holistic and sustained approach to student engagement.

This integrated approach to motivational design offers both theoretical and practical advantages. It blends process-oriented and systems-based strategies, incorporates social learning, and provides holistic motivational support. It creates a more dynamic and responsive learning environment by providing real-time assessment and personalized interventions. It also enhances self-regulation by combining emotional support with goal tracking and adaptive guidance. By adopting this approach and leveraging AI, educators can go beyond delivering content and create engaging, motivating experiences that empower distance learners to succeed. The figure below illustrates the dimensions of this proposed integration.

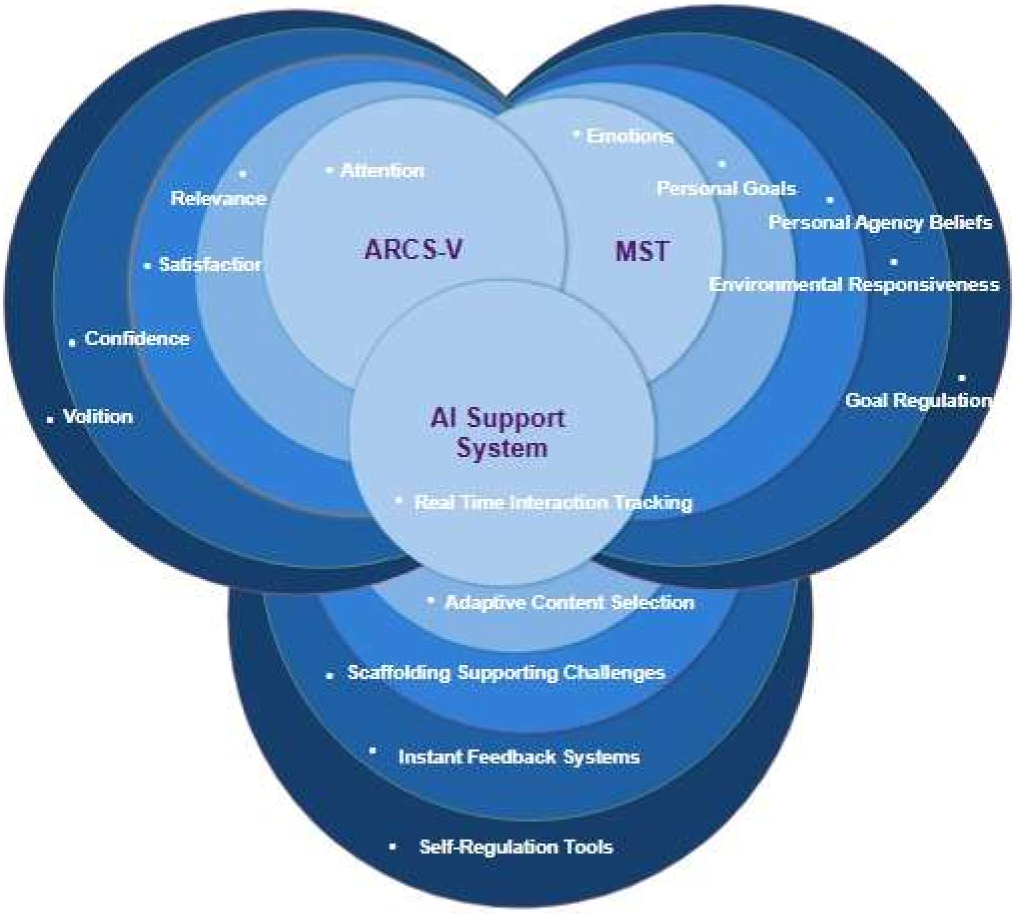

Figure 1. *The AI-supported integrated motivational system*

Adaptive Content Delivery: Halkiopoulos and Gkintoni (2024) discuss the role of AI in adaptive learning systems that personalize content delivery. This aligns with the ARCS-V Relevance principle by tailoring content to individual learning needs and promoting a sense of competence (Confidence).

Predictive Analytics for Intervention: Dutta et al. (2024) present a comprehensive approach to using predictive analytics in online learning to identify at-risk students and inform interventions. This approach can be used to support self-regulation by proactively addressing potential challenges and encouraging a sense of control over the learning process.

Intelligent Intervention Systems: With intelligent intervention systems in distance education, AI can provide timely and personalized support (Katiyar et al., 2024). This is in line with the satisfaction and desire components of ARCS-V, as personalized interventions can increase learner satisfaction and support self-regulated learning. In the Table below, the integrated components of the ARCS-V and MST components are shown.

Table 1. *Integration of ARCS-V and MST Components with Artificial Intelligence Support*

ARCS-V Component	MST Component	AI Support Mechanism
Attention	Emotions	Real-time interaction tracking
Relevance	Personal Goals	Adaptive content selection
Confidence	Personal Agency Beliefs	Creating scaffolded challenges
Satisfaction	Environmental Responsiveness	Instant feedback systems
Volition	Goal Regulation	Self-regulation tools

AI-assisted Motivation Assessment

Continuous motivation assessment is key in AI-enabled learning, using real-time analysis of student behavior and natural language processing (NLP) to measure engagement. AI systems such as Zhang et al.'s (2023) eye-tracking algorithms and Wang et al.'s (2021) behavioral pattern recognition allow for continuous engagement tracking. Likewise, Santosh et al. (2024) successfully integrated real-time engagement prediction from gaze data with by using ChatGPT-generated summaries to enhance student engagement. These tools, combined with sentiment analysis of student responses, help assess students' emotional and cognitive states. Algorithms that detect emotional shifts through user interaction patterns allow for immediate, adaptive interventions (Yu et al., 2024). Tracking progress toward personalized learning goals is also crucial, as Halkiopoulos and Gkintoni (2024) note that aligning content and pacing with individual goals increases motivation and retention. This dynamic, responsive approach supports personalized feedback loops, which are vital for building self-efficacy and commitment to goals.

Adaptive Intervention

AI systems play a crucial role as adaptive tools in education by adapting to changes in student confidence and engagement (Guo et al., 2024). Song et al. (2024) highlight the effectiveness of personalized acceleration algorithms that adapt content delivery based on engagement data. Platforms such as *Smart Sparrow, ALEKS, Knewton Alta, Squirrelai,* and *DreamBox Learning* use real-time content adjustments to optimize learning paths and leverage algorithms such as Bayesian knowledge tracking to provide targeted, data-driven interventions for each student's needs. These adaptive systems also offer contextual support to help students manage their own progress by creating personalized examples that align with their goals. Furthermore, as Dutta et al. (2024) note, these platforms introduce a social element that fosters collaborative learning by encouraging peer connections around shared goals. This is in line with social constructivist theories that emphasize the importance of peer interaction in effective learning.

AI Support Mechanisms

AI enhances student engagement by creating synergy among key motivational components such as attention, emotion, relevance, goals, confidence, and agency (Guo et al., 2024). For example, AI-driven systems adjust content timing, difficulty, and modality to sustain focus and emotional engagement. *Kahoot!* can be used for interactive quizzes and games, *Nearpod* for interactive lessons, *Classcraft* for gamified learning, *Pear Deck* for interactive presentations, *Edpuzzle* for interactive videos, and *Socrative* for real-time assessment. As Fidan and Gencel (2022) note, multimodal strategies that adapt to a student's current state are crucial for maintaining attention over time. The integration of relevance and goals is another critical factor in fostering sustained engagement. As Li and Keller (2018) suggest, personalized learning paths aligned with individual career goals create a direct link between learning and real-world applications. This relevance boosts intrinsic motivation and helps students find meaning in abstract concepts. AI also supports confidence and agency by progressively challenging students and predicting their success. These adaptive tools encourage self-efficacy and autonomy. Song et al. (2024) emphasize how AI-driven platforms can transform passive learners into active, confident participants by guiding them toward targeted skill development.

AI-supported Monitoring and Adaptation

The use of AI in attention monitoring represents a significant advancement in personalized learning environments. Eye-tracking algorithms, such as those developed by Zhang et al. (2023), offer detailed engagement analysis by tracking where and how students direct their attention during educational tasks. When combined with Natural Language Processing (NLP) models, as seen in Alqahtani et al. (2023), which assess the depth of engagement, these tools provide a comprehensive understanding of student behaviors and needs. Adaptive content delivery systems can then adjust the pace and sequence of lessons based on attention patterns, ensuring that content remains engaging and suitably challenging.

Real-time monitoring systems, like Carnegie Learning's MATHia, demonstrate the power of AI in responding to student needs instantly, increasing engagement and promoting sustained focus (Fancsali et al. 2023; Katonane Gyonyoru, 2024).

Conclusion

Integrating AI into motivational models represents a significant theoretical advancement, merging process-oriented approaches like ARCS-V with systems-based frameworks such as Motivational Systems Theory (MST). This unified framework not only enhances the understanding of individual and collaborative motivational needs but also incorporates social learning, offering a more holistic view of student engagement. One of the primary benefits of this integration is enhanced adaptability. Real-time motivation assessment enables highly personalized interventions that adjust dynamically to each student's evolving needs, creating a responsive and flexible learning environment. Additionally, the combination of voluntary control with emotional support helps maintain motivation over time. AI-powered adaptive learning systems have the potential to revolutionize distance education by providing continuous, personalized, and data-driven interventions.

However, successful implementation requires careful attention to ethical, technical, and pedagogical factors. Future research could focus on refining adaptive models, integrating emerging technologies like emotion-aware systems, and exploring the long-term impact of AI-driven learning on diverse student populations. While AI holds great promise for creating synergy between the ARCS-V and MST models, practical examples of such synergistic support mechanisms remain limited. By analyzing students' emotions in real time, AI can dynamically adjust content presentation, difficulty, and engagement strategies to sustain attention and foster positive emotional experiences. AI systems can also facilitate personalized learning paths tailored to students' goals, align content with career aspirations to enhance relevance and motivation, offer feedback based on success prediction algorithms, and provide opportunities for skill development.

Suggestions

By employing AI-driven personalized learning and adapting content to individual needs, an integrated ARCS-V and MST motivation model proposed here can enhance learner motivation, creating engaging experiences that foster learner achievement. However, to fully realize this potential, ODL instructional design must capture not only cognitive but also affective and motivational states of learners. Instructional design in ODL should incorporate evidence-based principles, focusing on active learning, self-regulation, and metacognition to keep learners engaged. Advances in NLP and multimodal learning analytics can further enhance learner motivation by providing personalized feedback and fostering real-time interactions. Additionally, AI should support collaborative learning in ODL environments, and adapt to lifelong and life-wide learning contexts. Interdisciplinary collaboration, ethical practices, and empirical evaluation are crucial to ensuring that AI-driven personalized learning is effective and equitable. The motivational framework proposed in this paper serves as an initial conceptualization aimed at addressing the theoretical limitations of both ARCS-V and MST. Therefore, future research should focus on empirically assessing motivational impact.

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Author Information

Dr. **Harun SERPİL** is an assistant professor at Anadolu University, Faculty of Education. He received his MA degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from Bilkent University in 2000, and his Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction in 2016 from University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research interests include distance education, higher education, language education, andragogy, use of GAI in education, life-long learning, and educational sociology. He is currently a co-editor of the *Yükseköğretim Dergisi/TÜBA Higher Education Research/Review*. He has published 20 articles in national and international journals, and 7 international book chapters. He has presented 51 papers at international conferences. He is also a sworn interpreter, with 30+ years of translation/interpretation experience.

Address: Anadolu University, Faculty of Education, Curriculum & Instruction Department, Eskişehir, Türkiye
Phone: +90 222 3350580/3537
E-mail: hserpil@anadolu.edu.tr
https://avesis.anadolu.edu.tr/hserpil

Cemil ŞAHİN is a lecturer at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages. He graduated from Gazi University, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) program in 1999, and earned his MA degree from Anadolu University TEFL program in 2006. He is currently a doctoral student in ABD status at Anadolu University Open Education Faculty Distance Education Program, working on his dissertation. His research interests are corrective feedback and online instructional design.

Address: Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages, Eskişehir, Türkiye
Phone: +90 222 3350580/6031
E-mail: cemils@anadolu.edu.tr
https://avesis.anadolu.edu.tr/cemils