

# Role-Based Governance of Online Educational Platforms

Transparency • explainable automation • procedural legitimacy

---

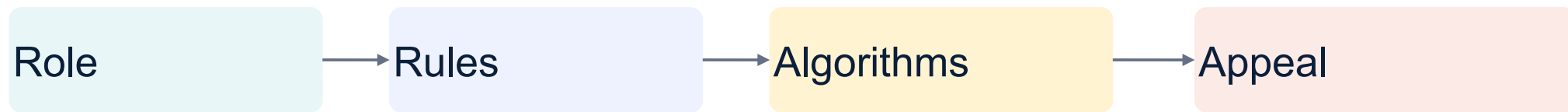
Dr. Mariyan Pantaleev Filipov  
Varna University of Management  
VSIM 2026

15 minutes

# Main thesis

The platform is a governance environment, not only a software tool

**A sustainable online educational platform emerges when participants understand their role, the rules, automated decisions, and the way they can respond.**

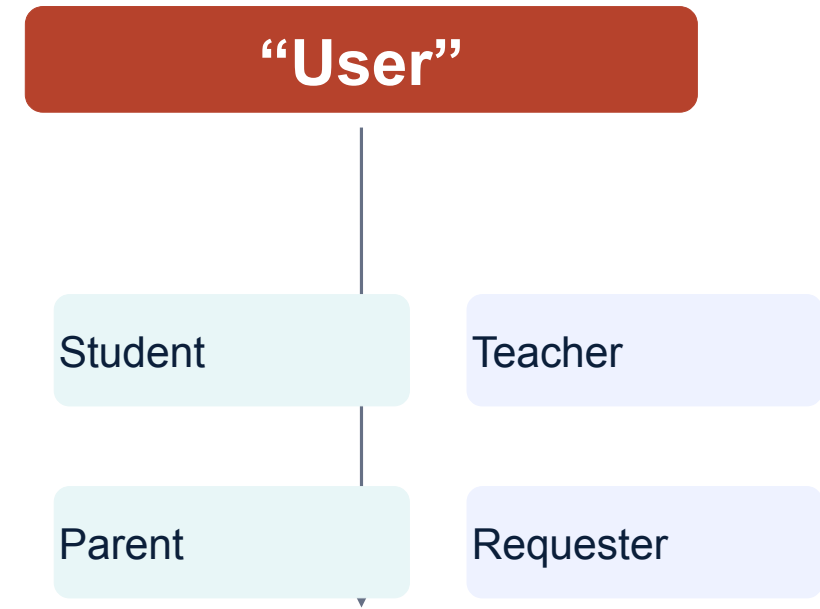


Procedural legitimacy

# The problem

Online platforms are often governed through the generic figure of the “user”

Different participants have different rights, risks, and criteria of value.  
Algorithms distribute visibility, recommendations, status, and moderation.  
When rules are unclear, trust is replaced by a sense of arbitrariness.



---

# Object, aim, and tasks

What exactly the paper investigates

## OBJECT

The governance architecture of the online educational platform

## AIM

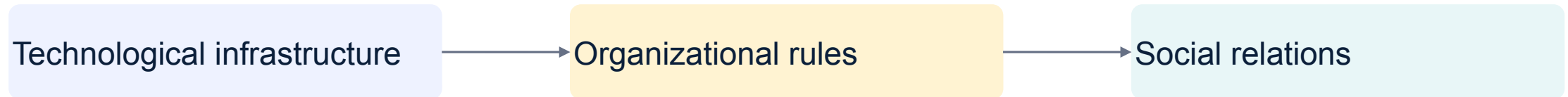
A role-based governance model grounded in empirical data

## TASKS

to justify the link between role, transparency, and legitimacy;  
to present role-specific and cross-role empirical tendencies;  
to formulate a governance model with protective mechanisms.

# Theoretical framework

Sociotechnical system + platform governance



**The platform is not assessed only by the quality of the software. It is assessed by how it distributes access, visibility, recognition, control, and responsibility.**

**Conclusion: technical efficiency without procedural fairness does not guarantee trust.**

# Role architecture

Four different positions in the same platform

Student  
progress  
motivation  
recognition

Teacher  
professional  
validity  
fair status

PLATFORM

Parent  
visibility  
signal  
protection

Requester  
accountability  
analytics  
value

---

# Procedural legitimacy

A decision may not be convenient, but it must be understandable and contestable

1

clear rules

2

explainable decisions

3

traceable responsibility

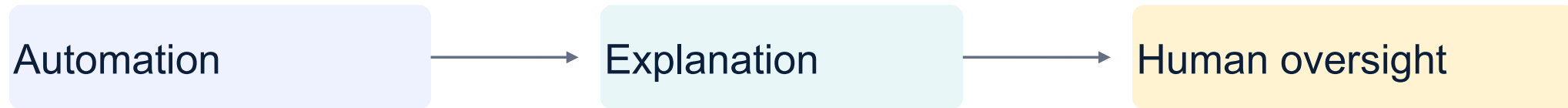
4

right to respond

**Legitimacy does not mean that everyone is satisfied. It means that the participant can understand the procedure, trace the decision, and access a channel for correction.**

# Explainable automation

Automation is acceptable when it does not hide governance



## ROLE-SPECIFIC MEANING OF EXPLANATION

the student understands how effort affects progress;  
the teacher understands rating, visibility, and moderation;  
the parent understands signals and recommendations;  
the requester understands use, impact, and return.

# Research design

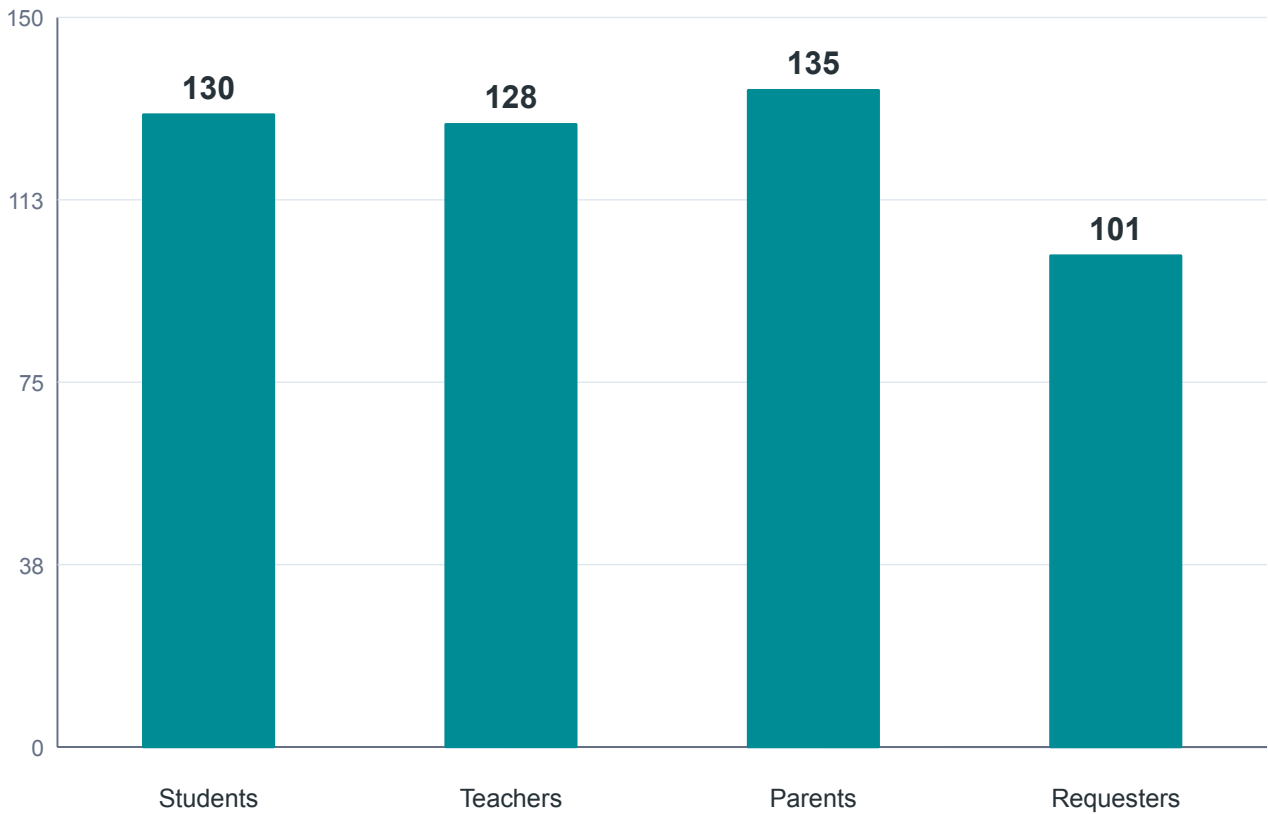
Diagnostic, comparative, and model-generating research



**Important limitation: the study does not measure the effect of an implemented platform; it measures perceptions and expectations toward key governance characteristics.**

# Sample

494 valid responses in four role groups



494

valid responses

4

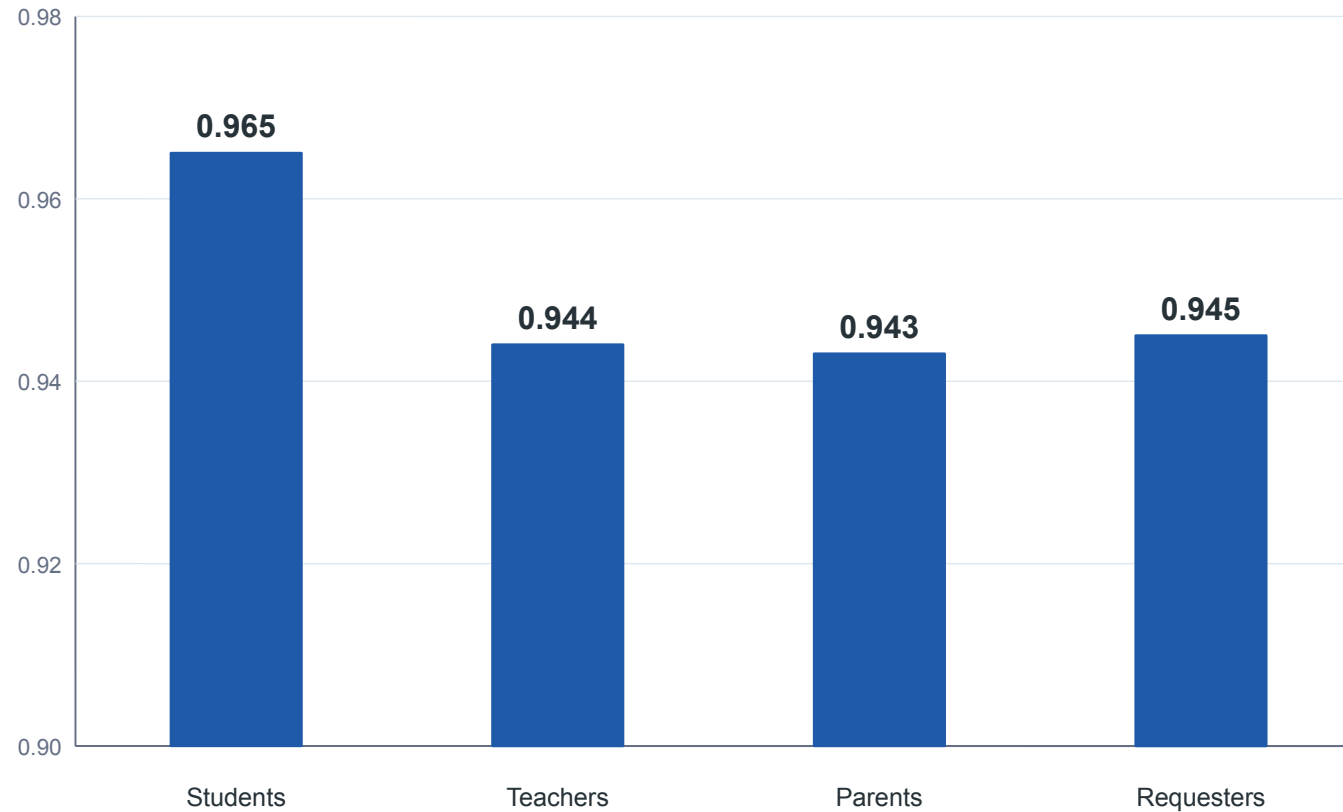
role-based instruments

Period: 10 June – 18 August 2025

Source: Author's research; Filipov, 2026.

# Reliability of the instruments

High internal consistency of the four questionnaires



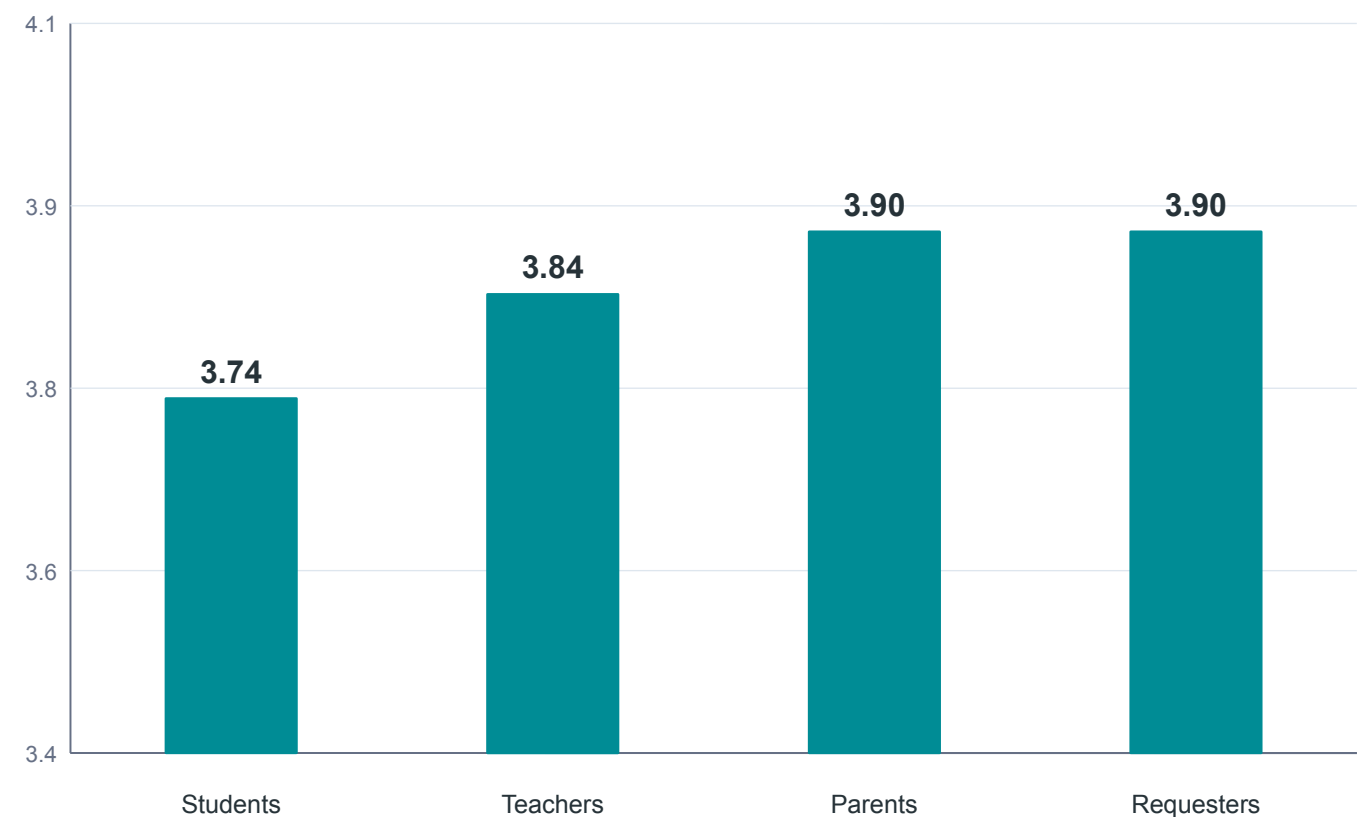
$$\alpha = 0.943 - 0.965$$

Reliability supports the use of the instruments, while very high values also call for attention to overlap among similar items.

Source: Author's research; Filipov, 2026.

# Mean profiles by role

All groups are above the neutral point



## Conclusion

Differences among roles do not undermine the model. They show why a single generic interface and one common rule set are not enough.

Highest overall profiles: parents and requesters — 3.90.

Source: Author's research; Filipov, 2026.

# Profile 1: students and ordinary users

Motivation, visible progress, and social recognition

4.01

higher motivation when a peer  
recognizes the effort

3.95

unclear goals and rules lead to  
demotivation

Governance meaning

progress must be visible;  
effort must lead to an understandable  
result;  
recognition must be more than a  
formal badge.

Source: Author's research; Filipov, 2026.

---

## Profile 2: teachers and content creators

Professional validity and fair visibility

4.09

status should depend on real  
activity, not administration

4.06

public logic of rating and  
moderation

Governance meaning

ratings must have a public logic;  
moderation must be explainable;  
professional contribution must lead to  
role, status, and development.

Source: Author's research; Filipov, 2026.

# Profile 3: parents

Visibility without over-control

4.22

insufficient motivation of the child  
to participate

4.19

need for greater visibility of  
progress

Governance meaning

the parent needs information, but should  
not replace student autonomy;  
a channel for signals and feedback is  
needed;  
visibility must be protective, not  
controlling.

Source: Author's research; Filipov, 2026.

# Profile 4: requesters and external stakeholders

Accountability, analytics, and returnable value

4.15

mechanism for reporting  
favoritism

4.14

regular summary of use and  
impact

Governance meaning

external contribution must be  
traceable;  
analytics must show actual use and  
impact;  
a procedure against favoritism and  
opaque visibility is needed.

Source: Author's research; Filipov, 2026.

---

# Cross-role tendency 1

Transparency is a basic condition of trust

**When criteria are unclear, the platform is experienced as arbitrary.**

progress

rating

moderation

recommendations

signals

Governance implication: the platform must publish understandable criteria, not only final outcomes.

## Cross-role tendency 2

Recognition must be a governance mechanism



Recognition is not just a badge. It is feedback, reputation, access to a new role, professional development, and visibility of contribution.

---

# Cross-role tendency 3

Automation is acceptable if it is explainable and correctable

No: opaque human administration

No: untouchable automatic power

## Preferred logic

Hybrid governance: automation + explanation + human review

# Cross-role tendency 4

Feedback translates participation into trust

invisibility

no signal channel

no appeal

no analytics



Channel for proposal, signal, appeal, and traceable response

**Without the right to respond, participation remains formal.**

# The proposed model

Seven governance principles

1. Transparency

2. Explainable automation

3. Human oversight

4. Role clarity

5. Recognition and development

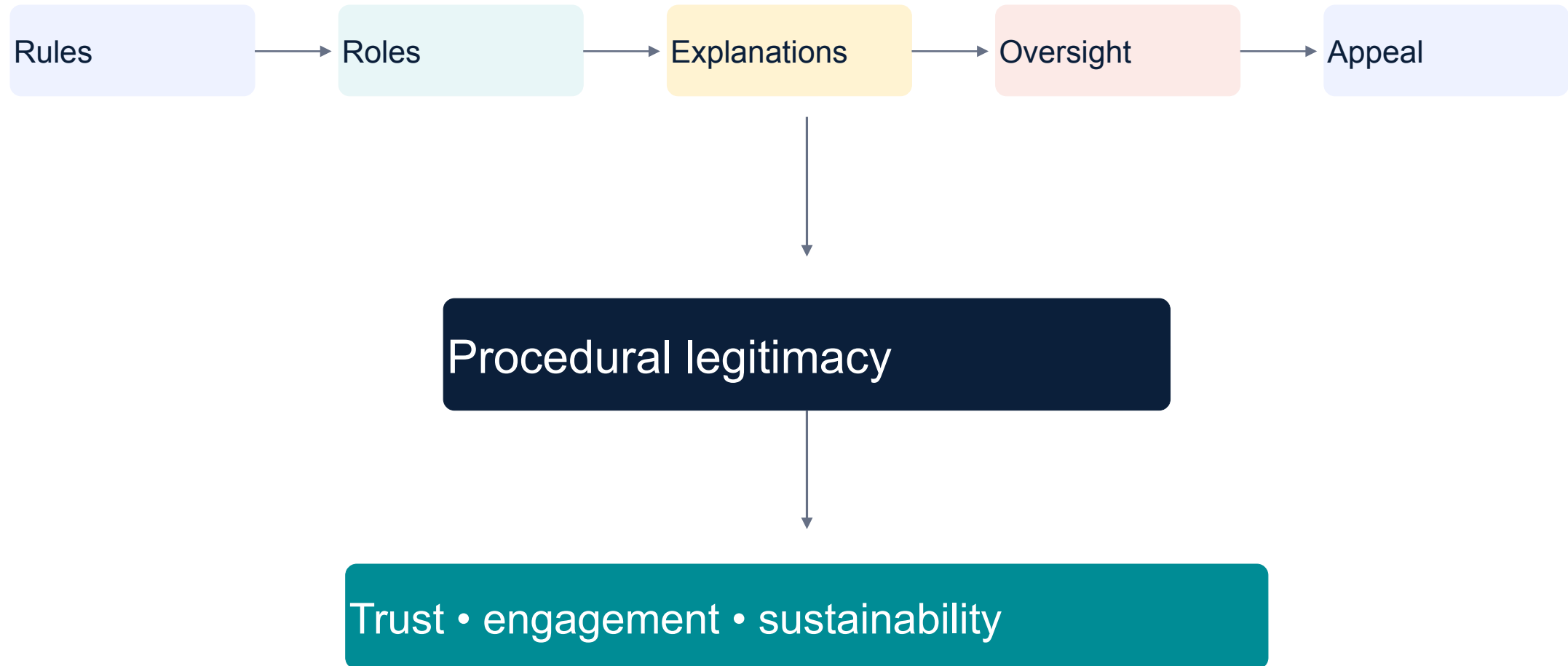
6. Voice and appeal

7. Sustainable value

Connecting principle: procedural legitimacy

# How the model works

From governance mechanisms to trust and sustainability



---

# Contribution and limitations

What the paper demonstrates and what it does not yet demonstrate

## CONTRIBUTION

role-based reframing of platform legitimacy;  
empirically supported governance directions;  
a model combining automation and human oversight.

## LIMITATIONS

purposive and convenience sampling;  
self-reported data;  
no measurement of long-term behaviour in an actually implemented platform.

Next step: pilot implementation and tracking of actual behaviour, satisfaction, trust, and sustainability over time.

# Conclusion

**A fair platform is not one that simply automates more.  
A fair platform is one that makes automation  
understandable, roles clear, and correction possible.**

---

Thank you for your attention

Questions and discussion