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A Stakeholder-Theoretical Reading of Avicenna's Tadbīr al-Manzil: A Tripartite Analysis for Contemporary Business Ethics

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Abstract

Stakeholder Theory, through its descriptive, instrumental, and normative dimensions, provides an influential framework for analyzing organizational relationships and ethical responsibilities. However, its application to classical Islamic philosophy, particularly Avicenna's account of household management (*tadbīr al-manzil*) in *al-Siyāsa*, has received little scholarly attention. This study examines *tadbīr al-manzil* through the analytical framework of Stakeholder Theory using documentary and comparative philosophical analysis. The findings indicate that both frameworks conceptualize social and economic life as networks of reciprocal relationships, although Avicenna's model reflects a hierarchical family structure whereas Stakeholder Theory adopts a more symmetrical conception of stakeholder relations. Both approaches emphasize relationship management, justice, and foresight as conditions for stability and effectiveness; however, Avicenna understands economic activity as a means to human flourishing (*sa□āda*), while Stakeholder Theory primarily emphasizes organizational sustainability and value creation. Although both frameworks recognize ethical responsibilities beyond self-interest, they differ fundamentally in their normative foundations: *tadbīr al-manzil* is grounded in *shari□a*, virtue ethics, and human nature, whereas Stakeholder Theory relies on modern ethical approaches. By bringing Islamic practical philosophy into dialogue with contemporary business ethics, this study offers a new comparative perspective for understanding ethical management across distinct intellectual traditions.

Introduction

The family, as one of the oldest and most fundamental social institutions, has long been a central subject of philosophical reflection. In the Islamic philosophical tradition, it is understood not merely as a biological or economic unit but as a moral institution in which human beings cultivate virtues, fulfill reciprocal responsibilities, and pursue human flourishing (*sa□āda*) in both worldly and spiritual dimensions. Within practical philosophy (*al-ḥikma al-□amaliyya*), household management (*tadbīr al-manzil*) constitutes one of the three principal domains of human governance, alongside ethics (*tadbīr al-nafs*) and politics (*tadbīr al-mudun*). Accordingly, Islamic philosophers developed principles governing family relationships, economic activities, and moral responsibilities.

Among the most important contributions to this tradition is Avicenna's concise yet influential treatise *al-Siyāsa* (also known as *Tadbīr al-Manāzil*), which presents a systematic account of household management. The treatise addresses such issues as the purposes of marriage, the distribution of family responsibilities, income and expenditure, children's education, the treatment of servants, and the ethical regulation of economic life. Although composed within a medieval Islamic context, its ethical-economic framework provides valuable resources for contemporary discussions of responsibility, management, and sustainable social relationships.

In contemporary business ethics and strategic management, Stakeholder Theory has emerged as one of the principal alternatives to the shareholder-centered model of the corporation. Rather than treating organizations solely as instruments for maximizing shareholder wealth, it conceptualizes the firm as a

network of relationships among individuals and groups whose interests possess intrinsic moral significance. Through its descriptive, instrumental, and normative dimensions, Stakeholder Theory offers a comprehensive analytical framework for explaining organizational relationships, evaluating managerial effectiveness, and justifying ethical responsibilities toward those affected by organizational activities.

Despite extensive scholarship on both Stakeholder Theory and Avicenna's practical philosophy, **no study has systematically interpreted** *Tadbīr al-Manzil* **through the descriptive–instrumental–normative framework of Stakeholder Theory.** Existing studies have generally focused on historical analyses of *al-Siyāsa*, examinations of Avicenna's economic and ethical ideas without a clearly articulated analytical framework, or comparisons with other philosophical traditions. Likewise, stakeholder scholarship has developed almost exclusively within modern organizational contexts and has devoted little attention to classical Islamic philosophy. This gap provides an opportunity to investigate whether Avicenna's household management contains stakeholder-like principles and how its ethical-economic framework may contribute to contemporary discussions of responsible management.

This study addresses the following question: **To what extent can Avicenna's** *tadbīr al-manzil* **be interpreted through the descriptive, instrumental, and normative dimensions of Stakeholder Theory, and what similarities and differences emerge between these two intellectual frameworks?** To answer this question, the study employs documentary analysis and comparative philosophical inquiry, drawing primarily on Avicenna's *al-Siyāsa* and related works alongside the foundational texts of Stakeholder Theory, particularly those of Freeman, Donaldson and Preston, Phillips, and McVea. Rather than claiming that Avicenna formulated a premodern version of Stakeholder Theory, the analysis identifies conceptual convergences and divergences between two distinct intellectual traditions.

This study contributes to the literature by introducing Stakeholder Theory as a novel analytical framework for interpreting Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil***. Rather than proposing a new stakeholder model, it demonstrates how a classical Islamic philosophical text can be systematically examined through a contemporary business ethics framework, thereby enriching dialogue between Islamic practical philosophy and modern management theory.**

The article is organized as follows. The first section clarifies the principal concepts of practical philosophy, *tadbīr al-manzil*, economy, and Stakeholder Theory. The second reviews previous scholarship and establishes the theoretical framework. The subsequent sections examine the descriptive, instrumental, and normative dimensions of Avicenna's household management in comparison with Stakeholder Theory. The final section evaluates the strengths, limitations, and contemporary implications of both frameworks before presenting the conclusion.

1. Conceptual Foundations

Before undertaking the comparative analysis of *tadbīr al-manzil* (household management) and Stakeholder Theory through their descriptive, instrumental, and normative dimensions, it is essential to clarify the principal concepts that underpin this study. Conceptual clarification is particularly important

because several of the key terms employed in this article originate from distinct philosophical and intellectual traditions and therefore carry different historical and theoretical connotations.

Accordingly, this section defines and contextualizes four central concepts: *tadbīr al-manzil* (household management), practical philosophy (*al-ḥikma al-ʿamaliyya*), the concept of economy within the Islamic philosophical tradition, and Stakeholder Theory. Establishing these conceptual foundations provides the analytical framework for the comparative discussion that follows.

1.1. Practical Philosophy (*al-Ḥikma al-ʿAmaliyya*) and *Tadbīr al-Manzil* (Household Management)

To understand the place of *tadbīr al-manzil* (household management) in Avicenna's philosophy, it is first necessary to examine the broader framework of practical philosophy (*al-ḥikma al-ʿamaliyya*) within which it is situated. Following the Aristotelian tradition, Avicenna divides philosophy into two principal branches: theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy. Whereas theoretical philosophy is concerned with the knowledge of reality as it is and seeks the attainment of truth, practical philosophy addresses the regulation of voluntary human actions and is directed toward the realization of the good and the attainment of *saʿāda* (human flourishing or happiness). Consequently, practical philosophy is not merely concerned with knowing, but with guiding human conduct in accordance with rational and ethical principles.

Avicenna defines practical philosophy in *Ilāhiyyāt-i Dānishnāma-yi ʿAlāʾī* (*The Metaphysics of the Dānishnāma-yi ʿAlāʾī*) as the discipline that "makes us aware of our actions and conduct, and its benefit lies in teaching us what we ought to do in order to organize our worldly affairs and remain hopeful for the hereafter" (Ibn Sīnā, 2004, p. 2). This definition demonstrates that practical philosophy is not confined to regulating temporal life. Rather, it integrates worldly order with humanity's ultimate spiritual end, presenting ethical conduct as the means through which both earthly well-being and eternal felicity may be achieved.

A more systematic account is provided by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī in *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (*The Nasirean Ethics*). He defines practical philosophy as "knowledge of the interests underlying voluntary movements and productive acts of the human species, in a manner that leads to the order of their worldly and otherworldly affairs and is conducive to the perfection toward which they aspire" (Ṭūsī, 1977, pp. 7–9). Al-Ṭūsī's formulation emphasizes that practical philosophy concerns the rational direction of voluntary action toward human perfection. Through the proper exercise of free choice, individuals cultivate both *maʿāsh* (worldly livelihood) and *maʿād* (the hereafter), thereby integrating moral responsibility with the pursuit of human flourishing. This perspective illustrates one of the distinctive characteristics of the Islamic philosophical tradition: practical philosophy seeks to harmonize ethical life, social order, and spiritual fulfillment within a single normative framework.

Within Islamic philosophy, practical philosophy is traditionally divided into three interrelated branches corresponding to the principal spheres of human existence: the individual, the household, and the political community. Avicenna explicitly adopts this tripartite classification in *al-Siyāsa* (*The Politics*),

where each branch performs a distinct yet complementary function in the cultivation of virtuous human life.

The first branch is *ethics* (*tahdhīb al-nafs*, self-refinement), which is concerned with the cultivation of moral character and the governance of the soul. Avicenna regards self-governance as the indispensable foundation of every higher form of governance. Accordingly, in *al-Siyāsa* he identifies the governance of the soul (*siyāsat al-nafs*) as the first stage of household administration, arguing that one who lacks mastery over oneself cannot successfully govern a household (Ibn Sīnā, 1985a, p. 17).

The second branch is *tadbīr al-manzil* (household management), which occupies an intermediate position between individual ethics and political governance. Avicenna defines it as "the manner of managing the household and the participation of the man with the woman, children, servants, and employees in organizing domestic affairs" (Ibn Sīnā, 2004, p. 266). His definition indicates that household management extends beyond the administration of material resources to encompass the ethical regulation of relationships among all members of the household.

Al-Ṭūsī develops this conception further by defining *tadbīr al-manzil* as "considering the condition of the family members in a manner that serves the common good, facilitates the means of livelihood (*ma□āsh*), and leads to the perfection that is desirable through collective participation" (Ṭūsī, 1977, pp. 34–35). In this formulation, the household is conceived not merely as an economic unit but as a moral community in which cooperation, shared responsibility, and the pursuit of human perfection constitute the principal objectives. Material well-being is therefore understood as one component of a broader ethical order rather than as an end in itself.

An essential element of this conception is the role of the ***mudabbir*** (household manager). Al-Ṭūsī compares the *mudabbir* to a physician who must understand the distinct disposition and circumstances of each member of the household and guide each toward his or her appropriate perfection (Ṭūsī, 1977, pp. 34–35). This analogy underscores that household management requires practical judgment, moral discernment, and administrative competence. It is therefore presented as a form of rational governance grounded in ethical responsibility rather than a purely technical or economic activity.

The foundations of this conception may be traced to al-Fārābī. In *Fuṣūl Muntaza□a* (*Selected Aphorisms*), al-Fārābī presents the household as an integrated social unit composed of four principal relationships: husband and wife, master and servant, father and child, and owner and property (al-Fārābī, 1985, pp. 40–41). The responsibility of the *mudabbir* is to establish harmony among these interconnected relationships so that each member may fulfill his or her proper function and contribute to the common good of the household.

Although Avicenna builds upon this Farabian foundation, his treatment of *tadbīr al-manzil* is more systematic and philosophically independent. Whereas al-Fārābī primarily discusses household management as a preparatory stage for political governance, Avicenna recognizes it as an autonomous branch of practical philosophy with its own subject matter, objectives, and principles. This development

is reflected most clearly in *al-Siyāsa*, whose discussions extend beyond household administration in the narrow economic sense to include questions concerning the rights and responsibilities of spouses, children, servants, and workers. Household management therefore emerges not merely as a doctrine of domestic administration but as a comprehensive ethical framework governing the reciprocal obligations that sustain family life and social order.

The third branch of practical philosophy is **political governance (***siyāsat al-madan***)**, which concerns the organization of human society and the establishment of a just political order. While ethics focuses on the refinement of the individual soul and *tadbīr al-manzil* addresses the regulation of household relations, political governance extends these principles to the wider community. Its ultimate aim is not merely the efficient administration of social affairs but the creation of the conditions necessary for collective flourishing and the realization of human perfection within a political community.

Within this tripartite structure of practical philosophy, *tadbīr al-manzil* occupies a mediating position between individual ethics and political governance. The household represents the first social environment in which moral virtues, cooperation, responsibility, and mutual obligations are cultivated. Consequently, the family is not understood merely as a private association or an economic unit; rather, it functions as the foundational institution through which individuals acquire the dispositions required for participation in broader social life. In this sense, household management serves as the bridge through which personal virtues are transformed into patterns of social cooperation and political order.

For Avicenna, the purpose of household management extends beyond the preservation of material resources or the satisfaction of immediate needs. The household provides a framework within which livelihood (*ma□āsh*), moral development, and human well-being are integrated. The proper administration of domestic affairs aims at achieving harmony among household members and creating the conditions for tranquility (*sukūn*), justice, and shared flourishing. Therefore, economic activities within the household are embedded within a broader ethical structure and cannot be separated from questions of responsibility, obligation, and human perfection.

Avicenna's account of household organization must also be understood within the historical and social context of medieval Islamic society. In this framework, family members were assigned complementary responsibilities intended to preserve the material and moral integrity of the household. The roles attributed to spouses, children, servants, and dependents reflected the social structures of Avicenna's time and were designed to maintain cooperation and order within the family. Thus, rather than interpreting these arrangements as merely economic divisions of labor, they should be understood as part of a broader ethical framework concerning mutual responsibilities and the preservation of the household as a moral community.

The significance of *tadbīr al-manzil* in Avicenna's philosophy therefore lies in its comprehensive understanding of governance. Governance begins with self-regulation, extends to the ethical management of the household, and culminates in the organization of political society. Through this hierarchical structure, Avicenna presents human flourishing as a process that unfolds across

interconnected levels of existence: the individual, the family, and the community. Accordingly, *tadbīr al-manzil* constitutes not an isolated theory of domestic administration but an essential component of practical philosophy that links personal virtue with social order.

1.2. The Concept of Economy in Islamic Literature and Its Distinction from Western Economics

A significant conceptual distinction underlying this study concerns the different meanings attributed to the concept of "economy" in Islamic intellectual tradition and modern Western economic thought. The Arabic term *iqtiṣād* derives from the root *q-ṣ-d*, which conveys meanings such as moderation, balance, and avoidance of excess and deficiency. This linguistic origin indicates that, within Islamic literature, economy is not initially conceived as a technical discipline concerned merely with the allocation of resources, but rather as an ethical principle governing human conduct through moderation and balance.

Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, in his *Mufradāt Alfāẓ al-Qur□ān* (Lexicon of Qur□ānic Terms), defines *iqtiṣād* as "the middle state, the two extremes of which are excess and deficiency" (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1992, entry "q-ṣ-d"). This understanding is reflected in the Qur□ānic description of the righteous as those who, when they spend, "are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but maintain a just balance between those extremes" (Qur□ān 25:67). Accordingly, economic behavior is presented not as a value-neutral activity but as a manifestation of moral character. The regulation of consumption, the control of desires, and the proper use of material resources are therefore understood as dimensions of ethical self-governance.

By contrast, although the Western term "economics" originates from the Greek *oikonomia*, which originally referred to household management (Merriam-Webster, 1988), the modern discipline of economics has developed a significantly different meaning. With the emergence of modern economic theory, particularly following Lionel Robbins's influential definition, economics became understood as "the science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses" (Robbins, 1935, p. 16). This formulation emphasizes scarcity, choice, and resource allocation, presenting economics primarily as an analytical and explanatory discipline concerned with human decision-making under conditions of limited resources.

The distinction between these two conceptual frameworks reflects deeper differences regarding the relationship between economic activity and human flourishing. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, economic conduct is embedded within a wider ethical order shaped by principles such as moderation, justice, and the common good. Material activities are evaluated not only according to their efficiency but also according to their contribution to moral development and social harmony. Modern economics, particularly in its dominant neoclassical form, has generally sought to establish itself as a positive science focused on explanation, prediction, and efficiency, often separating economic analysis from explicit moral considerations.

This conceptual distinction is essential for understanding Avicenna's conception of *tadbīr al-manzil*. In his philosophical framework, household management cannot be reduced to the technical administration of material resources. Rather, it represents an ethical practice in which the organization of livelihood,

relationships, and property is directed toward human perfection and the achievement of a well-ordered life. Therefore, the study of *tadbīr al-manzil* requires attention not only to economic functions but also to the moral and philosophical assumptions that shape them.

1.3. Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory has emerged as one of the most influential frameworks in contemporary business ethics and strategic management, challenging the traditional shareholder-centered model of corporate governance. In contrast to the view that the firm exists primarily to maximize shareholder wealth, stakeholder theory maintains that organizations bear ethical responsibilities toward a broader range of actors affected by their activities, including employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and the natural environment. Rather than understanding the firm merely as an instrument for creating shareholder value, this approach emphasizes the recognition of the legitimate interests and claims of multiple stakeholders whose well-being is connected to organizational decisions.

Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 66) characterize stakeholder theory as a "managerial" theory that "recommends the attitudes, structures, and practices that, taken together, constitute stakeholder management." The conceptual foundations of stakeholder theory can be traced to the 1960s, particularly to the work of the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), which emphasized the importance of considering the concerns of shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, lenders, and society in defining long-term organizational objectives (Freeman & McVea, 2001, p. 5).

The theory received its most influential and systematic formulation through R. Edward Freeman's *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* (1984), which established stakeholder-oriented management as a distinct framework within strategic management. Freeman and McVea (2001, p. 3) argue that the emergence of stakeholder theory was closely associated with increasing environmental uncertainty and organizational complexity, which made traditional strategy approaches insufficient for identifying new challenges and opportunities. In this context, stakeholder theory sought to provide a more comprehensive understanding of managerial decision-making by recognizing the interdependence between firms and the various groups that contribute to or are affected by organizational activities.

Contemporary scholarship generally identifies three interconnected dimensions within stakeholder theory. The descriptive dimension explains how organizations actually interact with different stakeholder groups; the instrumental dimension examines whether stakeholder-oriented management contributes to organizational effectiveness and performance; and the normative dimension addresses the ethical justification of stakeholder claims and the responsibilities organizations owe to stakeholders. These three dimensions provide the analytical framework for the comparative examination of stakeholder theory and Avicenna's conception of *tadbīr al-manzil* in the subsequent sections.

2. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative documentary analysis approach to examine Avicenna's conception of *tadbīr al-manzil* (*household management*) through the descriptive, instrumental, and normative dimensions of Stakeholder Theory. Documentary analysis is an established method in qualitative research that involves the systematic examination, interpretation, and analysis of textual sources in order to identify conceptual patterns, meanings, and theoretical relationships (Bailey, 1994, p. 35).

The primary corpus of this research consists of Avicenna's writings on practical philosophy, particularly his treatise *al-Siyāsa* (*Tadbīr al-Manāzil*), which serves as the central source for analyzing his conception of household management. To provide a broader understanding of the Islamic philosophical tradition of *tadbīr al-manzil*, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (*The Nasirean Ethics*) is also employed as a complementary source. These primary texts are examined with particular attention to discussions concerning household organization, the management of material affairs, the responsibilities of household members, and the ethical principles governing domestic relations.

In addition to primary philosophical texts, the study draws upon secondary sources in two areas: scholarly studies on Avicenna's practical philosophy and household management, and major works on Stakeholder Theory within business ethics and management literature. These sources provide the conceptual background necessary for the comparative analysis.

The process of analysis was conducted in four stages. First, relevant passages concerning *tadbīr al-manzil*, household relationships, material management, and ethical responsibilities were identified and extracted from Avicenna's and al-Ṭūsī's works. Second, the extracted material was categorized according to the three dimensions of Stakeholder Theory. The descriptive dimension was used to analyze the structure of household relations and the roles of its members; the instrumental dimension was applied to examine cooperation, organization, specialization, and the achievement of shared objectives; and the normative dimension was employed to investigate questions of justice, rights, obligations, virtue, and moral responsibility.

Third, the categorized findings were comparatively examined alongside the corresponding dimensions of Stakeholder Theory in order to identify areas of convergence and divergence between Avicenna's household model and contemporary stakeholder-oriented approaches. Finally, the study evaluates the theoretical strengths and limitations of both frameworks and considers the possibility of developing an integrative ethical model based on their comparative analysis.

To enhance the validity of the research, source triangulation was employed through the examination of multiple primary and secondary sources in Arabic, Persian, and English. The reliability of the analysis was strengthened by systematic textual examination, careful attention to original sources, and consistent interpretation of concepts within their historical, philosophical, and theoretical contexts.

Although this study provides a comparative analysis of Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* and Stakeholder Theory, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research focuses primarily on *al-Siyāsa* as the central text for examining Avicenna's account of household management, although other works,

such as *al-Shifā* and *Dānishnāma-yi Alā ī*, contain relevant ethical and philosophical discussions. Second, the study relies on published editions rather than manuscript-based textual criticism, as its purpose is conceptual and philosophical analysis rather than philological reconstruction. Third, the research is theoretical and interpretive and does not include empirical investigation; future studies may examine the practical relevance of the proposed framework through empirical research. Finally, the analysis focuses specifically on Avicenna's thought and does not provide a comprehensive comparison with all Islamic philosophers who contributed to practical philosophy, such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Miskawayh. These limitations also indicate potential directions for future research.

3. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Previous studies on *tadbīr al-manzil* and household economy in Avicenna's thought can be classified into four main categories.

a) Descriptive-historical studies

A number of studies have primarily focused on introducing and describing Avicenna's treatise *al-Siyāsa* and its philosophical significance. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād (1996) and Nūrānī-Nejād (2004) have provided foundational descriptions and analyses of Avicenna's *al-Siyāsa*. Similarly, Kirmānī and Salgī (2013) have examined domestic life from a philosophical perspective, although their analysis does not specifically address the economic dimensions of household management.

b) Economic studies

A second category includes studies that have examined the economic aspects of Avicenna's thought. Khalīlī Nūsh Ābādī (2022) and Arab-Lū (2014) have extracted and analyzed Avicenna's economic ideas and compared them with modern economic perspectives. In addition, Nurizal Ismail's master's thesis (2012) examined Avicenna's economic thought at both micro and macro levels. These studies have contributed significantly to identifying economic elements within Avicenna's philosophy; however, they generally approach his ideas from the perspective of economic thought rather than analyzing *tadbīr al-manzil* as an ethical framework of household governance.

Within contemporary business ethics and management literature, Stakeholder Theory has provided an influential framework for analyzing economic relationships beyond a purely shareholder-centered approach. Although the foundational works of Stakeholder Theory do not belong to the field of positive economics, they have significantly influenced discussions in managerial economics, institutional economics, and business ethics. Rather than focusing on mathematical models or market prediction, these studies examine the relationships between organizations and their stakeholders and emphasize that economic activities are embedded within social and ethical relationships (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman & McVea, 2001; Freeman, Phillips, & Sisodia, 2019). Nevertheless, despite their emphasis on ethical and social dimensions of economic relations, these studies have not engaged with the

tradition of Islamic practical philosophy or concepts such as *tadbīr al-manzil* and household economy in Avicenna's thought.

c) Legal and gender studies

A third group of studies has explored the legal and social dimensions of household organization. Kūchnānī et al. (2024) have examined aspects of Avicenna's legal theory, while Bakhshī et al. (2018) have compared the perspectives of al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and al-Ṭūsī regarding women and family relations. These studies provide important insights into the normative and social aspects of household organization; however, they do not examine *tadbīr al-manzil* through the analytical framework of contemporary business ethics.

d) Comparative studies

A fourth category consists of comparative studies that analyze Avicenna's views in relation to modern theories of family and society. Būzārī-Nejād and Iqbālī (2019), for example, have compared Avicenna's conception of the family with Giddens' perspective on family models. However, such comparative studies have not explored the relationship between Avicenna's household management and stakeholder-oriented approaches.

Despite the valuable contributions of these studies, an important research gap remains. Existing scholarship has examined various dimensions of Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil*, including its philosophical, economic, legal, and social aspects; however, limited attention has been given to a systematic analysis of *tadbīr al-manzil* through the descriptive, instrumental, and normative framework of Stakeholder Theory. This study seeks to address this gap by providing a comparative examination of Avicenna's household management theory and contemporary stakeholder-oriented approaches.

The descriptive-instrumental-normative framework provides a comprehensive analytical lens for examining governance systems by considering three interconnected dimensions. The descriptive dimension focuses on the structure and characteristics of a system and asks what it is; the instrumental dimension examines how the system functions and contributes to achieving particular objectives; and the normative dimension investigates the ethical principles that justify its responsibilities and obligations.

Accordingly, this study analyzes *tadbīr al-manzil* from three perspectives. The descriptive dimension examines Avicenna's account of household structure and the relationships among its members. The instrumental dimension explores how household organization contributes to cooperation, stability, and the achievement of shared objectives. The normative dimension investigates the ethical foundations of household governance, including justice, responsibility, virtue, and reciprocal obligations. The following sections apply this framework to identify the similarities and differences between Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* and Stakeholder Theory.

4. Descriptive Dimension of Stakeholder Theory and Avicenna's *Tadbīr al-Manzil*

In Stakeholder Theory, the corporation is understood as a constellation of cooperative and competitive interests possessing intrinsic value. Unlike the traditional shareholder-centered model, which assigns priority to shareholder wealth maximization, the descriptive dimension of Stakeholder Theory portrays the firm as a network of relationships among multiple stakeholders whose interests are interconnected. Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 69) describe the firm as "a constellation of cooperative and competitive interests possessing intrinsic value," in which shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, and communities participate through reciprocal relationships. Freeman and McVea (2001, p. 3) further emphasize that the stakeholder approach involves the active management of relationships and the promotion of shared interests, recognizing that various groups have a stake in the success of an organization. Similarly, Freeman, Phillips, and Sisodia (2019, p. 10) stress the importance of identifying stakeholders through their concrete identities and circumstances, expressed through the idea of "names and faces," rather than treating them merely as abstract categories.

A comparable systemic perspective can be found in Avicenna's account of *tadbīr al-manzil*. In his treatise *al-Siyāsa*, Avicenna describes the household as a network of reciprocal relationships in which each member performs a particular function. He defines household management as "the manner of managing the household and the participation of the man with the woman, children, servants, and employees in organizing domestic affairs" (Ibn Sīnā, 2004, p. 266). Similarly, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī describes *tadbīr al-manzil* as the consideration of the conditions of household members in a way that serves the common good, facilitates livelihood (*ma□āsh*), and leads to the perfection desired through collective participation (Ṭūsī, 1977, pp. 34–35). Thus, in the Islamic philosophical tradition, the household is not merely a private unit of consumption but a structured ethical and economic community.

Within Avicenna's framework, each household member performs both economic and moral functions. The man is presented as the manager (*mudabbir*) responsible for organizing household affairs and preserving its resources. The woman is described as a partner in domestic management, a trustee of property, a participant in child-rearing, and a source of tranquility within the household. Avicenna states that a virtuous woman is "the man's partner in his property, her husband's deputy in his household, and his trustee in raising his children" (Ibn Sīnā, 1929, pp. 32–33). Children are considered members whose education prepares them for their future responsibilities, while servants are regarded as participants in household life who possess reciprocal obligations and deserve humane treatment.

One distinctive feature of Avicenna's description concerns the economic rationale of marriage. Since human beings preserve resources for future needs and cannot personally manage all affairs at all times, Avicenna argues that they require a trustworthy partner who can protect their property and provide tranquility. For this reason, he considers the spouse an essential element in household organization (Ibn Sīnā, 1912, p. 12). Al-Ṭūsī similarly identifies the preservation of property and the continuation of lineage as important purposes of marriage while rejecting the reduction of marriage to merely physical desire (Ṭūsī, 1977, p. 215).

Economic management within the household is another important element of Avicenna's model. He emphasizes that wealth should be managed according to moderation and virtue. A person who acquires wealth should allocate part of it to charity, good works, and socially beneficial purposes, while avoiding extravagance and deficiency. Avicenna also stresses the importance of saving resources for future difficulties, arguing that a prudent person should anticipate life's uncertainties and preserve resources to avoid poverty and hardship (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 35).

A comparison between *tadbīr al-manzil* and Stakeholder Theory reveals important similarities and differences. Regarding similarities, both frameworks adopt a systemic approach and understand organized life as a network of relationships rather than as an isolated entity. The household in Avicenna's philosophy and the corporation in Stakeholder Theory are both constituted through interactions among different members whose cooperation contributes to the stability and success of the whole (Freeman & McVea, 2001, p. 3; Ṭūsī, 1977, pp. 34–35). Moreover, both approaches emphasize concrete relationships rather than purely abstract roles, corresponding to Freeman, Phillips, and Sisodia's (2019, p. 10) emphasis on "names and faces."

However, significant differences distinguish the two models. First, Avicenna's household description reflects the hierarchical social structure of his historical context, in which responsibilities and authority are distributed according to differentiated roles among family members. In contrast, Stakeholder Theory emphasizes a more symmetrical network structure in which no stakeholder group possesses inherent priority over others (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 69). Second, the normative background of Avicenna's household model is rooted in *sharī□a*, practical reason, and virtue ethics, whereas Stakeholder Theory generally relies on modern ethical frameworks such as social contract theory and the principle of stakeholder equality (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 78). Third, the ultimate purpose of the two models differs: *tadbīr al-manzil* aims at the comprehensive flourishing and happiness (*sa□āda*) of household members, including its spiritual dimension, while Stakeholder Theory primarily focuses on organizational legitimacy, sustainability, and shared value creation.

Accordingly, the descriptive dimension demonstrates that Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* and Stakeholder Theory share a relational understanding of economic and social organization. Both view human cooperation and ethical responsibility as essential components of organized life. Nevertheless, they differ regarding authority structures, normative foundations, and ultimate objectives, reflecting the different philosophical assumptions underlying each tradition.

5. Instrumental Dimension of Stakeholder Theory and Avicenna's *Tadbīr al-Manzil*

The instrumental dimension of Stakeholder Theory examines whether stakeholder-oriented management contributes to organizational effectiveness, sustainability, and long-term success. While the descriptive dimension explains the existence and structure of stakeholder relationships, the instrumental dimension focuses on the practical consequences of managing these relationships. Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 71) describe this dimension as establishing a connection between stakeholder management and desirable organizational objectives, particularly profitability and organizational performance. According

to Freeman and McVea (2001, p. 3), the stakeholder approach recommends the “active management of the business environment, relationships, and the promotion of shared interests” as a strategy for achieving long-term organizational success.

Freeman, Phillips, and Sisodia (2019, p. 5) emphasize that stakeholder theory provides managers with practical knowledge—“knowing how”—rather than merely abstract principles. In this sense, stakeholder theory offers guidance for managing concrete relationships and creating value within particular organizational contexts. Phillips (2003, pp. 5–6) similarly argues that stakeholder theory contains strong prescriptive implications regarding how organizations should be managed.

Nevertheless, the instrumental dimension alone cannot provide a complete justification for stakeholder theory. Freeman, Phillips, and Sisodia (2019, p. 5) argue that although stakeholder management may contribute to organizational effectiveness, its ultimate justification is normative. Empirical evidence demonstrating a relationship between stakeholder orientation and organizational success cannot by itself establish the moral legitimacy of stakeholder obligations. Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 78) therefore maintain that the foundation of stakeholder theory lies in the intrinsic value of stakeholders rather than merely in its instrumental benefits.

Empirical studies have nevertheless demonstrated the practical significance of stakeholder-oriented management. Collins and Porras, in their influential study *Built to Last*, show that enduring and successful companies are often characterized by strong value commitments and attention to broader interests beyond short-term financial objectives. Such findings support the instrumental claim that attention to organizational values and stakeholder relationships can contribute to long-term sustainability. However, as Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 78) argue, empirical success confirms the usefulness of stakeholder theory but does not constitute the ultimate foundation of its ethical legitimacy.

A comparable instrumental dimension can be identified in Avicenna’s conception of *tadbīr al-manzil*. In Avicenna’s framework, household management is not limited to moral recommendations; rather, it provides practical principles for maintaining economic stability, organizing resources, and ensuring the continuity of family life. However, unlike contemporary management theories in which efficiency, performance, and organizational survival constitute central objectives, economic effectiveness in Avicenna’s thought serves a higher purpose: the cultivation of human perfection and the attainment of happiness (*sa□āda*) in both worldly and spiritual dimensions (Būzārī-Nejād & Iqbālī, 2019, p. 6).

Accordingly, household economy in Avicenna’s thought cannot be separated from ethical cultivation. Economic activities such as earning, spending, saving, education, and cooperation are evaluated according to their contribution to human flourishing. In this respect, *tadbīr al-manzil* presents an integrated model in which economic efficiency is not an independent objective but a means toward moral and spiritual perfection. The effectiveness of household management depends not only on material prosperity but also on the formation of virtuous relationships among family members.

Within this framework, Avicenna identifies several practical principles that contribute to the stability and effectiveness of household management. One of these principles is *specialization and the development of professional skills*. Avicenna considers mastery of a craft (*ṣināa*) an essential foundation of economic effectiveness. Individuals should engage in professions according to their abilities and strive for excellence rather than merely seeking minimal income. He states:

“Whoever wishes to adopt one of these crafts as a means of livelihood must strive to establish it on a solid foundation, to progress and excel in it, so as not to be considered deficient among practitioners of that craft” (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 31).

For Avicenna, craftsmanship possesses greater stability than mere commercial activity because it depends on knowledge, experience, and productive ability. Khalīlī Nūsh Ābādī (2022, p. 4) notes that Avicenna’s preference for craft over commerce reflects his emphasis on productive knowledge and sustainable economic activity. This principle has a significant parallel with contemporary management theories, which emphasize competence, expertise, and human capabilities as sources of organizational success.

A second instrumental principle in Avicenna’s household management concerns *saving and economic resilience.* Avicenna emphasizes that prudent management requires anticipation of future uncertainties and preparation for possible difficulties. He writes:

“A prudent person should not neglect the fact that life brings trials and adversities, and should therefore set aside resources to avoid falling into poverty and ruin” (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 35).

Al-Ṭūsī similarly emphasizes the importance of preserving wealth and provisions, arguing that wise individuals should store resources so that they may benefit from them during periods of necessity and hardship (Ṭūsī, 1977, p. 173). This principle reflects an understanding of economic resilience in which responsible management requires foresight and protection against vulnerability. In this respect, Avicenna’s household economy shares similarities with modern managerial approaches that emphasize sustainability and long-term planning.

Another essential principle is *justice and moderation* in resource management. For Avicenna, economic effectiveness cannot be achieved through unlimited accumulation or excessive consumption. Rather, it requires moderation (*iqtiṣād*) and justice in the allocation of resources. He states:

“The sound and proper course is neither extravagance nor excessive frugality, but rather measured and deliberate expenditure guided by moderation and temperance” (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 35).

This principle reflects the broader Islamic understanding of economy as a moral disposition oriented toward balance rather than merely as a mechanism of resource allocation. Justice in expenditure contributes to household stability by preventing conflict, preserving resources, and maintaining harmony among family members.

The participation and respect of women also constitute an important dimension of Avicenna's model of household effectiveness. Avicenna considers cooperation between husband and wife necessary for the proper functioning of the household. The wife is not portrayed merely as a passive member of the family but as an active participant in managing domestic affairs and preserving family resources. He describes a virtuous woman as:

"the man's partner in his property, her husband's deputy in his household, and his trustee in raising his children" (Ibn Sīnā, 1929, pp. 32–33).

From an instrumental perspective, this description indicates that household efficiency depends on cooperation among family members and recognition of their responsibilities. Although Avicenna's framework reflects the gender-based social structure of his historical context, it attributes a significant economic and managerial role to women within the household. This emphasis on participation has a parallel with Stakeholder Theory, where organizational effectiveness depends on recognizing and engaging relevant participants. However, unlike Stakeholder Theory, which defines participation according to organizational roles, Avicenna's model is structured around familial responsibilities and social functions.

Education constitutes another important instrumental principle in Avicenna's conception of household management. For Avicenna, preparing children for economic independence requires not only moral education but also the acquisition of practical skills and professions. Children should be trained in crafts and occupations that enable them to contribute productively to society and maintain their own livelihood.

Avicenna states that after learning a profession and craft, children should be encouraged to manage their own livelihood, perfect their skills, and become accustomed to seeking sustenance through their own abilities (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 50). This approach demonstrates that education functions as an economic investment that strengthens both individual capabilities and household sustainability. In this respect, Avicenna's view has a certain similarity with contemporary approaches in management and business ethics, where investment in human capabilities is considered essential for long-term development. Nevertheless, the difference lies in the ultimate objective: while modern management approaches generally emphasize productivity, innovation, and value creation, Avicenna integrates economic education within the broader framework of moral development and human perfection.

Avicenna's discussion of *servants and workers* further demonstrates that household management includes obligations toward those who contribute to economic activity. Although servants occupied a different social position within Avicenna's historical context, they are not regarded merely as instruments of production. Rather, they possess human dignity and deserve humane treatment. Avicenna states:

"The benefit of a servant is that he is like the limbs and organs of the body… it is fitting that you treat them with kindness and leniency, and not be harsh with them, for they too are human beings who become tired, experience weakness and old age, and have natural needs" (Ibn Sīnā, 1985a, p. 107).

This principle indicates that respect for workers is both an ethical obligation and a practical requirement for maintaining cooperation and stability. A household in which members and workers are treated with justice and compassion is more likely to achieve internal harmony and continuity. A similar idea appears in Stakeholder Theory, where attention to employees' interests contributes to trust, commitment, and organizational effectiveness. Kūchnānī et al. (2024, p. 6) similarly emphasize that Avicenna's social and legal discussions contain principles concerning reciprocal obligations and the protection of human interests.

Marriage also occupies an important instrumental position in Avicenna's account of household management. In his framework, marriage performs both ethical and practical functions: it contributes to the continuation of human society, preservation of lineage, psychological tranquility, and economic stability. Avicenna describes marriage as one of the foundations of social order and refers to it as the "best pillar of the city" (*afḍal arkān al-madīna*) (Ibn Sīnā, 2015, p. 351).

In *al-Siyāsa*, Avicenna further explains the economic rationale of marriage. Since human beings preserve resources for future needs and cannot personally manage all affairs throughout their lives, they require a trustworthy partner who can protect their property and maintain household order. Therefore, the spouse functions as a partner in economic management and a source of stability (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 12). Although this explanation differs significantly from contemporary understandings of family relations, it demonstrates that Avicenna viewed the family as an organized institution requiring cooperation, division of responsibilities, and effective management.

The instrumental dimensions of *tadbīr al-manzil* and Stakeholder Theory share several important similarities. First, both approaches emphasize the active management of relationships as a condition for success. In Stakeholder Theory, this principle appears in the active management of organizational relationships and the promotion of shared interests (Freeman & McVea, 2001, p. 3). In Avicenna's household management, it appears in the responsible governance of family relationships, resources, and obligations by the *mudabbir* (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 35).

Second, both frameworks recognize justice and fairness as practical requirements for stability. Stakeholder Theory argues that fair treatment of stakeholders strengthens cooperation, commitment, and organizational performance (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 71). Likewise, Avicenna considers moderation in expenditure and avoidance of waste essential for household balance and economic survival (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 35).

Third, both approaches emphasize foresight and preparation for uncertainty. In Stakeholder Theory, this appears in the managerial ability to create value within complex and changing environments, described by Freeman, Phillips, and Sisodia (2019, p. 5) as "knowing how." In *tadbīr al-manzil*, it appears in the recommendation of saving resources for future difficulties (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 35; Ṭūsī, 1977, p. 173). Furthermore, both perspectives recognize specialization, competence, and cooperation as essential elements of effective management (Freeman & McVea, 2001, p. 3; Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 31).

Despite these similarities, significant differences distinguish the two frameworks.

First, the ultimate purpose of efficiency differs. In *tadbīr al-manzil*, economic effectiveness serves the higher goal of human perfection and worldly and otherworldly happiness (*sa□āda*). Economic activity therefore acquires meaning within a moral and spiritual framework. In Stakeholder Theory, although ethical considerations are important, the instrumental dimension primarily examines how stakeholder management contributes to organizational sustainability, performance, and value creation (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 71).

Second, the relationship between ethics and efficiency differs. In Avicenna's thought, ethics is inseparable from efficiency: justice, moderation, and virtue are necessary conditions for successful economic management. Economic success without moral order is incomplete because the purpose of economic activity is ultimately human flourishing. In Stakeholder Theory, ethical stakeholder management may generate instrumental benefits, but the instrumental justification remains analytically distinct from the normative foundation of the theory (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 78).

Third, the organization of responsibilities differs. Avicenna's model reflects the gender-differentiated division of household responsibilities characteristic of his historical context, whereas Stakeholder Theory defines participants according to their organizational interests and roles rather than gender distinctions (Bakhshī et al., 2018, p. 9; Freeman & McVea, 2001, p. 3). This difference reflects two different conceptions of social organization: one based on familial roles and natural functions, and the other based on institutional participation and stakeholder interests.

Fourth, the normative sources underlying instrumental principles are different. In *tadbīr al-manzil*, economic practices are guided by *sharī□a*, practical reason, and virtue ethics. Justice, moderation, responsibility, and cooperation derive from a broader moral order. In Stakeholder Theory, the legitimacy of stakeholder relationships is generally explained through modern ethical approaches, including social contract perspectives and theories of stakeholder legitimacy (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 69).

Finally, the mechanisms through which efficiency is achieved differ. Avicenna emphasizes craftsmanship, saving, moderation, education, participation, and humane treatment of workers as the foundations of household stability (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, pp. 31–35). Stakeholder Theory emphasizes shared value creation, transparency, accountability, and cooperative relationships as mechanisms for organizational success (Freeman, Phillips & Sisodia, 2019, p. 5).

The instrumental analysis demonstrates that Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* contains a coherent model of household effectiveness based on specialization, responsible resource management, justice, education, cooperation, and respect for human dignity. These principles share important similarities with the instrumental dimension of Stakeholder Theory, particularly regarding relationship management, foresight, participation, and the connection between ethical conduct and sustainable success.

Nevertheless, the two frameworks differ in their philosophical foundations and ultimate objectives. In Avicenna's system, economic management serves the broader purpose of human perfection and happiness, while in Stakeholder Theory, organizational sustainability and value creation constitute the primary practical objectives. Therefore, although both approaches recognize that effective management depends on responsible relationships, they interpret this relationship within different conceptions of human flourishing, economic activity, and social organization.

6. Normative Dimension of Stakeholder Theory and Avicenna's *Tadbīr al-Manzil*

The normative dimension constitutes the philosophical foundation of Stakeholder Theory and distinguishes it from a merely instrumental approach to management. While the descriptive dimension explains the existence and structure of stakeholder relationships and the instrumental dimension examines their contribution to organizational effectiveness, the normative dimension addresses why managers have moral obligations toward stakeholders. Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 67) argue that "although the descriptive and instrumental dimensions are important aspects of the theory, its fundamental basis is normative," because stakeholder interests possess intrinsic value. Accordingly, managers are required to respect stakeholders not only because such practices may improve organizational performance, but also because stakeholders have moral significance in themselves. This dimension connects Stakeholder Theory directly with moral philosophy and theories of justice (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 74).

Contemporary proponents of Stakeholder Theory emphasize that its primary foundation is normative rather than merely empirical or strategic. Freeman, Phillips, and Sisodia (2020, p. 234) argue that the theory addresses the ethical challenges of capitalism by rejecting the assumption that corporations exist solely for shareholder wealth maximization. Instead, the central purpose of business should be the creation of value for all stakeholders, a principle grounded in respect for human dignity (Freeman, Phillips & Sisodia, 2020, pp. 13–14). Thus, stakeholder management is not simply a technique for achieving better performance; it reflects a broader ethical commitment regarding how economic relationships ought to be organized.

Phillips (2003, pp. 85–86) further develops the normative foundation of Stakeholder Theory through the principle of stakeholder fairness. According to this principle, when individuals voluntarily participate in a cooperative scheme, reciprocal moral obligations arise among participants. These obligations are not limited to explicit contractual commitments but emerge from participation in a system of cooperation itself. Phillips (2003, pp. 87–88) refers to these as "obligations of fairness," arguing that justice requires recognition of the legitimate claims of those who contribute to and are affected by cooperative activities. Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 74) similarly maintain that the ultimate justification of Stakeholder Theory rests on its normative foundation rather than on its instrumental consequences alone.

A comparable normative foundation can be identified in Avicenna's conception of *tadbīr al-manzil*. In Avicenna's philosophical system, household management is not merely a method for organizing economic resources; rather, it is a moral practice directed toward justice, virtue, and human perfection.

The family economy acquires meaning within a broader ethical and religious framework in which worldly activities serve the ultimate purpose of human happiness (*sa□āda*). Unlike modern managerial theories, where ethical obligations are primarily discussed within the framework of organizational relationships, Avicenna situates economic conduct within the larger structure of practical philosophy, connecting household management with ethics, religion, and the perfection of the human soul.

The normative framework of Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* can be examined through four interconnected principles: religious law (*shari□a*), virtue ethics, human dignity and reciprocal obligations, and justice in family relationships.

6.1. Religious Law (*Shari□a*) as a Normative Foundation

For Avicenna, practical philosophy is ultimately connected to divine guidance. In *al-Shifā□: al-Ilāhiyyāt*, he states that the origin of the three branches of practical philosophy—ethics, household management, and politics—is derived from divine law (Ibn Sīnā, 1985b, p. 14). Accordingly, economic activities within the household are not governed solely by individual preference or economic calculation; they are shaped by religious and moral obligations.

Within this framework, practices such as charity (*ṣadaqa*), almsgiving (*zakāt*), and generosity (*infāq*) are not merely voluntary expressions of personal morality but constitute elements of a virtuous economic order. Avicenna emphasizes that wealth should be managed according to principles of justice and moderation, because material possessions are instruments for achieving moral purposes rather than ends in themselves (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 32).

6.2. Virtue Ethics and Moral Self-Governance

A second foundation of Avicenna's normative framework is virtue ethics. For Avicenna, effective household management begins with self-governance (*siyāsat al-nafs*). A person who cannot discipline his or her own desires and actions lacks the moral capacity required to govern a household. Therefore, the refinement of the soul (*tahdhīb al-nafs*) constitutes the necessary foundation of economic and social management (Ibn Sīnā, 1985a, p. 17).

Justice, wisdom, temperance, and courage are therefore not separate from economic activity; rather, they are conditions for its proper realization. In this respect, Avicenna's approach differs from purely technical conceptions of economy, because economic competence is inseparable from moral character. The manager of the household (*mudabbir*) must possess both practical knowledge and ethical virtues in order to guide family members toward their proper ends.

6.3. Human Dignity and Reciprocal Obligations

A third normative foundation of Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* concerns the recognition of human dignity and reciprocal obligations among household members. Although Avicenna's framework does not employ the modern terminology of human rights, his discussions include principles concerning the protection of

persons, property, livelihood, and reciprocal responsibilities. These principles can be interpreted as reflecting a philosophical concern with human dignity and legitimate claims within social relationships.

Avicenna recognizes that human beings possess different capacities, social functions, and material circumstances, which he attributes to the wise governance of God (Ibn Sīnā, 1929, p. 7). However, these differences do not negate the fundamental moral value of human beings. Rather, each person has specific obligations and entitlements within the household order. In this sense, household management is not merely the administration of resources but the regulation of relationships based on responsibility and mutual duties.

For example, Avicenna describes the wife not merely as a dependent member of the household but as a partner in property management, a representative in domestic affairs, and a trustee in raising children (Ibn Sīnā, 1929, pp. 32–33). Likewise, parents have obligations toward their children, including education, moral cultivation, and preparation for independent livelihood (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, pp. 43–50). Servants and workers, despite occupying a different social position within Avicenna's historical context, are also regarded as human beings deserving humane treatment. This emphasis demonstrates that economic relationships are embedded within moral obligations rather than being reducible to exchanges of utility.

6.4. Justice and Reciprocal Rights within Household Management

Justice represents the central organizing principle of Avicenna's household ethics. In his view, the stability and success of the family depend on the appropriate fulfillment of reciprocal responsibilities among its members. The household manager is obligated to maintain balance, provide necessary support, and ensure that family relations are governed by fairness and moderation.

Avicenna's discussion of household roles reflects the social and cultural assumptions of his historical context. He assigns differentiated responsibilities to men and women, with the man generally described as responsible for provision and external economic affairs, and the woman associated with domestic organization and preservation of household resources (Ibn Sīnā, 1929, pp. 32–33). From a contemporary perspective, these role distinctions represent a historically situated model of family organization rather than a universal account of gender relations.

Nevertheless, the underlying normative principle is that economic cooperation requires recognition of responsibilities, trust, and mutual obligations. In this respect, Avicenna's emphasis on reciprocal duties has a point of comparison with Stakeholder Theory, where ethical management requires recognition of the legitimate interests and contributions of different participants.

Despite their different philosophical foundations, *tadbīr al-manzil* and Stakeholder Theory share several important normative similarities.

First, both approaches reject a purely self-interested understanding of economic activity. Stakeholder Theory maintains that all stakeholders possess intrinsic value and that managers have obligations toward them beyond short-term financial interests (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 67). Similarly,

Avicenna considers economic relationships within the household to be governed by moral responsibilities rather than individual advantage alone (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 35).

Second, both frameworks emphasize justice and fairness as essential principles of social and economic organization. In Stakeholder Theory, fairness provides the basis for moral obligations among participants in cooperative systems (Phillips, 2003, pp. 85–86). In Avicenna's thought, justice ensures the proper ordering of household relationships and contributes to human flourishing (*sa□āda*) (Ibn Sīnā, 1940, p. 35).

Third, both theories recognize that moral obligations extend beyond formal agreements. Stakeholder Theory argues that participation in cooperative activities generates obligations of fairness even without explicit contractual consent (Phillips, 2003, pp. 87–88). Similarly, Avicenna considers household responsibilities to arise from moral, religious, and natural conditions rather than merely from individual choice (Ibn Sīnā, 1985b, p. 14; Ibn Sīnā, 1985a, p. 17).

However, significant differences distinguish the two frameworks.

First, their normative foundations differ. In Avicenna's system, the ultimate source of economic morality is divine law (*shari□a*) combined with practical reason and virtue ethics. In Stakeholder Theory, normative justification is generally developed through secular ethical approaches, including theories of justice, social contract perspectives, and philosophical accounts of stakeholder legitimacy (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 78; Phillips, 2003, pp. 85–86).

Second, their ultimate objectives differ. For Avicenna, household management is ultimately directed toward human perfection and worldly and otherworldly happiness (*sa□āda*) (Ibn Sīnā, 2015, p. 351). Economic order is therefore meaningful as part of a broader moral and spiritual journey. In Stakeholder Theory, the normative objective is primarily the creation of a more responsible and inclusive form of economic organization that promotes collective welfare and sustainable relationships among stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 67).

Third, the scope of obligations differs. Avicenna's normative framework focuses primarily on relationships within the household, including obligations among spouses, parents, children, and servants (Ibn Sīnā, 1929, pp. 32–33; Ibn Sīnā, 1940, pp. 43–50). Stakeholder Theory, by contrast, extends moral obligations beyond organizational boundaries to include employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and other affected groups (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 69).

Fourth, the organization of social roles differs. Avicenna's model reflects a historically specific division of responsibilities within the family, whereas Stakeholder Theory defines participants according to their relationship to the organization rather than inherited social roles (Freeman & McVea, 2001, p. 3). This difference reflects two different conceptions of social order: one based on household functions and moral responsibilities, and another based on institutional participation and stakeholder interests.

Finally, the mechanisms of moral accountability differ. In Avicenna's framework, compliance with economic and social duties is ultimately connected to religious commitment, moral conscience, and the pursuit of perfection (Ibn Sīnā, 1985a, p. 17). In Stakeholder Theory, accountability is generally maintained through institutional mechanisms, professional norms, legal structures, and social expectations (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 78).

The normative analysis demonstrates that Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* represents a comprehensive ethical-economic framework in which economic activities are inseparable from virtue, justice, and human perfection. Similar to Stakeholder Theory, it rejects the reduction of economic relations to mere utility maximization and emphasizes responsibility toward others. Both frameworks recognize that sustainable social and economic systems require respect for the interests and dignity of participants.

Nevertheless, the two approaches differ fundamentally in their philosophical foundations and ultimate purposes. Avicenna's model is grounded in a theistic conception of economy, where economic activity serves the realization of moral perfection and happiness. Stakeholder Theory, while ethically oriented, develops within a secular framework that seeks to reorganize economic relationships through principles of fairness, legitimacy, and collective welfare.

Therefore, the comparison reveals both convergence and divergence: convergence in the recognition that economic relationships possess ethical dimensions, and divergence in the sources from which those ethical obligations are derived. Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* presents economy as a path toward human flourishing within a divine moral order, whereas Stakeholder Theory presents it as a framework for responsible organizational practice within modern pluralistic societies.

7. Comparative Evaluation of Stakeholder Theory and *Tadbīr al-Manzil*: Strengths, Limitations, and Contemporary Implications

Following the descriptive, instrumental, and normative analysis of Stakeholder Theory and Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil*, this section provides a comparative evaluation of the two frameworks. The purpose is not to replace one model with another, but to identify their respective strengths, limitations, and potential contributions to contemporary discussions of ethical management.

Stakeholder Theory represents a significant development in modern business ethics by challenging the reduction of the corporation to a purely economic institution oriented toward shareholder wealth maximization. By conceptualizing the firm as a network of reciprocal relationships among multiple stakeholders, the theory recognizes the ethical significance of employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and other affected groups. Its normative foundation, particularly the claim that stakeholder interests possess intrinsic value, places human dignity and moral responsibility at the center of organizational decision-making (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 67). Furthermore, its instrumental dimension provides managers with practical guidance for navigating complex organizational environments by emphasizing relationship management, cooperation, and long-term value creation (Freeman, Phillips & Sisodia, 2019, p. 5).

Nevertheless, Stakeholder Theory has also been subject to critical discussions. One major challenge concerns the prioritization of competing stakeholder interests. Although the theory recognizes the legitimacy of multiple stakeholders, determining how managers should resolve conflicts among competing claims remains a complex issue. This challenge has led some scholars to question whether stakeholder theory provides sufficiently precise criteria for decision-making in situations of ethical disagreement. Furthermore, because the theory emerged within the context of modern Western management and moral philosophy, its application across different cultural and normative contexts requires further examination. Although stakeholder theory provides a strong ethical framework for organizational relationships, its normative foundations generally rely on modern philosophical approaches, social agreements, and institutional mechanisms rather than a comprehensive metaphysical account of human flourishing.

In comparison, Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* presents a broader philosophical model in which economic activity is inseparable from ethics, human nature, and the ultimate purpose of life. Household management is not merely a technique for resource allocation but a practical science directed toward the cultivation of virtue, justice, and human perfection. Unlike Stakeholder Theory, whose normative framework is primarily based on modern ethical theories, Avicenna's model derives its normative principles from three interconnected sources: religious law (*sharī*), virtue ethics, and an understanding of natural human capacities. These foundations provide an internal moral orientation in which economic actions are evaluated according to their contribution to individual and collective flourishing.

Another strength of *tadbīr al-manzil* lies in its integrated understanding of economic and moral responsibilities. Avicenna does not separate economic efficiency from ethical development; rather, concepts such as moderation, saving, education, cooperation, and justice are simultaneously economic and moral principles. This holistic perspective provides an important contribution to contemporary debates on ethical management by emphasizing that sustainable economic activity requires attention not only to external performance but also to the character and moral development of participants.

However, *tadbīr al-manzil* also contains limitations when examined from a contemporary perspective. Some aspects of Avicenna's household model reflect the social and historical conditions of medieval society, particularly regarding authority structures and the division of responsibilities between men and women. These elements require careful philosophical reinterpretation if the model is to contribute to contemporary discussions of family management and social organization. Moreover, because *tadbīr al-manzil* primarily focuses on household relationships, it does not directly address the complex institutional structures of modern economic life, including corporations, markets, governments, and civil society organizations.

A comparative reading suggests that the two frameworks can provide complementary insights. Stakeholder Theory contributes a flexible approach to managing complex networks of relationships, emphasizing participation, dialogue, and the consideration of diverse interests. Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil*, in contrast, contributes a deeper ethical anthropology in which economic activities are connected

to virtue, responsibility, and human flourishing. Combining these insights may contribute to the development of a more comprehensive approach to ethical management—one that incorporates both practical mechanisms of stakeholder engagement and a richer account of moral purpose.

Such a dialogue, however, requires careful consideration of differences between the two traditions. Stakeholder Theory generally allows managerial flexibility in balancing competing interests, whereas Avicenna's framework establishes obligations grounded in ethical and religious principles. Therefore, any contemporary application of *tadbīr al-manzil* should not simply reproduce historical social structures but should critically reconstruct its underlying principles—such as justice, moderation, responsibility, and mutual cooperation—in light of present conditions.

In this sense, Avicenna's household management can contribute to contemporary ethical management discussions by offering a model in which economic activity is understood as a means toward human flourishing rather than merely efficiency or profitability. Conversely, Stakeholder Theory provides valuable methodological tools for applying ethical principles within complex modern organizations. A constructive engagement between these two traditions may therefore open new possibilities for developing culturally sensitive approaches to business ethics that combine practical effectiveness with substantive moral commitments.

In conclusion, Stakeholder Theory offers a powerful framework for understanding and managing modern organizations through attention to relationships, participation, and stakeholder value. However, it faces challenges concerning normative grounding and the resolution of competing interests. Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* provides a comprehensive ethical-economic framework grounded in virtue, justice, and human flourishing, although some of its historical assumptions require reinterpretation for contemporary contexts. Their comparative study demonstrates that ethical management can benefit from both institutional flexibility and deeper philosophical reflection on the purpose of economic activity.

Conclusion

This study examined Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* through the descriptive, instrumental, and normative dimensions of Stakeholder Theory in order to explore the conceptual relationships and differences between Islamic practical philosophy and contemporary business ethics. Rather than claiming that Avicenna anticipated a modern stakeholder theory, the study employed Stakeholder Theory as an analytical framework for interpreting a classical text of Islamic practical philosophy and for identifying points of convergence and divergence between two distinct intellectual traditions.

The analysis demonstrates that significant conceptual parallels exist despite their different historical and philosophical contexts. In the *descriptive dimension*, both frameworks understand social and economic entities as systems of interdependent relationships in which the stability of the whole depends upon the proper functioning of its members. However, Avicenna's model is organized through a hierarchical structure of reciprocal responsibilities within the household, whereas Stakeholder Theory generally conceives stakeholder relationships in more symmetrical organizational terms.

In the *instrumental dimension*, both frameworks recognize relationship management, justice, cooperation, foresight, specialization, and responsible resource management as essential conditions for stability and long-term success. Their fundamental difference lies in the purpose of economic activity. For Avicenna, household management ultimately serves human perfection and worldly and spiritual flourishing (*sa□āda*), making economic efficiency subordinate to moral ends. In Stakeholder Theory, by contrast, the instrumental dimension primarily explains how ethical stakeholder management contributes to organizational effectiveness, sustainability, and value creation.

The *normative dimension* reveals both the closest similarities and the deepest philosophical differences. Both approaches reject the reduction of economic relationships to contractual or purely instrumental exchanges and affirm that relationships generate genuine moral obligations. Nevertheless, they derive those obligations from different normative foundations. Stakeholder Theory grounds managerial responsibility in concepts such as stakeholder fairness, legitimacy, and the intrinsic value of stakeholder interests, whereas Avicenna grounds household responsibilities in *sharī□a*, virtue ethics, and a philosophical understanding of human nature. Consequently, although both traditions emphasize justice, responsibility, and respect for persons, they differ substantially in their philosophical justification of these principles.

The principal contribution of this research lies in demonstrating that Stakeholder Theory can serve as a productive analytical framework for interpreting Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil* without reducing the latter to a precursor of modern management theory. By bringing Islamic practical philosophy into dialogue with contemporary business ethics, the study illustrates how concepts such as justice, moderation, responsibility, reciprocity, and human flourishing can enrich current discussions of ethical management while preserving the intellectual integrity of both traditions.

The comparative evaluation further indicates that each framework offers distinctive strengths. Stakeholder Theory provides sophisticated analytical tools for managing complex organizational relationships through dialogue, participation, and attention to multiple stakeholder interests. At the same time, it continues to face challenges concerning the prioritization of competing stakeholder claims and the philosophical grounding of its normative commitments. Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil*, in contrast, presents a comprehensive ethical vision in which economic activity is inseparable from virtue, justice, and the cultivation of human flourishing. Yet several elements of this framework reflect the social conditions of its historical context and therefore require careful critical reinterpretation before being applied to contemporary family and organizational settings.

The dialogue between these two traditions suggests that ethical management need not be understood exclusively through either modern managerial theories or classical religious philosophy. Instead, a constructive engagement between them may contribute to culturally informed approaches to responsible management that integrate practical effectiveness with stable moral commitments. Such engagement, however, requires conceptual reconstruction rather than the direct transfer of ideas from one intellectual tradition to another.

This study has several limitations. It focuses primarily on Avicenna's *al-Siyāsa* as the principal source for examining *tadbīr al-manzil* and adopts a conceptual and comparative methodology without empirically testing the proposed analytical framework. Future research may extend this approach by examining other works of Avicenna and later Islamic philosophers, particularly al-Fārābī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and by investigating the relevance of this comparative framework to contemporary issues in family economy, business ethics, responsible management, and public policy within Islamic societies.

Overall, this study demonstrates that meaningful dialogue between Islamic practical philosophy and contemporary management theory is both possible and intellectually fruitful. By applying the descriptive–instrumental–normative framework of Stakeholder Theory to Avicenna's *tadbīr al-manzil*, it offers a new perspective on household management as an ethical-economic system and contributes to the broader interdisciplinary conversation linking philosophy, business ethics, and management studies.

Declarations

Author Contribution

The author is the sole contributor to this work and was responsible for all stages of the research, including conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing, and final approval of the manuscript.

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