

Social Pathology in Organizations: A Systematic Literature Review of Dysfunction, Power, and Symbolic Responsibility

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Abstract

This study develops an integrated understanding of social pathology in organizations by examining how dysfunctional social, cultural, and structural conditions shape organizational behavior. PRISMA-informed systematic literature review was conducted using Scopus. The search covered English-language journal articles published from 2015 to 2025 and combined terms related to social pathology, social problems, organizational dysfunction, and organizational settings. Of 5,662 records initially identified, eight substantively relevant studies were retained after database filtering, title-and-abstract screening, and full-text eligibility assessment. The final corpus was analyzed through thematic synthesis. Findings, four interrelated patterns were identified: (1) organizational hypocrisy and symbolic social action; (2) governance failure and organizational dysfunction; (3) social exclusion and power asymmetry; and (4) substantive organizational responses to social problems and sustainability. Across these themes, pathology emerged not as isolated individual misconduct but as a multilevel condition produced by gaps between discourse and practice, weak accountability, concentrated power, exclusionary participation, and legitimacy-oriented responses that lack operational follow-through. Practical implications Organizations can reduce pathological conditions by aligning stated values with measurable practices, strengthening grievance and accountability systems, protecting employee and stakeholder voice, and embedding social responsibility in governance and performance processes. The review connects fragmented research streams and proposes social pathology as an integrative organizational-behavior lens linking institutional decoupling, governance, power, voice, and sustainability.

Keywords: social pathology; organizational behavior; organizational dysfunction; organizational hypocrisy; governance failure; power imbalance; sustainability

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations are social systems in which members interpret authority, fairness, voice, responsibility, and acceptable conduct. Organizational outcomes therefore cannot be explained solely by individual motivation or formal structure; they also depend on the social conditions through which norms are communicated, power is exercised, and misconduct is either challenged or normalized. When these conditions become persistently dysfunctional, organizations may develop what this article conceptualizes as social pathology: socially embedded patterns of interaction, culture, governance, and institutional practice that undermine ethical conduct, trust, inclusion, psychological safety, accountability, and collective performance.

Research in organizational behavior already documents many manifestations of such dysfunction. Workplace deviance and counterproductive work behavior include interpersonal and organizationally directed conduct that harms members or the organization (Thrasher et al., 2020; Zappalà et al., 2022). At the collective level, counterproductive behavior is associated with leadership, fairness perceptions, employee attitudes, productivity, turnover, customer satisfaction, and organizational

performance (Carpenter et al., 2021). Organizational silence likewise prevents concerns, mistakes, and improvement ideas from reaching decision makers, particularly when employees expect low impact or interpersonal risk (Morrison, 2014; Sherf et al., 2020; Kim & Wang, 2024). Toxic leadership, exclusion, and cynical climates further intensify emotional exhaustion and deviant responses (Ahmed et al., 2024; Akinyele & Chen, 2025).

Although these streams are well developed, they are usually studied separately. Research on deviance emphasizes harmful conduct, research on silence emphasizes suppressed participation, research on governance examines accountability failures, and research on corporate social responsibility focuses on organizational responses to social and environmental demands. This fragmentation obscures the possibility that these phenomena are connected expressions of a broader organizational condition. For example, a grievance mechanism may formally signal accountability yet fail to deliver remedy; a public statement may affirm equality while leaving exclusionary structures unchanged; or a sustainability program may generate legitimacy without altering decision-making routines. Such gaps between formal commitments and operational practices are central to institutional decoupling and organizational hypocrisy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Brunsson, 2002).

A further conceptual problem concerns the meaning of pathology. In database searches, the term frequently denotes medical or professional specialties rather than dysfunctional social conditions. A rigorous review must therefore distinguish social and organizational pathology from articles in which pathology merely names a clinical discipline. Failure to make this distinction produces false-positive studies and weakens construct validity. The present revision addresses this boundary problem explicitly and treats social pathology as a non-clinical, multilevel organizational construct.

This study addresses three research questions: (RQ1) How is social pathology manifested across organizational contexts? (RQ2) Through which institutional, governance, and power mechanisms is it produced and sustained? (RQ3) What organizational practices can mitigate or transform pathological conditions? By answering these questions, the study contributes in three ways. First, it integrates previously fragmented phenomena into a coherent conceptual domain. Second, it links micro-level behavioral outcomes to meso-level culture and governance and to macro-level legitimacy pressures. Third, it develops a practical framework for differentiating symbolic responsibility from substantive organizational change.

Conceptual Background

1. Social Pathology as a Multilevel Organizational Construct

Social pathology generally refers to dysfunctional conditions that disturb the healthy functioning of a social system. Applied to organizations, it encompasses recurring patterns of behavior, relationships, norms, and institutional arrangements that weaken cooperation, fairness, ethical judgment, and organizational learning. The construct is broader than deviance because it includes not only visible misconduct but also normalized silence, distrust, cynicism, exclusion, procedural emptiness, and the routine disconnection of formal commitments from actual practice (Bogale & Debela, 2024).

A multilevel perspective is essential. At the individual level, employees may engage in withdrawal, retaliation, silence, or counterproductive behavior. At the group level, informal norms may legitimize incivility, favoritism, or concealment. At the

organizational level, governance structures may concentrate decision authority, neutralize complaints, or reward symbolic compliance. These levels interact: harmful conduct is more likely to persist when culture and structure protect it, while dysfunctional systems are reproduced through everyday behavioral conformity. Evidence that workplace culture influences deviant behavior and that organizational justice, exhaustion, motivation, and job satisfaction are associated with counterproductive profiles supports this multilevel interpretation (Bujang et al., 2024; Tziner et al., 2020).

2. Institutional Decoupling, Hypocrisy, and Legitimacy

Institutional theory explains why organizations may adopt structures, policies, and public commitments that signal conformity to societal expectations while remaining weakly connected to operational practice. Meyer and Rowan (1977) describe this separation as decoupling: formal structures enhance legitimacy even when they are not fully integrated with day-to-day activity. Brunsson (2002) similarly argues that organizations may manage conflicting demands by separating talk, decisions, and action. From this perspective, organizational hypocrisy is not limited to intentional deception; it may also be a systemic response to incompatible stakeholder expectations.

Legitimacy is nevertheless fragile when stakeholders repeatedly observe inconsistency. Suchman (1995) distinguishes strategies for gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy, but symbolic actions become pathological when they substitute for substantive accountability. In organizational behavior terms, observed inconsistencies can reduce trust, increase cynicism, weaken identification, and discourage voice. The relevant analytical question is therefore not whether an organization communicates socially desirable values, but whether those values are translated into decision rights, resource allocation, incentives, remedies, and measurable outcomes.

3. Power, Justice, Voice, and Exclusion

Social pathology is also produced through unequal power relations. Actors with control over information, procedures, resources, and sanctions can define which concerns are legitimate and which remain invisible. When organizational members believe that speaking up is unsafe or futile, silence may become a rational response rather than a personal deficiency. Voice and silence are distinct behavioral choices shaped by perceived impact, psychological safety, leadership openness, and institutional responsiveness (Morrison, 2014; Sherf et al., 2020; Lainidi et al., 2023).

Organizational justice and inclusion provide a complementary lens. Exclusionary systems restrict access to participation, recognition, opportunity, or remedy, while concentrated authority can make formal participation largely ceremonial. Ethical, transformational, and participative leadership can reduce counterproductive behavior through engagement, whereas ostracism and unethical leadership can intensify it (Huang et al., 2021; Mrayyan & Algunmeeyn, 2025). Thus, pathology is reproduced when power asymmetries are institutionalized and when voice systems do not meaningfully affect decisions.

4. Analytical Framework

Based on the preceding literature, the review uses four sensitizing dimensions to organize the evidence: (1) discourse–practice alignment, (2) governance and accountability, (3) participation and power distribution, and (4) substantive

organizational responses to social and environmental problems. These dimensions do not assume that all organizations are pathological; rather, they provide a framework for identifying when recurring organizational arrangements generate harmful behavioral consequences or merely simulate responsibility.

METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review to synthesize conceptual and empirical research on social pathology in organizational settings. A systematic review was appropriate because the relevant evidence is dispersed across organizational behavior, public relations, corporate social responsibility, governance, sustainability, and social-policy research. The review followed the logic of transparent identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion described by PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA was used as a reporting framework rather than as a claim that the heterogeneous studies were suitable for statistical meta-analysis. The literature-search description was also strengthened in line with PRISMA-S principles of reproducibility and search transparency (Rethlefsen et al., 2021).

Literature reviews can support theory development when they move beyond summary and systematically compare concepts, mechanisms, and findings across fragmented fields (Snyder, 2019). Accordingly, the present review combined structured selection procedures with thematic synthesis.

Scopus was used as the sole bibliographic database because of its broad multidisciplinary coverage and its support for field-specific searching, filtering, citation tracking, and export (Elsevier, 2025). The review covered journal articles published from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2025. The original search logic combined pathology-related terms with organizational-context terms. For reproducibility, the search syntax reported in the source manuscript was retained as the basis of the review: TITLE(pathology OR "social problem" OR "organizational pathology" OR "organizational dysfunction" OR "social issue" OR "social concern") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY(organization OR workplace OR corporate OR institution OR company).

Because pathology is polysemous, the screening protocol applied an explicit conceptual-boundary rule: records were excluded when pathology referred only to a medical, laboratory, speech-language, or other clinical specialty and the study did not examine dysfunctional social conditions within an organization. This rule removed false positives while preserving studies that substantively addressed organizational hypocrisy, governance failure, social exclusion, stakeholder power, or organizational responses to social problems.

Table 1 summarizes the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Aspect	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Publication period	2015–2025	Published before 2015 or after 2025
Language	English	Languages other than English
Document type	Peer-reviewed journal article	Books, chapters, conference papers, editorials, notes, and non-journal publications
Subject relevance	Social sciences, business, management, communication, governance, sustainability, or closely related organizational fields	Fields unrelated to organizational or social analysis

Aspect	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Conceptual relevance	Substantive analysis of social pathology, organizational dysfunction, social problems, social issues, exclusion, governance failure, stakeholder power, or symbolic responsibility in an organizational context	Pathology used only as the name of a clinical or technical discipline, or no substantive organizational focus
Evidence base	Empirical or conceptually grounded article with a clear method and interpretable findings	Insufficient methodological transparency or no analyzable organizational evidence

The initial Scopus search identified 5,662 records. Database filters for publication period, language, and document type removed 3,112 records, leaving 2,550 records for title-and-abstract screening. A further 2,375 records were excluded because they did not address an organizational or social-science problem relevant to the review. The full texts of 175 articles were assessed for eligibility. Of these, 167 were excluded because social pathology was not substantively examined in an organizational context, including records in which pathology referred only to a clinical discipline. Eight articles were retained for thematic synthesis.

The revised selection corrects a construct-validity problem in the original draft, which included two articles on clinical training disciplines that did not investigate social pathology as an organizational phenomenon. Their exclusion strengthens conceptual coherence without altering the central themes of the review.

PRISMA-informed study selection

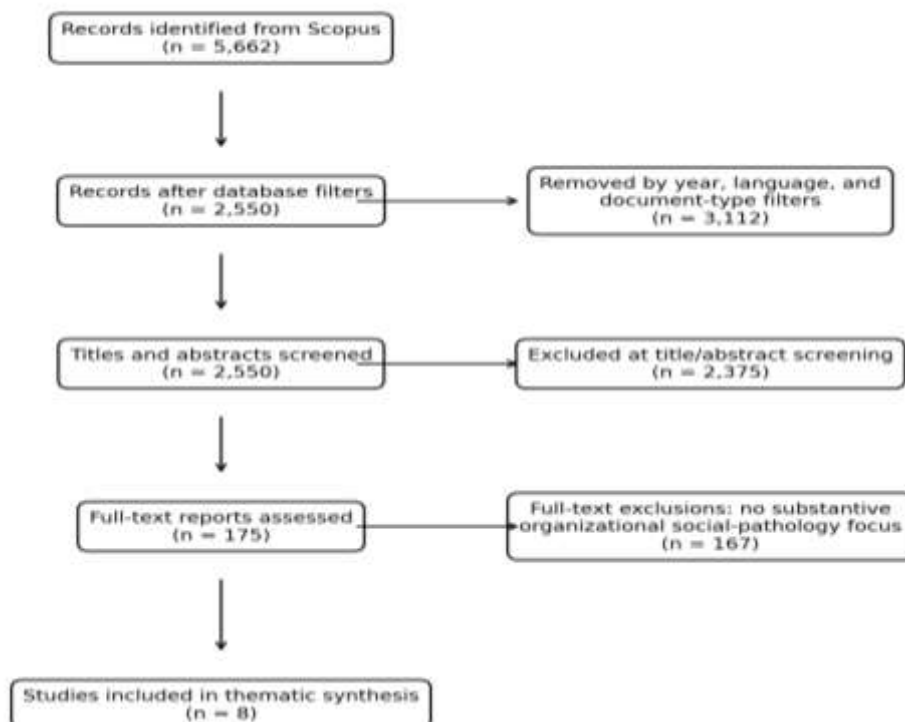


Figure 1. PRISMA-informed study-selection flow. The numerical reconstruction should be checked against the original Scopus export log before submission.

A structured extraction matrix was used to record publication year, organizational setting, research design, focal social problem, principal findings, implied causal mechanisms, behavioral consequences, and proposed organizational responses. The

eight studies were then compared iteratively to identify convergence, divergence, and recurring relationships across contexts.

Thematic analysis was used because the corpus included qualitative case studies, critical thematic analysis, experiments, and multi-case research that could not be meaningfully pooled statistically. Following the logic of reflexive thematic analysis, initial descriptive codes were grouped into higher-order themes and repeatedly checked against the source studies (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The final themes were: organizational hypocrisy and symbolic action; governance failure and dysfunction; social exclusion and power asymmetry; and substantive responses to social problems and sustainability.

Given the methodological heterogeneity of the corpus, no single risk-of-bias instrument was appropriate. Studies were instead appraised for clarity of purpose, transparency of method, relevance to the organizational construct, and adequacy of evidence supporting the reported conclusions. This approach supports conceptual synthesis but does not establish causal effect sizes. The use of one database, English-language restrictions, and a small final corpus also limit comprehensiveness and generalizability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Characteristics of the Included Studies

The final corpus comprised eight journal articles published between 2019 and 2024. The studies covered universities, corporations, non-governmental organizations, resource-extraction companies, online public communication, and sustainability programs. Research designs included critical thematic analysis, experiments, qualitative case studies, and multiple-case analysis. Despite contextual diversity, the studies converged on a central issue: organizations can publicly display responsibility while maintaining governance arrangements and power relations that reproduce the underlying problem.

Table 2 summarizes the included studies and their relevance to the four themes.

No.	Study	Context/focus	Method	Key contribution
1	Adamik & Nowicki (2019)	Industry 4.0 co-creation and CSR	Multiple-case analysis	Weak CSR implementation, short-termism, and deficient governance can transform co-creation into value co-destruction.
2	Parcha & Kingsley Westerman (2020)	Corporate social advocacy	Experiment	Advocacy can influence attitudes, but effectiveness depends on issue relevance, organizational fit, and perceived support.
3	Sätre et al. (2020)	Local civic organizations in Russia	Case study	Organizations adapted under institutional pressure, but dependence on individual leaders created governance and participation vulnerabilities.
4	Raimo et al. (2021)	CSR responses during COVID-19	Multiple case study	Company–NGO collaboration mobilized health, food, technological, and social support for vulnerable groups.
5	Ashby-King (2023)	University responses to George Floyd's killing	Critical thematic analysis	Public commitments to diversity often reproduced existing institutional logics rather than advancing structural change.

No.	Study	Context/focus	Method	Key contribution
6	Budianto & Isnalita (2024)	Sustainability in Indonesian beverage companies	Qualitative case study	Sustainability initiatives addressed social and environmental problems through community programs and stakeholder engagement.
7	Owen & Kemp (2024)	Corporate grievance mechanisms	Qualitative analysis	Procedural fiction, deferral, disconnected remedies, and other pathologies limited effective responses to community grievances.
8	Zhao et al. (2024)	Corporate social-issue communication and online incivility	Online experiment	Uncivil online discussion increased cynicism and reduced support for organizations taking positions on controversial issues.

2. Organizational Hypocrisy and Symbolic Social Action

The most visible form of social pathology was a discrepancy between publicly communicated values and the practices through which authority and resources were actually organized. Ashby-King (2023) showed that university statements following the killing of George Floyd frequently acknowledged racism and affirmed diversity, yet often remained within established institutional logics. The statements could therefore enhance legitimacy without necessarily redistributing power or altering structures that produced unequal outcomes.

Corporate social advocacy displayed a similar tension. Parcha and Kingsley Westerman (2020) found that advocacy can shape attitudes when audiences perceive issue relevance and organizational fit. Zhao et al. (2024), however, demonstrated that uncivil public discussion surrounding corporate positions can increase cynicism and reduce organizational support. Together, these findings indicate that social-issue communication is behaviorally consequential but highly dependent on perceived authenticity, consistency, and the surrounding discourse environment.

From an organizational-behavior perspective, symbolic action becomes pathological when communication substitutes for operational change. Repeated inconsistency between declared values and observable practices can produce cynicism, distrust, and withdrawal among employees and external stakeholders. The mechanism is institutional decoupling: social commitments are incorporated into formal discourse but remain weakly connected to incentives, decision processes, accountability, or remedy. Symbolic action is therefore not inherently dysfunctional; it becomes pathological when it protects legitimacy while leaving the underlying condition unchanged.

3. Governance Failure and Organizational Dysfunction

Owen and Kemp (2024) provide the clearest evidence that formal procedures can conceal rather than resolve dysfunction. Their analysis identified recurring “pathologies of practice” in corporate grievance mechanisms, including procedural fiction, default deferral, pressure release, disconnected remedy, and irremediability. These mechanisms appeared to satisfy expectations of accountability while limiting meaningful redress for affected communities.

Adamik and Nowicki (2019) similarly showed that co-creation and CSR initiatives can generate co-destruction when governance is short-term, ethically weak, or insufficiently accountable. Collaborative language does not guarantee shared value; without transparent roles, long-term responsibility, and credible oversight, collaboration can shift risks to less powerful participants. In civic organizations, Sâtre et al. (2020) found that adaptation was often tied to the authority and reputation of individual leaders. Although concentrated leadership supported survival under

institutional pressure, it also made organizations vulnerable to succession problems and weak internal democracy.

These studies suggest that governance failure is a structural driver of social pathology. Ambiguous procedures, concentrated discretion, and accountability systems oriented toward compliance rather than remedy reduce trust and perceived justice. They also shape behavior by teaching organizational members that participation has limited consequences. Governance pathology therefore links formal structure to silence, cynicism, disengagement, and stakeholder conflict.

4. Social Exclusion and Power Asymmetry

Exclusion and unequal power appeared both inside organizations and in relationships with external stakeholders. Ashby-King (2023) showed how institutional responses to racial injustice could reproduce dominant logics even while using inclusive language. Sâtre et al. (2020) highlighted the concentration of strategic influence among organizational leaders, while Owen and Kemp (2024) demonstrated how corporations controlled the procedures, resources, and timelines through which community grievances were processed.

Power asymmetry matters because it determines whose knowledge becomes actionable. Actors with fewer resources may be invited to participate yet remain unable to shape outcomes. This creates a distinction between formal inclusion and consequential participation. When organizational members or stakeholders perceive that voice will not affect decisions, silence, disengagement, and distrust become predictable responses rather than anomalies.

The reviewed evidence therefore supports a relational understanding of pathology. Social exclusion is not limited to overt discrimination; it also includes restricted access to decision arenas, unequal procedural capacity, lack of remedy, and dependence on dominant actors. Corrective action requires more than representation. It requires decision rights, transparent information, protection from retaliation, and demonstrable links between stakeholder input and organizational action.

5. Organizational Responses to Social Problems and Sustainability

The corpus also showed that organizations can mitigate rather than reproduce social pathology. Raimo et al. (2021) documented how companies collaborated with NGOs during the COVID-19 pandemic to deliver food, health, technological, and social support. Budianto and Isnalita (2024) found that Indonesian beverage companies used sustainability initiatives to address community and environmental concerns through empowerment, education, health, conservation, and stakeholder partnerships.

The critical distinction is whether social responsibility is embedded in organizational systems. Programs are more likely to be substantive when they involve sustained resource commitments, stakeholder collaboration, governance responsibility, measurable outcomes, and organizational learning. By contrast, temporary campaigns that remain disconnected from core decisions may reproduce the symbolic pathology identified in the first theme.

Organizations therefore occupy a dual position. They can create social problems through weak governance, unequal participation, and legitimacy-seeking symbolism, but they also possess resources and coordinating capacity that can address those problems. The behavioral effect of sustainability initiatives depends on whether

employees and stakeholders experience them as credible, participatory, and consistent with everyday organizational practice.

6. Integrative Thematic Synthesis

Across the four themes, social pathology followed a recurring sequence: institutional or stakeholder pressure generated a formal organizational response; the response was filtered through governance and power arrangements; stakeholders evaluated whether talk, decisions, and action were aligned; and this evaluation shaped trust, cynicism, voice, engagement, and legitimacy. Table 3 summarizes the integrative framework.

Pathological/transformational condition	Organizational mechanism	Behavioral consequences	Corrective organizational practices
Discourse–practice gap	Values, CSR, advocacy, or inclusion claims are weakly connected to operations	Cynicism, distrust, reduced identification	Tie commitments to budgets, responsibilities, indicators, and public follow-through
Governance failure	Procedures exist but do not deliver accountability or remedy	Silence, disengagement, unresolved conflict	Independent oversight, clear escalation, time-bound remedies, transparent reporting
Power asymmetry and exclusion	Participation is formal but influence and resources remain concentrated	Low psychological safety, weak voice, perceived injustice	Protected voice channels, shared decision rights, representation with consequential authority
Substantive social response	Responsibility is integrated into governance, collaboration, and learning	Trust, engagement, legitimacy, adaptive capacity	Long-term partnerships, measurable outcomes, stakeholder co-design, continuous evaluation

Discussion

1. Theoretical Contributions

The review advances organizational-behavior theory by reframing social pathology as a multilevel condition rather than a collection of isolated misconduct events. Individual deviance, silence, cynicism, and exhaustion are important outcomes, but the reviewed evidence indicates that they are often generated by meso-level governance and culture and by macro-level legitimacy pressures. This approach connects behavioral research on deviance and voice with institutional research on decoupling and legitimacy.

Second, the findings clarify that organizational hypocrisy and governance failure are related but distinct. Hypocrisy concerns the separation of talk, decisions, and action, whereas governance failure concerns the inability or unwillingness of organizational systems to allocate responsibility, process grievances, and produce remedy. The two reinforce one another when symbolic policies protect legitimacy and weak governance prevents stakeholders from challenging the gap.

Third, the review identifies power as a cross-cutting mechanism. Institutional commitments do not become substantive merely because they are formally adopted. Their effect depends on who controls interpretation, implementation, information, and sanctions. Thus, voice and participation should be assessed by their influence on decisions, not by their formal availability. This insight helps explain why organizations may appear inclusive while continuing to produce silence and exclusion.

Finally, the dual-role finding extends the concept beyond diagnosis. Organizations are not only sites in which pathology develops; they are also actors capable of transforming pathological conditions through governance reform, stakeholder

collaboration, and learning. Social responsibility should therefore be evaluated as an organizational capability rather than as a peripheral communication activity.

2. Managerial and Policy Implications

For managers, the central implication is that ethical statements and social initiatives must be translated into operating architecture. Organizations should assign accountable owners, allocate resources, establish measurable outcomes, and disclose progress and limitations. Alignment audits can compare public commitments with policies, incentives, promotion criteria, procurement, complaint handling, and resource allocation.

Grievance and voice systems require particular attention. Effective mechanisms should be accessible, independent, time-bound, protected from retaliation, and capable of producing remedy. Managers should monitor not only the number of complaints or suggestions submitted but also response times, resolution quality, recurrence, stakeholder satisfaction, and whether input changed decisions.

Organizations should also distinguish consultation from shared influence. Representation without decision rights can intensify cynicism. Inclusive governance requires transparent selection of representatives, access to relevant information, clear escalation routes, and documentation of how stakeholder input was incorporated or why it was rejected.

CSR and sustainability programs should be integrated with risk management, performance evaluation, and strategic planning. Partnerships with communities and NGOs can strengthen relevance and implementation, but organizations should avoid treating temporary visibility as evidence of impact. Independent evaluation and longitudinal indicators are necessary to distinguish substantive improvement from symbolic legitimacy management.

3. Limitations and Future Research

This review has several limitations. First, it relied on Scopus alone; relevant studies indexed in Web of Science, ProQuest, EBSCO, or regional databases may have been missed. Second, the English-language and 2015–2025 restrictions reduce historical and geographical breadth. Third, the final corpus was small and methodologically heterogeneous, preventing statistical synthesis. Fourth, the search term pathology generated false positives because it also names clinical disciplines. Although explicit boundary rules improved construct validity, future searches should prioritize phrases such as “social pathology,” “organizational pathology,” “organizational dysfunction,” “institutional decoupling,” and “pathologies of practice.”

Future research should develop and validate a multidimensional measurement model of organizational social pathology. Potential dimensions include discourse–practice decoupling, accountability failure, power concentration, exclusion, voice suppression, and symbolic responsibility. Quantitative studies could test relationships with trust, engagement, commitment, psychological safety, counterproductive behavior, turnover, and stakeholder support. Longitudinal and multilevel designs are particularly important because pathological conditions may accumulate gradually and spread through teams and institutional routines.

Comparative research should examine how social pathology varies across national cultures, sectors, ownership forms, and regulatory environments. Digital organizations also require attention because algorithmic decision-making, online incivility, misinformation, and opaque automated systems may create new forms of

exclusion and accountability failure. Finally, intervention studies should evaluate whether governance reforms, ethical leadership, protected voice systems, participatory decision-making, and independently assessed sustainability programs produce durable behavioral and institutional change.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review conceptualizes social pathology in organizations as a multilevel condition produced by persistent dysfunction in discourse, governance, power, participation, and institutional practice. The eight included studies revealed four interrelated patterns: organizational hypocrisy and symbolic social action; governance failure and organizational dysfunction; social exclusion and power asymmetry; and substantive organizational responses to social problems and sustainability.

The central conclusion is that pathology cannot be reduced to individual misconduct. Harmful behavior is enabled and sustained when formal commitments are decoupled from practice, accountability mechanisms do not provide remedy, power is concentrated, and voice lacks consequences. Conversely, organizations can transform these conditions when responsibility is integrated into governance, resources, stakeholder participation, learning, and measurable follow-through. The proposed framework therefore provides both a theoretical lens for future organizational-behavior research and a practical basis for building organizations that are more ethical, inclusive, accountable, and socially sustainable.

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