

Differences in the adoption of an open strategizing method by a private organization versus a public organization: A qualitative study

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ABSTRACT,

Open Strategy is becoming an increasingly studied topic by researchers and practitioners. Open Strategy approaches take strategy in a direction that involves transparency and inclusions for stakeholders. Furthermore, other promising benefits of Open Strategy include more commitment, joint sense-making, and organizational creativity. An approach that consists of Open Strategy principles is the A3 approach that Dr. H.J. Doeleman has developed. This approach is widely used in the Public Sector in the Netherlands but has yet to be widely adopted by the Private Sector. Therefore, this study will focus on applicability and the motivations for a Private Organization to adopt the A3 approach. An explorative case study has been conducted at a large Private Organization active in the automotive industry. Longitudinal research is undertaken to get knowledge in three moments with the Private Organization. Additionally, interviews were held with three employees of a Public Healthcare organization currently working with the approach to gain insights into their motivations for adapting and using the A3 approach. The research results show that motivations for the Private Organization are slight potential improvements in strategic alignment, progress monitoring, and transparency. The Organization expects only remote results because of its well-developed current method that proves successful with the much-integrated lean culture. This implies that results will be different for various types of private organizations. Interestingly, the Public Domain implied motivations very closely in line with the findings at the private organization. However, there were differences in the type of cultures between the organizations. Nevertheless, this suggests that the differences in the adoption rate between the sectors are not due to the contents of the A3 approach. Additionally, the research finds that the A3 approach well supports the belief systems of an organization, and it would integrate the core values sufficiently into the Private Organization.

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Keywords

Open Strategy, A3 Approach, Belief Systems

1. INTRODUCTION

The private domain lags compared to the public domain regarding adopting the A3 'open strategy' approach. The A3 approach is developed by dr. H.J. Doeleman to achieve a strategizing approach with less paper and more management control. Nevertheless, there needs to be more knowledge about why this is the current situation and the differences in adapting the approach between the public and private domains. A knowledge deficit situation that is associated with the aforementioned is that there is no information on what advantages and disadvantages are related to the use of the A3 approach for both the public domain and private domain and what motivations would be there for the adoption of the A3 approach in the private field.

Doeleman et al. (2022) developed the so-called 'A3 approach' as a constellation of three open strategizing practices for realizing organizational annual plans and monitoring the progress quickly and effectively. The A3 approach builds upon three fundamental open strategizing practices. Firstly, create a participative annual plan on one A3 paper size sheet. Secondly, the A3 management dialogue consists of a reciprocal dialogue among the different management levels of the organization to monitor the progress of realization and link the policy to its execution. The third component is A3 online; this is a progress information tooling that facilitates the dialogues with the required information. The EFQM Excellence Model is the basis for the first practice: a format of the A3 annual plan because, with this model, two questions are answered; are all the results and efforts sufficiently balanced, and is the plan consistent and coherent regarding the proposed direction (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014; Doeleman et al., 2022). The EFQM approach is a multi-dimensional quality management model, meaning that performance needs to meet the stakeholders' expectations, needs, and demands (Nabitz et al., 2000). The A3 approach has several advantages when the approach is executed correctly. Qualities of effective transformational leadership will be integrated into the management control systems (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014). The additional effects are more control and less paper(work). The inspiring process of creating the annual plan gives energy rather than losing it. It provides clarity and consistency for the organizational direction and implementation of annual plans. Lastly, it creates coherence among the different annual plans at various management levels and stimulates dialogues regarding these plans among different organizational layers (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014).

1.1 Research objective and question

The main objective is to analyze the motivations of a private company that would influence its choice to adopt the three open strategizing practices as proposed by the A3 approach. Many public sectors, for example, public education, healthcare, and municipalities have adopted the A3 approach. Firstly, insights need to be collected regarding reasons for adopting the A3 approach in the public sector and how they experience working with the A3 approach. The healthcare sector is chosen because this sector has processes in line with the private sector. Secondly, it is vital to research the differences between private companies' current strategic approach and the A3 approach. So, it is essential to identify the current strategizing practices in a private organization and the advantages and disadvantages experienced. Thirdly, how private company x experiences an intervention with the A3 approach. The final objective of this research is to compare insights regarding the differences in adapting the A3 approach between the public and private sectors and within the different ways of strategizing researched in the private company x. This will ultimately give information regarding the motivations for private company x into the A3 approach.

This research objective will be achieved by answering the following main research question and the sub-questions that are related to this:

The main research question: What motivates private company X in its choice to adopt the A3 approach for strategizing?

The main research questions will be answered by answering the following five sub-questions:

- Sub-question 1: "What are the reasons that led to the adoption of the A3 approach in the healthcare sector, and what are their experiences with the approach?"
- Sub-question 2: "What is the current approach of company X regarding strategizing processes, and what are the expected success conditions as well as pitfalls of this approach identified by the employees of the company?"
- Sub-question 3: "What are the observed initial reactions of the participants of the intervention regarding the motivations, usability, and (dis)advantages during the intervention."
- Sub-question 4: "What motivations are suggested by the interviewees in company X to influence the choice of whether to adopt and implement the A3 approach?"
- Sub-question 5: "How will the influence of the belief systems of an organization change by adopting the A3 approach?"

The results of this study could provide information for the public as the private domain in adopting the A3 approach or open strategizing practices in general. It will also provide insights regarding the differences between the private and public fields in adopting the A3 approach. Lastly, it will give insight into potential improvements of the A3 approach that could lead to more organizational value in the private sector.

1.2 Academical relevance

This research will firstly give new insights into the literature for adopting open strategizing practices for a private organization and how these practices can best be implemented. In addition, the research will give new understandings regarding the differences between the private and public domains regarding adopting open strategizing practices in organizations.

1.3 Practical relevance

This research will give an understanding of the reasons for eventually adopting the A3 approach in a private company and recommendations on how the degree of attractiveness could be increased in the private domain. Secondly, it will give insight into possible improvements for the A3 approach that could lead to a more valuable approach for a company in the private domain. This research will also clarify the differences in adaptation between the private and public domains regarding the approach.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Strategy formulation and implementation

Mintzberg stated that the definition of strategy couldn't rely on one description, so five definitions are proposed for the concept of strategy: plan, ploy, pattern, position, and perspective. A plan as it provides a guideline (or set of policies) for a sort of consciously intended course of action to deal with a situation. This plan can also be a ploy, a specific maneuver to outplay a competitor. It is a pattern as it is a way of consistent behavior, whether intended or not. Strategy can also be defined as the organization's position in its environment. Lastly, the underlying thought of perspective is that strategy is the ingrained way how the internal organization perceives the world. (Mintzberg, 1987).

Organizations formulate strategies to achieve a more favorable position. Due to today's highly dynamic business environments, strategy formulation should be a continuous and cognitive process to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances constantly. Organizational learning takes a significant stake because this is seen as the only source of sustainable competitive advantage. For this reason, strategy formulation should also be regarded as a continuous learning process. This is also the difference between traditional and modern strategy formulation approaches. Traditional approaches tend to analyze the environment to identify the ideal position. However, such an approach will fail in the current dynamic environment because the environment will change before the strategy is implemented (Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1995). "Strategy implementation can be defined as the communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans" (Noble, 1999). This definition also focuses on the process involved in strategy implementation, which is related to the continuous learning cycle of strategy formulation. Both these concepts are firmly related, and it also suggests that there is a slim line between strategy formulation and implementation (Leonardi 2015).

2.2 Evolution of strategizing practices

Many approaches toward strategizing practices have been developed over the last century to improve organizational performance. Hoshin Kanri is an approach of significant influence developed by Yokogawa Hewlett-Packard in the 1970s and was subsequently adopted by Hewlett-Packard and other organizations in the USA (Calingo, 1996). Hoshin Kanri can be interpreted as a Japanese Total Quality Management (TQM) approach. This approach is grounded on the following principle: "each individual in an organization is recognized as being the expert in their job, that humans seek recognition and want to be involved and are motivated by a desire to be recognized as a contributor to the success of the community to which they belong (Hutchins, 2008)". Hoshin Kanri's approach consists of processes regarding creating an annual plan and realizing these plans (Jolayemi, 2008). "In its more detailed form, Hoshin planning includes a long-range plan (five- to ten-year vision), a one-year plan, deployment to departments, implementation, monthly audits, and the president's annual audit" (María R. Calingo, 1996). By applying this approach persistently, Toyota moved from being far behind to being the world's leading automotive producer in 2007 (Hutchins, 2008).

Kaplan & Norton (1992) introduced a second influential strategizing approach, 'The Balanced Scorecard'. The Balanced Scorecard has four perspectives that interact in all directions; The Financial Perspective, the Customer Perspective, the Internal Business Perspective, and the Innovation and Learning Perspective. Two advantages of using these perspectives are the collectivization of all seemingly disparate elements of a company's competitive advantage. Secondly, it protects against suboptimization due to forcing all managers to consider all essential operational measures (Kaplan & Norton, 1992).

A more recent strategizing approach was introduced by Kaplan & Norton in 2008. Kaplan & Norton (2008) introduced "the closed-loop management system". This system starts with creating a plan focused on three to five years. The second phase involves translating the strategy to all units and employees using a strategy map. The third and fourth steps are about implementing and monitoring the created plan and testing and adapting the strategy to ensure that the strategy keeps up with the organization's needs (Kaplan & Norton, 2008).

More recently, Weiser et al. (2020) introduced the concept of adaptive strategy implementation. This concept consists of the interplay between three activities: conceptualizing-, enacting-,

and coordinating strategy. Organizations conceptualize a strategy by executing the activities involved in continuously reevaluating the strategic direction. Enacting the strategy consists of bringing the pattern of the strategy implementation and the people's actions in line (Weiser et al., 2020). The deliberate actions aimed at orchestrating strategy implementation and the social dynamics that form how people work independently on goals and tasks to achieve collective actions can be attributed to coordinating strategic efforts (Jarzabkowski et al., 2012; Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009). The integrative view proposed by Weiser et al. (2020) provides a more dynamic understanding of strategy because it deploys the interplay between conceptualizing and enacting strategy. The interplay is the heart of strategy implementation rather than evaluating the quality of strategy implementation based on the extent to which the strategy has been implemented appropriately in line with the pre-determined plan. This perspective enables the adaptive turn in strategy implementation (Weiser et al., 2020).

2.3 Open strategy

Open strategizing takes strategy formulation and implementation in a new direction. Seidl et al. (2019) report that 'Open strategy' involves both subdimensions of transparency and inclusion. Subdimensions for transparency are the number/range of audiences and topics disclosed and the openness of transparency procedures. Subdimensions of inclusions are the number/range of constituencies, depth of involvement, the scope of decision-making rights, and transparency of inclusion procedures. Strategy processes are always a combination of openness in some of these dimensions but may be more closed in other dimensions. The definition, therefore, accentuates the fundamental concepts of transparency and inclusion while identifying that the practices of openness in each instance are part of a complex interplay (Seidl et al., 2019).

Open strategy implies inclusion and transparency among an organization's internal and external stakeholders regarding the organization's strategy (Whittington et al., 2011). This means, seen from the perspective of corporate governance, that the stewardship theory has to be integrated into organizations to make an open strategy successful (Adobor, 2020). According to Birkinshaw (2017), open strategizing consists of four aspects. The first aspect is 'commons-based production', where people unite voluntarily to create information, knowledge, or cultural goods (Benkler & Nissenbaum, 2006). The second aspect, 'crowd-based input to decision making', implies that many individuals provide insights into a process that the organization controls. Thirdly, 'collective buy-in and action' is about getting the people to shift their behavior and attitudes to implement a chosen way forward instead of asking them to contribute to formulating a strategy. These three aspects constantly engage with the fourth aspect, 'collective sense-making' in open strategizing. Which is executed by the most influential organizational stakeholders, and these stakeholders give meaning to the chosen strategy that has come forwards out of the other three aspects. (Birkinshaw, 2017)

More significant amounts of strategic information become available in an open strategizing approach, leading to more people engaging in the strategy conversation (Hautz et al., 2017). Other promising benefits of an open strategizing approach are, due to the more extensive and more diverse pool of contributors, more creativity (Stieger et al., 2012); also, there is increased commitment and joint sensemaking (Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Hutter et al., 2017; Ketokivi & Castañer, 2004), and another advantage is favorable impression management (Gegenhuber & Dobusch, 2017; Yakis-Douglas et al., 2017). Mack & Szulanski

(2017) also suggest that an open strategy is beneficial for strategy implementation because involved employees are better prepared.

Implications for an open strategizing approach will differ between organizations; for example, privately held companies are under less pressure from external than companies selling all or a portion of themselves to the public. Also, external transparency will influence the relative effectiveness of various strategies (Whittington et al., 2011). Hautz et al. (2017) propose five dilemmas for open strategizing, summarized in figure 1. The right side of this figure suggests some significant consequences that may negatively affect the success of an open strategizing approach.

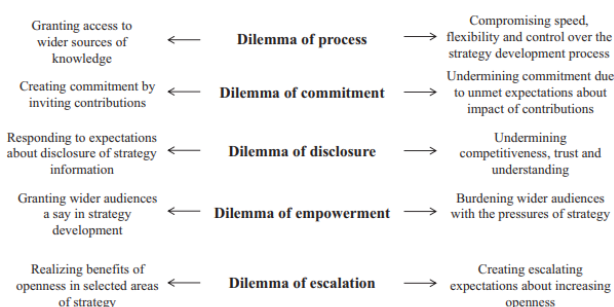
2.4 A3 approach of open strategizing

The A3 approach is built upon adaptive and open strategizing principles. It is a tool for creating (annual) plans (or project- or program plans) for an organization and, secondly, a tool to realize these annual plans and monitor the progress of the annual plans quickly and effectively. The A3 approach consists of three leading open strategizing practices, combining the concepts of transformational leadership and management control (as proposed by Simons (1994)). Firstly, the A3 annual plan from the particular organization is created on a single A3 paper. Secondly, the A3 management dialogue consists of a reciprocal dialogue among the different management levels of the organization to link the policy to its execution. The third component is A3 online, the management information collection point that facilitates the management dialogues with the required information. The EFQM Excellence Model (based on direction, execution, and results) is the basis for the A3 annual plan format. It is used to analyze if the results and efforts are sufficiently balanced and if the plan is consistent and coherent (Doeleman et al., 2022).

The EFQM Model is a framework that supports organizations in managing change and improving performance for organizations that aim for a long-term, sustainable future. Using the EFQM Model provides the opportunity to take a holistic perspective by appreciating the complexity of an organization but simultaneously seeing it as an organized system. This can be explained by seeing the organization as the world at large. It should not be seen as linear, mechanical, and predictable but rather as a complex adaptive system consisting of interdependent humans living on a dynamic planet. EFQM Model has seven different criteria that lead to the three components, direction, execution, and results, that together provide the holistic overview of the organization (EFQM, Private Foundation, 2022).

Successful implementation of the A3 approach requires effective leadership that fits with the desired behavior related to the management control system process. Effective leadership strategies for the approach are transformational leadership and transactional leadership (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014). Transformational leaders inspire their followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes while developing their leadership capacity. Transactional business leadership consists of social

Figure 1: Dilemmas of Open Strategizing



exchange; they offer financial rewards for productivity or deny these rewards in the case of lack of productivity (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The moderating role of transformational leadership is also illustrated in Doeleman et al. (2022), where among others, it is demonstrated that two attributed characteristics to transformational leadership dimensions, intrinsic motivation & empowerment, contribute to effective strategy implementation (Doeleman et al., 2022).

A second crucial requirement for successfully using the A3 approach is alignment between the Management Control System and the A3 approach. (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014) Management control systems represent various ways the organization's top management team efforts to improve the organization's performance in line with the strategic objectives. Management Control is the systematic process by which the organization's strategies are implemented through the influence of higher-level managers on lower-level managers (Anthony et al., 2014).

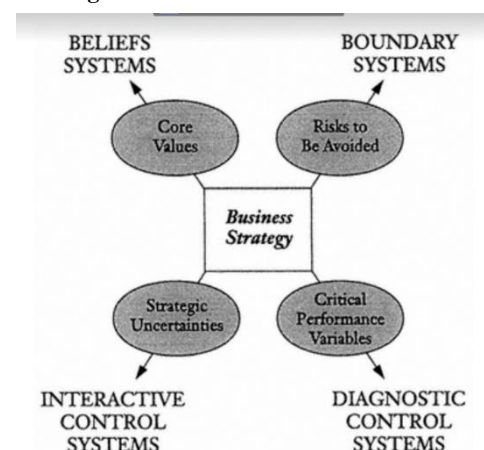
2.5 Simons Levers of control

Simons (1994b) created a model for strategy implementation, with the business strategy as the core value for competing with competitors. The model is shown in figure 2 (Simons, 1994b). The second level of this model stems from the highest level 'business strategy' and introduces four key components that must be analyzed to achieve successful strategy implementation. These components on the second level are each controlled by a single system or lever, visible in figure 2. This thesis will focus on the lever 'Belief Systems' because this contributes to the more extensive research in which the other components will be investigated in other individual reports.

"Belief systems are formal systems that top managers use to define, communicate and reinforce the organization's basic values, purpose, and direction" (Simons, 1994a). The primary purpose of belief systems is to guide and inspire the organization in its search and discovery. If problems arise with the strategy implementation, the belief systems help elect what issues must be tackled to solve. More importantly, when there are no problems within the organization, the belief systems help to motivate the employees to find new ways to create value. (Simons, 1994b)

A second reason for the importance of belief systems is that symbolic information is the basis for creating the belief system (Simons, 1994b). Furthermore, according to Westley and Mintzberg (1989), great leaders and capable managers recognize the influence of symbolism and inspiration. The third reason for belief systems is that with the increasing complexity of organizations, it gets more difficult for individuals to identify

Figure 2: Simon's levers of control



themselves with the organization's purpose and direction. Belief systems can improve this. Fourthly, with the rapidly changing technological environment, it is vital to have strong core values to assure organizational stability. Lastly, higher-educated employees expect responsibility. A clear corporate purpose is essential to give them this responsibility for using their creativity and solving challenges (Simons, 1994b).

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design

The overall research design of this thesis consists of an explorative empirical study focused on a private organization. The organization's name is kept confidential since the company does not want to expose its way of strategic working and other matters that may come to the surface during this study. Qualitative action research, with a longitudinal data collection method, is executed. All data collection moments in this research were recorded. The study of the organization was done in Dutch and later translated into English to make it more accessible for more people interested in this study.

During this longitudinal research, data collection will be performed three times over a period. All the data collection moments are conducted with the same three individuals. T1, the first data collection moment, is a focused group interview with all three employees regarding their current approach of strategizing in their company, how their current strategizing approach works, and the advantages and disadvantages are the main topics of this interview. Secondly, T2 is an intervention with Dr. H.J. Doeleman that consists of a lecture focused on the A3 approach for strategizing with all three participants. This intervention is recorded as well to be able to analyze the initial responses during the intervention. The last data collection moment, T3, is an individual interview with each individual who had participated in T1 and T2. This interview was about how the A3 approach would potentially affect the way of working with strategy within the organization.

Additionally, interviews were executed with public healthcare organizations using the A3 approach. This is done in advance of the qualitative action research to better understand the A3 approach in the professional environment and to indicate potential motivations to work with the A3 approach.

3.2 Case selection and sample description

Purposive sampling is applied for the case selection. A significant part of the study was focused on the public domain versus the private domain, which led to selecting a case in both fields. Three cases are chosen in the public healthcare domain and one organization in the private domain that can be explained as the approach is well adopted in the public domain rather than in the private domain. Public organizations are already familiar with the approach, in contrast to the private domains. So to give the study at the private organization the attention it deserves, only one private organization has been selected in this study.

The private organization is active in the automotive industry. The interviewed individuals are involved in developing and implementing the organization's strategic goals, and they supervise & manage other employees. Public organizations are active in the healthcare sector, The three individuals were all driving forces for introducing the A3 approach to their organization.

The results of these interviews can be compared to the results of the private domain to see if there are fundamental similarities or differences between using the approach in these two domains.

3.3 Research Methods

This research has been performed using two qualitative research methods: 1) interviews and 2) interview analysis.

Interviews are conducted because this is a widely used data collection method for qualitative action research. The interviews with the correspondents of the public domain were semi-structured to get an open view of their motivations for using the A3 approach. T1 is a focused group interview to achieve an extensive conversation, and things can be discussed regarding how the organization deals with strategizing processes. T3 is an individual interview with each respondent to get an honest opinion from each individual, where they cannot influence each other. This was decided after the T2 intervention, where some respondents were more enthusiastic than the other correspondents. T1 and T3 were semi-structured interviews to get a relatively open interview where the participants could express their opinions.

3.4 Data-analysis

The collected data will be analyzed with the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2012), which is an inductive approach to analyzing qualitative data. The analyzed data will be the fundament for answering the central question of this research. The interviews with the public domain (health care organizations), as the interviews with the private organization, will be analyzed using this analysis. The Gioia analysis is performed in three steps. The first step. First-order terms analysis will try to observe the respondent's terms faithfully. Little attempt is made to refine categories, so the numbers of categories tend to explode on the front end of the interview. Secondly, second-order themes will follow from the first-order terms by seeking similarities and differences between these categories. Considering the arrays before, those new categories will be given labels or phrasal descriptors as second-order themes. Thirdly, aggregate dimensions will be distilled from second-order themes. These aggregate dimensions will be the primary motivations following the interviews.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Motivations for working with the A3 approach in public healthcare organizations

The following section describes the findings from the interviews with three public healthcare organizations.. All sentences *italicized* in the following section are quotes from a public healthcare organization. The complete list of the semi-structured interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

4.1.1 Strategic alignment

Strategic alignment is a considerable motivation to use the A3 approach for all three interviewed organizations and was mentioned multiple times during the interviews. Focus, clarity, and alignment are all improved at the interviewed organizations because of the A3 approach. Using the A3 approach, organization HX has improved focus and clarity.

"The A3 annual plan gives an excellent overview and forces you to think about what goals and how to formulate these goals."

Organization HY has more alignment between the different departments because the A3 has the vision as its basis.

"Our A3s are based on the organization's vision. So by having this as the basis of the annual plan, there is more alignment among the different departments".

Lastly, Organization HZ also states that the A3 approach improved its strategic alignment because the lower-level departments in the organization have to base their A3 on an A3 of a higher-level department plan.

“Departments can twist the KPI of the organization less because it has to be based on a higher layer A3 plan. So this is how consideration and uniformity have improved a lot”.

4.1.2 Progress monitoring

A second motivation that all three organizations affirm is the ability to monitor progress effectively. Mainly A3 online has a significant stake in the come about of this motivation. Organization HX reasoned this motivation with a sidenote regarding their own organization’s use of the A3 approach.

“The reporting and monitoring of projects are beneficial in A3 online, although every colleague in the ideal world should use them, and this is not happening right now.”

Organization HY also affirmed this with, among others, the following statement.

“A3 online creates a clear overview of the organization’s most important ongoing trajectories and the progress made in these trajectories”.

Continuously improving is a significant value for Organization HZ. A3 provides the tool to keep track of the progress made in projects regarding improvements.

“Continuous improvement is complemented by tools that are available in the A3 approach”

4.1.3 Additional relevant key findings

Another key finding that is very interesting is that the A3 approach mostly has to be seen as a management tool. It was affirmed that the approach is not relevant for employees with no connection to managing the organization because they are not interested in the more detailed information regarding what is happening in their organization apart from what is related to their job. This finding has to be placed into perspective that this will depend on the size of an organization. This becomes clear in a statement by Organization HZ.

“You must see it as a management tool, not a tool for all employees. I have over a hundred employees working in my department, half of them will not know what the A3 approach is, and the other half will know what it is but not what information is stated on the A3 annual plan. They are just not interested in these kinds of things.”

Organization HY also declared this with a recommendation for the organization’s driving forces behind the A3 approach.

“It is a management tool, and you must let the managers know that they are the plan owners. So they have to work with it and take the lead in keeping the whole A3 package up to date.”

4.2 Current strategizing approach for private organization PX

All italicized text in section 5.2 is a quote from Organization PX in the following section.

4.2.1 Structure and mechanism

Organization PX is active in the automotive industry and is a multinational. This research has been conducted at one of its facilities in the Netherlands, and because of this, the research is only relevant to this particular location. The structure that Organization PX uses for deploying strategy among the whole organization starts at the central strategy plan of Organization PX. The strategy will then be broken down into the lower levels of the organogram. The strategy is constantly made applicable to the concerning area at each level. After the central plan, each location of company PX will define its strategy based on the main strategic plan. The managing director does this. The concerned manager will then break down this new plan for their management area. The strategy is broken down even further by

the active workshop managers in a specific management area. The supervisors will break down the defined plans by the workshop managers to make them applicable to their departments. Interviews are held with a manager and two supervisors, so the findings are most relevant to this level of the organization. The strategy gets customized according to the needs of the concerned department in every layer it goes down in order. All the created strategies on every level must support the strategy of the layers above. The general organization strategy is a long distance away for the supervisors. Once a year, there is a strategic meeting to discuss strategy and annual plans for the coming year. After this day, the strategy gets distributed, as explained before. Part of this is the distribution of the so-called “assignment directives” to the supervisors. These are actions for the supervisors to apply to their department in a way that is effective for the department and contributes to the annual plan.

Every supervisor contributes to the strategy daily. A system is used with all the necessary numbers, KPIs, etc. The supervisors do have some freedom to adjust this system. However, the documents of all the supervisors within the organization are almost identical so that a supervisor can understand the strategic plan of another supervisor and their department.

“We have a playing system as supervisors with all the necessary information for the daily follow-up of what is expected of the supervisors. This system is almost completely identical for every supervisor.”

There is a daily meeting with a supervisor and the team leaders to discuss daily actions and progress. This meeting is followed by a meeting of supervisors with their workshop manager regarding the same goal as the meeting between supervisor and team leaders but on a higher level.

A new focus topic is discussed weekly during the supervisor meeting, where all supervisors are present from all departments. There are four focus themes based on the organizational strategic plan, and these topics redeem each other every week until the cycle of the same four focus areas starts again. This research will not give topics to guarantee the organization’s confidentiality.

The Kaizen methodology is used for organizational improvement at the supervisor level. This is a system where a slight modification is made within a week, with a supervisor with a multi-functional team taking the lead to implement the Kaizen. This is all part of the lean culture that is present at organization PX. In this culture, all employees play a part in the cycle of optimizing efficiency and internal processes. The Kaizen, the improvement, is usually a slight improvement in a business process and can focus on a variety of topics: safety, ergonomics, production, etc. A Kaizen is carried out every week, resulting in much improvement yearly. The Kaizen is determined a year before it starts. The Kaizen is carried out within a week, but data collection and preparation start before this week. A respondent:

“We have a quality and productivity optimization tool called the Kaizen Process. The Kaizen is focused on manageable improvements within a week”.

All these meetings and the Kaizen process create a culture that effectively monitors and implements changes. Every employee may give ideas for improvements, and with the Kaizen process, all levels of employees are integrated into making progress happen.

4.2.2 Advantages of the current strategy approach

The following section will discuss the advantages of the currently used method in Organization PX. Firstly, Organization PX is very active with annual plans.

"I would grade the awareness regarding annual plans at our location with an 8 on a scale of 1 to 10. We are all very active with that topic."

The documents used for monitoring, meetings, etc., are almost identical. This creates a culture where employees can quickly transfer between departments if necessary.

The Kaizen process greatly affects the organization's improvement and the targets set in the annual plans. It takes work to reflect on potential gains during the production process.

"The Kaizens we run have many effects; during this moment, you are out of the operating process. It is impossible to think about improvements during the process."

4.2.3 Shortcomings of the current strategy approach

Section 4.2.3 will discuss the disadvantages of the method used by Organization PX. Organization PX does not have a central digital system to distribute and monitor plans. Accessing the plans of other departments can be challenging.

"We do not have a program for the distribution of plans. We all use a Word document with the same layout."

During turbulent periods, it may be that supervisors choose to neglect a planned Kaizen, which may become a threat to continuous improvement if this occurs often.

"A current pitfall is that we are currently in turbulent times, which sometimes leads to the following occurrence. Supervisors may neglect a planned Kaizen because they say it is impossible from a production point of view."

4.3 Initial reactions to the A3 approach during the intervention

Italicized text in the following section is a quote from one of the respondents during the intervention.

4.3.1 Comparing the approaches

There is much overlap between the A3 approach and Organization PX's current approach to strategy and annual plans.

"I observe many similarities between the two approaches. Our method has no specific approach, as we call it. For example, we also pull apart actions and results from each other"

Organization PX is very advanced with monitoring and reviewing annual plan progression monthly. This monitoring is also a goal of the A3 approach.

"Information department boards are discussed and updated daily with extensive visualization. So every mechanic and team leader knows the day's plan, and a strong follow-up culture is created."

The observation of Organization PX is that their approach and the A3 approach are similar, and there were positive reactions toward the A3 approach.

4.3.2 Initial suggestion for motivations of the A3 approach

Organization PX does not have a consistent system for the setting and follow-up of actions. The A3 approach does have this attribute which would be helpful for organization PX.

"What we don't have at our organization is a consistent system or format for the performance of stated actions on the supervisor level. This would be of added value, I suppose."

Organization PX does not have a central system for monitoring progression but does this by using several documents. The A3 annual plan format could cause more holding power and make strategic actions more concrete.

"If it is easily accessible digitally, you can put all your actions into it digitally. Then you have even more leverage to make those strategic actions concrete that you want to concentrate on."

Organization PX has the vision that everyone should contribute to the organizational strategy, which is also a recognizable point of the A3 approach.

"Everyone contributes to the organizational strategy. It is not just for managers; you should be in this game on all levels."

4.4 Suggested motivations for the use of the A3 approach within Organization PX

Again, in section 4.4. all italicized text is a quote from one of the respondents.

4.4.1 Strategic alignment

Organization PX expects that implementing the A3 approach would create more strategic alignment among the location. Their current inconsistent way of working would improve with the introduction of the A3 approach.

"Plans are easier accessible for the different departments and supervisors who are continuously involved in plans and improvements."

The involvement of interested employees in plans could also increase with A3 as they are more centralized.

"A3 would contribute to the involvement of employees in the workplace regarding plans because the plans are centralized, and secondly, they are easy to share and access digitally."

4.4.2 Transparency

An overview may sometimes be lacking in working with plans and projects, but the A3 approach could provide this missing attribute.

"The rationale is very similar between the two methods, I think, but it is refreshing to see everything in one layout and overview. This is something we could be interested in as an organization."

Communication could be improved by using the A3 approach. A3 would give the employees more straightforward access to relevant plans and projects with a clear formulation.

"It would bring more life into the annual plans for the employees because more information is given about current progress and targets. By using A3, this is done more clearly than we are using right now."

Plans and projects would be shown more professionally, increasing the clarity of plans and projects among the employees. A3 looks more professional in involving employees, showing them information, and making actions visible in a clear context.

4.4.3 Additional Relevant Key Findings

Organization PX also suggests that the A3 approach could improve the monitoring of progressions in the projects and plans. Currently, there is no consistent system used for monitoring.

"It would also contribute to how IT is connected to measuring progress and dividing plans because it is an online tool that is easy to share and access for all departments."

A general suggestion by a respondent was that the A3 approach looks very flexible to him and applicable to many organizations.

"Because there is much freedom in the A3 approach, it seems very flexible. That's why I think it's very applicable to many companies. You can spin it and apply it to your organization."

4.5 Influence of the A3 approach for Simon's lever of control 'belief systems' in organizations.

The influence of the A3 on the belief system differs per public healthcare organization. Organization HZ uses the A3 annual plan to connect vision and actions, for example.

"We have colored the parts of the vision in the same way as the rest of the annual plan. So that you can see how this policy emphasis contributes to this part of the vision."

Also, organization HY is trying to connect the vision with the goals set for the coming period. They see this as essential for the organization because they want to include as many stakeholders as possible.

"From the vision, we just got a new one. Then we try to translate it into what goals are associated with it. We do that organization-wide. Of course, you want the vision done for as many stakeholders as possible, and so do the goals."

However, the A3 approach has not improved the presence of the core values in organization HX.

"I don't think core values are very specifically named anymore at the moment. I think you can get them out of strategy if you know them. Don't know them? Well, then, they don't come out very clearly."

A3 would improve the communication of the core values of the organization PX slightly. This is mainly because A3 would enhance communication with the employees regarding plans and projects and the core values included in the A3 format. Nevertheless, Organization PX thinks that its current approach also covers the organization's core values.

"I think both approaches would cover the organization's central values sufficiently. Although the A3 approach would be a bit more organized."

If you generate more involvement among employees, they will have more accessibility to the strategy and its core values. This would cause more awareness of the core values.

"If you constantly share and discuss the A3 format with your employees, conversations will arise around the subject of the organization's central values. This is often related to the strategy, vision, and mission."

Employees, apart from the management and supervisors, could be more involved with strategy now.

"I encounter that strategy, and annual plans reside with the management.. So now, it is a far-from-bed show for a significant number of the employees due to all the strategy breakdowns"

5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

This section will discuss the findings resulting from this research. Firstly, the motivations of the three (Public) Healthcare Organizations for working with the A3 approach will be discussed. This will be followed by debating the interview results and intervention with Organization PX. Lastly, the results from the public and private domains will be compared.

5.1 Motivations for A3 in (Public) Healthcare Organizations

The three interviews at the different (public) healthcare organizations resulted in several motivations. In a follow-on from the Gioia analysis, three bases for using the A3 approach are found in this research: 1) improved strategic alignment among the organization, 2) enhanced monitoring progress, and 3) more transparency in the organizations. At last, leadership plays an essential role in making these motivations happen.

5.1.1 Strategic Alignment

The strategic alignment has improved in the organizations, which is a significant effect of why organizations keep using the A3 approach. It has created more inclusiveness for all colleagues in discussing and reviewing the strategic plans for the organization. As stated in the literature review of this study, Hautz et al. (2017) suggest increased inclusiveness among employees as well, which has been suggested by the respondents of this research as well. More alignment will emerge by including a larger part of the organization in strategic plans.

A3 online generates consistency in the organization because different departments can access each other's plans. Secondly, a specific department's plan can be based on a higher-layer plan of the organization due to the connectivity in A3 online. One of the reasons for including the EFQM Excellence model in the A3 approach is to create more coherence and consistency in the organization by using the fundamental concept of direction, execution (actions), and results (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014). The respondents did not recommend using this model and its advantages as a motivation. However, this suggested quality could go unnoticed or be natural from the respondents' perspective. Overall, the A3 approach has led to more organizational coherence and consistency and, as a result, more strategic alignment.

Focus has increased in the organization because the approach forces you to make strategic choices, and the format creates an environment where you can make your plans manageable. The A3 approach forces organizations to concentrate on core issues due to using simplicity in the projects, which creates clarity in actions, results, and direction (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014). Interviewees said that creating focus in organizations stimulates more strategic alignment.

Inclusiveness, consistency, and focus are motivations for using the A3 approach. Inclusiveness is a motivation supported by Hautz et al. (2017), indicating a reliable motivation. Nevertheless, consistency and focus were not found in the literature review of this study. This suggests that more research is required to improve the reliability of these motivations. However, it is supported by all three public respondents in this study, so consistency and focus are motivations for using the A3 approach.

5.1.2 Progress Monitoring

The A3 approach has created an effective system for monitoring the progress of improvements in results and actions of employees and managers an organization makes. According to the respondents, it creates a central measurement system that the whole organization can use to keep track of their projects. Transformational leadership has its role in creating an environment where the employees are stimulated and educated in using the A3 approach and see it as the central system of the organization to play its role in the larger picture of the organization. These leaders need to incentive the employees to use the A3 approach as the leading approach because this makes it most effective. This again shows a transformational leader's impact on implementing the approach, which was also suggested by H. J. Doeleman et al. (2022)

Organizational improvement emerged through the ability to monitor progress effectively, included in the A3 approach rendering to the respondents. This is mainly because in A3 online, results, actions, and key success factors are connected. This creates an environment where continuous improvement is enhanced in the organization, which is appreciated. Secondly, the A3 approach has created an environment where progress is shown in the significant projects an organization is performing. By generating this focus, another motivation discussed in the

previous section, organizations can concentrate on these projects and make organizational improvements.

Progress monitoring is not a specific attribute of Open Strategy, and because of this reason not found as a matter of importance in the literature review. However, all respondents comment that the A3 digital component is an essential motivation for using the A3 approach. Nevertheless, transformational leadership has a vital role in effective progress monitoring, so the importance of leadership is crucial.

5.1.3 Transparency

Transparency among the employees of the organization improves by using the A3 approach. It creates an overview of the core topics the organization deals with. Employees get an overview of key success factors, results, and actions for next year, incorporated into the A3 one-pager. Employees like the compactness of this approach, which is also one of the features of the intervention of the A3 approach. It also creates coordination in the organization as it gives an overview of the projects to which employees are assigned.

The approach forces the owners of the A3 (annual) plans to formulate their results, actions, and key success factors in such a way that it creates clarity for the whole organization. Lower-level employees have more understanding of what they are contributing, which can improve their occupational quality. This is related to the fact that employees are better prepared to take action upon the strategy implementation (Mack & Szulanski, 2017). These advantages result from more clarity about the organization's strategy.

Improvement of communication effectiveness between colleagues and between departments of the organization is an attribute that accounts for a motivation to use the A3 approach. The ability to connect several A3 plans generates clear communication between the different plans and projects from departments and may prevent possible contradictions between projects. The improvement in communications is also due to the capability to access other departments' plans. This may inspire new projects, formulation, etc., to create more strategic alignment. Research by Doz & Kosonen (2008), Hutter et al. (2017), and Ketokivi & Castañer (2004) suggested increased joint sensemaking among the organization due to Open Strategizing. A3 online introduces this collective sensemaking because the information is shared through the whole organization, leading to collaborative sensemaking that has been made possible by improved communication among the organization.

We can see in section 5 of this research that many of the motivations for using the A3 approach are connected. The effect of leadership was related to educating people about monitoring. Leadership is also needed to stimulate employees to continuously work with the approach, as this will create strategic alignment in the de organization. Secondly, generating organizational improvement results from the motivation that the A3 approach makes focus. The incentive to improve communication by using the approach creates more transparency in the organization, but enhanced communication also forms an organization where more strategic alignment arises. A central measurement system motivates public healthcare organizations to use the A3 approach, but this can also be connected to the underlying reason that the A3 approach creates consistency and, following this, more alignment.

5.1.4 The role of leadership

The driving forces behind stimulating the A3 approach are mostly higher-level managers. These managers have to facilitate the use of the A3 approach in the organization as it is vital to keep

the data processed in A3 online up to date. This can be done by giving users of the A3 approach advantages of using the approach and educating them on how to use the A3 online digital facilitation. Educating people is also related to transformational leadership, a practical approach for implementing the A3 approach (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014). One of the respondents stated that they failed to inspire and educate users in the first period of using the A3 approach, which resulted in a less successful implementation. Secondly, an interviewee also commented that the driving forces for A3 have to stimulate people to keep updating the whole A3 package. This indicates the importance of successful leadership in the A3 approach. Transformational leadership moderates effective strategy implementation for open strategy approaches (Doeleman et al., 2022). Leadership is essential in creating an effective A3 process that can lead to several motivations to use the A3 approach.

5.2 Motivations for Private Organization PX

Organization PX has been studied in this research with three data collection points to investigate possible motivations for adopting the A3 approach. Three main motivations have arisen for implementing the A3 approach: increased employee transparency, more strategic alignment, and improved progress monitoring.

5.2.1 Increased employee transparency

Transparency toward the lower-level employees, mechanics as an example, and mutual transparency between the supervisors motivate the potential adoption of the A3 approach. Several documents are used at this moment for displaying plans for the employees. Because the A3 approach shows this information in one layout, there is an expected increased experience of having an overview, which is also one of the advantages of the A3 annual plan (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014).

The coordination between supervisors will enhance because supervisors have digital access to the A3 annual plans of the other supervisors. Presently supervisors have to access the programs of supervisors by accessing the numerous documents that the concerned supervisor creates. This will change into a single layout, improving digital communication and motivating the use of A3 online.

The A3 approach would also clarify the organization, accounting for the supervisors and the mechanics. The consistent system is more professional than the document that is used currently and offers the attribute to make organizational activities visible to the employees in a clear context.

Organization PX sees this transparency as a motivation for adopting the A3 approach. Transparency is one of the main features of Open Strategy (Seidl et al., 2019). This is also in line with Doeleman et al. (2022) because they also suggest that A3 online encourages the exchange of information, best practices, and learning possibilities to increase transparency in the organization. Hautz et al. (2017) indicate that more persons will engage in the strategy conversation by using open strategy approaches due to a large amount of transparency. Transparency is a significant motivation in addressing the research question, as multiple sources see this as a considerable advantage. In addition, this increased transparency can lead to more creativity in the organization (Stieger et al., 2012). Although this was not suggested as a reason for motivation by Organization PX, it does imply an advantage of transparency.

5.2.2 More strategic alignment

The potential for an increase in strategic alignment among the mechanics and supervisors would induce adopting the A3 approach. Strategic alignment regarding the bigger picture of the

international organization is present as this is well communicated and visible on the Organization PX location. Nevertheless, this strategy gets adjusted down to the subordinate layers of the organization. The A3 approach could enhance strategic alignment between the different departments on the supervisor level and among the employees operating under a supervisor. Several studies regarding open strategy also imply an increase in strategic alignment, which suggests that this is a significant motivation (Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Hutter et al., 2017; Ketokivi & Castañer, 2004).

Consistency will get a substantial boost, which is one of the main drivers for creating more strategic alignment. The A3 approach would provide one dominant system with all the necessary strategic information instead of the different documents currently used. These unidentical documents are not always easily accessible, and it can take time to understand a colleague's documents properly. By using one approach, all users of the A3 approach would have the necessary knowledge to understand the plans and actions of other departments. The consistency among the departments would be improved by having a uniform approach to making plans. What strengthens this motivation is that the central value in organization X is standardization, and by using the A3 approach, the strategizing processes get standardized. This standardization also created more consistency in the organization. This motivation is one of the goals of the A3 plan: "the aim of the annual plan is first and foremost to establish one standardized framework used by all levels in the organization. This will help create consistency and coherence among the annual plans of all segments of the organization (Doeleman & Diepenmaat, 2014, page 54)".

More focus that will lead to strategic alignment is an expected advantage of the A3 approach. The plans are central and concrete in the A3 approach, which will give focus because the plans are digital and accessible for colleagues who will concentrate on the central A3 plan. According to Doeleman & Diepenmaat (2014), the approach delivers direction for the organization. This direction ultimately creates focus because the organization has more knowledge about what way they want to go, and this will ask for specific plans that will be focused on. So this "focus" motivation is closely linked to a deliverable of the A3 approach. This focus will increase at all organizational levels because more employees will be involved with an open strategy. According to Mack & Szulanski (2017), this focus also improves because employees are better prepared for strategy implementation.

Lastly, the strategic alignment could increase among the subordinate employees under supervisors as the A3 approach creates more inclusiveness. This inclusiveness is an advantage of open strategizing, according to Hautz et al. (2017), and this more extensive engagement of employees is included in the A3 approach. This inclusiveness could increase at private organization PX if their A3 plans were more uniform and could be shared and accessed digitally. This will allow more colleagues to be involved in the strategic process at the supervisor level, as mechanics, for example, will also have easier access to the plans. This will also create an environment where all employees can contribute to projects and plans with input since the A3 online tooling is user-friendly. This environment where everyone can contribute with input is much valued at the organization, and this is another reason why increased inclusiveness is a motivation. This inclusiveness also leads to joint sensemaking, resulting from open strategizing (Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Hutter et al., 2017; Ketokivi & Castañer, 2004). Subsequently, more strategic alignment within the organization because of joint sensemaking.

5.2.3 Improved progress monitoring.

Private organization PX assumes that the quality of monitoring projects will slightly improve. Organization PX is already very effective in monitoring all the ongoing projects. They perform very well in this activity with an effective "follow-up" culture due to their well-developed focus on lean. Nevertheless, A3 online and the A3 management dialogue, in particular, have some features that can enhance the current asset. Organization PX currently has regular daily, weekly, and monthly meetings. However, there is no standardized format for how these meetings take form and how the results are monitored. In contrast, the A3 management dialogue is very well structured and would be uniform for all supervisors. This organized way of discussing the progress would make it easier to compare results between supervisors and projects and plans. Secondly, the organized and identical way of processing results into the system would also contribute to an organized monitoring approach that could improve the progress monitoring process.

The central digital measurement system contributes to a compelling connection between IT and the data of monitoring progress because of how straightforward information can be shared and accessed. Employees can access this information anywhere and anytime and compare the results of projects from a central program which is very effective for an organization. A3 would provide such a system for Organization X, which is expected to improve progress monitoring.

5.2.4 Flexibility

Private organization X believes that the A3 approach is flexible, making it very applicable to many organizations. The A3 approach can be transformed into the organization's need by adjusting the nine areas to the structure of the particular organization with the EFQM model as a basis. The fact that the A3 approach is adopted in a wide range of public organizations is in line with this suggestion. This recommendation is not specific to organization X but is a motivation in general for adopting the A3 approach.

5.3 Simons Lever of Control: Belief systems

Organization PX does not suggest that the attention and use of the core values would increase as a result of using the A3 approach. The core values are very well integrated into the culture of Organization PX. They are visible throughout the location of the organization. It is expected, however, that the A3 approach creates the necessary focus for any organization's 'belief systems'. So for an organization with a missing emphasis on 'belief systems' the A3 approach would be a way to improve in this area. Adopting the A3 approach to create the necessary attention for core values would be a motivation in general, but not in the case of Organization PX. Belief systems are increasingly important when the complexity of an organization rises (Simons, 1994b). This confirms that belief systems have to be well integrated into a large organization such as Organization PX. Still, it is not expected that the A3 approach will increase awareness around belief systems because the organization has successfully integrated the belief systems into the organization.

5.4 Comparing the Public Organizations and Private Organization PX

Motivations for the private sector as for the public sector have come forward out of the analysis that has been conducted in sections 6.1 and 6.2. Comparing the results of both analysis domains is essential because motivations from studying the public field results from the A3 approach in practice. This would suggest that the grounds are proven valid in contrast to the results of Organization X, which are expectations of adopting the approach. Interestingly, most of the Gioia analysis's aggregate

dimensions and second-order themes can be found as results for both domains.

The aggregate dimensions, strategic alignment, and transparency have arisen in both analyses. Moreover, when this is broken down even further, the second-order themes of these dimensions also appear for both domains. Adopting the A3 approach would effectively improve strategic alignment and transparency in private organizations, as these are motivations for both the public domains and Organization PX.

The aggregate dimensions of improving monitoring progress results as well from both analyses. However, there is a difference in the second-order themes, which can be accounted to the fact that Organization PX is in a far-developed stage of generating organizational improvement with its lean culture and the tools developed for this area. At the same time, in the public domain, the A3 approach was a motivation to develop a way to create organizational improvement. Nevertheless, Organization PX suggests that their approach, but also the A3 approach, is well structured for organizational improvement. The conclusion is that private organizations can also take advantage of these characteristics or qualities of the A3 approach. An overview of these results is given in table 1.

Leadership is seen as an important area by the public domain but not by the Organization PX. This can be explained by the fact that a solid lean culture at Organization PX results in automatic employee initiatives complementing the Organizational Strategy as they are constantly involved in this process. This culture still needs to develop in public organizations, leading to the fact that leadership is essential to use the A3 approach successfully.

6. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The main focus of this study was researching the applicability of the A3 strategizing approach in the private sector. Low adoption of the A3 strategizing approach in the private sector and high adoption in the public sector raised the suspicion that the A3 strategizing would be more applicable to the public sector. Following the previous, the main focus of this research was to identify the motivation for adopting the A3 approach in a private organization. Three public healthcare organizations were interviewed as well to compare motivations and, with that, strengthen conclusions. Lastly, the potential impact of the A3 strategizing approach on the ‘belief systems’ (one of Simon’s levers of control) within a private company is studied. After

conducting a longitudinal study at Organization PX, insights emerged about drivers for adopting the A3 strategizing approach. Increased employee transparency, more strategic alignment, and improved progress monitoring are considered the primary motivations for Organization PX to adopt the A3 approach. These motivations are mainly consistent with the literature discussed in section 2.3 regarding Open Strategizing. Public Healthcare Organizations also suggested strategic alignment, progress monitoring, and transparency as essential motivations. The results of this research can be seen as reliable because the insights are consistent between several cases. This research would suggest that A3 strategizing should be appropriate to private organizations and that the lack of adoption in the private sector is not due to the content of the A3 approach.

The awareness around Simon’s lever of control, ‘belief systems’ would not increase by adopting the A3 strategizing approach based on the research at Organization PX because the core values are well integrated into the organization. However, it is expected that the approach may increase awareness regarding belief systems in organizations with low current understanding, as it creates awareness in the public sector. Organization PX believes the approach would be sufficient for integrating the core values.

6.2 Limitations and recommendations

Several limitations of this research must be mentioned and kept in mind when adopting conclusions and results. Firstly, due to the short time frame in which the research had to be conducted, the approach has yet to be implemented at Organization PX. The results of this study are based on the expectations of the A3 strategizing approach and not on factual experiences. Implementing the approach at private organizations is also a recommendation for future research. At this moment, there is still a need for knowledge regarding why the approach has been adopted less in the private sector. This situation could be clarified when the methodology has been implemented in private organizations. The research at Organization PX has also only been conducted at the lower level of the organization. Perspectives regarding the approach could be different at other layers of the organization. Other organizational levels also need to be investigated to achieve the complete picture of an extensive system as Organization PX. Organization PX is in a far-developed stage in strategizing, so conclusions could be different for private organizations that need to develop in the strategy area. These organizations are another area that should be researched to get the complete picture of implementing the A3 strategizing approach in the private sector. So, several areas at Organization

Table 1: Comparing the Public and Private Studies

Public Healthcare Organization		Organization PX	
Inclusiveness	Strategic alignment	Strategic alignment	Inclusiveness
Focus			Focus
Consistency			Consistency
Central measurement	Progress monitoring	Progress monitoring	Central measurement
<i>Organizational Improvement</i>			<i>Organizational monitoring</i>
Overview	Transparency	Transparency	Overview
Clarity			Clarity
Communication			Communication
<i>Driving forces</i>	<i>Leadership</i>	-	-
<i>Stimulating forces</i>			

PX and the private sector must be studied in future research to achieve a more reliable conclusion.

Convenience sampling has been used for the interviewed cases in Healthcare Organizations. Only three cases have been studied, and to achieve a complete representation of this public sector, more organizations should be investigated, as this would increase the reliability of the study. The respondents were all three drivers behind the implementation of A3 and may be biased for that reason. Other persons in their organization may have different perspectives on the A3 strategizing approach, which should also be considered for a more reliable study.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions Public Sector ‘Healthcare’

1. What is your involvement in the A3 approach?
2. What prompted the organization to choose the A3 approach?
3. What is the most essential perceived added value? Can you focus on the three pillars of the A3 approach:
 - a. A3 annual plan
 - b. A3 progress discussion
 - c. A3 digital support
4. What concerns or areas for improvement are remaining internally?
5. A method is often used if it is also perceived as fun. How do you keep working with the A3 approach exciting?
6. Who are the main drivers in your organization? And how do they achieve this?
7. What was the best moment around applying the A3 approach?
8. Were there any moments of difficulty? These could also possibly be challenges you encountered.
9. What is your main recommendation for other healthcare organizations to work with the A3 approach?
10. How would you rate working with A3 on a scale of 1 to 10? → Specific to the three pillars
11. Could I receive an example of an A3 annual plan or any relevant internal documents as a practical application?

Questions regarding core values (belief systems) within the organization:

12. What core values have been defined in your organization?
13. To what extent do core values in your organization play a role in your strategy?
14. To what extent are core values periodically discussed on their realization?
15. To what extent are core values periodically adjusted on their realization?
16. To what extent are core values translated into concrete results and actions?

Appendix B: Interview Questions Private Sector Organization PX

Interview T0

1. To what extent is strategy implementation something your company is aware of?
2. → Could you rate awareness on a scale of 1 to 10?
3. What does the methodology you currently use for strategy implementation look like?
4. What is the main reason for choosing this approach?
5. Which components of this approach are most significant for the organization and why?
6. Which parts of this approach have been most effective for you?
7. → Can you give an example of a situation where this emerges?
8. What concerns or areas for improvement are there which remain internally?
9. → Can you give an example of a situation where this emerged?
10. Are annual plans used internally, and how are they designed?
11. How are employees involved in creating the annual plans (strategy objectives) and informed after adopting the annual plans (strategy objectives)?
12. To what extent do you distinguish measurable results versus efforts? As in: should an action have a directly measured result attached to it?
13. How is there communication with employees on interim progress of achievements and actions?
14. To what extent do employees recognizably translate annual plans into action?
15. Who has the main driving role for the attention of annual plan implementation, and what does this look like?
16. To what extent do you experience broad involvement in preparing annual plans and their implementation?
17. In what way are employees involved?
18. To what extent is information technology connected to the progress of the annual plans?
19. To what extent do employees have access to progress information?
20. Have there ever been any critical incidents around annual plan implementation?
21. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate working with the strategy method?
22. Could I receive an example of an annual plan or any relevant internal documents as a practical application?

Questions regarding the core values (belief systems)

1. What are the company's core values?
2. To what extent do core values in your organization play a role in strategy/annual plans?
3. To what extent are core values periodically discussed for their realization
4. To what extent are core values periodically adjusted on their realization
5. To what extent are core values translated into concrete results and actions?

Interview T2

1. Has awareness of strategy implementation increased after the A3 introduction session?
2. What are the main differences between the current strategy implementation methodology regarding annual plans and the A3 approach?
3. What are the main similarities between the current strategy implementation method regarding annual plans and the A3 approach?
4. What is/are the reason(s) for adopting or choosing the A3 approach?
5. What reason(s) is/are there for not applying or choosing the A3 approach?
6. Which components of the A3 approach appeal to you most and why?
7. Which part of the A3 approach do you think has the potential to have the most significant impact on the company?
8. To what extent could the A3 approach provide solutions to the areas of concern and improvement regarding strategy implementation?
9. In your opinion, are adjustments needed to make the A3 approach fit the requirements and characteristics of the company?
10. To what extent do you think annual plans according to the A3 approach have added value compared to the current practice of annual planning?
11. To what extent does the A3 approach contribute to the involvement of employees in the formulation of annual plans, objectives, and strategy?
12. To what extent do you expect that working with the A3 approach can increase the enjoyment around strategy implementation compared to the current way of working?
13. To what extent do you think the A3 approach can improve the company's focus on results?
14. To what extent can A3 management dialog with employees improve communication about interim progress of performance and actions?
15. To what extent can the A3 approach contribute to translating the strategy into action for employees?
16. To what extent can the A3 approach improve the match between information provision and strategy progress?
17. To What extent can the A3 approach improve the accessibility of progress information for employees?

Questions regarding the core values (belief systems)

1. To what extent will the role of core values be affected by the A3 approach?
2. Will core values be discussed more or less at realization by the A3 approach?
3. Will core values be translated more or less often into concrete results and actions by the A3 approach?
4. Will core values be adjusted more or less often on their realization or lead to a new core value through the A3 approach?
5. Will core values become more or less of a guide in the organization by applying the A3 approach?

Appendix C: Gioia Analysis Public Sector

First order concepts	Second order themes	Aggregate dimensions
It is a management tool, and you have to let the managers know that they are the owners of the plan. So they have to work with it and take the lead in keeping the whole A3 package up to date.	Stimulating the use of the A3 approach	Leadership
Educating users is very important. What is the methodology and how to use it are important questions for new users.		
Policymakers have to be present in the organization to let it work effectively.		
I try to lower the threshold for working with the method and try to give advantages to the people who work with the method to keep it alive.		
The driving forces behind A3 are the management team and the directing manager.	Current driving forces A3	
The driving forces behind the method are the policy advisor and the business manager.		
It is a great way to involve colleagues in the strategic process because everyone can create an account.	Inclusiveness	Strategic alignment
It is very user-friendly. You can show it on your screen and inform people about it. It shows progress very well, and the plans for the future are also easy to find.		
We try to create a vision that is accountable for 5 years. Our A3 is also translated depending on this vision. You want to do this for as		

many stakeholders as possible. This accounts for the vision as well as the stated goals in the A3.		
You can aim for compactness and be critical and your goal and concern.	Focus	
The A3 annual plan gives an excellent overview and forces you to think about what goals and how to formulate these goals. You aim for compactness which is critical for your goal and concern.		
Bringing focus to the business is a very big advantage of the method.		
It forces you to make choices that are logical at the same time.	Consistency	
Departments can twist the KPI of the organization less because it has to be based on a higher layer A3 plan. So this is how consideration and uniformity have improved a lot.		
The major advantage of A3 online is the fact that it is digital. With this system, I can look into all the A3 annual plans of all departments. This can be very interesting because the targets of other departments can also influence our department.		
Our A3s are based on the vision of the organization. So by having this as the basis of the annual plan, there is more alignment among the different departments.		
Continuous improvement is complemented by tools that are available in the A3 approach: connecting the goals to actions, monitoring the actions, and being able to give feedback on projects.	Organizational improvement	Progress Monitoring
A3 online creates a clear overview of the organization's most important ongoing trajectories and the progress made in these trajectories.		
It is important that owners of project plans see the A3 environment as the central measurement system for keeping track of the progress.		
The reporting and monitoring of projects are very useful in A3 online, although they should be used by every colleague in the ideal world, and this is not happening right now.	Central measurement	
An annual plan goes straight into a closet that won't open again for another, but people keep using this system because you have to keep it up to date in all sorts of ways.		
A3 online has provided us with an excellent overview of how projects are divided among the employees in terms of workload and what they perform.	Overview	Transparency
Colleagues like the A3 approach because it is very compact.		
It gives an excellent overview and forces you to think about how to formulate your goals and create clarity.	Clarity	
It is a great management tool. Colleagues need to know what there is in the annual plan, but not how it is in the annual plan.		
The connection between all the different A3 plans of different departments is very interesting to see. This is very easy and clear by using A3 online. The same account to connecting KPI, actions, results, etc.	Communication	
The major advantage of A3 online is the fact that it is digital. With this system, I can look into all the A3 annual plans of all departments. (...). Secondly, it can also give inspiration for your own department.		

Appendix D: Gioia Analysis Organization X

First Order Concepts	Second order Themes	Aggregate dimensions
(T2) The rationale is very similar between the two methods, I think, but it is very refreshing to see everything in one layout and overview. This is something we could be interested in as an organization.	Overview	Transparency
(T2) We now have several documents that we use to measure progress and review plans, so it can be difficult to get an excellent overview. So it could be more time efficient as well.		
(T2) It would bring more life into the annual plans for the employees because more information is given about current progress and targets. By using A3 as the method of informing employees, this is done in a clearer way than we are using right now.	Communication	

(T2) Accessibility would be improved towards the plans and strategy because of A3 online, so this keeps it alive, and it is easy to communicate with colleagues.		
(T2) A3 looks more professional in involving employees and showing them information, and making actions visible in a clear context.	Clarity	
(T2) The templates would be appropriate to the organization due to the contents and making plans and goals well-defined.		
(T1) I see the value of visualizing and digitizing to clarify everything for colleagues.		
(T1) What we don't have at our organization is a consistent system for the performance of stated actions on the supervisor level. This would be of added value, I suppose.	Consistency	Strategic alignment
(T2) Plans are easier accessible for the different departments and for the supervisors that are continuously involved in plans and improvements.		
(T2) Actually, with A3, you standardize a process. And standardizing is precisely something we like to do at Organization PX.		
(T2) Visually, it is far better than our current method. Secondly, A3 exists out of one document while we work with more documents.		
(T2) We currently take a lot of steps in our structure to distribute the plans among the organization, and a lot of different documents are involved in this process. Your document/system would be easier to read for our employees. It is more visual and understandable.		
(T2) Actually, with A3, you standardize a process. And standardizing is precisely something we like to do at Organization PX.		
(T1) If it is easily accessible digitally, you can put all your actions into it digitally. Then you have even more leverage to make those strategic actions concrete that you want to concentrate on.		
(T2) A3 would contribute to the involvement of employees in the workplace regarding plans because the plans are centralized, and secondly, they are easy to share and access digitally.	Inclusiveness	
(T2) It is a clear system for the interested employee to access so that this user-friendly environment would improve the involvement of employees in the plans and projects.		
(T2) The A3 monitor conversation is well structured, and progress on the actions would be easy to measure. We do have conversations regarding progress on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis, but how this meeting is less well-designed at this point.	Organized monitoring	Progress Monitoring
(T0) We do not have a program for the distribution of plans. We all use a Word document with the same layout.	Central measurement	
(T2) It would also contribute to how IT is connected to measuring progress and dividing plans because it is an online tool that is easy to share and access for all departments.		
(T2) Because there is room for freedom in the A3 system, it seems very flexible. That's why I think it's very applicable to a lot of companies. You can put your own spin on it and make it applicable to your own organization. For example, my department has no "customers" we deliver to, but we deliver results/production to other parts of the organization. You could incorporate this well into the A3 approach.	Adjustable	Flexibility