Master Thesis

WORKING IN A STIGMATIZED ENVIRONMENT: MOTIVATION, WORK MEANING, AND INTERACTIONS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL TEACHERS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate how motivation relates to work meaning and how interactions with others influence the relationship between motivation and work meaning among special education teachers. This research used a qualitative method by conducting semi-structured interviews with 20 special education teachers in Indonesia. Using the framework of Self Determination Theory (SDT), it was found that intrinsic motivation and work meaning serve as pathway to each other through the fulfilment of three basic psychological needs for autonomy (career aspiration fulfilment and congruency with personal values and beliefs), competence (answering the challenge of the job, the need for personal and professional development, actualizing potentials and interests, and contributing to the greater good), and relatedness (belonging to a community). The absence of one or more needs fulfilment is compensated by the presence of other need(s) fulfilment. Motivation and work meaning were found to be potentially supported and discouraged by negative stigmas in the society, which were derived from interactions with others outside of work. The potential harm of negative stigmas was compensated by interactions with others at work which support the needs for autonomy (flexibility encouragement), competence ((dis)confirmation of competence, availability of learning environment, and cooperative culture at work), and relatedness (role model and compassionate communication). Furthermore, this study also proposes some recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Motivation, work meaning, interactions, self-determination theory, special education teachers

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, several reforms in the field of education have been initiated to improve student achievement (Silva, 2008) and teachers' professional development (Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal, 2003; Little, Gearhart, Curry, & Kafka, 2003). In 2005, Indonesian Government passed the Teacher Law to improve the national education system, highlighting the teacher management and development (Chang, Shaeffer, Al-Samarrai, Ragatz, de Ree, & Stevenson, 2013). Among several issues behind the passing of this law were the shortcomings of teachers' educational qualifications, competence, and perceived motivation to teach. Motivation is central in education realm (Covington, 2000), because in turns, it also influences outcomes such as student motivation, educational advancement, and last but not least, teachers' own sense of satisfaction and fulfilment (de Jesus & Lens, 2005).

According to Frankl (1959/1992), satisfaction fulfilment is not the only aspect to which people orient their actions to. He pointed out that the search for meaning is a primary motivational force in people's lives. Accordingly, people have a natural mechanism to orient their actions more towards meaning fulfilment rather than mere gratification or satisfaction fulfilment. Since people spend a significant amount of their lifetimes working, they also turn their work into a resource that provides meaning, identity, sense of belonging, and stability in their lives (Hoar, 2004; Holbeche & Springett, 2004 as cited in Cartwright & Holmes, 2006).

Work meaning is believed to be interconnected with motivation (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzniewski, 2010). Although the relationship between meaningful work and motivated behavior seems evident, only a small number of empirical studies have addressed them together (e.g. Guion & Landy, 1972). A survey conducted by Guion and Landy (1972) among newly recruited employees in engineering companies found that when workers are well-informed about the work situation, they will experience a meaningful work and thus be motivated to do the work. In addition, Chandler and Kapelner (2013) undertook an experimental research to investigate the relationship between task's meaningfulness and workers' effort. Participants who were recruited from online crowdsourcing market were asked to do several tasks that had been framed as meaningful and less meaningful. Afterwards, in the form of a survey, the participants were asked whether the tasks were enjoyable, purposeful, meaningful, give them a sense of accomplishment, and made their efforts recognized. Eventually, Chandler and Kapelner found that task meaningfulness has a positive relationship with workers' effort in task accomplishment.

Furthermore, research also found that the internalization of motivation is supported by the presence of other co-workers (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Similarly, in the field of work meaning, the presence of others at work has been highlighted as an important factor in the conception of work meaning (Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003). Earlier research on motivation and work meaning, however, paid little attention to interactions with others as factor that could influence the dynamic relationship

between motivation and work meaning. Therefore, this research attempts to bridge the gap in the current research on motivation and work meaning by also including the interactions with others, in order to investigate how interactions contribute to the relationship between motivation and work meaning. Thus, this research addresses the following questions:

1. *How does motivation relate to work meaning?*
2. *How do interactions with others influence the relationship of motivation and work meaning?*

This study used qualitative method by conducting interviews with 20 special education teachers from two different schools in Indonesia. The distinct characteristics of special education teaching compared to regular teaching, which are the stigma or negative societal views on people with disability (Wardhani, 2012) and special school institution (Komardjaja, 2005) as well as a high emotional demand of special education teaching profession (Wardhani, 2012), provided an interesting context for this study. In addition, although work meaning has been studied in many educational contexts (e.g., secondary school teaching (Fourie & Deacon, 2015), regular schools teaching (Demirkasimoglu, 2015), higher education sector (Anthun & Innstrand, 2016)), it has never been studied within the context of special education teaching.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Motivation

Motivation is the core of activation and intention that concerns several aspects, such as energy, direction, and persistence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci introduced Self Determination Theory (SDT) to study human motivation, stating that people have inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs, and the conditions that encourage those positive processes. SDT suggests two overarching concepts of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Gagné, Forest, Gilbert, Aubé, Morin, & Malorni, 2010). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation drives people to seek out novelty and challenges, to explore, to learn, and to exercise one's capacities. Intrinsic motivation can be derived from doing activity of interest that generates spontaneous satisfaction in doing the activity itself, while extrinsic motivation requires instrumentality between activity and outcomes, such as tangible or verbal rewards to encourage satisfaction (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

As a basis of self-motivation, intrinsic motivation takes into account the fulfilment of three inherent needs in human life, which are competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). Autonomy proposes that people need to feel in control of their actions and goals; competence involves efficacious performance in attaining several internal and external outcomes; and relatedness explains the sense of belonging and connections to others in a social environment. Several studies on motivation have been conducted within the framework of SDT. For

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instance, in their study on the role of autonomy and relatedness in Chinese children's motivation, Bao and Lam (2008) found that relatedness might have facilitated the internalization of motivation. Furthermore, Niemic and Ryan (2009) confirmed that internalization of extrinsic motivation into intrinsic motivation is essential in encouraging self-initiation and keeping interest in the activities that are not inherently interesting or enjoyable.

2.2 Work meaning and meaningful work

Work meaning is defined by Wrzesniewski et al. (2003, p.99) as "employees' understanding of *what* they do at work as well as the *significance* of what they do." The meaning of work has been studied for over decades, spanning across disciplines (Rosso et al., 2010). Tracing back to the historical root of work meaning, in Middle Ages work was perceived as a calling to escape worldly life, to contemplate and dedicate one's life to God (Dawson, 2005). According to Dawson, following the rise of entrepreneurial activities in the 18th and 19th century, work became a central dimension of personal fulfilment and human dignity. On the survey among employed men in the United States conducted by Morse and Weiss (1955), it was found that people do not only work for economic reason, but also to fulfill the need to belong to a larger society and to have a purpose in their lives.

Wrzesniewski (2003, p.297) viewed work meaning as an experience of work that considers the way people view their work as "more meaningful, satisfying, and necessary for the functioning of their organizations and of the wider world". The meaning itself can appear in positive, negative, or neutral sense; however in literature, work meaning generally has a positive tone (Rosso et al., 2010). Rosso et al. also asserted that meaningful work is a work that is perceived as significant and holds more positive meaning for individuals. Therefore in this research, the terms 'work meaning' and 'meaningful work' will be used interchangeably. Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) proposed the structure of work meaning that consists of three dimensions: (1) Job meaning, in which employees perceive and evaluate the tasks and activities of their jobs, (2) Role meaning, in which employees perceive and evaluate their position in the organization, and (3) Self-meaning, in which employees perceive and evaluate the value or worth of their personal qualities in the job.

Rosso et al. (2010) summarized several sources from which work meaning can be derived, namely, self, others, work context, and spiritual life. Self-source of work meaning revolves around the self of an individual, as an internal source of work meaning. This source consists of values, motivation, and beliefs. Others, as a source of work meaning, acknowledge the interactions and relationships of individuals with other people or groups, both within and outside of the workplace. The work context source of meaning explains how a certain work context and a particular work environment, such as design of a job task, organizational mission, national culture, and other non-work domain, influence

the work meaning. Finally, the spiritual life as the source of work meaning includes spirituality and sacred callings as factors that contribute to the conceptualization of work meaning.

2.3 Motivation and work meaning

Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) underlined the importance of intrinsic motivation in the production of work meaning, which further leads into a better work performance. An empirical research by Guion and Landy (1972) found that when people perceive a meaningful situation in their work, as a result of getting maximum information about the work, people will be more motivated to do the work. By employing an experimental research, Chandler and Kapelner (2013) examined the influence of perceived task meaningfulness to workers' effort in doing the task. They found that when the task was framed more meaningfully, the workers were likely to put more efforts in doing the task and required less compensation for their times dedicated to do the task. Shamir (1991) confirmed that the way a task can be motivating depends on the meaning it holds to an individual rather than the extrinsic rewards it may offer.

Meaningful work is often seen as an antecedent to motivated behavior, while according to Rosso et al. (2010), greater work meaningfulness is produced when employees experience intrinsic motivation, or when they perceive the congruence between their self-concepts and their work activities. Another perspective on the relationship between motivation and work meaning is offered by Chalofsky and Khrisna (2009) in their review article. They suggested work meaning as a deeper layer of intrinsic motivation. Chalofsky (2003) proposed a model of meaningful work as a motivational construct that includes the sense of self, the work itself, and the sense of balance as factors that constitute work meaning. Since he called the model as the *integrated wholeness*, the constructs of the sense of self, the work itself and the sense of balance are pretty much intertwined with each other.

Previous literature has confirmed the relationship between motivation and work meaning. As emphasized by Chalofsky and Khrisna (2009), people are more committed, engaged, and intrinsically motivated for their work when they perceive their work as meaningful. And on the contrary, people will be likely to experience burnout, apathy, and detachment from their work when they perceive their job as meaningless (May et al., 2004 in Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). While there has been considerable research on motivation and work meaning, most research has been focusing only on the causality between the two, yet little attention is paid to the direction and dynamic of the relationship between motivation and work meaning. This research utilized SDT as a framework to investigate the dynamic relationship of motivation and work meaning. SDT is relevant to be applied because its components, which are autonomy, competence, and relatedness, are identical to some factors that constitute the mechanisms to work meaning, which are self-efficacy (autonomy and competence) and belongingness (Rosso et al., 2010).

2.4 Interactions with others and motivation

Although SDT emphasizes on self or self-determination for the fulfilment of intrinsic motivation, this theory also takes into account the importance of others in supporting intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci (p. 73) underlined the interactions with others as centrally important in the internalization of motivation because ones' behaviors "are prompted, modeled, or valued by significant others to whom they feel (or want to feel) attached or related." The component of relatedness in the SDT itself has actually shown the connection between motivation and social interactions. Furthermore, Relationship Motivation Theory (RMT), a sub-theory of SDT, has recently been introduced by Deci and Ryan (2014). The central point of RMT is that people need to have a good quality relationship to experience relatedness. Relatedness occurs when care and support for oneself are available in the social environment. On the contrary, when the relationships are more instrumental or used as a means to an end, the sense of relatedness will be undermined.

Research on how interactions with others facilitate intrinsic motivation was widely conducted in educational setting. Komarraju, Musulkin, and Bhattacharya (2010) investigated the role of interactions between students and faculty and its influence on students' motivation and achievement. The study found that students who have frequent interactions with their faculty members have more confidence with their academic skills and are generally more motivated, extrinsically and intrinsically. Similarly, Niemiec and Ryan (2009) also found that teachers' supports on students' fulfilment of the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness encourage students' autonomous behaviors for learning, academic performance, and well being. In the research on the role of autonomy and relatedness in the motivation of Chinese children, Bao and Lam (2008) found that socio-emotional relatedness might have facilitated the internalization of intrinsic motivation. In healthcare context, it was found that regardless the level of job control and job demand, social supports from coworkers and supervisors help to produce intrinsic motivation (Van Yperen & Hoogedorn, 2003).

2.5 Interactions with others and work meaning

Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) highlighted the importance of others in the conception of work meaning, as people making sense of their work based on the cues and actions of others at work. Richardson (2012) asserted that personal experience at work, including how people define themselves, is constructed by people and co-constructed by their social context, in this case the work they do and the relationships in which they participate. Morrison, Burke III, and Greene (2007) pointed out that meaning can be found even in small things; to find this meaning, however, people at work need to attend to these small things through interactions. Interactional communication at workplace occurs to facilitate information sharing, relationship creation, meaning making, organizational culture, and values construction (Berger, 2008 as cited in Men, 2014).

The construction of work meaning is suggested as an interpersonal sensemaking process based on interpersonal cues generated and received most likely during interactions at work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). The cues could be direct or indirect, that are noticed in routine or non-routine situations of both formal and informal setting. In the organizational setting, it is believed that the organization exists through sensemaking, instead of preceding or producing sensemaking (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). The process of sensemaking in an organization is enabled by communication in the forms of interactive conversations with others in which the organization is talked into existence (Weick et al., 2005). The role of organization as the social environment, in this case, is emphasized by cultural and interpersonal sensemaking mechanism in the construction of work meaning and meaningfulness (Rosso et al., 2010).

2.6 Interactions with others, motivation, and work meaning

In sum, the significance of interactions in influencing motivation and the importance of interactions in shaping work meaning have been supported by previous studies. However, little attention is paid to the role of interactions in the relationship of motivation and work meaning. To bridge that gap, besides investigating the relationship between motivation and work meaning, this research also examines the influence of interactions with others on the relationship of work meaning and interactions. Previous studies mainly focused on the interactions at work, while this research focuses on both interactions at work and outside of work. The following section explains the research method employed to address the research questions.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research context

Indonesia is a country where individuals with disabilities and their families are often stigmatized (Komardjaja, 2005), considered unproductive, and discriminated in rights fulfilment (Kusumastuti, Pradanasari, & Ratnawati, 2013). Not only for individuals with disabilities and their families, stigmatization also holds for special schools in Indonesia, referring to the schools as the place to educate mentally retarded students or to hide them in avoidance to be seen by the public (Komardjaja, 2005). While special education institution has been being degraded in some way, the teaching profession itself is considered to be a highly respected and desirable profession in Indonesia (Chang et al., 2013).

Several measures have been taken by the government, nevertheless, to guarantee the well being of individuals living with disabilities, for instance by reinforcing the Law No. 4/1997 on the Disability Act. One clause stipulated by the Law is that each individual with disability has the right to education.

Although education provisions for students with disabilities in Indonesia are mainly carried out by special schools, these days the government has been encouraging inclusive education to accommodate students with disabilities or special needs (Sheehy & Budiyanto, 2014). However, not many regular schools are keen or ready to engage in inclusive education, and not everyone can afford the cost of inclusive education, leaving special schools as the only options for individuals with disabilities to access education.

To encourage the participation of children with special needs in special education, both public and private special schools are supported by the government in terms of finance and teaching workforce. Therefore, teachers who work for special schools, be it public or private, are mainly civil servant teachers who are assigned by the government to work in those schools. In some cases, the teachers might possess little or no competence in special education. This situation provides an interesting context to this research. The lack of competence, demanding workloads, as well as negative stigma often attached to the people they are working with and the institution they are working for, might have a contribution to work motivation, interactions with others, and sensemaking process into work meaning.

3.2 Research participants

A total of 20 special education teachers from two different special schools in Indonesia were interviewed for this research. There is no specific guideline in determining the number of participants in a qualitative study, therefore in this study, the interviews were concluded until they had reached saturation point, where there were no new findings, concepts, themes, and problems revealed (Francis et al., 2010). The combination of purposive and convenience sampling was used to select the participants, in which the participants were drawn based on the judgment of most information on the characteristic of interest (Guarte & Barrios, 2006) as well as easy access and willingness to take part in the study (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

Participants had to meet three criteria to be invited to the interview. First, they had to be involved in the job for at least 12 months. The researcher assumed that this period is sufficient for the participants to become well-acquainted with their work and its social environment. Second, they must work full time (registered as civil servant teachers or contract teachers). Third, this study strived to include participants across different educational backgrounds (special education and non-special education educational backgrounds), job status (civil servant teachers and contract teachers), and gender (male and female). All participants agreed to voluntarily take part in the interviews. Prior to the interviews, the participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. Participants were not rewarded for their participations.

Participants were aged between 23 and 59 with the mean age of 41 years old. 13 participants had a degree in special education and 7 participants did not have any degree in special education. 15 participants were listed as civil servant teachers while 5 participants were contract teachers. 14 teachers were female and 6 teachers were male. The average work experience as special education teacher was 14 years, ranging from 18 months to 32 years. The demographic of the participants can be found in Appendix A.

3.3 Semi-structured interviews

This study used a qualitative method by conducting individual semi-structured interviews. Interviews were applied to investigate the relationship between motivation and work meaning and how interactions with others influence this relationship. Interviews were suitable for this research context since they were able to provide the research with personal perspectives, in-depth understanding of personal context, and detailed subject coverage (Ritchie, 2003). The interviews used open-ended questions, covering the themes of motivation, work meaning, and interactions with others. The purpose of using open-ended questions was to gain insightful information emerging in the interviews within non-predetermined set of responses (Carey, Morgan, & Oxtoby, 1996). The data collection took place in Indonesia for the duration of one month, from November until December 2015. The interviews lasted 62 minutes on average, with the shortest interview lasted for 27 minutes and the longest lasted for 119 minutes.

All interviews were held face to face in participants' workplaces, without the presence of other person during the interviews. Before the interview, each participant was given a short introduction about the research. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. The interviews were audiotaped with the consent of the participants. Each interview began with demographic questions, such as, participants' educational backgrounds, year(s) of work experience, and employment status. Next, the participants were asked about the content and activities of their job, how they became involved in the job, the things in the job they like or dislike, and the aspect of the job they are good or not so good at. From this part of the interview, we could gain insight into participants' initial motivation to work and their perception about the job and themselves. The next part of the interview focused on the meaning of work, for example: "What does it mean to be a special education teacher to you?" and "How important is your work in your life?". Subsequently, the participants were asked about their motivation and how they are related to work meaning. In this part, we can gain an understanding about how motivational aspects are related to work meaning. Finally, the participants were asked about how they interact with others and how these interactions are related to work meaning. At the end of the interview, participants were asked if they had something else they

would like to add. The interview guide can be found in Appendix B.

3.4 Data analysis procedure

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, resulting in 249 pages of transcript. Subsequently, the interviews were analyzed with the help of Atlas.ti software to keeping track of code creation. To answer the first research question, the first analysis was conducted in multiple rounds of coding. The first round of coding was performed through open coding and in vivo coding to select stories related to work meaning. This selection was based on Wrzesniewski et al.'s (2003) framework of work meaning, including: Job meaning (perception and evaluation of tasks and activities), role meaning (perception and evaluation of position in the organization), and self-meaning (perception and evaluation of the value of one's personal qualities in the job). In the next round of coding, these sub-categories were assigned based on SDT framework of basic needs fulfilment, which includes the need for autonomy, the need for competence, and the need for relatedness. These assignments were conducted to find out how motivation is related to work meaning. Two sub-categories emerged in the category of the need for autonomy, which are fulfilling career aspiration and congruency with personal values and beliefs. Four sub-categories emerged in the category of the need for competence, including answering the challenge of the job, the need for personal and professional development, actualizing potentials and interests, and contributing to the greater good. One sub-category emerged under the category of the need for relatedness, which is belonging to a community.

Some of the sub-categories emerged in the first analysis are aligned with the terms in motivation research, such as congruency with personal values and beliefs. Rosso et al. (2010) stated that people will experience work meaningfulness when they have intrinsic motivation or when they perceive the congruence between their self-concepts and their work activities. Within SDT research, Ryan and Deci (2000) pointed out that people will be internally motivated when they perceive congruence or experience synthesis between the self and the work. Using SDT approach to investigate the relationship between work value orientations, psychological need satisfaction, and job outcomes, Vansteenkiste, Neyrinck, Niemiec, Soenens, Witte, and Broeck (2007) considered self-development, community contribution, and affiliation, as intrinsic work value orientations. These elements of work value orientations proposed by Vansteenkiste et al. are aligned with the sub-categories in this research, which are the need for personal and professional development, contributing to the greater good, and belonging to a community.

Since this research aimed to seek commonalities between participants' responses, sub-categories represented by only one comment were excluded. This principle applied to all the coding rounds in data analysis. Subsequently, a codebook was developed and given to a second coder. The second coder

used to codebook to code a sample of interviews independently according to the categories defined in the codebook. The independent coding of the first analysis resulted in a value of interrater agreement (Cohen's kappa) .85. Cohen's kappa value .61–.80 is considered as substantial agreement, while the value of .81– 1.00 is considered as almost perfect agreement (McHugh, 2012).

To answer the second research question, the second analysis was performed to find all comments reflecting how interactions with others influence the relationship between motivation and work meaning. The comments were categorized under three categories of: support for autonomy, support for competence, and support for relatedness. In the next round of coding, sub-categories were searched within the data. Two sub-categories were yielded in the category of support for autonomy, including negative stigma in the society and flexibility encouragement. Three sub-categories emerged in the category of support for competence, which are (dis)confirmation of competence, availability of learning environment, and cooperative culture at work. Meanwhile, sub-categories emerged within the category of support for relatedness include role model and compassionate communication. Some of sub-categories emerged in the second analysis, which are flexibility encouragement and (dis)confirmation of competence, are aligned with forms of developmental support found by Janssen, van Vuuren, and de Jong (2013) in their research on identifying support functions in the developmental network through SDT perspective. Janssen et al. found creating freedom and confirming and praising competence as developers' supportive behavior for autonomy and competence respectively.

Corresponding to the first analysis, the codebook was completed and given to the second coder as a guide to conduct an independent coding for the second analysis. The independent coding for the second analysis resulted in interrater agreement value (Cohens' kappa) of .83. Referring to McHugh (2012), the value of 0.83 is considered to be almost perfect interrater agreement. Based on the interrater agreement values for the first and second analyses, the codes within the categories are considered to be reliable. The codebook with the sample of comments can be found in Appendix C.

4. RESULTS

This chapter will present the results in two parts. The first part will discuss how motivation relates to work meaning. The second part will discuss how interactions of special education teachers with others influence the relationship between motivation and work meaning.

4.1 The relationship of motivation and work meaning

According to SDT, people will be intrinsically motivated when their three basic needs are fulfilled, which consist of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. As a theory of human motivation, SDT has also been used to explore the antecedents of meaningful work experience (Beadle & Knight, 2012).

Intrinsic motivation is important in the production of work meaning (Wrzesniewki et al., 2003). Rosso et al. (2010) mentioned self-efficacy (autonomy and competence) and belongingness (relatedness) as pathways through which work becomes meaningful, and vice versa, when people perceive their work as meaningful, they will be motivated to do the work (Guion and Landy, 1972). Through the framework of the three basic needs fulfilment, the relationship of motivation and work meaning among special education teachers in Indonesia will be explained.

4.1.1 The need for autonomy

Fulfilling career aspiration

In the interviews of how they got involved in their job as special education teachers, several teachers mentioned that being a special education teacher is an aspiration. One of the teachers mentioned that after a meaningful encounter with an individual with special needs, he became interested and chose to pursue a degree in special education. However, his several applications to college were rejected and he ended up choosing another subject of study. In that subject of study, he decided to opt a specialization related to special education. Later, he finally found a way to enter a career in special education. A sense of choice and determination shown by this teacher are aspects of autonomous behavior that can promote motivation (Bao & Lam, 2000).

> Teaching special education has been my aspiration, I was inspired by my friend who was a person with special needs. I used to hang out with him. Seriously. His name is X. Seriously, I used to hang out with him. (P#14)

> In semester 4 in sport sciences, we had to choose a special track. […] For the fourth option, we had adaptive sports. Adaptive sports are sports for people with special needs. I ended up choosing that options, because that's the one I always wanted. […] How I felt was, have you ever felt like this, I applied three times for special education studies, got rejected, and finally got accepted in sport sciences, and there I found a path to my aspirational career, it was like I have fulfilled my dream. (P#14)

Different stories were told by civil servant teachers who embarked on special education teaching job as a part of their work assignment. Civil servant employees have to follow the work assignments required by the civil service system. Some teachers did not even apply to be special education teachers. They have worked as civil servant teachers at other institutions before they were finally assigned to special education schools. For civil servant teachers who have no background in special education, getting involved in special education was perceived as a compliance to the system.

So, I was here because of Governor Regulations. The Governor Regulations stipulated that the training institution (I once worked) is not a school, while I am registered as a teacher. […] It was more because of the regulations, I did not choose or ask to be a special education teacher. That was the reason. (P#9)

The first time I got a job as a civil servant, I was an engineering teacher. But then there was no more slot in the training institution, then I have to be assigned at a school. We have to follow the school assignment ruled by the system. So based on the contract, we have to be willing at wherever we are assigned. In the district there are just two vocational high schools, which could not accommodate all of us. Because this is a duty, we have to be willing to be assigned everywhere at whatever position. (P#2)

From the illustrations above, career aspiration can be seen as an encouragement to intrinsic motivation in entering a job, although civil service work assignment system could potentially discourage intrinsic motivation (by limiting choices of placement preference). Initial motivation in getting involved in the job could influence how these teachers experience and value the significance of their job. For example, the teacher with intrinsic motivation (career aspiration fulfilment), valued the job as a 'dream', and reaching a dream equals to enjoyment. Meanwhile, teachers with more extrinsic motivation valued their job as a 'duty' or a form of compliance, something that they did not even ask to happen. Here, intrinsic motivation that is embodied in the career aspiration fulfilment could serve as a pathway towards a meaningful work.

Congruency with personal values and beliefs

Some of the teachers perceive that there were congruent values between the work and their personal values and beliefs that motivated them to engage in their work. In that sense, the meaning of work went beyond just fulfilling economic needs; it became a way of life. According to one teacher, the important thing in life is serving others, and by doing her work she could fulfill that purpose by serving children with special needs.

…We live to work, to serve these children, we have to focus on these children. To be honest, my life has been dedicated to these children. So we live to work, and on the other way around, we work to live, hahaha.. So, that's the meaning, hahaha. (P#12)

Another teacher perceived his work as something that fits the value of the society. The significance of work for him is not only to gain an economic well-being, but also to maintain a social well-being. He explained that working as a teacher would not only strengthen his social status in society, but also the social status of his significant other.

…I'm being realistic, the worth of oneself in the society might be measured by how much money one earns or what does he do. Some people might value the money, oh, he's so rich. From the occupational point of view, although I am still young, in the community they call me with honorific title 'Mr.', because I'm a teacher. Later when I get married, although my wife is not a teacher, they will also call my wife with honorific title 'Mrs.' (P#14)

For some teachers, religious beliefs have been integrated into their personal values. Working was perceived as a way of spiritual engagement, to be devoted to God. They believed that they should do good deeds in this world to achieve well-being in the afterlife and working is a part of those good deeds.

> The first thing is right…, so what we are looking for is not merely money, but devotion to God. So we make a living based on the intention to be devoted to God. If we only seek worldly life, that's all we would get. We would get zero for the afterlife. That was being said. Are you agree? Hahaha. (P#2)

From the illustration above, it can be seen that the congruency between work and personal values and beliefs is something that makes the work meaningful. Although the work is either motivated by external rewards, such as social status, as well as by personal importance, such as dedication and devotion, most of the teachers perceived that working goes beyond fulfilling their economic needs. The teachers were in control of their goals, which are to look for work-life balance and to achieve a social and spiritual well-being.

4.1.2 The need for competence

Answering the challenge of the job

The nature of special school environment, such as different abilities among students even within the same type of impairment and no standardized curriculum for special education, pose challenges to special education teachers. Teachers' sense of self-efficacy in overcoming those challenges has an influence on their sensemaking of work and is likely to shape their motivation to work. A teacher mentioned that because she was motivated to do the job, she felt that her job became more enjoyable. Her success in dealing with emotional challenges eventually led to happiness. As stated by Cartwright and Holmes (2006), a form of happiness is achieved by attaining goals that have an intrinsic merit.

> Well the challenging part is, I have five children in the classroom. There is a smart one, I teach him from nothing until he is able to grasp something. I feel very delighted because finally he is able to do something. There is another kid with multiple disabilities, she has hearing impairment and learning difficulties. She is not able even to do the sum. Sometimes I feel desperate, but then I try again. Well, something unenjoyable for me is, no, in general everything is enjoyable, because we are aware of their disabilities, so I don't really feel desperation. Just, when they learn something and they face difficulties, it challenges us to be, to be more creative. (P#10)

> To be honest with the motivation I have, this job becomes more enjoyable, more…, without burden. So it flows really smoothly. I found random happiness in a day when my class is not overwhelmed with emotions. That is for me a success. (P#6)

Self-efficacious performance in doing challenging tasks had encouraged the teachers to discern their work. This is reflected by how they are aware of students' disabilities (e.g., *in general everything is enjoyable, because we are aware of their disabilities*) and how they deal with such situation (e.g.,

just, when they learn something and they face difficulties, it challenges us to be, to be more creative).
When the teachers perceive the 'ability' in answering the challenge of the job, they are more likely to
be motivated in doing their work.

The need for personal and professional development

Some of the teachers in special schools (both who were involved as a part of job assignments and
who voluntarily applied for the job) do not hold any degree or competency in special education.
Unfortunately, there was no sufficient training or preparation prior to the job placement. The special
schools do not strictly set any competence standard to be met by the teachers. Therefore, it depends
on the teachers themselves, whether they want to become personally and professionally developed.
A teacher who signed up for the job without having previous degree in special education expressed
how her effort in mastering capacities in special education teaching had made her job more
meaningful.

> My education was not special education, so special education is a new thing for me. […] I was first assigned
> to a class for students with hearing impairment. The first time I came here, I borrowed a dictionary this
> thick (showing how thick the dictionary was), to learn sign language. There are finger signs, word signs, I
> learned all of them, I brought the book home. I was like, if I teach special school, but I don't understand
> sign language, how could I deliver something? The first word I learned was 'good morning'. I wrote it on
> the board, then they (the students) taught me how to sign 'good morning', 'thank you'. Then, it's my job to
> learn, I brought the dictionary home and practiced the sign language for the materials I am going to deliver
> the next day. […] From that point, I felt really grateful God had put me in this place. (P#6)

Another teacher who joined the special school as a part of work assignment expressed his
reluctance in learning more about special education. He was provided with some training sessions but
he felt that they were not sufficient. He was aware of his lack of competence and how to compensate
that, yet still reluctant to make extra efforts.

> I was really lacking in knowledge when I came here. First I asked my colleague, what kind of impairments
> they (the students) have and how to teach them. Those basic stuffs. As time went by, it turned out that
> their impairments did not hinder the learning process because the materials were adjusted to their needs.
> […] The problem is, I did not develop other skills. Like communication skill, which is very important. So I
> cannot (communicate), because I don't know how to communicate with them. […] Unfortunately there is
> no training about that. Most of the trainings are dedicated to improve administrative stuffs. I really regret
> that. (P#9)

From the stories above, we can see that the more motivated the teachers to fulfill the need of
personal or professional development are, the more they are able to generate a positive meaning of
their work. The motivation to engage in professional development, however, was likely to depend on
the type of the task. For instance, when it came to performing an administrative task, most of the
teachers expressed their reluctance to do the task or develop the skills to do the task better.

> I am less administrative, that's the thing I don't like, hahaha. So I like being with the children, with my job

as a teacher. What I don't like are for example, being a civil servant, we have to make a paperwork, we have to deal with requirements for periodical promotion, then training certificates, those are the things I don't like, hahaha. (P#6)

It's a little difficult, to be honest the difficulty is not that I am unable to do it. It's because the motivation. I am a technical person, I have a tendency to do technical works. Administrative works could be burdensome, although actually not that difficult. It just requires to be done in a routine manner. So it depends on the person actually, if you ask me, I am a type of researcher, technical research, not social. I am not accustomed to routine activities. It's just a target, from my supervisor or personal target. When it comes to administrative works, sure I am left behind, that's for sure. (P#9)

In recent years, administrative tasks have been integrated in online platforms, for example the database and evaluations. This requires the teachers to also possess a proficiency in IT (information technology) skills. Some teachers in their late career stage (46-65 years old) (Kram & Isabella, 1985) acknowledged that the integration of administrative tasks and IT made administrative tasks even harder for them to accomplish and likely to make them become less motivated.

It's better to master (IT skills). But I am old already, I have less capacity to absorb things. That is a problem. […] So when it comes to IT, I am left behind. No matter how hard I try to catch up, it's difficult when you're old, you couldn't meet those standards. (P#20)

In general, the teachers perceived that administrative task was less significant than teaching task. Still, they had to do the task because it was required by the central teacher administration. This is relevant to the finding of Chandler and Kapelner (2013) that reported that task meaningfulness influences workers' effort in task accomplishment.

Actualizing potentials and interests

Some teachers found their motivation through performing the tasks that were relevant to their potential and interest. The teachers perceived the significance of their work when they could actualize themselves through the work that they did. There was a teacher who had no previous qualification in special education, but she felt that she had a competence in teaching a subject in special schools. Although she did not have any experience in teaching students with special needs, she encouraged herself to apply to a special school in order to experience something new and to develop her potentials. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the drive to seek novelty, challenges, and exercise one's capacities is a form of intrinsic motivation.

Firstly, I wanted to give it a try. I like challenges, something different. I came here and found out what kind of skills-related subjects they have. I got in here, because I have skills on the subject they offer here, fashion class. I develop knowledge I obtained in college, I develop it here. (P#13)

Another teacher told a similar story. He did not object to be given an extracurricular task outside his working hour, because basically the task was something that he had an interest in. He expressed that the experience of working that is based on interest as something motivating and enjoyable.

> Because my background is sport and I like football, when it comes to extra work, usually they assigned me to sport, especially to football and also swimming….. I become more motivated because that is my hobby. Working that is based on hobby is enjoyable, isn't it? (P#14)

The teachers perceived the significance of their work when they were able to actualize their potentials and interests while doing the work. The perceived significance of work has also encouraged motivation in doing the work, and eventually, enjoyment in doing so.

Contributing to the greater good

Teachers of both special schools perceived their job as a way to help others, care for the needy and contribute to the students, their parents, and society at large. They viewed the way they contribute to the students' well-being, in this case by preparing the students to an independent living, as a way to also contribute to their parents and the society, because at the end, these children will go back to the community after they finish their special education. By being independent, they can live on their own and gain their own well-being without becoming a burden to their parents and the society. These activities of contributing to the greater good had given a meaningful impact to their lives. At this state, the job meaning has been integrated to their life meaning and such things as material earning became less important in doing the job.

> I hope I can be better in serving these children, so they can optimize what they have. So these children can be helpful, independent individuals, at least for themselves, moreover to their families and the society. (P#6)

> Sometimes, we try to make money as much as possible, but that job would not make us happy. My aim is to make them independent individuals, they can do anything on their own. That would make my life meaningful to others. As sometimes in the street, what made me so happy was when their mothers approached me and being thankful for what I did, sometimes with teary eyes. Gosh, that made me so overwhelmed and really motivated me. I mean I just gave a little, but they thanked me a lot. Things like that makes my life meaningful, being needed by others and helping others. (P#11)

Contributing to others was the most frequent answer when the teachers were asked about the significance of their job in their life and the meaning of being a special education teacher. For them, it became meaningful because they could perform activities that bring a greater impact, not only for the students, but also for society in general. The meaningfulness of contributing to others has instilled

intrinsic motivation in the teachers, in which they do the work not only because their work offers external rewards, but also because it has significance to the lives of others.

4.1.3   The need for relatedness

Belonging to a community

Some teachers cited their work environment as their second home, where they consider coworkers as their second family and students as their own children. This sense of belonging to a community had added enjoyment to their work.

> For me personally, the office is second family after family at home. (P#10)

Sense of belonging seems to be a pathway to a meaningful work. In the interview, a teacher who possessed less competence (i.e. did not hold a degree in special education teaching), yet experienced a satisfying connection with the people in their work environment, expressed her motivation to be better in serving the children.

> I'm very happy to be here. This is my habitat. I got in here, and I belong to my habitat. Although I am outside of it (do not have special education), but since I got here, I feel I am already in my habitat, and I am very happy. I hope I can be better in serving the children. (P#6)

On the other hand, another teacher perceived the belongingness to the community in a negative light. This civil servant teacher was the one appointed to a special school as a part of job assignments. He expressed his lack of motivation in doing his work in the special school. Aside from working in the special school, the job assignment still requires him to work at the previous institution he worked before, which is a training institution. The impact of this circumstance was that the teacher faced difficulties in making sense of his work. He was aware that he should be more motivated to do his work, but he did not seem to be motivated to adjust his motivation.

> The problem is, I am not motivated. I try to improve my motivation here. […] I actually feel mentally burdened here. I have this school as my main office but I am not a hundred percent here, neither in the other institution I work for, because that is not my main office. So it's getting ambiguous, I am like a confused person. So to be able to make meaning of my work, I should have changed my motivation, but I haven't done it yet. (P#9)

Developing a satisfying connection in the workplace plays a significant role in encouraging work meaningfulness and boost teachers' motivation in doing the work. Especially for teachers who are less self-autonomous (e.g., getting involved in the job because of work assignment) and less self-efficacious

(e.g., feeling incompetence or lacking of competence in special education), satisfying connections and sense of belonging to their work community would help them to evaluate and value their job as well as to internalize their motivation.

4.1.4 Conclusion

The first research question guiding this study is "How does motivation relate to work meaning?". Through the lens of SDT, the relationship between motivation and work meaning is explained through the fulfilment of three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The optimum fulfilment of these three needs will lead to intrinsic motivation and meaningful work, as suggested by previous research (Beadle & Knight, 2012; Deci et al., 1991).

As reflected in the theme of career aspiration fulfilment, teachers who were self-endorsed or intrinsically motivated when applying for a job as a special education teacher experienced their job more positively and tended to generate more positive meaning of their work. In this way, we can see that intrinsic motivation embodied in career aspiration fulfilment is a pathway to a meaningful work. When intrinsic motivation is absent in the initial involvement in the job, the teachers would still be autonomous when the work has congruence with their personal values and beliefs. This congruence added meaningful value to their work and eventually motivated them to do the work.

Lacking of competence is another reason why teachers were not intrinsically motivated when entering the job as special education teachers; this was encouraged, for example, by civil service work assignment system. The need to possess competence to answer the challenge of the job and the opportunity to actualize potentials and interests by doing the job had helped the teachers to perceive the significance of their work. When they perceived their job as meaningful because it held significance or it offered something that they were fond of, they were more motivated to do the work and eventually experienced inherent happiness in doing the work.

Most of the teachers perceived meaningful work and were intrinsically motivated when it comes to the tasks related to teaching. They saw teaching task as a way to help the children and the society (contributing to the greater good) and to devote themselves to God (congruency with personal values and beliefs). This is in line with the research of Chandler and Kapelner (2013) that found that task meaningfulness encourages motivation to do the work, especially when the task has an impact to others.

Alongside the fulfilment of the needs for autonomy and competence, the fulfilment of the need for relatedness holds a significant role in encouraging meaningful work and intrinsic motivation. Especially in the cases where the needs of autonomy and competence are not fulfilled, the need to

belong to a work community and develop satisfying connections with the people within the community enables the teachers to make sense of their work and to facilitate their motivation to do the work.

This research found that the relationship between motivation and work meaning could be seen as a process rather than just a causality relationship in which one influences the other; in fact, they serve as pathways to one another. This process is facilitated by the fulfilment of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This research also found that when one or more needs are not fulfilled, the fulfilment of other need(s) will compensate for it and hence facilitate the internalization of meaningful work and intrinsic motivation.

4.2 The influence of interactions on the relationship of motivation and work meaning

Previous section has elaborated how motivation relates to work meaning. This section will explain how interactions with others influence the relationship between motivation and work meaning through the support of three basic needs, which are autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

4.2.1 The support for autonomy

Negative stigmas in the society

During the interview regarding their interactions with others from outside of their work, the teachers mainly shared their negative stories on how they had to deal with negative stigmas of the children with special needs and the profession of special education teachers. Sometimes, even their families looked down on their job or showed disapproval of their job.

> And out there, the students have been negatively stigmatized. Sometimes also the teacher. My grandma was so angry, "Why do you work in special school, teaching stupid kids?" She's the one who got angry. So the negative stigma is still there, also for special education teacher. (P#11)

> And my brother, he works in regular school. He asked, "Why did you choose that major (special education), what would you be in the future? (P#20)

The teachers perceived the negative stigma as a barrier for children with special needs to be accepted in the society. Although nowadays the government has encouraged inclusive education and the society are getting more open towards children with special needs, somehow, they witnessed that the stigma persists.

> Well, it's been good in this neighborhood..their acceptance, especially in this neighborhood. But we still hear some says like, "Look at those stupid kids, that…crazy kids." Some people still say that stuffs. The inclusive society is yet to come. So I think inclusive programs are really important. (P#8)

> It used to be, they didn't have any access to public service, I mean education. They were not well served. People let them to work in the farm, they were not allowed to go to school. But now I think, there has been a good progress. The government has launched inclusive education program. Furthermore, this

comunity is an inclusive community, so maybe they start to accept these kids. (P#16)

Related to work meaning, the way these teachers dealt with negative stigma in the society has an influence on how they perceived and evaluated their roles at work. For example, they were not just a teacher, they were also an ambassador who played a role in socializing the potentials of the children with special needs and special education institutions to the society. Most of teachers who were interviewed were aware of the stigma and considered that these issues are very important because eventually they are very much related with the future of the students. Negative stigmas could hinder these students to be accepted by the society and to live an independent live. While this problem is deemed important, there is no specific guideline on how to overcome it, hence the teachers have to take the initiative to deal with it. As discussed by some teachers, inferiority has become a problem for several special education teachers due to the negative stigma surrounding special education teaching. Negative stigma is like a double-edged sword: on one hand, the stigma could be harmful for the work meaning and motivation to work, for example by discouraging teachers' self-esteem, while on the other hand, it could motivate the teachers to take the initiative in counteracting stigmatizing practices in the society.

> Sometimes the society still give negative judgment towards special education. They don't really know what special education is. I hope with these children's achievements, the society will get to know that special school also has potentials, so they don't just look at the negative side. (P#15)

> I am proud, I am not ashamed. Sometimes special education teachers are inferior when, for example we have joined training with regular school… For me, I am proud. It's enjoyable, I am proud, no need to feel inferior. (P#1)

Flexibility encouragement

Working in a new environment with such demanding workload could potentially lessen the motivation to work. Support, in the form of giving more flexibility and less pressure by the supervisor, was perceived by some teachers as factors that facilitated growth and added enjoyment to the work. Flexibility encouragement from the supervisor could improve teachers' motivation, which in turn could also influence how they perceived their work (enjoyable, being in own 'world').

> How old are you? Do you still like being pressured? I am given flexibility here. Even more than other teachers. I feel that way. I was given a class, I gave up, and then the class was merged (with another class), so there are two teachers. I feel like being in college, I am given training. I am given training by the principal. So the principal gives me flexibility, so it's more like this is really my world, I really enjoy it. I don't feel under pressure. (P#14)

> If the supervisor motivate, support, and guide us in appropriate way, the work atmosphere will be good. No burden, more enjoyable, our work become more volitional. But when there is pressure from the supervisor, the work would become uncomfortable. (P#15)

For non-civil servant (contract) teachers, the small salary sometimes encouraged them to have another job. The flexibility of working hours provided by the school management enabled the teachers to work their side job. This kind of flexibility was praised by several contract teachers.

> I am so grateful, that I am given flexibility here. I could finish my class in the afternoon. I work at another place as a shop assistant. (P#14)

> A small salary encouraged me to have a side job, I have a small business…Since I am a contract teacher, right after I finish teaching, I could go home. But if there are some extra works, I will stay and do it. After school I usually shop for my business. Hahaha… (P#11)

Working in special education schools could be very demanding, both emotionally and physically, particularly for those who have little or no competence in special education. Even for those who have a competence in special education but are still registered as contract teachers, several of them still suffered a job insecurity due to small salary. The flexibility encouragement provided by the school management has given a sense of freedom to the teachers to escape the controlling situation that they perceived (e.g., demanding workload, financial insecurity).

4.2.2 The support for competence

(Dis)confirmation of competence

One of the teachers mentioned that there was an element of confirmation in her interactions with others. This positive evaluation of others had added enjoyment to her teaching job and helped her in evaluating herself and her work.

> What I like is teaching, and interacting with many people. Teaching in special school makes you have a wide connection with others. Usually they evaluate us as patient persons. So I got the plus value there. They view us as a patient persons. That's the plus value.

Another teacher felt that she was being underestimated by her supervisor but she maintained a positive attitude toward it. The negative attitude of her supervisor even motivated her to do more, to prove that she was competent to accomplish the job.

> The other day we had a competition. I have to say, there is a challenge when we are being underestimated by others moreover by the 'supervisor', I put it in quotation marks. I always say, don't always look at the negative side. "You cannot even reach the final round." I was so annoyed to hear that. Don't, don't say like that. When we are taken for granted, we have to bring out the positive energy. We have to prove, don't just talk. Walk your talk, prove it. (P#17)

Both confirmation and disconfirmation of their competence occurring during the interactions between the teachers and others at work seemed to affirm the positive meaning of work and encourage the teachers to seek the positive meaning at work in a motivated way.

Availability of learning environment

Furthermore, support for competence was also provided through knowledge sharing among the teachers. Especially for the teachers who previously had no specialization in special education, they did not feel completely left out because of this learning support available in the work environment. The teachers exchanged information regarding the school, the students, and other related information with other co-workers at work. The learning process took place both through verbal communication (e.g., discussion) and non-verbal communication (e.g., observing other co-workers).

> Learning from colleagues. I observe them. Sometimes we share, "If you have student like this, how do you deal with him/her?" We have a mutual learning. We share what we experienced at the office. So we exchange knowledge. (P#8)

One of the teachers also mentioned that she learned by interacting directly with the students. She perceived such interaction as an eye-opening experience that enables her to see a different side of the students with special needs, which she has never seen before as she did not have any degree in special education.

> I am very grateful to be in this place. I learn a lot from the children. They who could not hear are able to do something beyond my expectations. The children with hearing impairment, they could dance, how could they synchronize with the music? Then I thought, the one who learn in this school is me, not them. (P#6)

Owing to the availability of learning environment, which is facilitated by the interactions between teachers and others at school, the teachers will be more informed about their work situation. When the teachers are well-informed about the work situation, they will be likely to experience a positive meaning at work (e.g., being grateful). This finding is in agreement with the research line by Guion and Landy (1972), that when people are well-informed about their work situation, they will experience a meaningful work and be motivated to do the work.

Cooperative culture at work

A cooperative culture at work is something that is appreciated by most teachers. By cooperating with others in accomplishing their work, most of the teachers felt more efficacious in doing the work. One of the teachers expressed that cooperating is a way to respect another co-workers. Another teacher described that when co-workers help each other, they will be more motivated to do the work because there are always helpful resources whenever they face any difficulties.

> Working with other coworker, for example doing the paperwork, we will do it together. […]. By that interactions, it means that we respect our coworker who have an abundance work task. We will do it in our less occupied time. So there is a cooperation. (P#3)

> If the coworkers understand and support each other, the work would mean, well we will be more motivated to do the work. If we are not able to do the work, there are coworkers who could help. (P#15).

The role of cooperative culture in supporting competence seems to be prominent, especially in **a** collectivistic culture like in Indonesia, where being individualistic is less appreciated. Cooperating is not only seen as an instrumental way to reach certain work goals, but also treated as a way to appreciate others.

4.2.3   The support for relatedness

Role Model

One of the teachers referred to his senior co-workers as his role models. He viewed these co-workers as self-reflecting mirrors, through which he saw his work and how he should take the actions related to his work.

> I consider them as my mother. They are like mirror for me. I want to be like them when I'm grown up. Later when I'm grown up. I still consider myself a kid. Later I want to be like the teachers here. The way I teach…because I still need to learn here and there.

A teacher who admitted that he was lacking the competence in special education and showed less motivation in doing his job referred to his co-workers as an example of 'good' teachers. The cues he interpreted from his colleagues encouraged him to adjust his work meaning and motivation accordingly.

> I avoid to make this meaning, they will stay the same kids regardless my teaching. I avoid that. Sometimes when people feel burn out, they will think that way. "These kids' disabilities.., they could never be able how hard I try to teach them." I'm trying not to be like that. [..] It's a bit unique here in special school. So people who give totality in special education are really great people. There are a lot of teachers like that here. You could find them in every school event, they never skip teaching hours, and they have been doing that even before we have teacher certification.

The comments above reflected the influence of significant others in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of teachers towards the sensemaking of work and motivation to do the work. This finding is similar to the statement of Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 73), that ones' behaviors "are prompted, modeled, or valued by significant others to whom they feel (or want to feel) attached or related."

Compassionate communication

Compassionate communication is an emotional work that highlights the sub-processes of noticing, feeling, and responding (Miller, 2007). According to Miller, the actions of compassionate communication take form in noticing the suffering of others, gathering information about others in need, connecting with others cognitively and emotionally, and responding through verbal and non-verbal manners (such as touching and listening). In the context of this study, compassionate

communication mainly occurred in the interactions between teachers and others at work, especially students with special needs. Some teachers described this process of noticing, connecting, and responding in both verbal and non-verbal manners in their interactions with students. Compassionate communication was manifested, for instance, in the form of caring and empathic attitude.

> My kids, especially whom I taught in my class, are kids who are longing for a touch. Maybe because their parents are quite busy at home. So they come toward me, asking for a hug, in need for a gentle touch, someone to talk to them. So at school, sometimes I just provide them with affectionate touch, I sing with them. (P#6)

> Ooh, on the meaning, being in special school for me is to look at these children. I look at these children. I feel close to them, know their characters. Like, beyond our lives, I have not known before, exist a circumstance like this. I think that leads more to empathy. (P#5)

This compassionate communication also occurred in their interactions with supervisor and co-workers, like the following descriptions given by a teacher.

> ..They care about me, because they are about my mom and dad's age. So they really care about, we always talk out every problem, they remind me of things I haven't done. [..] So they take care of me as if I were their own children. So I have a lot of parents, here. (P#17)

Furthermore, the teachers also perceived the importance of interacting with students' parents. Sometimes the interactions went beyond communicating about the children; a teacher also listened to personal or family matters shared by the parents. They also respond to the parents' needs by offering helps or with their willingness to help.

> The parents sometimes share their personal problems, family matters, I am ok with that. If I could help, I will help what I could. (P#19)

> For me personally, I would like to meet with the parents or relatives who pick up their children in person. Sometimes the children are impatient to be picked up or do not want to be picked up. I help them to persuade the children. (P#6)

Compassionate communication had shaped the teachers' belongingness to the community, added enjoyment to their work, and enabled them to communicate better with their supervisor or co-workers, students, and students' parents. In addition, it had also helped the teachers to make sense of what they experience at work and motivated them to do their work better, as they perceived the significance of connecting with others at work.

4.2.4 Conclusion

The second question of this research is: "How do interactions with others influence the relationship of motivation and work meaning?" Based on the framework of SDT, the influence of relationship with others on the relationship of motivation and work meaning is explained through the

supports of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs fulfilment. SDT proposes that internalization of intrinsic motivation must be nurtured (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and that motivated behaviors are supported by significant others with whom someone has interactions with. Interactions with others were also highlighted by Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) as something that contributes to the conception of work meaning because people make sense of their work based on the cues and actions of others at work. In addition, Richardson (2012) asserted that personal experience at work, including how people define themselves, is constructed by people and co-constructed by their social context, in this case the work they do and the relationships in which they participate.

Negative stigma in the society, flexibility encouragement, (dis)confirmation of competence, availability of learning environment, cooperative culture at work, role model, and compassionate communication were found to be the factors that influence the relationship between motivation and work meaning. As a result of their interactions with others from outside of their work, the teachers were aware of the negative stigma developed in the society about children with special needs and profession of special education teacher. As asserted by Sercu, Ayala, and Bracke (2015), the stigma could either be harmful or helpful for workers' motivation. In this case, stigma from society was more likely to instil the meaningfulness of the work they do and motivate them to counter that stigma, for instance by socializing the potentials of students with special needs to the society.

As the negative stigma in the society also has the potentials to be harmful to teachers' motivation and work meaning, interactions at work that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness tend to compensate the negative influence that the stigma might bring. Flexibility encouragement available at work was found to be a factor that support teachers' autonomy. Besides the stigma, teachers also had to deal with an emotionally demanding environment and highly demanding work tasks. Flexibility encouragement had helped them to sense some freedom in their work and be motivated to do their work.

Furthermore, finding a role model and experiencing a compassionate communication during interactions at work encouraged relatedness and drove the teachers to do their job better because they had 'mirrors' – their co-workers and supervisor – that they could reflect on. These 'mirrors' could also connect with them and respond to their needs. This compassionate communication did not only apply to the interactions between teachers and their co-workers and supervisor, but also between teachers and students. Taken together, role model and compassionate communication were found to be the two important pathways to a motivated behavior and meaningful work. Confirmation and disconfirmation of one's competence, availability of mutual learning environment, and cooperative culture at work were found to be the factors that influence the competence. Moreover, support for competence is not only manifested in a positive tone, but also in a negative tone (i.e. disconfirmation of competence).

5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between motivation and work meaning and how interactions with others influence this relationship among special education school teachers in Indonesia. To examine how motivation relates to work meaning and how interactions with others influence this relationship, interviews were conducted to gain insights into special education teachers' job contents, the significance of the work to the teachers' life (work meaning), teachers' motivation in doing the work, how motivation relates to work meaning, and how interactions have an influence on the relationship between work meaning and motivation. This study employed SDT framework to investigate how investigate how motivation relates to work meaning, and how interactions influence the relationship between work meaning and motivation.

According to the research findings, teachers' intrinsic initial motivation in getting involved in the job has a significant contribution to how they value the significance of their job. Teachers who were endorsed by their career aspiration when applying the job were likely to perceive their work more positively and more motivated to do the work, compared to teachers who were less self-endorsed (e.g., teachers who joined special school as a part of civil service work assignment). In this case, the lack of autonomy could be harmful because in turn it will lessen the sense of work meaningfulness and demotivate the teachers to work due to detachment (May et al., 2004 in Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009) and role problems at work (Billingsley, 2004a).

Alongside career aspiration fulfillment, this research also found that the sense of autonomy was endorsed by the congruence between work activities and personal values and beliefs. According to SDT, personal values and self-importance are factors that enable the internalization of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Spiritual and religious beliefs frequently emerged in the question of *what motivate you to do the work*. Adhered to the beliefs, working was perceived by the teachers as a form of devotion to God instead of merely satisfying economic needs. When work is perceived as a devotion, the teachers feel more volitional in doing the work and less intervened with problems emerged in the work, such as work demands. In the formulation of work meaning, spirituality is said to be a source from which the meaning can be derived (Rosso et al., 2010).

In the absence of autonomy, competence and relatedness are two important factors in the conceptualization of work meaning and intrinsic motivation. Relatedness is particularly essential to develop good quality connections between people in a social environment (Deci & Ryan, 2014). This research found that, one of the problems in the world of special education teaching in Indonesia is civil service job design which allows (or enforces) teachers who do not have knowledge about special education to be assigned to special education schools. Teachers need for relatedness compensated this problem by developing the sense of belonging to the community and engaging in high quality

relationship, particularly with the students. This relationship often grew into emotional bond, in which the teachers perceive themselves as second parents to their students and their students as their own children. As proposed by Baumeister and Leary (1995, p. 497), "belongingness appears to have multiple and strong effects on emotional patterns and on cognitive processes". In accordance to the research finding of by Bao and Lam (2008), emotional relationship is considered as something that might facilitate the internalization of intrinsic motivation. As an effect of belongingness, cognitive processes could help the teachers in the sensemaking process into work meaning.

Teaching in special schools could be very demanding. Besides negative stigmas, there are several other challenges have to be faced by special education teachers, for example the lack of special education curriculum and the different abilities of special education students even within the same type of impairment. While the challenges persist, teaching task was perceived as the most significant task among the other tasks. The challenging nature of special education teaching motivated the teachers to fulfill the need for competence and answer the challenges of the job. According to research, challenges of the job are mentioned to be an aspect that stimulate intrinsic motivation (Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Teaching task was also considered more important compared to other tasks, for instance administrative task, because teaching task gives more contribution to the greater good. According to Vansteenkiste et al. (2007), people will be intrinsically motivated when the work is oriented to contribute to the community. Chandler and Kapelner (2013) suggested when task meaningfulness is perceived, people will put more efforts in doing the work.

This research found that the relationship of motivation and work meaning is an ongoing process which is facilitated by the fulfillment of the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy, competence, and relatedness are integrated are related to each other, and compensate each other when one(s) is/are missing. In the dynamic of the relationship between work meaning and motivation, it can be seen that work meaning sometimes can be a cause or effect to motivation, and vice versa. The view of motivation as a process is supported by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013), stating that the experience of motivation in real life is more complex than the binary states of cause and effect because motivation evolves through a complex mental process of intention generation, implementation, and evaluation.

Negative stigmas in the society were found to be a support as well as control for intrinsic motivation and work meaning in the interactions between the teachers and the people outside of work. This is in line with what has been found by Sercu, Ayala, and Bracke (2015), stated that in one hand stigma could promote people's negative perception and towards their works and hinder motivation, while on the other hand it could motivate them to counteract those stigmas. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) suggested that people like to see themselves in positive light, the initiatives of

counteracting stigmas can be seen as a way to find a positive meaning of work. The route to find positive meaning of work is supported by interactions with others at work. As suggested by Wrzesniewski et al. (2003), the construction of meaning is an interpersonal sensemaking process based on interpersonal cues generated and received most likely during interactions at work.

Flexibility encouragement and dis(confirmation) of competence were found to facilitate motivation and work meaning by supporting autonomy and competence in the interactions at work. This finding confirmed what previous findings by Janssen et al. (2013), who found encouraging freedom as a support for autonomy, and confirming and praising competence as a support for competence, that are given by career developers to the protégé.

Work support in the form of availability of learning environment and cooperative culture at work were also found as factors enabling intrinsic motivation internalization. This is similar to what has been found by Van Yperen and Hoogedorn (2003) that in controlling situation, such as high work demands, social supports from coworkers and supervisors could help internalizing intrinsic motivation. Besides providing supports, supervisors and coworkers could act as role models for the teachers, as found in this research. As people making sense of their work based on the cues and actions of others at work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003), the existence of role models could enhance the meaning of work. People inspired by role models because role models possess some values that people would like to have. Lockwood, Jordan, and Kunda (2002) confirmed that goal-congruent role models help in shaping motivation.

Besides role model, this research also found compassionate communication during interactions at work, such as caring, listening, touching, understanding, as a way to support relatedness and enhance the meaningfulness of work in a stigmatized work environment. In their research on sensemaking process, Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) underlined these roles of providing resources, offering helps, or simply listening, as factors that help people discerning their meaning of work.

By applying the framework of human motivation theory, SDT, this study contributes to the research of motivation and work meaning by providing insights on how the fulfillment of basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) facilitate the dynamic relationship between motivation and work meaning. Current studies found the positive relationship between meaningful work and motivation to work (Guion & Landy, 1972; Chandler & Kapelner, 2013) but have not addressed the dynamic processes in the relationship between work meaning and motivation. This study also expands the research on motivation and work meaning by also including interactions with others as a factor that could influence the relationship between motivation and work meaning. The context of interactions within the research of motivation or work meaning is usually limited to interactions at work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003) or peer support (Van Yperen & Hoogedorn, 2003). This research have tried to expand that limitation by also including interactions with others outside of work,

as negative stigmas in the context of special education teaching were often contributed by the society or people outside of work.

Practical implications

This study found that teachers who were assigned to a specific teaching job without having specific knowledge in the area of work will likely to suffer from less motivation, this finding could be proposed to education policy makers to make an improvement in work assignment design. Improvement in work assignment design, for example assigning the teachers to a work in the area of their expertise, might encourage professional development, motivation to work, and well being of the teachers. This improvement in turn will influence the quality of education as aspired by the implementation of Education Reform in Indonesia.

This study also found several aspects (needs fulfillment) in which motivation and work meaningfulness could be encouraged in the field of special education teaching. These aspects could be applied in the practice of special education teaching to anticipate negative work outcomes often associated with special education teaching, such as role problems (Billingsley, 2004a), burn out (Wardhani, 2012), and work attrition or turnover (Billingsley, 2004b).

Limitations and recommendations for future research

This study has some limitations. First, this research narrowly assumes the direction of causality between motivation and work meaning, as the relationship between motivation and work meaning is rather seen as a process. Second, this research only include participants from one region in Indonesia. Education Reform policy is nationally adopted, but implementations of education policy might differ in each regions due to regional autonomy policy. Each region in Indonesia might also have different culture and values from other regions. Therefore, participants in different regions might experience the job differently due to these differences. Including participants from broader regions might generate different research findings. Third, this study strived to include participants across different gender, job status, and educational background. Differences are accommodated however are not balanced in each category. Fourth, the transferability of this research to other countries with different socio-cultural backgrounds is questionable. For example, the attitude of the society towards people with special needs might be different between the country where inclusion is long implemented (mostly in developed countries) and the country where inclusion has just been initiated (like Indonesia). Indonesia is a country predominantly muslim. In this research, Islamic beliefs (e.g., the beliefs that work is a form devotion to God to reach afterlife well being) has been found to have an influence on how the participants view and experience their work. This research findings would have been different if conducted in different countries with different cultural and religious backgrounds.

This study proposes recommendations for future research. First, in the context of work meaning, motivation, and interactions among special education teachers in Indonesia, this study suggests to include participants from broader regions in Indonesia for more generalizable results. Second, spirituality and religious beliefs are emerging aspects in this research, it is interesting to further study the influence of spirituality or religious beliefs in the context of motivation and work meaning. Third, in the doubt of this research transferability, research examining work meaning, motivation, and interactions among special education teachers in different countries are encouraged, to see how the findings would be different.

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Appendix A: Participants' demographic data

Participants	Age	Gender	Employment status	Educational background	Work experience in special educatio (in years)
P#1	48	M	Civil servant	Special education teaching	26
P#2	56	M	Civil servant	Special education teaching	32
P#3	49	M	Civil servant	Special education teaching	27
P#4	59	F	Civil servant	Special education teaching	32
P#5	39	F	Civil servant	Non special education teaching	3
P#6	36	F	Civil servant	Non special education teaching	10
P#7	40	F	Civil servant	Special education teaching	10
P#8	46	F	Civil servant	Special education teaching	25
P#9	40	M	Civil servant	Non special education teaching	3
P#10	46	F	Civil servant	Special education teaching	10
P#11	27	F	Non civil servant (contract teacher)	Special education teaching	4
P#12	47	F	Civil servant	Non special education teaching	14
P#13	23	F	Non civil servant (contract teacher)	Non special education teaching	1.5
P#14	25	M	Non civil servant (contract teacher)	Non special education teaching	3
P#15	42	F	Civil servant	Special education teaching	11
P#16	45	F	Civil servant	Special education teaching	18
P#17	24	F	Non civil servant (contract teacher)	Special education teaching	5

P#18	40	F	Non civil servant (contract teacher)	Non special education teaching	2
P#19	50	F	Civil servant	Special education teaching	28
P#20	57	M	Civil servant	Special education teaching	31

Appendix B: Interview guide

(English version)

Introduction

Giving a short introduction about the research. Explaining the confidentiality (e.g., that the participants will remain anonymous) and asking participants' consent to record the interviews.

Demographics:
1. How old are you?
2. Gender (observable)
3. What is your educational background?
4. How many month/years of work experience do you have?
5. How long have you been working in this institution?
6. What is your employment status?
7. What is your current position?
8. How many hours do you work per week?

The description of the job
1. Could you tell me about your current work (responsibilities, task, activities)?
2. What is your personal way of doing your work? Why are you doing it that way?
3. How did you become involved in your current work?
4. What are things in your work that you really like?
5. What are things in your work that you do not really like?
6. What are you good at?
7. What are you not good at? How do you deal with those?

The meaning of work
8. What does it mean to you to be a special education teacher?
9. Could you tell me how important is your work in your life? Could you please elaborate on that (relate to job, role, and self meaning)? Why is it important to you?

Motivation
10. How motivated are you in doing your work?
11. You have explained about motivation in doing your work, can you now reflect on the relationship of motivation and work meaning, how does motivation affect your work meaning and vice versa?
12. Will you be willing to do extra things for your work outside of working hours? Have you done it before, and could you give an example?
13. We have talked about the balance between work and personal life, can you now reflect on how work and life balance affect your work meaning and how your work meaning affect your work and life balance?

Interactions with others and work meaning
14. Could you tell me about your interactions at work with your supervisor?
15. How do these interactions affect your work meaning and how your work meaning affect these interactions?
16. Could you tell me about your interactions at work with your co-workers?
17. How do these interactions affect your work meaning and how your work meaning affect these interactions?
18. Could you tell me about your interactions at work with your students?

19. How do these interactions affect your work meaning and how your work meaning affect these interactions?
20. Could you tell me about your interactions at work with your students' parents?
21. How do these interactions affect your work meaning and how your work meaning affect these interactions?
22. Could you tell me what do people in general think about your job? How do their opinions affect your work meaning?

Additional
Would you like to add anything about your work that I have not asked you?

(Indonesian version)

Demografi

1. Berapa usia Anda?
2. Gender (observable)
3. Apa latar belakang pendidikan Anda?
4. Berapa lama pengalaman kerja Anda (tahun/bulan)?
5. Berapa lama Anda bekerja di institusi tempat Anda bekerja sekarang?
6. Apa status pekerjaan Anda?
7. Apa posisi Anda saat ini di tempat kerja?
8. Kira-kira berapa jam Anda bekerja per minggu?

Deskripsi pekerjaan

1. Bisa Anda ceritakan mengenai pekerjaan Anda saat ini (tanggung jawab, tugas, kegiatan)?
2. Bagaimana Anda melakukan pekerjaan dengan cara Anda? Mengapa Anda melakukannya demikian?
3. Bagaimana Anda bisa bekerja pada pekerjaan Anda sekarang?
4. Apa saja yang Anda sukai dari pekerjaan Anda?
5. Apa saja yang Anda tidak sukai dari pekerjaan Anda?
6. Apa kelebihan Anda dalam bidang pekerjaan Anda?
7. Apa kelebihan Anda dalam bidang pekerjaan Anda? Bagaimana Anda mengatasinya?

Makna pekerjaan

8. Menjadi seorang guru SLB, apakah maknanya bagi Anda?
9. Bisa Anda ceritakan, seberapa penting pekerjaan Anda dalam hidup Anda? Bisa Anda jelaskan lebih lanjut (dikaitkan dengan job, role, dan self)? Mengapa hal tersebut penting bagi Anda?

Motivasi

10. Seberapa termotivasi Apa dalam melakukan pekerjaan Anda/ Apa yang membuat Anda termotivasi untuk melakukan pekerjaan Anda?
11. Anda telah menjelaskan mengenai motivasi Anda melakukan pekerjaan, lantas apakah dapat Anda renungkan bagaimana pengaruh motivasi terhadap cara Anda memaknai pekerjaan, atau bagaimana makna pekerjaan memotivasi Anda?
12. Jika ditanya, bersediakah Anda melakukan pekerjaan di luar jam kerja? Kenapa ya dan kenapa tidak? Pernahkah Anda melakukan sebelumnya? Dapat Anda berikan contohnya?
13. Tadi Anda sudah menceritkan tentang keseimbangan kerja dan kehidupan pribadi, lnatas bagaimana menurut Anda keseimbangan ini mempengaruhi pemaknaan Anda tentang kerja, dan bagaimana pemaknaan kerja mempengaruhi keseimbangan ini?

Interaksi dengan orang lain dan pemaknaan kerja

14. Dapat Anda ceritakan mengenai hubungan Anda dengan atasan?
15. Bagaimana hubungan ini mempengaruhi makna kerja atau bagaiman makna kerja mempengaruhi hubungan ini?
16. Dapat Anda ceritakan mengenai hubungan Anda dengan rekan kerja?

17. Bagaimana hubungan ini mempengaruhi makna kerja atau bagaiman makna kerja mempengaruhi hubungan ini?
18. Dapat Anda ceritakan mengenai hubungan Anda dengan murid-murid?
19. Bagaimana hubungan ini mempengaruhi makna kerja atau bagaiman makna kerja mempengaruhi hubungan ini?
20. Dapat Anda ceritakan mengenai hubungan Anda dengan orang tua murid?
21. Bagaimana hubungan ini mempengaruhi makna kerja atau bagaiman makna kerja mempengaruhi hubungan ini?
22. Bagaimana secara umum orang memandang pekerjaan Anda? Bagaimana opini mereka berpengaruh pada pemaknaan kerja Anda?

Tambahan
Apakah Anda ingin menambahkan hal-hal yang belum saya tanyakan?

Appendix C: Codebook

HOW MOTIVATION RELATES TO WORK MEANING		
Nr	**Main category and sub-categories** / **Descriptions**	**Sample Comments**
A	**The need for autonomy** / **Teachers' need to feel in control of their actions and goals, to have a sense of having a choice in doing something, to experience oneself as the initiator of one's actions (self-endorsed behavior).**	
1	Fulfilling career aspiration / Related to initial motivation in doing the work. The sense of having having choice to engage in a job; engage in a job as a fulfillment of career aspiration.	I was in special education studies. After graduated, I applied for a job (in special education). At those days, it was difficult to get a job. It was only 1 or 2 being recruited. 1 (person) per batch. Then I applied to a private special school, they did not need any teacher. Then I gave a try to normal primary school. Primary school X at that time. I applied and thank God, I was accepted. In 2004, there was a special school teacher recruitment. They need a lot of special school teachers. I applied, accepted, and that's how I worked here. (P#10)
2	Congruency with personal values and beliefs / The work has congruency with one's personal values and beliefs. Personal values and beliefs could be derived from norms, cultures, religion, etc.	The first thing is right…, so what we are looking for is not merely money, but devotion to God. So we make a living based on the intention to be devoted to God. If we only seek worldly life, that's all we would get. We would get zero for the afterlife. That was being said. Are you agree? Hahaha. (P#2)
B	**The need for competence** / **Teachers' understanding on how to attain various external and internal outcomes and being efficacious in performing the requisite actions.**	

1	Answering the challenge of the job	The abilities of the teachers to overcome challenges (e.g., work challenges and emotional challenges) in their job by doing efficacious performance.	Well the challenging part is, I have five children in the classroom. There is a smart one, I teach him from nothing until he is able to grasp something. I feel very delighted because finally he is able to do something. There is another kid with multiple disabilities, she has hearing impairment and learning difficulties. She is not able even to do the sum. Sometimes I feel desperate, but then I try again. Well, something unenjoyable for me is, no, in general everything is enjoyable, because we are aware of their disabilities, so I don't really feel desperation. Just, when they learn something and they face difficulties, it challenges us to be, to be more creative. (P#10)
2	The need for personal and professional development	The need to develop personally and professionally, for example by learning about the work and the work environment.	My education was not special education, so special education is a new thing for me. […] I was first assigned to a class for students with hearing impairment. The first time I came here, I borrowed a dictionary this thick (showing how thick the dictionary was), to learn sign language. There are finger signs, word signs, I learned all of them, I brought the book home. I was like, if I teach special school, but I don't understand sign language, how could I deliver something? The first word I learned was 'good morning'. I wrote it on the board, then they (the students) taught me how to sign 'good morning', 'thank you'. Then, it's my job to learn, I brought the dictionary home and practiced the sign language for the materials I am going to deliver the next day. […] From that point, I felt really grateful God had put me in this place. (P#6)
3	Actualizing potentials and interests	Actualizing one's potentials or interests by doing work.	Firstly, I wanted to give it a try. I like challenges, something different. I came here and found out what kind of skills-related subjects they have. I got in here, because I have skills on the subject they offer here, fashion class. I develop knowledge I obtained in college, I develop it here. (P#13)
4	Contributing to the greater good	Contributing to something bigger than oneself. Providing or giving impact to others' well being. For example, helping the students to live an independent living, so that it will also benefit their parents and society in general.	I hope I can be better in serving these children, so they can optimize what they have. So these children can be helpful, independent individuals, at least for themselves, moreover to their families and the society. (P#6)

Nr	Main category and sub-categories	Descriptions	Sample Comments
C	**The need for relatedness**	**Teachers' need to develop secure and satisfying connections with others in a social environment**	
1	Belonging to a community	The feeling of being a part of the working team/environment. For example, considering the working environment as a second home and the coworkers as a second family.	I'm very happy to be here. This is my habitat. I got in here, and I belong to my habitat. Although I am outside of it (do not have special education), but since I got here, I feel I am already in my habitat, and I am very happy. I hope I can be better in serving the children. (P#6)

HOW INTERACTIONS INFLUENCE THE RELATIONSHIP OF MOTIVATION AND WORK MEANING

Nr	Main category and sub-categories	Descriptions	Sample Comments
A	**The suppor for autonomy**	**The way interactions (between special education teachers and others at work and outside of work) have influence on the relationship of work meaning and motivation by supporting the need for autonomy**	
1	Negative stigmas in the society	Negative stigma/perception about children with special needs or the job of special education teacher hold by the society which might encourage or hinder teachers' initiation to engage in the work or doing task at work	And my brother, he works in regular school. He asked, "Why did you choose that major (special education), what would you be in the future? (P#20)
2	Flexibility encouragement	Encouraging teachers' flexibility in doing the task at work, so that the teachers feel less controlled and more autonomous in doing the work.	How old are you? Do you still like being pressured? I am given flexibility here. Even more than other teachers. I feel that way. I was given a class, I gave up, and then the class was merged (with another class), so there are two teachers. I feel like being in college, I am given training. I am given training by the principal. So the principal gives me flexibility, so it's more like this is really my world, I really enjoy it. I don't feel under pressure. (P#14)
B	**The support for competence**	**The way interactions (between special education teachers and others at work and outside of work) have influence on the relationship of work meaning and motivation by supporting the need for competence**	

1	(Dis)Confirmation of competence	The action of confirming or disconfirming teachers' competence/ personal quality that influence teachers' self-efficacy in doing the work.	What I like is teaching, and interacting with many people. Teaching in special school makes you have a wide connection with others. Usually they evaluate us as patient persons. So I got the plus value there. They view us as a patient persons. That's the plus value.
2	Availability of learning environment	An environment which enable the teachers to share knowledge with each others, to grow personally and professionally.	Learning from colleagues. I observe them. Sometimes we share, "If you have student like this, how do you deal with him/her?" We have a mutual learning. We share what we experienced at the office. So we exchange knowledge. (P#8)
3	Cooperative culture at work	Collaborative working practices to accomplish task at work, e.g. to make complicated task simpler (could occur in the relationship between teachers-supervisor, teachers-coworkers, teachers-students' parents)	If the coworkers understand and support each other, the work would mean, well we will be more motivated to do the work. If we are not able to do the work, there are coworkers who could help. (P#15).
C	**The support for relatedness**	**The way interactions (between special education teachers and others at work and outside of work) have influence on the relationship of work meaning and motivation by supporting the need for relatedness**	
1	Role model	(A) person or people in the social environment who is/ are referred by the teachers as a good example, or teachers refer themselves as example for their students.	I consider them as my mother. They are like mirror for me. I want to be like them when I'm grown up. Later when I'm grown up. I still consider myself a kid. Later I want to be like the teachers here. The way I teach…because I still need to learn here and there.
2	Compassionate communication	Interactions that occur at or outside of work that involves ''connection'' to others (either cognitively through perspective taking or affectively through empathy) and ''caring'' for those others (often in communicative or behavioral ways such as noticing one situation, being, feeling, touching, listening to one another, responding, and non-violent communication).	My kids, especially whom I taught in my class, are kids who are longing for a touch. Maybe because their parents are quite busy at home. So they come toward me, asking for a hug, in need for a gentle touch, someone to talk to them. So at school, sometimes I just provide them with affectionate touch, I sing with them. (P#6)