



The Adaptation Communication of Foreign Football Player in Thai League: A Case Study of John Baggio

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Abstract

The research aims to study the communication for adaptation of foreign football player in Thai league, with a particular focus on a case Study of John Baggio adapting to Thai society and employed qualitative research by drawing upon a mixed-method approach based on participant observations and in-depth interviews to collect data from John Baggio and involved colleagues i.e., teammates, coaching teams, and staff. The research found key factors in John Baggio's case adapting to Thai society: (1) John Baggio's personal characteristics of being easygoing and having a sense of humor correspond with the concept of acculturation "Bicultural Identity" refers to a person who adjusts to new culture while retaining old culture. These characteristics foster a positive relationship with Thai teammates as well as an environment enabling to language learning in both Thai and English. (3) Off the pitch area can provide connections outside of the field. (4) Keeping up with Thai NEWS and mass media is beneficial for adaptability.

Keywords: 1) Communication 2) Adaptation Communication 3) Foreign Football Player
4) Football

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Introduction

When you what sport is the most popular around the world, football would probably be the first to come to mind. Football has captured the attention of people all over the world, whether they are players or watchers. worldwide people have significant passion for football since, it provides amused, excited, and entertained feeling to people as well as it has such an international and easy to understand rule set, thus becoming the most followed sport in the world.

Football sport in Thai league has progressed constantly. In 2008, Football Association of Thailand under The Patronage of his majesty the king (F.A.T) cooperated with Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) to establish Thai Premier League Company Limited (TL) with the goal of resurging the system and regulation of professional football competition in Thai leagues in accordance with Asian Football Confederation regulations (AFC), which aim to raise football sport in Asia to the same strength of international standard. (Buddhasri, Adisornprasert and Yansomboon, 2012, p. 160)

Footballer is treasure of football match. For Thai League match, F.A.T legislated law of the game in Thai League on football tournament registration in each season. The law allowed football club can register foreign footballers as prescribed by law. Nevertheless, in the first season of 1996, Johnnie Walker Thailand Soccer League, the tournament still employed a small number of foreign footballers. In 2019, the first Thailand league, the number of foreign footballers increased

significantly with 7 foreign footballers out of a total of 11 football players in the match.

Noticeably, Thai football league tournament has a room for foreign footballers in many position. Because of the high level of competition in each season, The majority of Thai football clubs attempted to establish foreign footballers as key tournament drivers, particularly in offensive games or forward positions. As a result, hiring foreign footballers contributes to a more effective club tournament.

Even though, the Thai football league tournament has plenty of room for foreign footballers in many positions. It also comes with a high level of competition to play that role. Apart from football talent, it is more important to adapt to Thai football club members or the context and environment in Thailand. Regardless of adaptive competence in the context, foreign footballers are unable to play football as a career in football clubs in Thai league.

In order that, adaptation of foreign footballers has resulted in both failure and success. In the case of failure, Jay Emmanuel Thomas, Britishman footballers, who played for PTT Rayong football club. The club canceled his contract due to an adaptive problem and poor performance. Furthermore, In the worst-case scenario, Anton Zemlianukhin's contract was terminated by Sukhothai F.C. in the middle of the season because he is unable to communicate in both English and Thai. For the successful case, Bireme Diouf, an ivory coast man, has had a long journey for playing football with eleven clubs and sixteen years. Since,



he can adapt to Thai society very well and communicate influentially in Thai (Siamsport, 2019)

Furthermore, whether in a success or failure case, the communication factor is likely to be involved consistently. Communication is a critical variable for foreign footballers to adapt to Thai society in communicating with club members like colleagues, head coach and others in the club as well as in daily life living such as talking to Thai people, Food ordering and, opening to News from Thai mass media etc. These factors help foreign footballers adjust to life in a new environment such Thailand.

The John Baggio case study is an example of success when compared to foreign footballers who come to play in Thai league. To illustrate, First, he spent 7 years long journeys to play football as a career at Sukhothai F.C. that competes in Thailand's highest league, the T1 League he is one of the few foreign footballers who has played for a single football club for a long term. While the other remains playing for a short term and transferring to various of Thai football club. Furthermore, he has the ability to keep up a good performance, whereas other foreign footballers with such a long period of time were also in the late stages of football and played in the lower Thai league. Lastly, he is a foreign footballer who has drawn the attention of various mass media outlets, having appeared in the media continuously since the start of his Thai football career. With the attention, he became a well-known foreign footballer.

The research on foreign footballers is still in its early stages I am interested in studying communication practices used in the adaptation to Thai society, with a particular focus on a case study of John Baggio, to gain a thorough understanding of the communication of adapting to Thai society as a foreign footballer. In essence, this research will benefit the Thai football industry by providing a framework for foreign personnel in various organizations.

Objective

To study the communication practices used in the adaptation to Thai society of John Baggio as a foreign footballer in a Thai football club.

Scope of study

The Scope of study directed to the communication practices used in the adaptation of foreign footballers to Thai society in a case study of John Baggio. The study explored various contexts, medias and factors that have an impact on the adaptation of John Baggio in Thai society as a footballer at Sukhothai F.C. in Thailand. The informants were categorized into two groups: 1) John Baggio as key informant 2) the involved colleagues, i.e., teammates, coaching teams, and staff. Data collection would be conducted during the months of April to September 2021.

Literature Review

The researcher has reviewed the related literature as follows:

1. Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal Communication refers to the process of delivering information and interacting with others to require and understand messages (Janghiran, 2018, p. 18)

Sookplam (2005, p. 249) raised the essential of interpersonal communication at the level of “Small Talk conversation”, which is commonly used in daily life. Small talk conversation is the simplest approach to communicate with others depending on the person, the place and time and, even the emotional experiences. Other types of communication, on the other hand, may necessitate the use of additional mediators in order to deliver the message. As a result, small talk conversation is the most simple and effective conversation and can help humans in achieving their personal goals in a variety of ways.

The benefits of human communication are as follows: 1) enable to build good friendships 2) is another way to relieve stress and worry, as well as to get one's problems off one's chest. 3) create an amusing, entertaining, and joyful atmosphere. 4) creates a room for people to open their minds and share their knowledge and ideas. 5) Create a good understanding between people during and after a conversation. 6) improve interpersonal communication skills in terms of message transmission, language usage, listening, and observing, these will lay a foundation for amore complex level of communication. 7) help to achieve the career goals and is crucial for a wide range of careers. 8) Connect with people through mobile phones, which are

now widely used, helps to shorten distances and bring people closer together. 9) Capable of using the ideas gained from the conversation to develop themselves and society.

Khunsit (2012, p. 76) conducted a study titled “Communication Cultural Adaptation of Thai Expatriates Working in Subsidiaries of Multinational Cooperations in Neighboring courties” The study discovered that Thai employees communicated with local staff in both English and local language in order to adjust to the organization, which led to increased teamwork and the development of positive relationships with local staff.

2. Intercultural Communication Theory

According to the changes in the economy, society, and transportation, people all over the world are leaving their home countries in search of an education, a job, and even family. These factors allow people from various cultures to communicate with one another. Intercultural communication is thus the study of communication between people from different cultures.

Avirutvorakul (2015, p. 16) viewed intercultural communication as communication between those who have different belief, social values and behavioral aspects. As a result, people from various cultures appear to have different understandings and interpretations of symbol and context.

Hall (197,1989, pp. 113-127) have categorized culture into two groups with the focus of context as follows:

2.1 High-context culture held that information cannot be understood solely



through words, but also need to consider physical expression and environmental context. In a high context culture, many things are left unsaid, letting the culture explain. For Asian countries, Japan, Korea, and China, tend to use implicit that consider appropriate time and place factors or how the message will affect the relationship, for example “It’s okay”, “That’s alright” to avoid conflict and maintain a good relationship.

2.2 Low-context culture relies more on explicit messages or self-evident. The meaning of messages is straightforward and direct to the point, countries with this type of culture are America, Germany, Scandinavian countries, Switzerland.

From the comparison between two culture types, it evident that low-context culture holds to straightforward message with explicit verbal language. Conversely, High-context culture relies more heavily on relationships and indirect message, it cannot simply understand from inverbal language.

3. Media Exposure and Information Seeking

Pongpitoon (2001, p. 13-14) has suggested that people differ in their media exposure behaviors, objectives, and exposure requirements. Commonly, people are exposed to information with three characteristics:

3.1 Exposure to mass media: The expectation of audiences is that mass media consuming will meet their needs. They will select to exposure depending on their personal goal, motivation, and usage intention. This exposure is followed by a change in attitude, behavior, and characteristics.

3.2 Exposure to personal media: Personal media can produce and share information in the way of person-to-person communications. Interpersonal Communication categorized to First, direct contact purpose is quite simply to give information directly to consumers. Second, group contact of communication public: it is a group of collective consuming goal with the same direction and attention.

3.3 Exposure to specific media: Specific media purpose is to provide a specific content for only the target group.

McCombs and Becker (1979, p. 51-52) explained that individual person will seek information to meet the following needs:

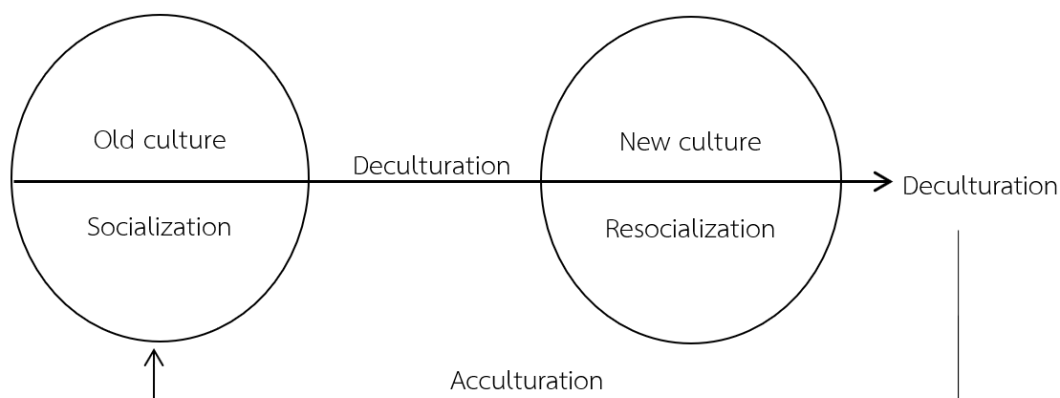
- Surveillance is necessary for individuals to keep up with what is happening surroundings and keep to date from mass media.
- Decision is crucial for making the appropriate decisions in social situation.
- Discussion provides the information to easily create a conversation with others.
- Participating and engaging with the surrounding.
- Reinforcement or the use news from mass media to compliment existing knowledge and support or reinforce action that has been taken.
- For relaxing and entertainment.

4. Adjustment

The individual enters to a new culture that is different from one’s own, it is like a journey to adjust themselves to new culture. Entry in new culture is inevitably to step into process of acculturation.

Vivatananukul (2016, p. 297-299) explained the old culture has shaped the individual identity. To entering to a new culture, the individual must step out of their old culture to exposure to new culture, this process is called “Deculturation”. Moreover, in “Acculturation process”, they must interact with the environment for a while. This exposure takes time before the formation through the interaction with new culture

would start. The individuals gradually change their mindsets and behaviors as well as search for similarity and difference in new environment to accept new social norm and value. At the same time, some old cultures will be forgotten or put on hold to slowly adjust to both deculturation and acculturation process. They will not, however, completely change to new norm. The process of deculturation and acculturation are following:



Picture No. 1 Process of entry to new culture and adjustment

Reference: Vivatananukul (2016, p. 298)

Enculturation is the process of absorption and learning of the culture people live in from childhood to grow up.

Deculturation is the process of leaving the original own culture.

Acculturation is the processes of change in thought, expression, and behavior that result from entering to new culture to understand host culture.

According to Berry, et al. (1887, p. 185-206) categorized identity-based cultural adjustment into four types as follows:

4.1 Ethnic – Oriented Identity refers to attachment to one’s own ethnicity and accept the small portion of new culture

or denial of new culture.

4.2 Bicultural Identity refers to attachment to one’s own ethnicity while adapting to the new culture.

4.3 Assimilation Identity is defined as the absence of attachment to one’s own ethnicity and acceptance of oneself as a member of the new culture. Therefore, one’s own culture is swallowed and eventually vanishes.

4.4 Marginal Identity is the feeling of not belonging to both own ethnicity and new culture. This identity refers to marginal people.



Methods

This study employed qualitative research and selected informants using Purposive sampling and snowball Sampling technique. Prior to data collection, the study applied a mixed-method approach based on participant observations and in-depth interviews to collect data from John Baggio and his involved colleagues i.e., teammates, coaching teams, and staffs.

The study explored the communication practices used in the adaptation of foreign footballers to Thai society in a case study of John Baggio through various contexts, medias, and factors. The scope of study was divided into three areas as following:

1. On the pitch area with investigating in communication covered everything in John Baggio career including in dressing room, meeting room, practice field, the field and even, press conference.
2. Side the pitch area with investigating in communication related to personal life living outside of the career in which exposure to the public, for example, restaurant, coffee café, mall, and Sukhothai F.C store.
3. Off the pitch area with investigating in communication involved especially in the private zone as well as in term of media exposure mode that opens to the news and social media.

Results

For studying communication practices, the research categorized area of study into three areas as following:

1. “On the pitch” area

It related to John Baggio workplace. He prioritizes communication in both English and Thai. According to the bilingual skill, it is used for communicating with club colleagues as well as understanding a plan or rule of playing football. Learning from conversations with football teammates leads to having a good command of the language and he will use the language in accordance with the situation and context. For training hour where need explaining to deliver what he means, he will communicate in Thai language. On the other hand, during a match that requires intentional focus, He will communicate in English at a clear, simple, and precise level, as well as communicate with body language and football technical terms that provide a clear understanding between each other in the context of playing football.

With the characteristics by nature of John Baggio is amiable, friendly, and easy-going as well as having a sense of humor person, easily get along with Thai teammates. In the club, where he gain a lot of new vocabularies to improve his Thai language skill like as in an interview “He is a good-natured, easy to get along with other Thai teammates. When be a part of the team, it’s easy to get new word and sentence more often” (Todsanit, personal, communication, April 11, 2021)

Additionally, John Baggio has communicated with Imitation to Thai footballers. Speaking in vulgar language, his goal is to provide entertainment and joy to teammates or coaching team. Furthermore, he also learns and adapt to be in line with Thai society and

culture with feature of high-context. John Baggio learn to communicate accord with Thai culture to work smoothly for Sukhothai F.C. To illustrate, when a teammate makes a mistake, he will communicate with respect and use implicit language with the coaching team and even with teammates.

For the others outside of the club, to the fan, he is approachable and way more communicating in Thai with easy-to-understand word, according to Thai fan mostly will only speak in Thai. With referee during the match, it would go to both in Thai and English regarding the technical term of football that easy to understand. Moreover, in communicating with mass media, he only interview in English to deliver precisely. Also, the coach teams will translate the words into Thai for the mass media again.

2. “Side the pitch” area

This area involved with personal life living outside of the career in which exposure to the public, John Baggio realized the important of communication on his own in both of English and Thai in way of live daily life such as food ordering, communicate with the fan and the others.

Connections found in this area. From on the pitch teammates, including coach teams become friends in real life. Those colleagues have a role in helping and sharing information for daily life living. For him alone, he has an enthusiastic to struggle for the information that he is interested in and necessary for living a life outside the pitch like about the food, where to buy a thing and, even barbershop. Moreover, he spent relaxing time activities with

the colleagues such as eating out together, grabbing a coffee, where are the place of conversation table, Thai language learning, and news sharing. In Switzerland, football club differs from Thailand's. In there, after calling it a day, they are usually straight to home without activities together. Conversely, in Thailand, at Sukhothai F.C, there is always doing activities together, which enhances a good relationship between each other. as like Baggio said “at Sukhothai F.C, it's not like in Switzerland after training, people go back home. We meet only in the practice field. But in here, after training, we have a dinner together. (personal communication, April 9, 2021)

For communicating with coach team, he uses the language as a communicative tool and without caring about grammar as Todsanit (personal communication, April 11, 2021) gave some information that “he talk to Thai people with mixed word of English and Thai For example, when he ask about where the car is. He will say where is rod (car) some, he want to speak mixed both of two. Some, he want to practice thai language” Moreover, he does a lot of activities with coach team. He often go out together to movie that is dubbed into Thai. Especially, he choose comedy movie above anything, since this kind of film is simple and has an easy-to-understand content. This kind of film, apart from releasing the stress, is also a way to learn Thai way of life. after that, he will collect the word from film to use in daily life. Furthermore, he also “open” to learn Thai tradition and culture through participating in Thai traditional events with coach team such as Songkran Festival or be a bestman in



wedding event.

In communicating with restaurant and other services, he will remember food menu in Thai from eating out with the colleagues to order by his own. In addition, to communicate with the fan, he try to speak in Thai first because, Thai fan can not speak English. he will analyzing the person he talk to, depending on the person, how to talk to this person, with what language. If they don't understand both. He will use technology tool as Google Translate.

3. "Off the pitch" area

This area involved especially in the private zone and exposure to Thai media such as News program or Ching Roi Ching Lan program broadcast on TV. Baggio always asks the teammates and coaching team about their media preference and watch follow after them. Moreover, he is exposure to Thai news and keep updating the situation within the country through NEWS program of BBTB Channel 7 to perceive what is going on in Thailand and bring the information to adapt in Thai situation such as NEWS about COVID-19 situation in Thailand. Baggio (personal communication, April 9, 2021) he interviewed that "I try to keep update to news everyday because, I'm staying in Thailand. I would like to know what happen around now. COVID-19 is important. I've just cancel the flight to go on vacation in Songkran day. Before that, I watched the news and they mentioned the large number of infected people, If I don't keep updating, I would go travel. It's risk to going out. That's the reason I try to update situation happen in Thailand."

Besides, he uses social media such

as Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok. Mostly, he present about himself on those platforms with short, easy Thai karaoke caption or Emoji and replying the comment with sticker. For communicating with the football club members, he will use Line application, which Thai people like to use it, and focus on understandable communication without grammar checking. Last, he keeps in touch with family via WhatsApp platform.

Furthermore, he chose to make everyday life easier by using online applications, such as the "Wongnai" application for finding a restaurant to eat at. He will, for example, order takeaway food through "Foodpanda" and shop online through an online platform.

However, seven years of staying in Thailand has proved his adaptability. It also plays a role in advising and helping his wife in matter of communicating in Thai, foods, places, and guiding how to adapt to Thai people.

Conclusion and Discussion

Solely a talent in football is not enough to foreign footballers in playing a football as career in Thai football league. Completely Unlike their country, the different in environment, socio-cultural background led to adjust to new different things both in the pitch and in living life outside the pitch. Besides, to survive in one football club, foreign footballers need to adjust themselves to club members, rule of the club and characteristics of playing football in Thai League. Moreover, adjusting to live life outside the pitch is also important. Since, unlike own country, they need to adapt in various things likes food,

communication, and lifestyle living. Outside the pitch living is also a key factor in adaptability of foreign footballers. Without adaptability, they will be unable to pursue a career in football in Thailand.

Nevertheless, who have had a variety of experiences transferring to various countries, find it easier to integrate into Thai society than others, according to Punpong (2018, p. 271)'s study of foreign footballers in Thai League, he explained that Thai football clubs in the Thai league tend to hire experienced foreign footballers from many countries since having experience adapting to a new society is one of the factors that can be well adapted to the local lifestyle. In the case of John Baggio, who has previously played international football for Switzerland. Providing experience in dealing with various situations in order to adapt to a new environment; in other words, with those experiences, he will find it easier to adapt to Thai society.

Meanwhile, in the case of John Baggio, he comes in Thailand alone, but he can able to adapt to Thai society, in contrast to Punpong's study. (2018, p. 259) explained without knowing anyone and communicating in the same language, it was easier to adjust to life abroad. On the other hand, In this study, Foreign footballers who bring their families to stay with either their parents or their wife and children. It is likely that communicating only with those who speak the same language will be a barrier to assimilating into Thai society or Thai people. With no one to live with in Thailand, John Baggio is forced to adapt to the host or Thai people through a variety of

actions: trying to speak in Thai with native people, engaging a lot of activities with Thai people, especially with the colleagues. All of this contributes to a more effective learning and adaptation to Thailand's environment, society, and culture.

Exposure to personal media, mass media and activities with Thai people

John Baggio can adapt to Thai society because he is actively seeking information that he needs for his own benefit. He seeks information from host resources, such as teammates and the coaching staff, and uses that information to adapt to life in Thailand in a variety of ways, including food and facilities.

Furthermore, playing football allows for interactive interaction with others on the team and in the club. The reason why John Baggio can adapt to being a part of teammates and others in the club for a short period. Also, he is person with the characteristics by nature of extrovert, friendly, and easy-going as well as also is brave to approach the others first and open to the others and with good-natured and having a sense of humor. Similar to Chanathip Songkrasin's case, Thai footballers who have moved to Japan to play for Hokkaido Consadole Sapporo. Despite the fact that he is not fluent in Japanese and he can easily get along with the team because he is an extrovert with a sense of humor. All of the above are consistent with Sakulnamunka's (2014, p. 89) study, which found that overall personality characteristics of Thai employees working with foreign staff are generous, considerate, and approachable.

When John Baggio becomes a member of the teammates group, he becomes more



engaged with the group by participating in group activities. The combination of his own characteristics and constant interaction contributed to his ability to communicate in both English and Thai. As John Baggio is open-minded in all aspects of learning contrast to some foreign footballers. They will not learn Thai if they can speak English or they will not learn in both languages. Similar to the case of Njiva Rakotoharimalala, a Malagasy footballer, who shares the same nationality as John Baggio and spent one season with Sukhothai F.C. With the characteristics of introvert, He is not open to both Thai and English language. These factors contribute to a lack of clarity in a football plan or rule club. Since his "lone wolf" style is unrelated to the other members of the team. Baggio is frequently called upon to act as a mediator for him. (Promkling, personal communication, August 24, 2021)

However, aside from playing football on the field, he usually participates in a variety of activities with teammates and the coaching staff within the club, allowing him to make more connections outside of the field. In contrast, when he was in Switzerland, people there relied on high individual. They, the footballers, will go straight home after the game, without doing any outside activities together.

Thai teammates are friendlier in Thailand. After-match activities are a great way to strengthen their bond. The activities included eating out, throwing a party, and grabbing a cup of coffee together. As a result, Baggio has learned Thai culture, way of life, and how to adapt to a new culture. Along with the study of Teeraputtigunchai (2018, p. 201) explained

the result of cross-culture adaptability, it is totally from outside activities with Thai people. Whether it is academic activities, sports activities, religious activities, or recreational activities in everyday life. As a result, they will have a better understanding of Thai lifestyle and culture than other foreigners.

Furthermore, by participating in activities with other connections, Baggio has begun the conversation, talking and sharing each other's stories in various content such as football, entertainment, and news and situation updates both in Thailand and globally. These enable John Baggio to receive a variety of information that is both entertaining and essential. He applies all of wide-range knowledge to his football career such as the conversation about the match. What is the match's erroneous point? or what part we need to fix it. as well as he brings all information applying in daily life, for example, news about restaurants, tourist attraction or events that occur in Thailand, etc.

On the other hand, exposure to Thai mass media caused him to become more acclimated to the host culture. Because of John Baggio's exposure to Thai mass media news, events, and movements, These enables him to use a wide range of information to adjust their behavior in accordance with the Thai situation in daily life as well for example, action on Thailand's COVID-19 epidemic situation, which is critical to John Baggio's life in Thailand, and exposure to this information will allow him to adapt to the situation or live in Thailand without fear of contracting the COVID-19 disease. Similar to Swarts (2014,

p. 97), the study explained that foreign footballers who play in the Finnish league will open to watch the news or read news from the Finnish media, allowing them to learn more about Finland. Some foreign footballers, for example, will read the news in order to communicate with their teammates. Furthermore, John Baggio chooses to expose himself to Thai mass media such as movies, which is an area for learning Thai lifestyle, society, and culture by watching Thai movies on a daily basis, allowing them to learn how Thai people communicate with one another or what the Thai way of life and culture entails. Because a portion of the content in Thai films is based on Thai society itself. Furthermore, watching Thai movies with Thai dubbed is a good way for him to learn vocabulary that he can remember and use in everyday life.

Communication under Host Culture

Seven years of staying in Thailand has proved his adaptability to Thai society and culture according to the characteristics of open-minded in learning new things both language and culture. Even though, there is far from his own culture. To illustrate, He interacts with host people through communication and appropriate behavior, similar to host culture. Such personalities are consistent with Individual-levels factors concept of Ting-Toomey (1999) explained personality attributes as a person who is dynamic, determined, and flexible to situation can enhance adaptability.

Moreover, John Baggio come from the country where features Low-context culture. When he transfer to Thailand, High-context culture, he need to learn many aspect of Thai

culture on his own and on the other guiding to adapt to Thai society and play football as career smoothly. This concept conform with Gudykunst (2005, p. 61), he explained, a person communicates with the host using their inherent cultural pattern. The outcomes of behavior expression and communication are inappropriate for the new culture, resulting in a person's failure to adapt to living in the host culture.

According to he still adheres to inherent pattern, low-context culture, in which people will straight forward, straight to the point and respect to the others. Furthermore, he has learned how to communicate in way of Thai culture, high-context culture. That put him at coherent way in understanding the differences between the two cultures.

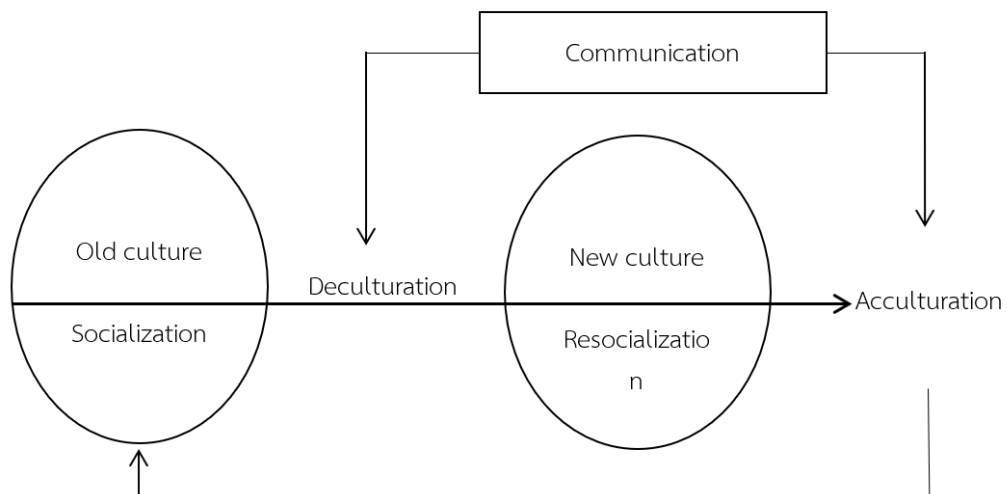
With that combination characteristics of Baggio, he is suitable to be captain of Sukhothai F.C. Because he has the ability to carry the team during the game, he has the potential to turn the tide. Furthermore, John Baggio is the team's captain, with various abilities such as staying for so long, playing for so many seasons, and knowing the club so well. Importantly, He has the ability to persuade everyone in the club to follow him. As a result, he is respected and accepted by club members. This Baggio's cultural adaptation concept is in line with Berry, et al. (1987, pp. 185-206) study of identity-based cultural adjustment. Baggio adaptation has feature of bicultural Identity. that refers to attachment to one's own ethnicity while adapting to the new culture. According to he was born and raised in Madagascar, the western world, he, thus, has

absorbed to inherent culture from childhood to grow up. Therefore, he stepped out of his original own culture called the process of “Deculturation” and he entered to new culture for learning and adjusting to Thai culture called the process of “Acculturation” (Vivatananukul, 2016, p. 298) His adaptation is to “survive gradually” both on and off the field, such as when he absorbed Thai culture and brought it to adapt to behavior expression that is appropriate to the host culture in order to continue a career as a footballer for Sukhothai F.C.

From the discussion provided above, The study discovered that communication is part of Baggio's cultural adaptation since he transferred to play football as a career for Sukhothai F.C. Thus, he step of inherent culture (deculturation process) to new culture.

(acculturation process) He communicated through various contexts, medias, and means which in everyday life living in Thailand. Furthermore, Baggio has an outstanding communication skill called Interpersonal communication, which is communicating with club members leads to language learning, relationship building, and obtaining necessary information for life living.

Furthermore, Baggio is exposed to mass media news in order to require the news in Thailand. He also uses it to facilitate himself, such as searching for a restaurant via Wongnai application. These communications are all key factors that contribute to adapting to Thai society. The discussion can summarize as shown in the image developed from Vivatananukul (2016 p. 298):



Picture No. 2 Process of deculturation to new cultural adjustment in John Baggio's case

For seven years of staying in Thailand has proved his adaptability. It reflected adaptation in the way he understands what he has learned and how to adapt to the environment, society, and culture in Thailand. Because of his adaptability, he was able to play the roles of adviser and experienced person in assisting his wife's relocation to Thailand in 2020.

Football sport as bussiness

In this day, the football industry is becoming a way of business, and footballers are compared to goods which can estimate valuably. Football player transfers are all about business and interests. Currently, it is difficult to find a footballer who will commit to a single club for a long term. For Baggio's case, apart from football talent, he also has adaptability to new environment, society and culture. Thus, he can easily stay in Thailand and play football as a career at Sukhothai F.C. for up to six seasons. As a result, he is a successful footballer in his professional career.

In contrast, becoming a legend for a specific club can be difficult. And, more often, they will retire from football or hang up their boots for good. Again, it's not easy to be a legend while still playing. To illustrate, in foreign football industry, the English Premier League, in case of Cristiano Ronaldo, who became a legend at Manchester United, even though, he has transferred to Real Madrid or Juventus. Similarly, in the Thai football industry, John Baggio is regarded as a legend foreign footballer who played for Sukhothai F.C. Despite this, he has transferred to other football clubs as Lajungreed (personal communication, May 5,

2021) said John Baggio is already a legend, as evidenced by his performance and long-term involvement with the club. As a result, he is a fan favorite at Sukhothai F.C.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. This research is a study of communication for adaptation in the case of foreign footballers from Madagascar, Africa. Future research could focus on other foreign footballers from different regions such as America, Asia, Europe, Africa, and Australia. to research communication in order to adapt to different cultures.

2. Several foreign footballers transfer to Thailand to play in the Thai league and on long-term contracts. For future research may pursue a comparative study of foreign footballer from different countries or regions.

3. For future research, may study of a group of foreign footballers that are frequently found in Thai leagues, such as a group of footballers from Brazil, Ivory Coast, Spain, Korea, or the Philippines, which found many footballers from these countries in the Thai League.

4. For future research may study adaptation with the case study of other type of sport or foreign athletes that compete a tournament in Thailand such as futsal, basketball or volleyball. Furthermore, foreign athletes compete in esports competitions, as well as foreign staff who work for various organizations in other fields of career.



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