CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some topics related to the background of the study, the statement of the problems, the purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation and definition of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Culture is way of life. As Zion and Kozleski (2005:3) defined culture is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of society use to interact with their world and with another. Meanwhile, Brisling (2000:4) states that culture refers to shared values and concepts among people who most often speak the same language and live in proximity to each other. These values and concepts are transmitted for generations, and they provide guidance for everyday behaviors.

Learning the culture is deeply bringing us to understand that people have primary role in culture. People with their ability as creator; create the way of life or named culture. People recognize culture as their life guiding. In this stage they become the adherent and their duty is to save the culture itself. In fact, people also play as the manipulator of culture when they are being out of cultures’ circle. This phenomenon must become our concern as long as we are humans’ culture. There are circumstances when people bring the culture abroad and it proves that people is the carrier of culture. Moreover, the whole concept means that people live within culture.

In the daily life ina country’s society, culture is also used as identity of a country. It becomes the existence of a nation in the eyes of other nations. The
process of living in the different culture can be an exciting and stimulating experience. It is also a tremendous challenge as we realize that our normal way of perceiving and behaving may not be appropriate in the new cultural setting. Each of us has been conditioned by our family, friends, and educational and religious institutions, think, perceive, and feel in certain ways. These values vary from culture to culture. Therefore, the behaviors lead to success or happiness in that culture also changes. Understanding those values is a key to understanding the culture. Hall (2002) states that culture is defined as a historically shared system of symbolic resources through which we make our world meaningfully.

Each country, city, and region has different culture, not only in terms of customs, language or the environment, but also the things as mentioned in the Diller (1999:14) cultural differences exist in values, style of communication, the perception of time, the meaning of health, community and so on. Furthermore, it is supported by Fitriany (2012) who states that actually, each country, island and city has different culture because people who live in one place will live with their own way, habit, and custom. It includes the way of their thinking, their habit, and their style. The effects of those differences make people confused when they go to other country or other city. It can be called as culture shock.

According to Samovar (2012:10):

Culture shock is a mental state caused by the transition that occurs when you go from a familiar cultural environment to an unfamiliar one and discover that your normative, established patterns of behavior are ineffective. It is defined as a term used to describe the anxiety and feeling (surprise, disorientation, confusion), only focused on psychological feeling but also about physical distress.

Coming from different cultures, international students face changes in every aspects of life, including changes in geographical location, weather conditions,
food, language, culture, habits and behaviors. Hence, the major task in cultural
adjustment is to cope with change in many aspects of life. Conner (1992) found
that resilience characteristics are essential characters to successfully deal, with
change. By studying the successful human behavior patterns during the process of
change, one is in a better position to make adjustments.

According to Quappe and Cantattore (2007), “Cultural Awareness is the
foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from us
and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions”. It is
important to learn more about cultural awareness for people who want to enter a
new cultural environment. It helps them to adjust and adapt with the new culture
and environment by themselves easily. Also, it helps them to avoid
misunderstanding and misinterpretation about the new culture which they
entered. Adjusting to a new cultural environment can be greatly difficult. The
problem is not only the psychological distress but also physically. In this case the
new comers are forced to adapt with the situations depend on the rule of the
country.

According to Kim (2001), points out that cross cultural adaptation is the
dynamic process where individuals resettling to new, unfamiliar, or changed
cultural environments in which this processes keep comparatively stable with their
environments through responsive change in the terms of their states, structures, or
patterns of their environment. It implies that adaptation involves the process by
which individuals rebuild their familiar culture to the culture they entered. It
covers short and long term adjusting until they are really able to cope with the
adjustment problem. This process includes how and why they adapt to that new
environment; while Martine and Nakayama (2010:320) asserted that cultural
adjustment is a process by which individuals learn the rule and customs of new cultural contexts. In the process of adjusting, individuals try to learn the hosting country in order to be survived and received by the society. They begin to learn the rules and the customs of the new culture, whether they are accepted or rejected.

In the current era of globalization, cooperation among countries is not only in economy field but also in education field. Nowadays, there are many student exchanges, both of students from abroad studying in Indonesia and vice versa. The students often have difficulty staying in another country because of cultural differences.

Living in foreign country sometimes makes people feel happy, proud, satisfied, and comfortable, but actually they will feel sad, unsatisfied and uncomfortable (Mazidatul, 2013). It means that they may have difficulties to understand the adjustment problem around them. Therefore, they have to adapt with some aspects of the new culture but not to others. Consequently, such a study of the relationships among resilience characteristics and adjustment factors may turn out to be significant. It is also important to explore the relationships among resilience characteristics and background factors to better understand resilience characteristics relative to international graduate

University of Muhammadiyah Malang is one of the Universities in Indonesia cooperating with European countries in education through AIESEC exchange program. Many students have attended this program, but they faced many difficulties in adapting/adjusting to their new environment. Hence, the writer wants to know what the problems that experienced are and what the culture adjustment by them and how to solve it.
Furthermore, it is supported by Mazidatul (2013) who conducted a study about culture shock faced by Indonesian student community in Hamburg, Germany. She found that overseas student faced culture shock in food, transportation, weather, social life, and habit. Similar to Indonesian AIESEC members who have joined Exchange Program in Europe, definitely the members face such culture shock situations in the beginning of their stay. For instance, they felt many difficulties such as food, social life, transportation, weather, and language in adjusting themselves in the new environment at the beginning of their stay in Europe.

Based on the reasons above, the writer wants to analyze the Indonesian students in AIESEC organization as the respondents of this study focus on the problem faced and the cultural adjustment experienced by them in joining Europe Exchange Program.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of study above, the writer would like to focus on finding the answers to the followings:

1. What are the cultural adjustments experienced by AIESEC members of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang in joining the Europe Exchange Program?

2. What are the problems faced by AIESEC members of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang in cultural adjustment during the Europe Exchange Program?

3. How do AIESEC members solve the problems of cultural adjustment during the Europe Exchange Program?
1.3 Purposes of Study

In accordance with the problems above, this study is conducted to get the answer of the research question. The purposes of the study are:

1. To describe kinds of adjustment experienced by AIESEC members of the University of the Muhammadiyah Malang in joining Europe Exchange Program.

2. To investigate the problems faced by AIESEC members in cultural adjustment during the Europe Exchange Program.

3. To describe the problems solved by AIESEC members in Cultural Adjustment during the Europe Exchange program.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to enrich and enlarge the knowledge about Cross Culture Understanding ingeneral and specifically to the students and the lecturers of English Department at University of Muhammadiyah Malang. This study is also expected to motivate students to analyze Cross Culture Understanding phenomenon happens when entering a new culture and environment. The result of this study is forecasted to give contribution for the next researcher who wants to conduct a similar research with different topic about resolution of homesickness.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is focused on the cultural adjustments and the limitation of this study is the AIESEC members of University of Muhammadiyah Malang’s perception who have joined Europe Exchange Program.
1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

To clarify the terms used in this study, the writer gives some definition of key terms. They are investigated in this study as the following:

a. Culture is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs and artifact that the members of society use to interact with their world and with another (Zion and Kozleski, 2005:3).

b. Cultural adjustment is a process of multiple interacting factors distinguished by different behavioral, cognitive, affective and demographic attributes and by different levels, varying from cultural assimilation to cultural transmutation (Martin and Nakayama, 2000:209).

c. AIESEC is a global, non-political, independent, not-for-profit organization run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education. Its members are interested in world issues, leadership and management that focuses on the development of youth through experimental learning (Pankaj, 2013).

d. Exchange program is the term given to a program, usually run through a university, which allows a student to live in a foreign country and attend a foreign university. The program usually grants credit for courses taken at the foreign institution and some also arrange for a work-study or internship agreement (Diamond, 2006).