3.0   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The intention of this research study is exploratory in nature. Much has been written about the online advertising over the past few years. However, there is no significant empirical data for the Malaysian context on this subject. Moreover, due to the dramatic economic changes recently, the findings of both academic and commercial research in the marketing and advertising field has lagged far behind everyday practice.

Hence, this research is essentially inductive and descriptive and is intended to discover the nature of the phenomenon in question. It attempts to gain an understanding of the usage and attitudes of online promotions, and to further investigate the usage and attitudes of Banner Exchange as part of the promotion mix.

The target of the survey is mainly Dot Com companies in Malaysia. With the increasing competitive market conditions, and the slow down of global economy, marketers are facing increased scrutiny over the allocation of every marketing dollar spent, this study will seek to investigate the possibility of Banner Exchange as an effective promotion tool.

3.1   SECONDARY RESEARCH (DESK RESEARCH)

The methodology of this study primarily focuses on desk research and case studies. The rationale will be discussed in the following paragraphs. External desk research is used in a subsidiary way, however primary research is the main thrust of the work. Secondary data provided a context within which to set the scope. The secondary research is mainly based on articles from the journals, newspapers, and primarily online articles. A few foreign academic research have been found on the Internet. However, none could be found locally. There are few online marketing books have been published. During Internet research several articles of the promotion mix were found. Foreign library computer networking was also useful.

3.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH (CASE STUDY)

The primary data was gathered through case studies. Case study was chosen as the format of the study as the research is exploratory, attempts were made for in-depth understanding of the issues. By having thorough interviews with the samples, hopefully can gain more insights of the topic. At the first stage Dot Com companies were contacted through e-mail and phone calls. Those who responded were then arranged for in-depth interviews. An open-ended questionnaire as shown in the Appendix was designed as a guideline. Data was obtained on the following main areas:

1) A comparison between the company's perception for online and offline promotions
2) The adoption of the various online promotion techniques
3) Attitude and perception towards Banner Exchange

The personal interviews took at least an hour for each interview to be conducted at the office of the interviewees' work place. This minimum interview time period was required to obtain adequately the responses to the questionnaire. The report of the interviews was done verbatim. In some cases, call backs were required to further clarify on certain areas.

3.3 PROBLEM OF THE RESEARCH

Over the whole process of data collection, there were few challenges appeared. Firstly, e-mails and phone calls were made mostly more than one time for each of the contact. Secondly, appointment was not easy to be arranged especially with the key persons in the company. Some appointment schedule was changed drastically from a date to another. Thirdly, interview had to finish within certain time frame as the interviewees are mostly having tight schedules. Owing to this, call backs have to be made for certain clarifications.

3.4   SAMPLING

Before e-mails being sent out, information was collected regarding Dot Com companies in Malaysia. Paper cuttings and news clippings were collected in relation to the info and activities of various Dot Com companies in the country. Paper cuttings were used as a sampling guide as this partly tells the activeness and popularity of certain Dot Com companies to be served as the samples. Data collection was able to gather the contacts of twenty over Dot Com companies. Thus, more than twenty e-mails were sent to the above selected Dot Com companies in Malaysia.

Those who responded were more than ten. However, only eight were selected as the target of the survey as they either have experience with the Banner Exchange or at least shown interest in discussing this promotion technique. Rationale behind the criteria of selection is to have a balanced perception toward the topic.