

Yin (1994:80)

Source of Evidence	Strengths	Weaknesses
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stable—can be reviewed repeatedly</li> <li>• unobtrusive—not created as a result of the case study</li> <li>• exact—contains exact names, references, and details of an event</li> <li>• broad coverage—long span of time, many events, and many settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• retrievability—can be low</li> <li>• biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete</li> <li>• reporting bias—reflects (unknown) bias of author</li> <li>• access—may be deliberately blocked</li> </ul>
Archival Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Same as above for documentation]</li> <li>• precise and quantitative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Same as above for documentation]</li> <li>• accessibility due to privacy reasons</li> </ul>
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• targeted—focuses directly on case study topic</li> <li>• insightful—provides perceived causal inferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bias due to poorly constructed questions</li> <li>• response bias</li> <li>• inaccuracies due to poor recall</li> <li>• reflexivity—interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear</li> </ul>
Direct Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reality—covers events in real time</li> <li>• contextual—covers context of event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time-consuming</li> <li>• selectivity—unless broad coverage</li> <li>• reflexivity—event may proceed differently because it is being observed</li> <li>• cost—hours needed by human observers</li> </ul>
Participant-Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Same as above for direct observations]</li> <li>• insightful into interpersonal behavior and motives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Same as above for direct observations]</li> <li>• bias due to investigator's manipulation of events</li> </ul>
Physical Artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• insightful into cultural features</li> <li>• insightful into technical operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• selectivity</li> <li>• availability</li> </ul>

Figure 4.1. Six Sources of Evidence: Strengths and Weaknesses