

## **Bonus Table 6.F**

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of Secondary/Existing Data**

#### Strengths of documents and physical data:

- Can provide insight into what people think and what they do.
- Unobtrusive, making reactive and investigator effects very unlikely.
- Can be collected for time periods occurring in the past (e.g., historical data).
- Provides useful background and historical data on people, groups, and organizations.
- Useful for corroboration.
- Grounded in local setting.
- Useful for exploration.

#### Strengths of archived research data:

- Archived research data are available on a wide variety of topics.
- Inexpensive.
- Often are reliable and valid (high measurement validity).
- Can study trends.
- Ease of data analysis.
- Often based on high quality or large probability samples.

#### Weaknesses of documents and physical data:

- May be incomplete.
- May be representative only of one perspective.
- Access to some types of content is limited.
- May not provide insight into participants' personal thinking for physical data.
- May not apply to general populations.

#### Weaknesses of archived research data:

- May not be available for the population of interest to you.
- May not be available for the research questions of interest to you.
- Data may be dated.
- Open-ended or qualitative data usually not available.
- Many of the most important findings have already been mined from the data.