RESEARCH SETTINGS

Research setting is another dimension of researching, and can be either the laboratory or the field. A laboratory study is any research study in which the subjects are brought to a specifically designated area that has been set up to facilitate the researcher's collection of data or control over environmental conditions. A field study is any research conducted in a setting other than a laboratory. Field studies in psychology may be conducted in people's homes, at their workplaces, at shopping malls, or in any place that is part of the subjects' typical environment.

Laboratory and **Field Settings** offer opposite sets of advantages and disadvantages. The laboratory allows the researcher to collect data under more uniform and controlled conditions than are possible in the field. However, the strangeness or artificiality of the laboratory may induce behaviours that obscure those that the researcher wants to study. A laboratory study f parent-child interactions, for example, may produce results that reflect not so much the subjects' normal ways of interacting as their reactions to a strange environment in which they know that they are being observed. To counteract such problems, some researchers combine laboratory and field studies. When, as often happens, the same conclusions emerge from tightly controlled

laboratory studies and less controlled but more natural field studies, researchers can be reasonably confident that the conclusions are meaningful.

Usually, experiments are most often conducted in the laboratory because greater control of variables is possible in that setting, and correlational and descriptive studies are more often conducted in the field. But these relationships between research designs and settings are by no means inevitable. Experiments are sometimes performed in the field, and correlational and descriptive studies are sometimes carried out in the laboratory.