

# Chapter 2(b)

## Theories And Application In Psychology

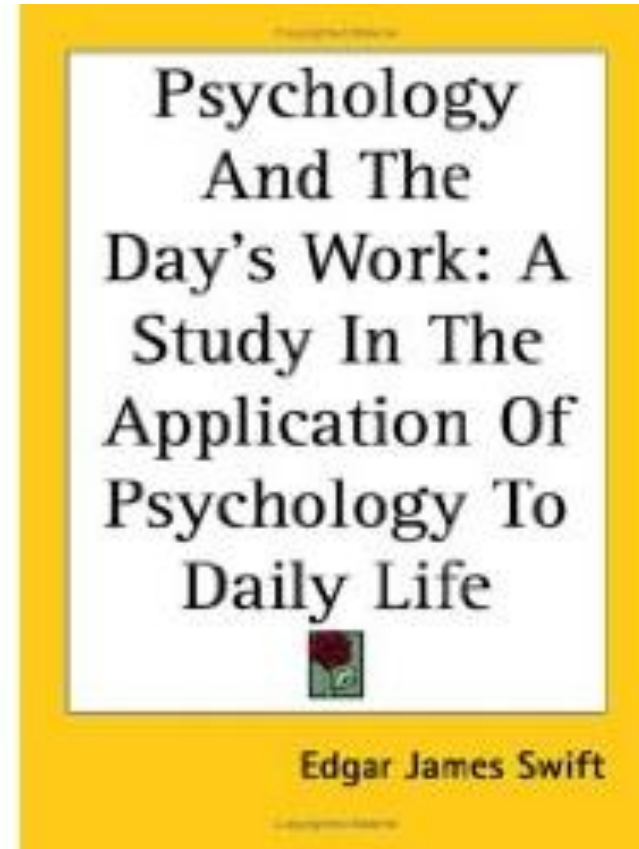
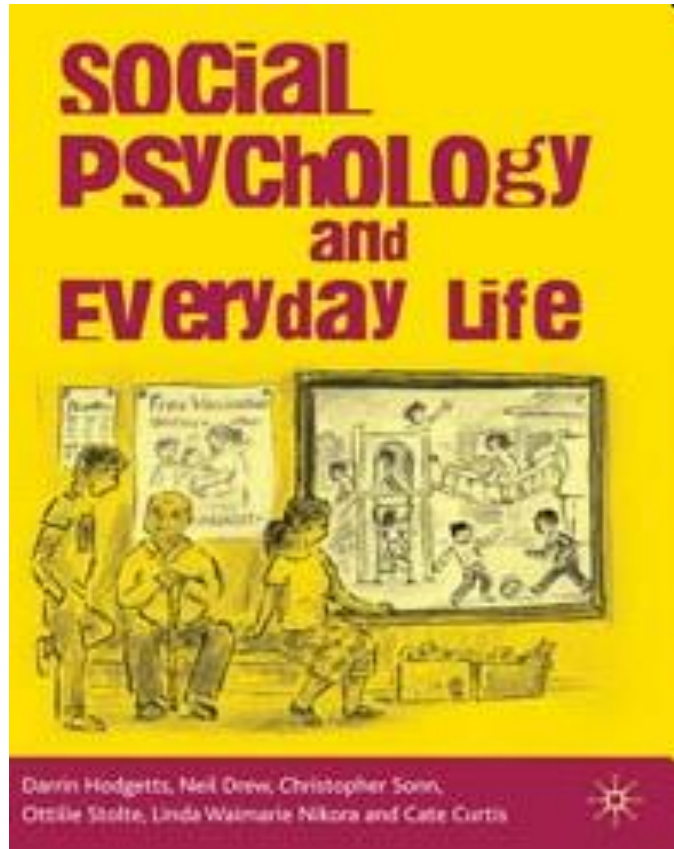
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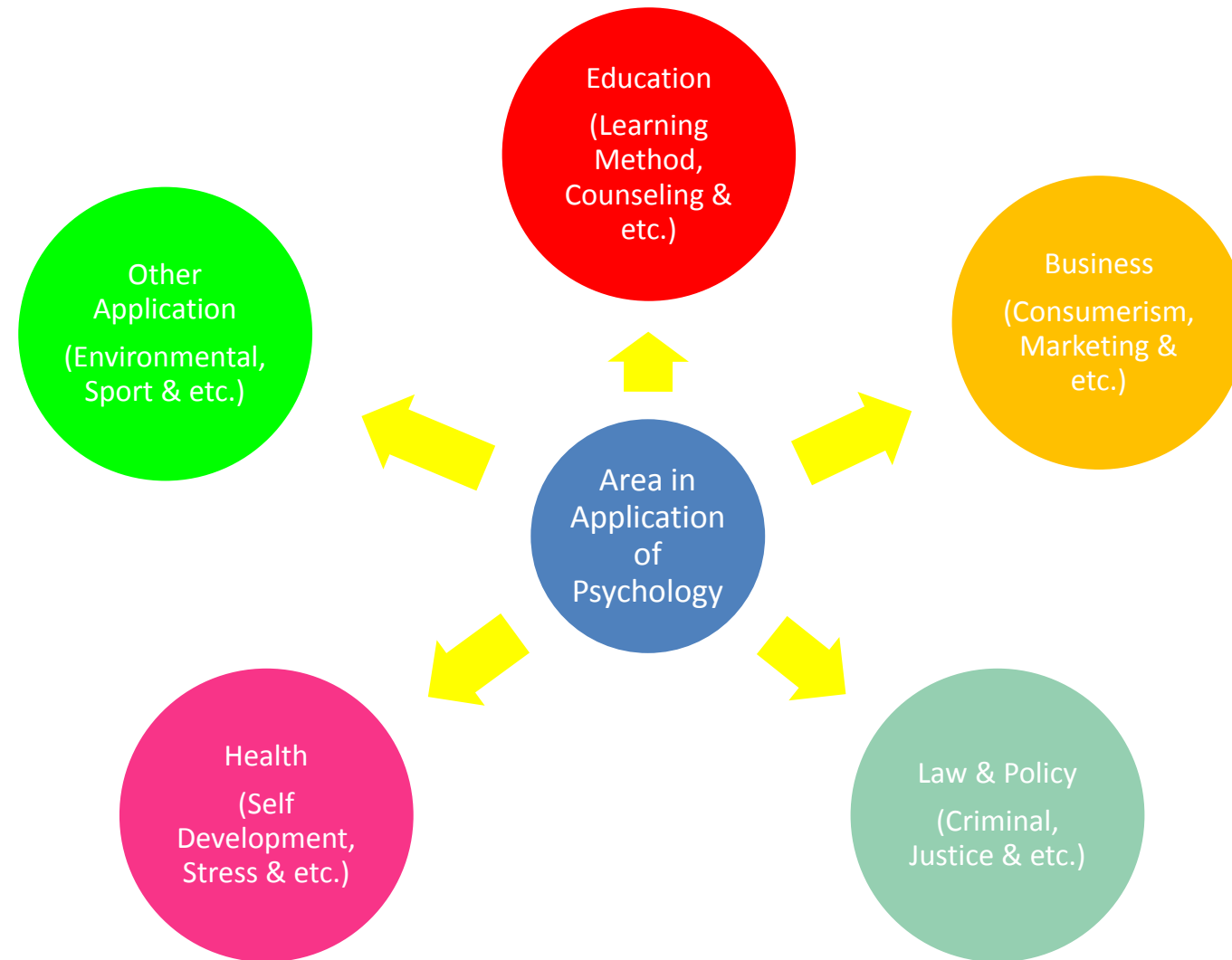
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# Applications of Psychology



- Basic researchers test theories about mind and behaviour.
- Applied psychologists are motivated by a desire to solve practical human problems.
- Four particularly active areas of application are health, education, business, and law.



# Health

- Many psychologists work in the emerging area of health psychology, the application of psychology to the promotion of physical health and the prevention and treatment of illness. Researchers in this area have shown that human health and well-being depends on both biological and psychological factors.
- Many psychologists in this area study psychophysiological disorders (also called *psychosomatic disorders*), conditions that are brought on or influenced by psychological states, most often stress. These disorders include high blood pressure, headaches, asthma, and ulcers (see Stress-Related Disorders).

# Health (Cont.)

- Researchers have discovered that chronic stress is associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease. In addition, stress can compromise the body's immune system and increase susceptibility to illness.
- Biofeedback techniques and stress relief system (emwave) can be used to release the stress

## Stress (continue)

- According to Larsen & Buss (2008), stress is referred to:
  - a. Subjective feeling produced by events that are uncontrollable or threatening (Larsen and Buss, 2008)
  - b. Stress is also referred to perceived demands in some situation.
  - c. Stress refers to how people respond to a particular situation.

# Education

- Psychologists in all branches of the discipline contribute to our understanding of teaching, learning, and education.
- Some help develop standardized tests used to measure academic aptitude and achievement.
- Others study the ages at which children become capable of attaining various cognitive skills, the effects of rewards on their motivation to learn, computerized instruction, bilingual education, learning disabilities, and other relevant topics.



# Education (continue)

- In addition to the contributions of psychology as a whole, two fields within psychology focus exclusively on education: educational psychology and school psychology
  - a) Educational psychologists seek to understand and improve the teaching and learning process within the classroom and other educational settings.
  - b) School psychologists work in elementary and secondary school systems administering tests, making placement recommendations, and counselling children with academic or emotional problems.

# Business & Organizational Development

- In the business world, psychology is applied in the workplace and in the marketplace. Industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology focuses on human behaviour in the workplace and other organizations. I-O psychologists conduct research, teach in business schools or universities, and work in private industry.
- Consumer psychology is the study of human decision making and behaviour in the marketplace. In this area, researchers analyze the effects of advertising on consumers' attitudes and buying habits.

# Law & Policy

- The polygraph is a device that measures a person's bodily responses to being questioned. Commonly called a lie detector, it is often used in law enforcement to assess whether a suspect is telling the truth. Because of its questionable accuracy, however, its results are usually inadmissible as evidence in court.
- Many psychologists today work in the legal system. They consult with attorneys, testify in court as expert witnesses, counsel prisoners, teach in law schools, and research various justice-related issues.

# Law & Policy

- Sometimes referred to as forensic psychologists, those who apply psychology to the law study a range of issues, including jury selection, eyewitness testimony, confessions to police, lie-detector tests, the death penalty, criminal profiling, and the insanity defence.

# Law & Policy

## Expert witnesses

- Psychologists specifically trained in legal issues, as well as those with no formal training, are often called by legal parties to testify as expert witnesses. In criminal trials, an expert witness may be called to testify about eyewitness memory, mistaken identity, competence to stand trial, the propensity of a death-qualified jury, to also be "pro-guilt", etc. Psychologists who focus on clinical issues often testify specifically about a defendant's competence, intelligence, etc. More general testimony about perceptual issues may also come up in trial.

# Law & Policy

## Advisory roles

- Legal psychologists may hold advisory roles in court systems. They may advise legal decision makers, particularly judges, on psychological findings pertaining to issues in a case. The psychologist who acts as a court adviser provides similar input to one acting as an expert witness, but acts out of the domain of an adversarial system.

# Law & Policy

## Amicus briefs

- Psychologists can provide an amicus brief to the court. The American Psychological Association has provided briefs concerning mental illness, retardation and other factors. The amicus brief usually contains an opinion backed by scientific citations and statistics. The impact of an amicus brief by a psychological association is questionable. For instance, Justice Powell once called a reliance on statistics "numerology" and discounted results of several empirical studies. Judges who have no formal scientific training also may critique experimental methods, and some feel that judges only cite an amicus brief when the brief supports the judge's personal beliefs.

# OTHER DOMAINS OF APPLICATION

Psychology has applications in many other domains of human life.

- Environmental psychologists focus on the relationship between people and their physical surroundings. They study how street noise, heat, architectural design, population density, and crowding affect people's behaviour and mental health.
- In a related field, human factors psychologists work on the design of appliances, furniture, tools, and other manufactured items in order to maximize their comfort, safety, and convenience.
- Sports psychologists advise athletes and study the physiological, perceptual-motor, motivational, developmental, and social aspects of athletic performance.
- Other psychologists specialize in the study of political behaviour, religion, sexuality, or behaviour in the military.