

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Predicting Sleep Duration in College Students: A Reasoned Action Approach

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Poor sleep quality can lead to physical illness as well as cognitive and emotional impairment (National Sleep Foundation, 2011). Previous research on sleep hygiene and sleep interventions has resulted in mixed and relatively weak findings, indicating a need for a better understanding of the causes of sleep habits. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) has been used to predict intentions and behavior in many health-related domains. The purpose of the current study is to determine if obtaining 7-8 hours of sleep nightly can be predicted from the TPB model. Participants engaged in a weeklong recording of their sleep habits as measured by sleep diaries and actigraphy. The TPB predicted 63% of the variability in intentions to obtain 7-8 hours of sleep. Intentions predicted 18% and 14% of the variability in sleep diary and actigraph sleep duration, respectively. For both sleep diary and actigraphy measures, perceived behavioral control predicted approximately 9% of additional variability in sleep duration beyond intentions.