

# Control Variable Use in Cross-Sectional Marketing Research: (What) Can We Do Better?

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# Control Variable Use in Cross-Sectional Marketing Research: (What) Can We Do Better?

## **Abstract**

Control variables are an important tool in marketing researcher to ensure causal interpretability of the observed focal effects. Despite its importance, there is substantial uncertainty among researchers (and in many cases, reviewers) regarding when and how control variables should be used. Empirical evidence from the fields of management and organizational behavior suggests that there is much room for improvement in control variable use, but evidence from the domain of marketing (above and beyond plenty of anecdotal evidence) is lacking. In this research, the authors analyze 75 empirical research articles published in three top-tier marketing journals to assess whether and how control variable use can be improved by marketing scholars. Findings are discussed and advice for marketing researchers and reviewers is provided.

**Keywords:** *control variable; OLS regression; statistical control*

**Track:** Methods, Modelling & Marketing Analytics