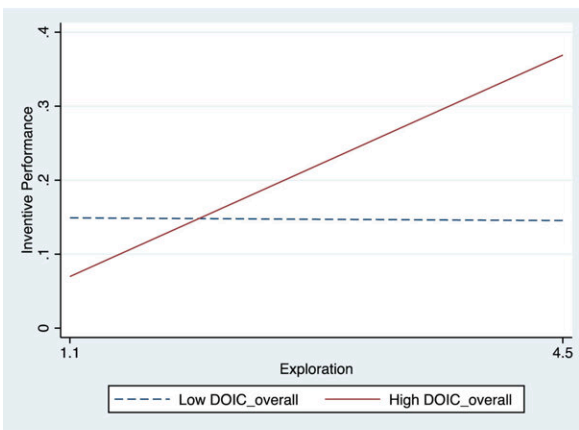


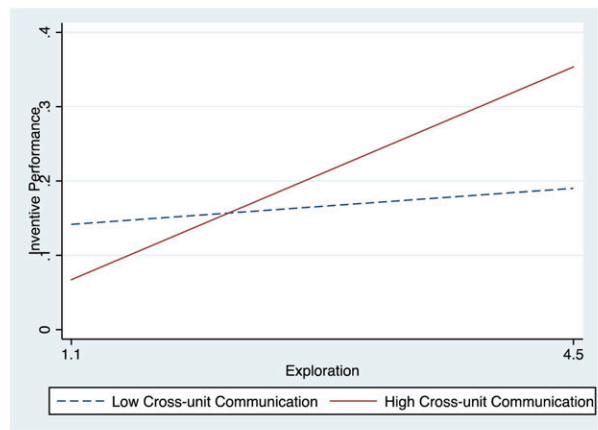
# Study: 'Exploring' inventors thrive in workplaces with open communications

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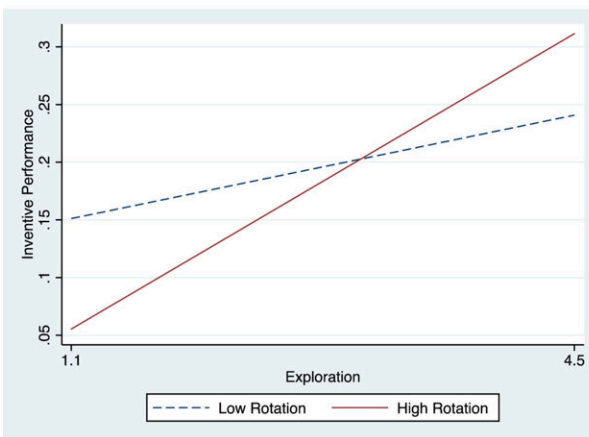
Panel A.



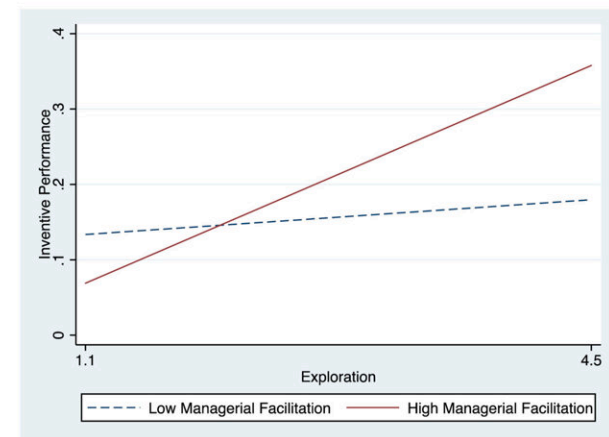
Panel B.



Panel C.



Panel D.



The relationship between exploration and inventive performance at the low (10 percentile) vs. high (90 percentile) levels of each moderator. Credit: *Technovation* (2022). DOI: 10.1016/j.technovation.2022.102611

A new organizational design study from researchers at the University of South Florida sheds light on the ideal work environment inventors need in order to succeed and thrive when they venture into new knowledge domains.

The study revealed that "explorers"—inventors who go outside their area of expertise whether in technologies, disciplines or industries—are most productive working in organizations that support cross-company communications versus a top-down, hierarchical approach.

This kind of decompartmentalized communication creates a more nurturing environment in which inventors know their inventions are valued and where there is more cross-unit project collaboration and greater managerial support as they work on something new, according to the study.

"Our research deepens our understanding on the roles that explorers play in innovation," said Lin Jiang, an assistant professor of entrepreneurship at the USF Muma College of Business. "The research also helps us understand what is the desirable work environment that we should provide for explorers to succeed."

Jiang's co-authored article was published online in August in *Technovation*, an interdisciplinary journal on [technological innovation](#).

Other major takeaways include:

- Exploring new domains doesn't help inventors increase the quantity or quality of patents unless they work for an organization that decompartmentalizes internal communication.
- Research and development employees who explore other domains are most successful in organizations that encourage and facilitate openness in internal communication. The two-way

communication nurtures cross-unit interactions, meetings, collaborations and managerial feedback.

Researchers surveyed 2,331 U.S.-based inventors in 2013. With an effective response rate of 16.5 percent, the study's final analysis was based on 321 inventors from 231 companies.

**More information:** Lin Jiang et al, Overcoming the challenge of exploration: How decompartmentalization of internal communication enhances the effect of exploration on employee inventive performance, *Technovation* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.technovation.2022.102611](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2022.102611)

Provided by University of South Florida

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