"Finsta gets all my bad pictures": Instagram Users' Self-Presentation Across Finsta and Rinsta Accounts

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Significant research has examined social media users' self-presentation strategies, both within a single account and across multiple platforms. Few studies, however, have considered how users' self-presentation varies across multiple accounts on a single platform. In this survey study, we examine how Instagram users manage content sharing decisions and the audience for their content across two types of Instagram accounts: Rinsta ("real" Instagram) and Finsta ("fake" Instagram). Data analyzed includes 499 Finsta and Rinsta posts rated across different dimensions of self-presentation (e.g., self-presentation intention, picture editing effort) and 453 open-ended responses about participants' rationales for using the two accounts. Through this mixed-method approach, we find that Rinsta accounts are more likely to be public, focus on positive and uplifting content, and involve more careful editing and selection, while Finsta accounts are used for more off-the-cuff, emotional, and inappropriate content, as well as those photos that do not make the Rinsta cut. Participants also rated how they perceived responses to their Finsta and Rinsta posts. Mediation analysis suggests that participants perceived responses to Finsta posts as less satisfying, useful, and supportive—partly because Finsta posts contained more negative emotions and received fewer comments than Rinsta posts. We discuss these findings in relation to prior work on social media, self-presentation, and platform affordances, and consider the benefits of this more time-intensive approach to managing two distinct personas on one platform.

CCS Concepts: • **Human-centered computing → Empirical studies in HCI**.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: social media; self-presentation; Instagram; Finsta; Rinsta; boundary management

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1 INTRODUCTION

Social media provides people with the opportunity to present themselves online and carefully control and curate their self-presentation [24]. Many studies have examined self-presentation on a single platform, with some of the most popular being Facebook [31, 64, 65] and Snapchat [40, 60]. As people increasingly incorporate multiple social media accounts into their daily life [9], it is also important to understand how they navigate self-presentation across these different platforms.

Self-presentation in a social media ecosystem of platforms with different norms, audiences, and affordances is quite complex [12]. Users devote significant energy to navigating this complexity and achieving their desired self-presentational goals. For example, they need to create and manage boundaries between platforms to keep their identities and corresponding audiences separated [43, 53, 69].

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A common framework for explaining between-platform differences in self-presentation is the affordance approach, which emphasizes that technical features on social media platforms are designed, perceived, and utilized differently, leading to differences in self-presentation [12, 54]. For example, LinkedIn's profile interface resembles formatted resumes, encouraging a professional and formal self-presentation [61]. On the other hand, Tumblr is perceived as a creative and less-restrictive platform that encourages highly expressive self-presentation [12].

In recent years, maintaining multiple accounts on one platform has become increasingly common; for example, Reddit users may have "throwaway" accounts to post or comment on sensitive topics they do not want to link back to their main account [36], while Haimson and colleagues described how people undergoing identity transitions may maintain multiple accounts on social media platforms "to partition their networks into those who knew their current selves and those who knew their past selves" (p. 2902) [22]. Other researchers have highlighted ways that social media users navigate variegated self-presentation within a single account, such as politicians who try to balance personal and professional aspects of their personality [11] and teens who use strategies like social steganography to encode messages within their posts [7].

The within-platform difference in self-presentation cannot be explained by the affordance approach, as the technical features of multiple accounts on the same platform are the same. This raises questions about how social media users who create multiple accounts on a platform engage in different self-presentation strategies and manage their audiences. Instagram offers an opportunity to expand upon the limited research on within-platform difference in social media self-presentation. On Instagram, some users maintain two accounts: a "real" Instagram (Rinsta) and a "fake" Instagram (Finsta), and usually perform different aspects of their personality on the two accounts [55].

In this study, we examine how college students present themselves on their Finsta and Rinsta, unpack the rationales behind differences in their self-presentation, and explore how they perceive responses to their self-presentation across the two accounts. To do this, we used paired surveys; in the first, we collected basic demographic information and open-ended responses regarding participants' reasons for using Finsta and Rinsta, how they decide on what to post to each account, and their cross-posting experiences between the two accounts, if any. Participants who met inclusion criteria were invited to complete a second survey that presented them with up to six randomly selected posts from their two accounts; for each post, they rated their self-presentation and their perception of post responses across multiple dimensions.

Findings based on 499 rated posts and 453 open-ended responses highlight that participants' self-presentation varied significantly between Finsta and Rinsta: they selectively presented positive and uplifting aspects of their lives with carefully edited pictures on Rinsta, and expressed themselves more freely—sometimes in emotional or negative ways—on Finsta. We also found that responses to Finsta posts were perceived as less satisfying, useful, supportive, and pleasant compared with that to Rinsta posts. Our mediation analysis suggests that emotions expressed in the post and the quantity of responses partially mediated the effect of account type on response perceptions.

This study builds on prior work in social computing and communication (e.g., [1, 55]) on how users re-purpose social media features and affordances to meet their multi-faceted self-presentation needs. Specifically, it extends prior qualitative and quantitative studies of Finsta through a larger sample, by employing a study design where participants rated posts from each of their accounts, and by using advanced statistical analyses to identify mediating factors. Our findings provide quantitative support for qualitative studies like [68] and extend Taber and Whittaker's quantitative findings [55] to explore how factors beyond personality traits varied across the two accounts.

Self-presentation is driven largely by one's audience, and Finsta and Rinsta accounts differ significantly in their intended audience. By asking participants to reflect on the responses they received from their audiences across accounts, this study also helps explain why users take additional

effort to engage in varied self-presentation. They may receive complementary benefits from using two accounts: Rinsta provides users with a large audience from whom they can receive positive feedback to their more curated self-presentation, while Finsta allows users to present their more authentic selves without being judged.

In the following sections, we overview prior work on social media and self-presentation, then describe our two-stage study of Finsta and Rinsta users. We present both quantitative and qualitative analyses of our data, then conclude by discussing how norms, platform features, and boundary management shapes users' self-presentation on Instagram.

2 RELATED WORK

2.1 Performing self-presentation on social media

There is a rich history of research examining how people make self-presentation decisions both offline and online. Goffman's dramaturgical approach, developed in the 1950s, has been used to understand how people present their idealized selves in front of others, and how their self-presentation varies based on the audience for whom they are performing [20]. Goffman distinguishes between the "front stage," where people engage in more selective self-presentation that is tailored to their audience, and the "backstage," where they can step away from that performance and be their true selves. For example, one is likely to dress and act differently when going to a job interview than when hanging out with friends.

In more recent years, researchers have extended Goffman's work to online spaces and particularly to social media platforms (e.g., [70]). Hogan [24] notes that as self-presentation moves online, interactions are more likely to be asynchronous, with audiences viewing posters' self-presentation after the process of performing is finished. Given the low cost of connecting with others, most social media users have a much larger audience with whom they engage, through both broadcasting content to a wide audience and through targeted interactions with individuals or smaller groups [17]. Navigating these audiences can be challenging due to context collapse [39, 62], whereby distinct audiences are grouped together into a homogeneous unit (e.g., "friends").

Social media offers distinct affordances that shape how self-presentation occurs, and leads to different strategies than offline self-presentation. Due to the editability affordance of many platforms, users can carefully curate their self-presentation by selecting which aspects of their identity to share—and which to keep hidden [59]. The affordance of persistence offers a digital archive of one's past posts, which can be both useful and embarrassing, depending on who is looking at the old content [48, 49]. In fact, the ephemerality of posts on platforms like Snapchat and WeChat are likely part of their appeal [4, 27]. Users also employ a wide range of social and technical strategies to manage their self-presentation across an often large and diverse audience [19, 63].

Researchers have identified several factors that influence how posters present themselves across different social media platforms [12, 16, 54]. DeVito and colleagues found that people's perceptions of affordances related to self-presentation vary widely across platforms, explaining why they exhibit different self-presentation behaviors on different platforms [12]. Duffy and colleagues found that creative workers apply a platform-specific self-branding strategy to accommodate platform features, audiences, and their self-concepts on different platforms [16].

Researchers have also considered the effect of platform norms on self-presentation [47, 66]. For example, Waterloo and colleagues [66] found that people's perceived appropriateness of sharing emotions differed across Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, such that Instagram was viewed as the least appropriate place for sharing negative emotions, and Whatsapp was the most appropriate place for sharing both positive and negative emotions. Sannon and colleagues evaluated

how people with chronic illnesses decided which platforms to disclose about their health and found that participants carefully managed their disclosures depending on their audience on a given platform, and often migrated to new platforms that could better meet their needs [47].

Researchers have also evaluated the effect of audience on self-presentation [16, 43, 69]. When people post on social media, they conceptualize the audience with whom they are communicating [37] and adjust their self-presentation strategies accordingly [39]. The self-presentation practice gets more complicated as people navigate larger and more diverse audiences across their social media ecosystems [13, 22]. For example, Zhao and colleagues [69] found that social media users purposefully segment audiences by platform, keeping different dimensions of their identities and the audiences associated with each separated.

2.2 Self-presentation variation within a single platform

While the above studies are useful for understanding potential variations in self-presentation across different platforms, they do not explain within-platform differences in social media self-presentation. Research has found that some Redditors create anonymous "throwaway" accounts to present their potentially stigmatizing aspects of their lives—discussing topics like mental health and obstacles in parenting [1, 44]—while avoiding context collapse [36].

Researchers have recently begun evaluating Instagram as one example of within-platform differences in social media self-presentation. This is due to the increasingly common practice of young people creating multiple accounts and presenting themselves differently across these accounts [30, 55]. These different profiles, reminiscent of Goffman's distinction between front stage and backstage performances, are typically referred to as "Rinsta" and "Finsta" to distinguish the "real" and "fake" accounts.

Rinsta and Finsta accounts differ in self-presentation and audience. Research has found that Finsta is viewed as a space for less polished content shared with close friends [30, 68]. Consistent with their perceived norms on Finsta, people report that they create their Finsta to follow their friends' Finsta and maintain small but close social networks [15, 30, 55, 68]. Users are clearly aware of differences in audiences between Finsta and Rinsta [15, 55] and devote much effort into having better control of Finsta audiences [68]. For example, Finstas are more likely to be set to private, and users closely manage whose following requests they accept; this contrasts with Rinstas, which are more likely to be public-facing, with a more heterogeneous audience in mind [15, 55, 68].

As a consequence, people report that they post messy, random, funny, and negative content on Finsta while maintaining their Rinsta as a space to "put their best foot forward" [30, 55, 68]. Users also exhibit different personality traits on Finsta and on Rinsta. Taber and colleagues [55] found that people reported being more disagreeable and authentic on Finsta, while Kang and colleagues [30] found that people presented their actual self to a greater degree on Rinsta than on Finsta. Finally, Xiao and colleagues found that people think they present complementary aspects of themselves on Finsta and Rinsta, and neither is more accurate than the other [68].

Our study addresses some of the gaps in prior research. Most studies on Finsta have been qualitative (e.g. [15, 68]). In addition, the limited quantitative research on Finsta has treated self-presentation as a stable trait that did not vary within an account [30, 55]. However, individuals can present themselves differently within an account in different posts over time (e.g., [27, 48]) or in different communication channels within an account (e.g., Stories vs. Posts on Instagram [34], status updates vs. private messages on Facebook [5]). In prior research, participants' responses might have been biased toward specific posts or be abstract and general. With our mixed-methods approach, we are able to quantify the difference in self-presentation between the two accounts by having participants view and rate randomly selected posts they have posted with explicit

metrics of self-presentation, and to explain this difference with participants' open-ended responses. Specifically, we ask:

RQ1: How do Instagram users' self-presentation differ between Finsta posts and Rinsta posts?

To answer this question, we measure three aspects of self-presentation: (1) self-presentation intention, which reflects how norms about self-presentation are perceived and performed; (2) effort put into editing images before posting; and (3) characteristics of the content shared, including emotions expressed, visual appeal, and post topics. We then follow up with qualitative analysis to enhance our quantitative results.

2.3 Perceptions regarding audience responses to posts

Self-presentation is not only about the performer, but also about the audience [20]. Social media users consider the potential audience for their posts [39, 69]. Audiences can typically respond to posts and address needs signaled in posters' self-presentation, such as providing social support to those who disclose negative emotions (e.g., [2, 10]), sharing useful information (e.g., [47]), responding to expressed emotions (e.g., [5]), or simply having fun and enjoyable interactions (e.g., [4]).

Several factors influence how posters perceive the responses to the content they share. Research has found that, regardless of relational closeness, people can provide social support to others on social media [8, 18, 45, 46, 46, 47, 67]. Weak ties or even strangers can provide valuable and useful information that one's close group cannot provide due to homophily [21, 47]. Network composition also matters: Snapchat interactions were perceived as more enjoyable compared to other social media platforms, because users usually only interact with a small group of close friends on Snapchat [4].

The quantity of responses is as important as who provides responses. A study on health blogging found that blogs with more reader comments were positively related to perceived social support [45]. Bazarova and colleagues [6] found that Facebook users perceive responses to posts with more comments and more likes as more satisfying and more useful. More responses also leave room for longer and more complex conversations, in which more useful information and constructive suggestions can be provided [29].

Emotions expressed in posts could shape the responses, which further influences how posters perceive the responses. Research suggests that after social media users use words about emotions, their contacts are more likely to use valence-consistent words and less likely to use words of the opposite emotions [33]. Bazarova and colleagues found that after sharing posts with more positive emotions, Facebook users are more satisfied [5, 6] and perceive the responses to the posts as more useful [6]. Posts with negative emotions might get supportive responses that include informational, emotional, esteem, instrumental, and/or social support [2, 23, 42].

Prior research on factors that influence social media users' perceptions of responses to their posts and the exploratory studies on self-presentation on Finsta suggest that users might perceive responses they receive on their Rinsta and Finsta posts differently. For example, Xiao and colleagues found that users regarded interactions on Rinsta (e.g., likes, generic comments) as superficial and transient while they perceived deeper engagement with their Finsta audience, who usually posted lengthy and supportive comments [68]. We propose to have participants reflect on their posts and responses they received under the posts and quantify how they perceived responses. We will examine the following question:

RQ2: How do Instagram users perceive responses to Finsta posts and Rinsta posts differently?

Specifically, we will examine posters' perceptions of received responses in terms of satisfaction, usefulness, supportiveness, and pleasantness. Exploratory studies on Finsta suggested that negative emotions are appropriate and common in Finsta posts, while Rinsta is positivity-biased [55, 68]. To further explore this, we ask:

RQ2a: Do emotions expressed in posts mediate the effect of account type on perceptions of response?

Finally, research suggests people usually maintain a smaller network on Finsta, which limits the range of people who can view and respond to their Finsta posts [55, 68]. Therefore:

RQ2b: Does the quantity of responses mediate the effect of account type on perceptions of response?

3 METHOD

3.1 Procedures

After receiving approval from the university Institutional Review Board, we recruited participants in October and November 2020 from a large, public university in the eastern United States. Because we were targeting a small subset of people (Instagram users who actively maintained at least two profiles), we requested a random sample of 4000 undergraduate students from the Registrar's office and sent them survey invitations by email. After approximately two weeks, a second random sample of 4000 undergraduates was requested to increase the sample size. The overall response rate was low (1.6%), likely due to a number of factors, including general survey fatigue, concerns the request was spam, the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Presidential Election, and the US Thanksgiving holiday. Beyond those factors, our recruitment focused on a narrow subset of Instagram users; even if some students were interested in the study, they may not have qualified to participate.

We targeted undergraduate students because they are among the most active social media users, and Finsta is especially popular among this age demographic [14, 52]. Participants were required to be at least 18 years old; have two Instagram accounts, one regarded as their "real" account (Rinsta) and another one regarded as their "fake" account (Finsta); and be active on both accounts, making at least one post on each account within the last six months.[1]

The study included two surveys, both hosted on Qualtrics. In the first survey, participants reported their demographics, their general use of Finsta and Rinsta, and shared their Finsta and Rinsta usernames with us. Participants needed to accept a following request sent from the first author's Instagram account if their Finsta and/or Rinsta was set to private so we could customize the second survey based on their posts. We only focused on posts, ignoring other forms of sharing on Instagram (e.g., Stories).

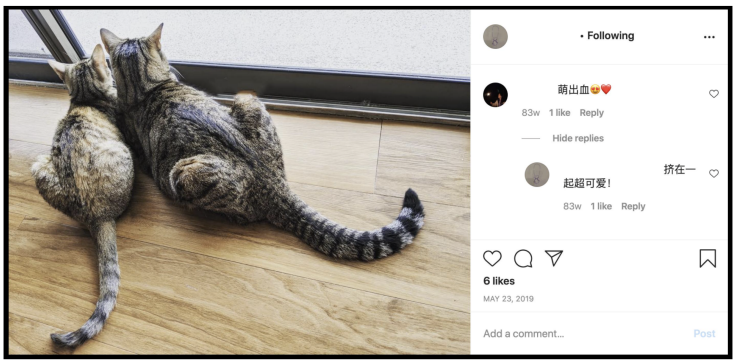
We collected a maximum of 30 recent posts from each participant's account with Instagram Scraper[2] and kept the posts within the last six months. Participants who posted at least once within the last six months in both accounts were invited to complete the second survey, where they answered questions for two to six their posts. If they had more than three posts within the last six months on Finsta or Rinsta, three posts were randomly selected; if they had three posts or fewer, all of the posts were selected.[3] We used screenshots of the posts to help participants recall the situation when they posted. The screenshot stayed at the top of the survey page, with questions

[1] We initially planned to focus recruitment on more active users, i.e., those who had at least three Rinsta posts and three Finsta posts within the last three months. However, the initial response rate was very low, and among those who completed the screener survey, many did not meet the original inclusion criteria. Therefore, we broadened the inclusion criteria to reach the sample size needed for analyses.

[2] https://github.com/arc298/instagram-scraper

[3] Our pilot testers (n=4) spent about 55 minutes rating 10 Instagram posts (5.5 minutes on each post). To collect sufficient data while not posing too much burden on participants, we asked participants to rate a maximum of six posts, hoping to

about the post listed directly below it (Fig. 1). The screenshot included the first picture of the post, the poster's caption, and the likes and comments received, if any.



Think about the time when you wrote this post. How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
It was important for me to present myself positively in this post	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Fig. 1. An example screenshot from the second survey. Questions about a post were listed under the screenshot.

Each participant who finished both surveys was compensated with a $5 Amazon Gift Card. Upon the completion of both surveys, participants were also entered into a raffle to win one of 10 $50 Amazon Gift Cards.

3.2 Participants

We received 128 responses to the first survey. The majority of our participants identified as female (82.8%), and their age ranged from 18 to 25 (M = 19.8, SD = 1.4). Responses were relatively even across college year (freshman: 25.8%, sophomore: 28.9%, junior: 23.4%, senior and above: 21.9%). Among the 128 participants who finished the first survey, 29 of them were not qualified for the second survey (e.g., did not give us access to their accounts, did not have enough posts within the last six months), and one did not finish the second survey. The 98 participants who completed the second survey rated 499 posts in total (Finsta: 255, Rinsta: 244).

We report the general Instagram use of participants who finished both surveys in Table 1. Chi-squared tests showed that the posting frequency was significantly different between Finsta and Rinsta (χ^2 = 20.01, df = 6, p = 0.003, ϕ = 0.32), with participants posting more frequently on Finsta than on Rinsta—22.4% and 7.1% of participants posted at least weekly on Finsta and Rinsta, respectively. With this in mind, it was unsurprising that participants had more Finsta posts than Rinsta posts. They also had smaller social networks on Finsta than on Rinsta, both in terms of the number of followers and the number of accounts they followed. Their Rinsta accounts were followed by a diverse range of contacts including friends (100%), acquaintances (93.9%), family

have participants finish the second survey in less than 30 minutes. Respondents completed the ratings more quickly than our pilot testers, spending 17.4 minutes on the second survey, on average.

	Finsta	Rinsta	t	p	Cohen's d
Num. Posts (last 6 months)	29.7(75.9)	6.5(7.6)	2.99	0.003	23.22
Num. Posts (total)	541.8 (2474.6)	63.7 (69.6)	1.91	0.06	478.10
Num. Followers	231.9 (1097.2)	1035.2 (764.3)	-5.95	< 0.001	-803.29
Num. Following	189.8 (268.6)	904.0 (650.6)	-10.27	< 0.001	-714.19

Table 1. Paired t-tests comparing the 98 participants' general Instagram use on Finsta and on Rinsta. Mean(SD) of their general Instagram use in are also included.

members (88.8%), relatives (81.6%), strangers (73.5%), colleagues (63.3%), a significant other (45.9%), and superiors from their job or school (23.5%). Their Finsta accounts were mostly followed by friends (99.0%), then by a significant other (30.6%) and acquaintances (30.6%). For 28.6% of participants, their Finsta followers only included friends.

Participants carefully managed their privacy configurations on Instagram. Looking at the 98 people who completed both surveys, 44.9% of them set both accounts to "Private" so that only approved users can view their content, while 39.8% set their Finsta to "Private" and Rinsta to "Public". Only a small percentage of participants set both accounts to "Public" or set only their Rinsta to "Private" (7.1% and 8.2%, respectively).

3.3 Measures in the second survey

For each of the posts selected for the second survey, participants answered a set of questions, which we detail below.

Self-presentation intention (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86, M = 4.01, SD = 1.56). Participants rated their self-presentation intention when posting using the five-item self-enhancement scale [65]. They indicated their agreement with statements like "It was important for me to present myself positively in this post" and "This post reveals more desirable than undesirable things about myself," on a seven-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Picture editing. Participants reported whether they applied filters and/or other picture editing techniques on the picture(s) of the post, and annotated if they used Instagram or external apps for picture editing. For those who edited their pictures, they also rated the effort they had put in editing the pictures of the posts using a scale from 1 (none at all) to 5 (a great deal). Less than half (194/495 posts) were edited. Overall, participants thought they used a little to a moderate amount of effort in editing pictures (M = 2.54, SD = 0.94)

Characteristics of posts. Participants rated each post across three additional dimensions: expressed emotion, visual aspect, and post topic. First, they rated the emotion expressed in the post from 1 (strongly negative) to 7 (strongly positive). Overall, posts were rated as moderately positive (M = 5.61, SD = 1.65). Second, participants rated up to five statements about the visual aspect of their posts from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Two items were about the general visual effect presented in the post: "This post is visually appealing" and "The color scheme in this post is harmonious" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.91, M = 5.07, SD = 1.75). Three items were about their appearance in the post, when applicable; for example: "I look attractive/cool/fashionable in this post" [41, 51, 56] (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87, M = 5.21, SD = 1.44). Participants also annotated whether the pictures of themselves were selfies or non-selfie self-portraits. Third, participants annotated the topic of the posts. They could select from a curated topic list including frequent topics in research about Finsta (e.g., cursing/venting, Not Safe For Work) [68] and general social media literature (e.g., friendship, family) [55, 65]. They could also describe the topic of the post in their own words.

	Finsta		Rinsta	
	Range	Mean(SD)	Range	Mean(SD)
Self-presentational intention	1-6.8	3.12 (1.27)	1.8-7	4.94 (1.28)
Picture editing effort	1-4	1.96 (0.60)	1-5	2.74 (0.95)
Emotion valence	1-7	4.99 (1.86)	3-7	6.26 (1.08)
Appearance attractiveness	1-7	4.41 (1.57)	2-7	5.74 (1.04)
Visual appeal	1-7	4.23 (1.81)	1-7	5.96 (1.16)
Response satisfaction	1-5	3.61 (1.05)	1-5	4.20 (0.84)
Response usefulness	1-5	2.86 (1.30)	1-5	3.41 (1.18)
Response supportiveness	1-5	4.21 (1.03)	1-5	4.81 (0.58)
Response pleasantness	1-5	4.21 (0.96)	1-5	4.78 (0.65)

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of all the numerical measures about participants' self-presentation in their posts.

Perceptions Regarding Responses to Posts. Participants answered two questions about their satisfaction to the responses on their posts [6] from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely): "To what extent did you like the responses (comments and likes) to your post?" and "To what extent were you satisfied with the responses to your post?" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.92, M = 3.91, SD = 0.98). They also answered two questions about the usefulness of the responses [6] from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely): "To what extent did you find the responses to your post useful?" and "To what extent did you find the responses to your post valuable?" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87, M = 3.14, SD = 1.27). Participants also rated the pleasantness and supportiveness of their interactions with contacts in the responses using a 5-point semantic differential scale (1 = very unpleasant/unsupportive; 5 = very pleasant/supportive) [4]. Overall, they felt their interactions were both pleasant and supportive (Pleasantness: M = 4.50, SD = 0.86; Supportiveness: M = 4.51, SD = 0.89).

3.4 Qualitative data & coding

In the first survey, participants (N=128) answered three open-ended questions about (1) their motivation for using Rinsta, (2) their motivation for using Finsta, and (3) how they decided which account to post to. We asked a fourth question about cross-posting content to both accounts; 69 participants shared cross-posting experiences. In total, we included 453 responses across the four questions in our qualitative analysis.

We approached the data from a "contextual constructivist" position [38]. We did not seek to reach perfect agreement, instead recognizing that each coder likely interprets responses somewhat differently and that responses could have multiple meanings. This places less focus on metrics like inter-rater reliability and instead focuses on reflexivity of the coders and several rounds of coding and discussion.

To analyze responses, the two authors conducted several rounds of qualitative coding to identity themes across the corpus [32, 58]. First, they independently went through the responses for each question and came up with a set of codes. Then they met and discussed their themes, creating a codebook that reflected their combined coding. For the purpose of this study, they narrowed the set of codes to capture four themes that most closely matched the quantitative analyses: self-presentation intention, emotional expression, photo quality, and audience. See Table 3 for code definitions and examples. The authors further discussed each code and came up with examples for including and excluding a code.

Code	Definition	Example
Self-Presentation Intention	Comments that describe self-presentation goals for an account, or differences in self-presentation goals between the two accounts.	*I use Finsta to express my true unorthodox, or unprofessional opinions and ideas to my friends and my friends only. // I like presenting myself in a certain way in my Rinsta and it's more for showing bigger moments in my life.*
Picture Quality	Comments about picture quality or picture editing.	*If I take some good A1 pictures of myself, I post them to my Rinsta. When ... I take good pictures but not Rinsta-worthy pictures, I post them to my Finsta.*
Emotion	Comments about sharing or expressing emotions through posts (e.g., ranting). Comments about an account being a safe space to share sensitive content without fear of judgment.	*I use [Finsta] as a fun spam account to just post whatever I want whenever I want. Only my close friends follow the account so it's a judgement free zone. I can rant and post crazy stuff on there. Everything stays private so it's safe.*
Audience	Comments about audience management or posting with a potential audience in mind, and references to whether an account is public or private.	*If it's something I only want my few close friends to see I would use my Finsta. // I use my Rinsta because I like a certain aesthetic and I'm proud of my pictures, so I want a larger audience to share them with, even tho I don't know everyone personally.*

Table 3. Codebook for open-ended responses regarding participants' rationales for using Finsta and Rinsta.

The two authors then went back and independently re-coded the data. Multiple codes could be applied to a single response. They met a final time to review disagreements and decide on the appropriate code.

3.5 Limitations

This study is limited in its generalizability, in part, due to recruitment challenges. Our population of interest is relatively small compared to all Instagram users, and we had to relax our inclusion criteria to recruit a sufficient sample size. Although we wanted participants who were regular posters on both Finsta and Rinsta, we allowed those who posted as rarely as once every six months (on each account) to complete the study, and this less frequent use may influence results. Expanding our criteria from three months to six months may have also led to recall problems for some items (e.g., self-presentation intention, picture editing). In addition, since the posts included were posted during the COVID-19 pandemic, factors related to both posting frequency and post topics might deviate from that before pandemic (i.e., when participants had more chance of traveling, hanging out with friends).

We also recognize that some students may have chosen to not participate because they did not want to share their account information with researchers. The 98 participants who finished both surveys were comfortable with the researchers accessing to their Finsta accounts, which were usually regarded as a more private space (84.7% of Finstas were set to "Private").

	Intercept Coef. (SE)	Finsta (vs Rinsta) Coef. (SE)	$R^2_{conditional}$	$R^2_{marginal}$
Self-presentation intention	4.95 (0.10)***	-1.84 (0.10)***	0.52	0.34
Picture editing effort	2.74 (0.09)***	-0.75 (0.12)***	0.55	0.11
Emotional valence	6.26 (0.11)***	-1.27 (0.12)***	0.31	0.15
Visual appeal	5.96 (0.12)***	-1.76 (0.12)***	0.46	0.25
Appearance attractiveness	5.74 (0.11)***	-1.35 (0.12)***	0.47	0.21

Table 4. The results of the linear mixed effects models measuring the effect of account type on participants' intention and effort in self-presentation, and self-presentation deliverables (*** p<0.001).

Lastly, our sample skewed heavily female, which could impact some findings. For context, 56.5% of Instagram users in the United States are female.[4] We do not have demographic data for users who maintain two profiles on Instagram.

4 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

Below, we report results from our quantitative analyses. Since each participant rated multiple posts, we conducted multi-level modeling to control for potential within-participant differences. We used the R package "lme4" to build mixed effect linear regression models where participant ID was input as the random effect [3]. For RQ1, the models used account type (Finsta vs. Rinsta) as the predictor, and participants' self-presentation across measured dimensions in each post as the outcome variables. For RQ2, the models used account type and post-level mediators as the predictors, and participants' perceptions of responses to each post as the outcome variables. We used the R package "mediation" to perform the mediation analyses [57].

4.1 RQ1: Effect of account type on self-presentation

Participants rated several dimensions of self-presentation on each post, including how much they wanted to present themselves positively (*self-presentation intention*), how they utilized the technology to polish their self-presentation (*picture editing*), and three *characteristics of their posts*.

4.1.1 Self-presentation intention. Participants reported having less intention to present themselves positively in Finsta posts than in Rinsta posts (Table 2). Self-presentation intention was significantly lower in Finsta posts than in Rinsta posts (Coef. = -1.84, $p < 0.001$, Table 4). Echoing previous literature, participants used their Rinsta, but not Finsta, as a space for "putting their best foot forward" [30, 55, 68].

4.1.2 Picture editing. Participants reported their picture editing behaviors on 495 posts.[5] In total, 39.2% posts were edited (194/495). Chi-squared tests showed that post editing behaviors differed significantly between Finsta and Rinsta ($\chi^2 = 80.31$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$, $\phi = 0.40$), such that Finsta posts were less likely to be edited (Rinsta: 144/242 = 59.5%, Finsta: 50/253 = 19.8%). In other words, the vast majority of Finsta posts went unedited, despite Instagram offering convenient one-click filters when posting.

Looking at the posts that were edited, participants reported putting less effort into editing Finsta posts than Rinsta posts (Table 2). On average, they thought they put less than "a little" amount of

[4]https://www.statista.com/statistics/530498/instagram-users-in-the-us-by-gender/

[5]We excluded four posts because participants reported that they were not sure about their picture editing behaviors. We also note that four of the 495 posts only included videos. Due to the significant proportion of posts that included pictures, we kept the phrase "picture editing'.'

effort in editing the pictures in Finsta posts while putting between "a little" to "a moderate amount" of effort editing the pictures in Rinsta posts. Perceived picture editing effort was significantly lower in Finsta posts than in Rinsta posts (Coef. = -0.75, $p < 0.001$, Table 4).

4.1.3 Emotional, visual, and topical characteristics of posts. On average, participants expressed more positive emotions in their Rinsta posts than their Finsta posts (Table 2). Emotions expressed in Finsta posts were significantly more negative than that in Rinsta posts (Coef. = -1.27, $p < 0.001$, Table 4).

These results echo our descriptive data on topics of participants' posts (Table 5). While they reported covering a wide range of topics on both accounts, they were more likely to use Finsta for disclosing negatively valenced content. For example, on Finsta they were more open about their struggles and challenges in life (23.1% vs. 4.9% of Rinsta posts), and were more likely to vent or complain (17.3% vs. 0%). Participants reported sharing positive content on both accounts; for example, posting about their friends was the most common topic for both Finsta (24.7%) and Rinsta (32%). Posting about holidays and travel was more common on Rinsta (24.2%) than Finsta (8.6%).

Since Instagram is an image-based social media platform, we examined participants' perceptions of visual aspects of their posts, finding a significant effect of account type (Coef. = -1.76, $p < 0.001$, Table 4). On average, participants thought their Finsta posts were less visually appealing than their Rinsta posts (Table 2).

There was a significant difference in the type of pictures included in Finsta posts and in Rinsta posts ($\chi^2 = 75.8$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$, $\phi = 0.39$). Rinsta posts were more likely to include self-portraits, especially non-selfie self-portraits than Finsta posts (Finsta: selfies = 42.0%, non-selfie self-portraits = 15.7%; Rinsta: selfies = 47.1%, non-selfie self-portraits = 41.8%).

Looking at posts including self-portraits, we found a significant effect of account type on participants' perceptions of their appearances in these posts (Coef. = -1.35, $p < 0.001$, Table 4). On average, participants thought their Finsta self-portraits were less attractive than their Rinsta self-portraits (Table 2).

To summarize, we found that the effect of account type on self-presentation was significant. Participants reported lower self-presentation intention, devoted less effort into editing pictures and posted less visually appealing pictures, and showed more negative emotions with content across a diverse range of topics in their Finsta posts. Overall, these findings provide quantitative support to and extend Xiao et al.'s [68] qualitative study of Finsta, which found that users tend to post unfiltered content to Finsta.

4.2 RQ2: Effect of account type on perceptions of post responses

In addition to exploring differences in the type of content shared on Finsta and Rinsta, we also considered whether participants perceived interactions with audiences differently across the two accounts. We answered RQ2 based on posts that received responses (468/499 = 93.8%). To understand what predicted participants' perceptions of post responses, we ran three sets of mixed effect models on each of the four dimensions of participants' perceptions: satisfaction, usefulness, supportiveness, and pleasantness. Our baseline models included the account type as the fixed effect and participant id as the random effect. To understand whether emotion expressed and the quantity of responses mediated this relationship, we added the corresponding predictors to the baseline models and ran mediation analysis.

On average, participants reported lower levels of satisfaction, usefulness, supportiveness, and pleasantness on responses to their Finsta posts compared with responses to their Rinsta posts (Table 2). Our baseline models showed that the effect of account type was significant across the four outcome variables (Table 6).

Topic	% Finsta	% Rinsta
Friends	24.7	32.0
Holiday/Travel	8.6	24.2
Big life events	12.5	18.4
Arts/Culture/Literature/Movie/Music	14.9	13.5
Struggles/Challenges in life	23.1	4.9
Family	13.3	9.0
Cursing/Complaining/Negativity/Venting	17.3	0
Romantic relationship	7.8	7.4
Politics	4.7	6.6
Food/Cooking	7.5	1.6
Health/Medicine	5.5	2.5
Me/Self	1.2	6.6
Profession/Careers	3.1	4.5
Science/Technology	2.0	1.6
Fashion/Beauty/Hairstyle	2.0	1.2
Sex/Not safe for work (NSFW)	1.6	1.2

Table 5. Topic distribution in Finsta posts and Rinsta posts. The percentages do not add up to 100 because a post could be about multiple topics.

The mediation analysis suggests that the emotional valence of a post partially mediates the effect of account type on participants' perception of post responses across the four dimensions. As previously reported, account type was a significant predictor of the emotion expressed in the post, such that Finsta posts expressed more negative emotions. In addition, emotional valence was also a significant predictor of the perceptions of post responses, weakening the effect of account type compared with the baseline models (Table 6). The indirect effect of the emotion expressed was significant for all four dimensions (satisfaction: Coef. = -0.24, 95% CI = [-0.33, -0.16], $p < 0.001$; usefulness: Coef. = -0.18, 95% CI= [-0.28, -0.09], $p < 0.001$; pleasantness: Coef. = -0.23, 95% CI = [-0.31, -0.16], $p < 0.001$; supportiveness: Coef. = -0.19,95% CI = [-0.27, -0.12], $p < 0.001$). The results suggest that responses to Finsta posts were regarded as less satisfying, useful, supportive, and pleasant compared with Rinsta posts partly because the emotions expressed in the posts were more negative. This finding resonates with prior work that found people perceive responses to posts with more positive emotions as more useful, and social media users feeling more satisfied sharing more positive emotions in their posts [5, 6]. Participants did not perceive more supportiveness when expressing more negative emotions on Finsta, suggesting that negative disclosures on Finsta—and on other platforms—might be driven by different underlying mechanisms: Finsta disclosures might be more about getting emotions off one's chest without expecting responses and supportiveness, while on other platforms, people signal the need for support when they share negative emotions and stories (e.g., depressed emotions, traumatized experiences) [1, 2].

We used the number of comments to measure the quantity of responses. The mediation analysis suggests that the number of comments on a post partially mediates the effect of account type on the perceived satisfaction, usefulness, and supportiveness—but not the perceived pleasantness of post responses. Account type was a significant predictor of the number of comments received, such that Finsta posts received significantly fewer comments. The number of comments was also a significant predictor of perceived satisfaction, usefulness, and supportiveness in post responses, weakening the effect of account type compared with the baseline models (Table 6). The indirect

	Satisfaction	Usefulness	Supportiveness	Pleasantness
Baseline models				
Finsta (vs Rinsta) Coef. (SE)	-0.59 (0.08)***	-0.59 (0.09) ***	-0.61 (0.07)***	-0.58 (0.07) ***
Intercept Coef. (SE)	4.19(0.07) ***	3.41(0.10) ***	4.82 (0.06) ***	4.78(0.06) ***
$R^2_{conditional}$	0.36	0.39	0.29	0.22
$R^2_{marginal}$	0.09	0.05	0.12	0.11
Models with Emotion Expressed as Mediator				
Finsta (vs Rinsta) Coef. (SE)	-0.35(0.08) ***	-0.41(0.10)***	-0.42(0.07)***	-0.35(0.07)***
Emotion Expressed Coef. (SE)	0.19(0.03) ***	0.14(0.03)***	0.15(0.02)***	0.18(0.02)***
Intercept Coef. (SE)	3.03(0.18) ***	2.53(0.24) ***	3.89 (0.17) ***	3.63 (0.16) ***
$R^2_{conditional}$	0.42	0.41	0.34	0.32
$R^2_{marginal}$	0.17	0.08	0.18	0.21
Models with Number of Comments as Mediator				
Finsta (vs Rinsta) Coef. (SE)	-0.41(0.08)***	-0.39(0.11)***	-0.52(0.08)***	-0.52(0.08)***
Num. Comments Coef. (SE)	0.009(0.002)***	0.01(0.003)***	0.004(0.002)*	0.003(0.002)
Intercept Coef. (SE)	3.98(0.09) ***	3.17(0.12) ***	4.72 (0.08) ***	4.72 (0.07) ***
$R^2_{conditional}$	0.39	0.42	0.30	0.23
$R^2_{marginal}$	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.12

Table 6. Three sets of linear mixed effects models measuring the effect of predictors on participants' perceived satisfaction, usefulness, supportiveness, and pleasantness from the responses they received under their posts (*** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.05$). Baseline models included account type as the only predictor.

effect of the number of comments was significant (satisfaction: Coef. = -0.18, 95% CI = [-0.27, -0.10], $p < 0.001$; usefulness: Coef. = -0.21, 95% CI = [-0.33, -0.10], $p < 0.001$; supportiveness: Coef. = -0.08, 95% CI = [-0.15, -0.01], $p < 0.05$). The results suggest that responses to Finsta posts were regarded as less satisfying, useful, and supportive in part because Finsta posts received fewer comments than Rinsta posts. The results echo previous research showing that the quantity of responses matters [6, 45].

5 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

To supplement the quantitative analyses presented above, we also provide a synthesis of key themes identified in participants' answers to four open-ended questions. We have organized these findings to mirror the quantitative findings for RQ1 and discuss differences in self-presentation intention, picture quality, and emotional content between the two accounts, as well as differences in perceived audience for Rinsta and Finsta posts.

5.1 Self-presentation differences across Finsta and Rinsta

Participants talked about perceived norms of sharing on Finsta and Rinsta and described how they incorporated these norms in their self-presentation on the two accounts. The biggest normative difference in content was that Rinsta was for positivity and putting their best foot forward, while Finsta was for authenticity or sharing a more raw and real side of their lives.

Rinstas were much more likely to be public accounts, and participants described specific goals for their self-presentation, focusing on positive posts, posts where they looked attractive and/or professional, and posts presenting an idealized version of their life. For example, one participant said they used Rinsta *"to do the typical 'social media' thing and show the best parts of my life."* Others described their Rinsta as *"formal," "professional,"* and *"public,"* or where they could *"receive external validation."* They tended to share significant life events and pictures of better quality on Rinsta—both in terms of their appearance in self-portraits, as well as using photo editing to enhance the image. A few participants mentioned using their Rinsta for advocating causes and voicing their political opinions, especially if these were a core part of their identity.

Finstas, on the other hand, were often perceived as a place where one could be themselves and not worry about maintaining a public persona, much in the way Goffman [20] described the back stage, or as a participant described it: *"a less public account with less importance about 'public image.'"* While they still perceived norms around Finsta, these norms focused on the absence of many of the strategies they felt they needed to conform to on their Rinstas. For example, in comparing their accounts, one participant said, *"It's fun to use and to post random things that I wouldn't post on my Rinsta because there's pressure for your Rinsta feed to be perfect."* They thought their Finsta self was *"less artificial"* and better reflected who they really were. They achieved these more authenticity-driven self-presentation goals on Finsta by posting less-calculated content and, sometimes said they posted anything that was on their mind at the moment, without thinking too much. Some participants used their Finsta to share specific interests or hobbies that they did not want to "overload" their Rinsta followers. The themes of these Finsta accounts included participants' art and poetry, plants, drones, cars, food, and fitness.

Participants' responses about their cross-posting experiences to Finsta and Rinsta highlight the difference in self-presentation between the two accounts. Slightly more than half (53.9%) of participants shared cross-posting experiences, where they posted the same—or similar—images to to both accounts. When cross-posting, they typically posted different types of pictures from the same event to Finsta and Rinsta. Consistent with their perceived self-presentation norms on the two accounts, they usually decided which pictures to post based on picture quality and whether the pictures contributed to their self-presentational goals. For example, one participant mentioned, *"Usually I'll post the good pictures from an event to Rinsta and the funny ones to Finsta."*

The distinction between self-presentation on Finsta and Rinsta aligns strongly with Goffman's metaphor of the front and backstage, where the front stage is the polished performance and the backstage is more casual and relaxed [20]. One participant said, *"On my Finsta I basically just gave a behind the scenes to the picture that I posted on my actual Insta (Rinsta)."* Participants also shared examples when they cross-posted about traveling or going to prom, concerts, or theme parks. For example, a participant said, *"Prom pictures was on both my Rinsta and Finsta. I had my pretty done-up pictures on Rinsta and my gross candids or after-party pictures on my Finsta."*

One of the most common distinctions participants made when talking about cross-posting to both their Finsta and Rinsta was in the length and content of their captions. Most said they tended to be more descriptive about their real feelings and experiences in their Finsta captions. For example, a participant cross-posted about a show she was in on both Finsta and Rinsta, saying: *"On my Rinsta, I posted the photos I actually liked that showed off the event and I looked alright in. On my Finsta, I*

posted some behind the scenes of getting ready, and a picture everyone liked but I hated. The caption on Rinsta was simple but my Finsta caption was a small recap of the event." In general, participants also talked about posting *"short and cute"* captions on their Rinsta, while their Finsta captions were longer and provided a space for behind-the-scenes information, complaining, fangirling, and more backstage disclosures.

Because Finsta was where users felt they could be more authentic and raw, and because these accounts tended to be smaller and more friend-focused, it was unsurprising to find that many participants said they used the account for venting, rants, and other emotional expressions. For example, one participant used Finsta *"to vent and unload to people I know who care"* while another noted they used it *"to rant and post things that are more personal about myself."* Finsta provided an important outlet for expression to many of our participants, especially when they felt pressured to present their lives as happy and positive on their Rinsta. Echoing [66], we found that participants reserved Finsta for negative emotion expressions because Rinsta was viewed inappropriate for sharing negative emotions. We also found that some participants valued Finsta for providing emotional catharsis without an expectation that others respond or provide support. In an example of this, one participant said: *"I sometimes use it to express how I'm feeling to an audience that won't necessarily respond. Sort of like a venting medium."*

5.2 Picture quality dictates where to post

Consistent with our findings regarding self-presentation intention and the image-oriented nature of Instagram, participants heavily relied on picture quality to decide which account to post to, and they described the effort they devoted into picture shooting and editing. Overall, pictures deemed *"good"* went to Rinsta, while pictures that did not make the cut quality-wise went to Finsta. More specifically, they described their Rinsta posts as including *"cute"* pictures where they *"look good,"* and pictures that they were *"proud of"* and wanted to *"show off,"* while their Finsta posts were more about *"casual," "candid," "random," "silly,"* and *"funny"* pictures. As one participant succinctly noted: *"Finsta gets all my bad pictures."*

Participants said they put a lot of effort into selecting and editing pictures for Rinsta, but not for Finsta. Some described photo shoots or carefully planned images, like this participant: *"I almost always post on my Finsta unless it's a planned out picture that I took with the intention of posting on my main [Rinsta], in which case I take 50-100+ pictures usually and pick the top 1-5ish."* For more styled pictures, participants tended to *"dress up"* and *"pose"* to ensure they looked good in the pictures. One participant mentioned using a DSLR camera to shoot high-quality pictures for Rinsta, despite it being much easier to use their phone camera. Participants also described applying various photo editing techniques to images before posting to Rinsta. Participants recognized the effort they put in editing pictures in Rinsta posts, with one noting, *"My Rinsta is for...photo essays I spent more than two hours on editing."* On the contrary, participants never mentioned paying attention to shooting and editing pictures for Finsta.

An unexpected use of Finsta by our participants was part of their picture curation process. A few participants said they used Finsta to see how the pictures would look on the platform; for example: *"I use my Finsta to understand how my photos will turn out if I wanted to post them on my Rinsta."* They also mentioned cross-posting to Finsta to get feedback from friends and select the best picture from a set before officially posting to Rinsta. One participant said, *"On Finsta, I'll ask which ones [unedited pictures] to post or maybe ask for a caption and then I'll post the actual edited pictures to my Rinsta with a good caption."* Another participant said they would post the unedited version of an image to Finsta and the edited version of the same image to Rinsta.

5.3 Audiences differ between Finsta and Rinsta

Participants described different audiences for their Finsta and Rinsta accounts, both in explicit terms, such as when noting Finsta is *"just for friends"* or more broadly, such as describing Rinsta as a place to *"tell the world about all the cool things I do."* Audience perceptions were often directly tied to use of privacy settings, and many Finsta accounts were set to private so only a selected few friends could view posts.

Use of privacy settings was less common on Rinsta, and participants said they expected their posts to be viewed by large and diverse audiences. Because public accounts are harder to manage, they carefully curated their posts, focusing on high-quality content that reflected positively on them. For example, one participant said, *"I use my Rinsta to establish myself online for possible employers, acquaintances, and people that I meet in life so they can see that I am a legitimate person."* Many participants' Rinstas were followed by strangers, which helped them evaluate their sharing decisions. Participants considered whether their posts would be appropriate or safe for strangers to view; for example: *"If it's too personal/inappropriate for strangers to see, I will post on Finsta because I only have friends/people I trust on there."*

This participant's statement was echoed by many others, and reflects the more private and friend-focused nature of Finsta. Because content was heavily gated, participants felt they could freely express themselves without fear of judgment, and seek support and feedback from their network. Participants viewed their Finsta as a *"safe haven"* for sharing intimate or painful moments from their life. For example, one participant noted, *"Only my close friends follow the account so it's a judgment-free zone. I can rant and post crazy stuff on there. Everything stays private so it's safe."* By controlling who can see content, Finsta accounts allowed for significantly more freedom than the carefully curated Rinsta accounts.

6 DISCUSSION

Social media platforms provide a number of ways for users to connect and interact with others, and numerous researchers have documented social media users' self-presentation strategies. Research on online self-presentation has largely focused on either how individuals self-present on a single platform [60, 65] or has compared self-presentation across several platforms, where different features and norms afford different self-presentation goals [12, 61]. However, few studies have considered how self-presentation varies on a single platform, with most of these studies considering how users try to segment their audiences and mitigate the effects of context collapse [64]. On Instagram, however, some users engage in varied self-presentation by creating two accounts: one for more visually appealing, "Instagrammable" content (Rinsta), and one for a subset of their network, typically just friends and close connections, where they are less refined and more authentic (Finsta). This distinction closely reflects what Erving Goffman described as "front stage" and "backstage" performances in his canonical work on self-presentation in the 1950s [20]. In this case, Rinstas represent the front stage, where users portray the more idealized and desirable version of themselves; Finstas are where they hang out and relax with friends without prying eyes or judgment.

Our quantitative and qualitative analyses highlight differences in Instagram users' self-presentation goals across their Finsta and Rinsta and their strategies to achieve these different goals. Our study complements and extends prior Finsta research by quantitatively examining self-presentation across several dimensions at the post level with a larger sample [30, 55, 68]. Previous research briefly mentioned how users perceive interactions on Rinsta and on Finsta [68]. Our study uses surveys to prompt participants to reflect on responses received under posts across multiple dimensions, suggesting the audience feedback is much more important on Rinsta than on Finsta. Together, these

findings provide a more robust understanding of how users engage in self-presentational processes and adjust self-presentation based on their goals and audience.

Rather than focusing on the role socio-technical affordances play in shaping self-presentation on different accounts, our study identifies within-platform differences in social media users' self-presentation and emphasizes that users' perceptions of their Finsta and Rinsta accounts shape their self-presentation. Below, we discuss within-platform differences in perceived norms related to self-presentation, technical features used to fulfill different self-presentational goals, and boundary management between Finsta and Rinsta, and we argue that the two types of accounts provide complementary benefits and achieve users' multi-faceted self-presentation goals.

6.1 Same platform, different norms: Differences in self-presentation on Finsta and Rinsta

The clearest finding from our data—supporting and extending the small qualitative study by Xiao and colleagues [68]—is in the self-presentational differences between Rinsta and Finsta. Rinsta, in many ways, is the prototypical social media account, where users engage in idealized and even exaggerated self-presentations that show themselves in the best possible light. Our participants described spending significant time taking and editing pictures, or asking themselves whether a picture was *"Rinsta worthy"* before posting.

By itself, one could argue that this form of self-presentation is typical and potentially even problematic, given research suggesting the selectively chosen content shared on social media gives viewers a skewed perception of others' lives and may have negative effects on users' mental health [28, 50]. On the other hand, Finsta accounts may provide users with a needed outlet to step out of their front-stage performance and enter the backstage. As Goffman [20] notes, if the front stage expects people to behave in particular and normative ways, the backstage allows them to step away from their performance and focus on themselves rather than the audience. This framing is well-aligned with how many of our participants described their Finsta accounts: Finsta provided a place to vent and rage, to be vulnerable, to share whatever they wanted—all without concern about judgment or negative consequences. When cross-posting about the same thing on both accounts, many described being more comfortable sharing the imperfect "behind-the-scenes" moments on Finsta, both in their image selection and through variations in their captions. This may also be why participants reported posting more frequently on Finsta; there were fewer expectations and they could be themselves with friends they knew and trusted.

Having these two distinct spaces for self-presentation can provide people with important benefits. Some participants mentioned using Rinsta to present a professional persona or expand their networks. These goals are not aligned with Finsta accounts, where users described more authentic and raw self-presentations and strengthening their connections with their closest friends, often by making their account private and limiting access to a select few. Balancing one's personal and professional identities can be challenging, especially on social media. Researchers have highlighted the challenges politicians and celebrities face when trying to achieve this balance between their professional roles and their personal lives on Twitter [11, 39]. In practice, job-related platforms like LinkedIn, even with similar features to Facebook (e.g., friending, posting updates), do not try to be friend-focused platforms [61].

Different aspects of identities are naturally segmented, as reflected in how participants described using their Finsta and Rinsta. However, this is not to say that there is no overlap between the two identities. Over half of our participants described examples of cross-posting, sharing the same event with different images and captions. These cross-posting examples highlight the blurred boundaries between self-presentational goals across accounts. Previous research [69] found that people were extremely cautious with cross-posting because it "may entail losing control of platform

boundaries around audience" (p. 94) and making their audience aware of their accounts on other platforms—where they may have different self-presentational goals, sharing strategies, and audiences. Participants in our study did not express similar concerns when talking about cross-posting between Finsta and Rinsta, likely in part because the access to Finsta accounts was heavily regulated, and it was usually seen as okay for their Finsta audience to see their Rinsta posts.

6.2 Using platform settings and features to achieve self-presentation goals

To achieve desired self-presentational goals on Finsta and Rinsta, participants applied the platform's features differently. For example, at the account level, they configured their privacy settings and were more likely to set their Finsta accounts to private (84.7% vs 53.1% for Rinsta). The privacy setting of Finsta added a layer of personal and information security to the more more personal, sensitive, or unedited content shared here. For example, one participant said, *"Any pictures that reveal anything related to my location or other sensitive information go to my private Finsta for security reasons since many of the people following my Rinsta I do not know."*

Participants also differentiated their post-level configurations, most notably via the thought that went into choosing content to post and the amount of editing. One surprising variation of this was mentioned by a few participants who described posting images to Finsta to get feedback from friends about which picture(s) should be posted on Rinsta, or to get a sense of how an image would appear on Instagram. This example highlights a core difference in self-presentation goals, where participants expressed little concern about posting more unfinished, raw, or lower quality images to their Finsta, while carefully edited and curated pictures posted to Rinsta to ensure they were *"Instagrammable."*

Photo editing can happen both on Instagram and through external apps, and Instagram nudges users to edit content through their interface. Users can make simple edits to their posts with one click, such as when they apply a filter. Our participants reported that they did not edit most of their Finsta posts. This was likely a purposeful decision for most, given their self-presentational goals for their Finsta, with one participant noting: *"My Finsta acts as a place where I can be myself in a, quite literally, unfiltered way."*

On the other hand, participants said they were more likely to edit Rinsta posts with Instagram's built-in features, which is also consistent with their self-presentational goals of presenting the *"best version"* of themselves, or conveying the *"pretty"* aspects of their lives. This view is also aligned with Instagram's focus on photo editing and filters since it launched in 2010; it was one of the earliest platforms to provide filters to enhance images [26], and filter use has become largely normalized on the platform.

A final feature mentioned by participants, especially in their description of cross-posting experiences, was how they used captions across their accounts. By allowing captions of up to 2200 characters long, Instagram allows users to engage in self-presentation beyond what is in the images. Many participants noted the caption was often more important on Finsta while the image was more important on Rinsta. When cross-posting about the same event on both accounts, they tended to include more genuine and lengthy caption in their Finsta posts while pairing a *"cute"* and brief caption to their Rinsta posts. Given that Instagram studies have largely focused on images shared through the platform, this represents a new avenue through which to explore how social media users re-purpose site features to achieve self-presentation goals.

6.3 Using two accounts to facilitate boundary management

Consistent with previous research on boundary regulation between multiple social media accounts [53, 69], identity/audience management was the most frequently mentioned motivation for our participants' use of Finsta and Rinsta. Participants left their positive and polished side on Rinsta,

and their unfiltered, sometimes negative, side on Finsta, and made it very clear that they wanted to keep their audiences on each account separate, even if that required the additional effort of managing two accounts.

Some participants adopted a unique strategy to manage the boundary between their Finsta and their Rinsta. They did not specifically hide the fact that they had a Finsta; instead, they strictly managed who could access their Finsta accounts, as also mentioned in prior work [68]. Some participants purposefully linked their Finsta and Rinsta by using one account to follow another (60.2% of them used their Rinsta to follow their Finsta, 74.5% of them used their Finsta to follow their Rinsta), so that Instagram might recommend their Finsta accounts to their Rinsta followers. Other participants directly announced their Finsta in their Rinsta profile description, signaling to their Rinsta followers that another aspect of themselves was out there.

Since the vast majority of participants set their Finsta to "Private" (84.7%), linking the two accounts in this way might help users build up their Finsta audience in a more controlled manner. Finsta networks were carefully curated to avoid context collapse [39], which could be problematic when a message for one audience is viewed by others, who might not understand or approve of the message. One participant described how their audience management decisions helped them avoid context collapse: *"I don't have to worry about messages being taken out of context because everyone on my Finsta would understand what I mean."*

While context collapse was unlikely on Finsta due to strict audience management, our participants reported significantly lower levels of satisfaction, usefulness, supportiveness, and pleasantness in responses to their Finsta posts compared with Rinsta posts. This is contrary to [68], who found that through venting, Finsta users can get emotional support from peers. Future research is needed to better unpack the relationship between venting and support on Finsta. On the other hand, consistent with previous research highlighting that the quantity of responses matters in posters' well-being [5, 45], we found that the number of comments participants received had a positive effect on perceived satisfaction, usefulness, and supportiveness in post responses. On Finsta, where the number of followers is usually much smaller and accounts are usually private, the quantity of comments is usually capped by the audience who can access the post. We also found that the valence of emotions shared in the post positively influenced how participants perceived post responses. This finding is consistent with previous research on emotional contagion that after users use words about emotions on their social media, their contacts adopt valence-consistent words [33]; as a consequence, it is not surprising that we found participants perceived responses to posts with more positive emotions as more pleasant. Our result is also consistent with [5] that people will feel more satisfied after sharing more positive emotions in posts, and with [31] that positive self-presentation enhances one's well-being.

To summarize, our results extend prior studies of Finsta [55, 68] and suggest that reserving a private communication space with a small group of close friends and opening up to broad and comparatively distant friends can both benefit social media users. Our results also indicate that offloading negative emotions and publicizing positive emotions are both critical emotional expressions on social media. These complementary and equally important benefits can explain why some users are willing to invest their time and energy into maintaining multiple social media accounts. We encourage future work to explore additional aspects of response perceptions and dig deeper into how the two accounts support Instagram users' mental well-being.

7 CONCLUSION

Social media have evolved significantly in the last 20 years, from a few platforms focused on friendship to now offering platforms devoted solely to images, videos, ephemeral messages, interactions with celebrities and strangers, and more. But one factor that has remained constant since

their inception—in fact, that extends beyond social media to earlier forms of computer-mediated communication like message forums—is that users of these platforms engage in varied, and often carefully curated, forms of self-presentation [12, 25]. After all, our online selves are an extension and reflection of our offline selves, and how we self-present in different environments with different audiences matters [20].

In this paper, we have considered how Instagram users take advantage of the platform's features and affordances to present two distinct sides of their identity and to engage with different audiences. Through paired surveys and data from participants' two Instagram accounts, we show how Finsta and Rinsta serve very different self-presentation goals. To achieve these goals, participants devoted much effort into segmenting and managing audiences between accounts, and into creating content for both accounts. While this approach to impression management is more intensive than maintaining a single account, we argue that Finsta and Rinsta are complementary, allowing users to connect with friends of all kinds without experiencing context collapse, and to benefit from both negative emotion expression and positive self-presentation.

By gaining a deeper understanding of how Instagram users differentiate Finsta and Rinsta and benefit from using both accounts, we have opened up a new set of questions for future researchers. For example, when thinking about the role of authenticity in self-presentation, how do audiences perceive users' multi-faceted self-presentation? Beyond that, researchers may consider what is lost when social media becomes highly segmented. For example, researchers have highlighted how diverse networks facilitate social capital on social media platforms [18, 35]; if we keep audiences separated based on platform, account, and/or self-presentational goal, can we still obtain those resources?

Given that many social media users seek to avoid or mitigate context collapse, platforms should continue exploring various design options regarding privacy settings and audience management configurations. Beyond binary options (e.g., private vs. public accounts, as offered by Twitter and Instagram), are there account-level privacy settings that would help users better achieve their self-presentation goals without experiencing context collapse? One option is to offer more ephemeral forms of interaction, which other researchers have found offers self-presentation benefits [4, 27]; Instagram does offer this form of sharing through their "Stories" Feature [60], but there may be other formats to control not just who can access content but *when* they can access it. Finally, features that already exist (e.g., Facebook's "Friend Lists") or are re-purposed by users (e.g., creating multiple accounts to segment one's audience) to combat context collapse can be hard to maintain [63], so we encourage researchers to evaluate whether there are more sustainable methods to assist users in achieving a varied self-presentation both within and across platforms.

Drawing on this and prior work, we argue that Finsta represents a robust area for expanding our understanding of self-presentation and identity, and has many applications for designers building and improving social media systems.

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