

### Abstract

Embarrassment has been considered a social emotion that motivates people to regulate their social image (Leary, Landel, & Patton, 1996). This study aims to extend the evidence that people are motivated to convey first-person embarrassment to others after a self-presentational predicament, and to find similar effects for observer's vicarious embarrassments when the person witness an embarrassed or unembarrassed other violating social norms. Eighty Chinese university students were recruited to participate in two tasks that investigated motivations in the expression of first-person and vicarious embarrassments, and the results generally supported the predictions that people were motivated to express their embarrassment. People tended to be motivated to express first-person embarrassment to others. People were also motivated to express vicarious embarrassment induced by an embarrassed target, and were motivated to convey vicarious embarrassment induced by an unembarrassed target through the expression of amusement. In addition, watching others feeling embarrassed led to better evaluation of the target and more approach or help behaviors towards the target, but the evaluation of target was unrelated to the observer's feeling of embarrassment.

*Keywords:* embarrassment, vicarious embarrassment, social emotion