



# ‘Harvesters of the old’ slick in targeting the emotional needs of the elderly

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Seeing someone with a beaming smile brings comfort and relaxation, making me willing to become a fan.

**One middle-aged man**

**Yang Jian**

It’s tough being old. There is a sense of loss, regrets and loneliness. What a golden opportunity for some Chinese Internet idols to exploit!

Recent headlines about the suspension of a popular content creator known as the “Scholar” on the TikTok-like Douyin platform has raised questions about the risks elderly people may face when they go online seeking succor.

The Scholar, known online as “Xiu Cai,” had over 12 million followers

before allegations of tax evasion wiped him from screens.

His content primarily comprised simple videos filmed in rural settings, with appealing content aimed at charming older folks.

Half of his followers were 50 years or older and 70 percent of them women and half of them 50 years or older.

The 39-year-old Internet sensation surnamed Xu from Anhui Province dresses in polo shirts or suits, sports a well-groomed hairstyle, casually gazes into the camera, then playfully smiles

or starts singing — creating a moment that feels like a chance encounter on the street.

He lip-syncs love song to his fans and calls them “big sisters.”

This simple charm offensive apparently has an astonishing impact on the hearts of countless older rural women.

A 72-year-old woman traveled 1,700 kilometers from northeast China’s Jilin Province to the county where Xu lives to meet him and bring him local specialties from her hometown. Another fan,