

# Research on the Social Impact of Silver Internet Celebrity Effect: A Case Study of Ten Silver Internet Celebrities in South Sichuan

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**Abstract:** In recent years, with the rapid growth of China's elderly population, with the emergence of digitalization and multimedia, a new network group - silver-haired Internet celebrities has grown up in the electronic information age. The emergence of silver-haired Internet celebrities has brought new changes to the public's general perception of the aging of today's society, and has also brought certain impacts to today's society. This paper takes ten silver-haired Internet celebrities in southern Sichuan as an example to explore the causes of today's silver Internet celebrity effect, focus on analyzing the negative and positive impacts of this phenomenon, and finally in view of the negative impact brought about, this paper proposes several improvement measures to make the silver Internet celebrity effect more reasonably integrated into today's society, and also provide certain reference significance for China's aging to a certain extent.

**Keywords:** Silver Net Celebrity Effect; South Sichuan Area; Effect; Measure

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## Introduction

From the practical point of view, studying the communication status and rise of Douyin elderly Internet celebrities is of great significance to the development of the short video elderly Internet celebrity group itself and the development of the whole society. This survey systematically sorted out the development status of Douyin short video elderly Internet celebrity accounts through content analysis and case study method, explored the causes of the rise of elderly Internet celebrities, analyzed the reasons for the popularity of elderly Internet celebrities from the perspective of communication, and reflected on the rise of elderly Internet celebrities. There are not many studies on the elderly Internet celebrity group, and most of the research on the elderly Internet celebrity is only basic research, lack of more in-depth exploration. As a large number of potential users of the Internet, the elderly group has always lacked sufficient attention<sup>[1]</sup>. This study takes elderly Internet celebrities as the research object, analyzes the development status of the elderly group in the field of short video, and analyzes their development from a perspective, which not only improves the research on the development status of different age groups of Internet celebrities, as well as the analysis of short video communication subjects and audiences, but also helps to improve the development performance of the elderly group in the new environment from the perspective of aging.

## 1. The reason behind the silver influencer effect

Silver influencers refer to a new group of influencers – older people. They either live stream, share their life experiences, show their family's curiosity, or pass on cultural knowledge and traditional crafts, subverting people's traditional influence in old age life, attracting a large number of fans to watch. And the southern Sichuan region, as an area with extremely prominent aging problems, It is essential to study the phenomenon of "silver influencers" outside the circle in the region.

## **1.1 The introduction of the policy creates space for "silver Internet celebrities"**

In recent years, the state has intensively launched a series of policies to cope with aging, such as the 13th and 5th National Plan for the Development of the Elderly and the Construction of the Pension System released in 2017. Inject strong dynamism into the market and provide a favorable political environment for the development of the silver phenomenon. Against the background of good policy, several needs of "silver influencers" will be further released, and quotes will be further raised.

## **1.2 The development of the industry lays the foundation for "silver Internet celebrities"**

The short video industry and influence economy provide silver influencers with a complete infrastructure, a solid market foundation, complete operational means, and the power of sustainable development and prospects. From the perspective of the development of the short video industry, as of December 2020, the number of short video users in China has reached 927 million. These users have become a potential market for silver influencers.

## **1.3 The spread of culture has brought about a turnaround for "silver-haired Internet celebrities"**

Silver-haired influencers are closely related to traditional Chinese culture. The emphasis on respect for older persons and the shaping of their positive image, as well as attention to the quality of life of older people in the context of active aging, social participation and social contribution, form the basis for public attention, acceptance and recognition of silver influencers. At the same time, under the influence of traditional culture, the younger generation has become "passion experts" in various ways, using new media use skills and Internet pop culture to feed back the elderly group. The intervention of digital reflux accelerates the melting of the digital divide and helps the elderly group to grow from "digital refugees" to "new digital migrants" [2].

## **2. Characteristics of the spread of the silver influencer effect**

### **2.1 Promote intergenerational integration**

The popularity of short videos has made the channels for the elderly to express themselves more diversified, and short videos are gradually becoming the new favorite of middle-aged and elderly groups. To a certain extent, the emergence of silver-haired Internet celebrities can eliminate the loneliness of empty nesters, narrow the "digital divide", and promote intergenerational integration. Most silver-haired people will easily disconnect from society due to factors such as insufficient acceptance and reduced learning ability. Silver-haired Internet celebrities can spread new knowledge and new thinking to middle-aged and elderly people in an equal, comfortable and more popular way, and help more silver-haired people understand and receive online information.

### **2.2 Achieve individualism**

In today's prevalence of individualism, the aging group also highly recognizes the power of the individual, and the data shows that the proportion of people who believe that "people must have their own personality and ideas" is extremely high. Whether it's dressing or behaving, they expect to find their uniqueness in the group and not be afraid of attention or dissent, even if what they do will fit into some "stereotype". On the other hand, the elderly are more eager to find themselves and live happily in a new stage of life. Hedonic play is seen as one of the ways to a happy old age [3].

### **2.3 Pull in the distance between each other**

Looking at these videos on the popular network, it is not difficult to find that the real and natural narration of the elderly and the

presentation of the original appearance of life have narrowed the distance with the younger generation and bridged the cognitive and emotional gap between different generations. The identity of "passers-by" makes their life insights, cultural knowledge or traditional skills more reliable and acceptable.

### **3. The social impact behind silver influencers**

#### **3.1 Positive Impact**

##### **3.1.1 Improve the media visibility of the elderly group and break people's stereotypes of the elderly group**

Under the empowerment of new media technology, silver-haired Internet celebrities no longer completely rely on the agenda setting and limited expression space of professional media organizations, but rely on the new field of Internet content platforms to transform from relatively passive communication objects and constructors to active communicators and active actors who fully present themselves. The "silver-haired Internet celebrities" active on the Internet break the negative stereotypes in declining discourse by maintaining and extending the beautiful image of the elderly in positive discourse, such as the video released by the Douyin account "Fashion Granny Group" in which several women wear cheongsam, hold red umbrellas, and dance folding fans to break people's original stereotypes of grandmothers<sup>[4]</sup>.

##### **3.1.2 Promote social and economic development**

At the same time, the media industry itself is also an important component of the information and knowledge industry. In recent years, with the improvement of living standards and the improvement of China's pension system, the "silver market" has become an emerging market with great potential, and the emergence of "silver Internet celebrities" has enabled businesses to open the elderly group market with the opinion leaders in these elderly groups as the entry point and promote the development of the "silver economy"<sup>[5]</sup>. At the same time, "silver Internet celebrities" have become an industry in their own right, and many MCN institutions have begun to cultivate elderly Internet celebrities.

#### **3.2 Negative Effects**

##### **3.2.1 Breeding false propaganda**

Driven by commercial interests, there may be a "alienation" phenomenon of physical and psychological separation, users can no longer maintain their original intentions, according to their own wishes and ideas to create, content will show a homogenization, vulgarization and even false trends.

##### **3.2.2 Easy self-loss**

The development of today's Internet is easy for the vast majority of people to lose themselves, especially for the elderly. The original intention of silver-haired Internet celebrities is to improve their lives through the Internet, find the joy of life, and finally realize the meaning of old age. But with the Internet show, When the phenomenon of linking various practical interests such as bringing goods arises, the original intention of silver-haired Internet celebrities is very deformed, driven by powerful capital, they are originally just for fun, and eventually they have to learn young people to bring goods, so that they lose themselves.

##### **3.2.3 Causing physical burden**

Frequent contact with the Internet can have a negative impact not only mentally, but also physically. The physical health of the elderly depends on the daily life routine and self-regulation, and addicted to the world in the Internet will make them nausea, dizziness,

fatigue and even disease, especially long-term consumption in electronic products, and it is easy to bring a lot of load to the body, which is not conducive to the old age of the elderly.

## 4. Summary

To sum up, the current life of silver-haired Internet celebrities is the result of interaction under multiple conditions, and when its rise blows the clarion call for a new picture of media culture and presents a vigorous development trend, the problems behind its phenomenon are still worth pondering. We should fully mobilize the government, non-governmental organizations, the market and other social subjects to participate in guiding and regulating the construction of the phenomenon of silver-haired Internet celebrities, give full play to the positive energy of silver Internet celebrities as life mentors, find a model suitable for the survival and development of silver Internet celebrities, and help silver Internet celebrities become a new force shaping mainstream social values and a new path to promote the governance of an aging society. In addition, the silver-haired influencers currently appearing in the public eye are still a small number of "vanguards" capable of crossing the digital divide and self-expression. For the invisible majority of older people, the situation that leads to their "invisibility" in media representation deserves more comprehensive and sustained attention.

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Project Fund: Supported by the National College Students Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program (Project No.: 202210641018)