



Digital Hamartiology: A Theological Examination of the Doctrine of Sin in the Context of Pentecostal Virtual Pastoral Counseling

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ABSTRACT

The widespread use of information technology has prompted the migration of Pentecostal pastoral counseling ministries into virtual spaces, thereby calling for a renewed theological articulation of the doctrine of sin (*hamartiology*) within digitally mediated contexts. Rather than proposing a change in the essence of sin, this study seeks to construct a framework of digital hamartiology by examining how the understanding and pastoral engagement of sin are rearticulated in technology-mediated counseling practices. Employing a qualitative method through literature review and constructive theological discourse analysis, this research engages contemporary theological scholarship and critically relates it to the phenomenon of virtual pastoral care. The analysis identifies three significant areas of theological rearticulation: (1) a reconfiguration of the pastoral “sacred space” of confession, understood not as sacramental relocation but as a relational and pneumatological presence mediated through digital platforms; (2) a reframing of the praxis of repentance in light of digitally mediated presence, which does not eliminate embodiment but transforms it into a form of mediated or extended embodiment; and (3) the emergence of distinct digital manifestations of sin such as anonymity, disinhibition, and repetitive patterns that require nuanced pastoral and theological attention without implying an ontological redefinition of sin itself. These findings highlight the urgency of developing a systematic and biblically grounded digital hamartiology that remains faithful to the enduring theological understanding of sin while equipping Pentecostal pastors to engage effectively with the complexities of contemporary digital life.

Keywords: digital hamartiology; virtual pastoral counseling; Pentecostal theology; doctrine of sin; cyber theology

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly reshaped the landscape of contemporary theological reflection and ecclesial practice. In the post-Covid-19 era, Pentecostal churches in Indonesia have increasingly migrated various ministerial activities particularly pastoral counseling into virtual environments. This transition entails more than a mere methodological adaptation; it calls for a careful theological rearticulation of how core doctrines, especially the doctrine of sin (*hamartiology*), are understood and pastorally engaged within digitally mediated contexts. In this regard, virtual pastoral counseling emerges as a critical locus where theological convictions about sin, confession, repentance, and restoration are both expressed and tested.

Hamartiology, as a theological discipline, does not develop in isolation from cultural and historical realities, yet it remains grounded in enduring biblical and doctrinal foundations. Therefore, the transition into the digital era should not be understood as necessitating a change in the ontological nature of sin, but rather as requiring a renewed articulation of its manifestation, mediation, and pastoral handling. Two interrelated developments highlight this urgency. First, the migration of pastoral counseling and confessional practices into digital communication platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and other online media reshapes the dynamics of spiritual interaction (Simatupang et al., 2025; Mangeghong & Nendissa, 2026). Second, the increasing visibility of digitally mediated expressions of sin such as cyber addiction, virtual infidelity, and forms of cybercrime presents new pastoral challenges that demand theological clarity without implying the emergence of a fundamentally new category of sin.

Within Pentecostal theology, pastoral ministry is deeply rooted in a pneumatological framework in which the pastor serves not merely as a counselor but as a mediator of spiritual care under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Traditionally, Pentecostal practices of confession and repentance emphasize embodied presence, including physical proximity, emotional immediacy, and practices such as the laying on of hands (Manurung, 2021a; Siahaan, 2018). However, the shift toward virtual counseling does not eliminate embodiment altogether; rather, it transforms it into a form of mediated or extended presence. This transformation introduces a constructive theological tension that must be addressed: how can the authenticity of spiritual encounter, the integrity of repentance, and the depth of pastoral care be maintained when presence is technologically mediated?

These developments give rise to a series of critical theological questions. To what extent can digitally mediated spaces function as meaningful contexts for pastoral engagement with sin and repentance? How should Pentecostal theology understand the nature of confession and restoration when they occur through virtual interaction rather than physical co-presence? Importantly, these questions should not be framed as challenges to the essence of sin itself, but as inquiries into how the doctrine of sin is faithfully articulated and pastorally embodied within new communicative environments.

The urgency of this inquiry is further underscored by a noticeable gap in Indonesian theological scholarship. Existing studies on digital religion have predominantly focused on practical dimensions, such as online worship practices (Tambunan, 2021), digital church management (Arifianto, 2021), or the psychological effectiveness of virtual counseling (Mangeghong & Nendissa, 2026). However, there remains a lack of systematic theological engagement particularly at the level of hamartiology that critically examines how the doctrine of sin is to be understood and applied within the context of virtual pastoral ministry from a Pentecostal perspective.

In response to this gap, this study seeks to develop a constructive and biblically grounded framework of digital hamartiology. Specifically, this research aims to: (1) analyze how the doctrine of sin is rearticulated within Pentecostal discourse on virtual pastoral counseling; (2) examine the theological implications of digitally mediated presence for the praxis of repentance and spiritual restoration; and (3) formulate a contextual framework of digital hamartiology that remains faithful to the enduring theological understanding of sin while equipping Pentecostal pastors to engage responsibly and effectively with the complexities of contemporary digital life.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach based on library research, combined with constructive theological and hermeneutical analysis. This methodological choice is grounded in the nature of the research, which does not seek to modify the ontological substance of doctrinal teachings, but rather to rearticulate the understanding and pastoral engagement of the doctrine of sin (*hamartiology*) within digitally mediated contexts. Accordingly, critical engagement with theological texts, scholarly discourse, and conceptual reflections is considered more appropriate than empirical field-based investigation.

The primary data for this study are derived from documented literature, systematically classified into four main clusters. First, digital theology and cybertheology literature, which provides the conceptual framework for understanding religious interaction in digital environments, drawing from scholars such as Campbell and Tsuria (2021), Spadaro (2014), Arifianto (2021), and Panuntun (2021). Second, hamartiology and Pentecostal theology literature, which examines the doctrine of sin particularly its biblical and theological foundations, as well as its pneumatological dimensions within the Pentecostal tradition (Manurung, 2021b; Fransiska & Krisdiantoro, 2023). Third, pastoral counseling literature, which offers the practical and theological basis for understanding pastoral praxis, especially within Evangelical-Pentecostal contexts (Susabda, 2007). Fourth, contemporary scholarly articles, which address the post-pandemic transition of church ministries into digital spaces, including pastoral care and counseling practices (Tambunan, 2021; Simatupang et al., 2025; Mangeghong & Nendissa, 2026).

The data analysis process is conducted through three interrelated stages. First, data reduction, involving the selection, categorization, and delimitation of relevant sources to focus specifically on the intersection of hamartiology, Pentecostal pneumatology, and digital mediation. Second, theological discourse analysis, which entails identifying key concepts, examining the arguments of selected scholars, and critically evaluating how the expressions and pastoral handling of sin and repentance are articulated within digitally mediated contexts without presupposing any change in the essential nature of sin itself. Third, constructive theological synthesis, which seeks to formulate a coherent and contextually grounded framework of “digital hamartiology” as a theological response to contemporary pastoral realities.

To ensure the rigor and credibility of the study, this research employs theoretical triangulation. This is achieved by critically engaging and dialoguing between Pentecostal theological perspectives and broader ecumenical discussions within digital theology. Such an approach enables the study to maintain theological fidelity to its Pentecostal framework while also ensuring analytical balance, conceptual clarity, and broader academic relevance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Landscape of Digital Theology and Its Implications for Hamartiology

The emergence of digital theology as a significant field of academic inquiry has opened a critical space for reexamining theological reflection within technologically mediated contexts. Drawing upon the work of Campbell and Tsuria (2021), digital religion is no longer understood merely as religion transferred into online platforms (religion online), but as religious life that is actively shaped by the logic and culture of digital environments (online religion). This perspective is further reinforced by Spadaro (2014), who argues that the internet has evolved beyond being a mere instrument of communication into a new environment of

human interaction that influences how individuals think, relate, and engage in theological reflection. However, this shift should not be interpreted as implying a change in the ontological nature of theological doctrines, including the doctrine of sin, but rather as a transformation in the context and mode of their articulation.

Within the Indonesian theological context, this development calls for an epistemological rearticulation. Arifianto (2021) and Panuntun (2021) emphasize that theological reflection in the digital era must move beyond methodological adaptation and engage deeper questions concerning divine presence, human identity, and moral transformation. Similarly, Hutagalung (2025) underscores the urgency of renewing theological discourse so that the church can respond meaningfully to digital realities without losing doctrinal integrity.

In relation to hamartiology, digitalization raises a crucial question: how should sin be understood when it is mediated through virtual spaces? It is important to affirm that virtual reality does not constitute a lesser moral domain. As Adian (2022) argues, the digital realm is an extension of human relational existence; therefore, moral responsibility remains fully intact. Consequently, acts committed in digital contexts bear the same theological weight as those enacted in physical settings. This does not indicate the emergence of a new ontological category of sin, but rather highlights the diversification and intensification of sin's manifestations within digitally mediated environments.

Accordingly, contemporary hamartiological reflection must attend to these developments (Borrong, 2020; Yabes et al., 2024). Studies on Generation Z as digital natives (Sambow & Palembang, 2025) demonstrate that cyberspace facilitates distinct patterns of sinful behavior such as anonymity-driven actions, repetitive engagement, and disinhibition that were less visible in pre-digital contexts. Therefore, the classical category of actual sin does not need to be deconstructed, but rather rearticulated and contextually extended to account for these mediated expressions of sin.

Hamartiology in the Pentecostal Theological Tradition: Doctrinal Foundations

A proper analysis of virtual pastoral counseling requires a clear grounding in Pentecostal hamartiology. Within the Pentecostal tradition, the doctrine of sin is inseparably connected to pneumatology and soteriology. As Wijaya (2018) notes, Pentecostal spirituality is centered on experiential encounters with the Holy Spirit. In this framework, sin is not merely understood as a violation of moral law, but as resistance to the transformative work of the Spirit, as reflected in readings of the Acts of the Apostles (Siahaan, 2018).

Pentecostal hamartiology maintains a dual understanding of sin: as an inherited condition rooted in human fallenness and as a personal act requiring individual accountability (Fransiska & Krisdiantoro, 2023). Consequently, pastoral counseling is not limited to behavioral correction but aims at deep spiritual transformation through divine encounter. Manurung (2021a; 2021b) emphasizes that confronting sin ultimately leads to an awareness of divine holiness and the "fear of the Lord," which catalyzes genuine repentance.

Furthermore, Pentecostal pastoral praxis is characterized by the dynamic operation of the *rhema* word Spirit-inspired communication that addresses the counselee in a personal and immediate manner (Rifai, 2016). Traditionally, this process has been closely associated with embodied presence, emotional immediacy, and practices such as the laying on of hands. However, the transition to virtual contexts does not eliminate

embodiment altogether; rather, it transforms it into a mediated or extended form of presence. This shift introduces a constructive theological tension that calls for careful discernment, without negating the continuity of Pentecostal doctrinal foundations.

Transformation of the Sacred Space: From the Physical Pastoral Chamber to Virtual Reality

The shift from face-to-face counseling to a virtual format forces a redefinition of sacred space. In the conservative Pentecostal pastoral tradition, the counseling room is understood spatially as a designated place where the presence of God manifests to restore the soul (Susabda, 2007). The spiritual atmosphere within this pastoral chamber is not merely a psychological effect, but a theological reality that determines the effectiveness of addressing sin.

When this physical space is eliminated by screens, the ensuing theological question is: Can virtual spaces (such as Zoom or WhatsApp) be incubated into sacred spaces? A synthesis of contemporary literature (Simatupang et al., 2025; Santoso, 2020) points to the conclusion that the sanctity of the counseling space is intrinsically determined not by its physical materiality (bricks or church buildings), but by the spiritual orientation of the participants and the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit, which permeates the boundaries of digital algorithms. Nevertheless, the literature consistently acknowledges that facilitating a "divine encounter" in cyberspace demands a significantly higher degree of spiritual intentionality from the pastor to create a sacred atmosphere amidst digital distractions.

The greatest obstacle in virtual pastoral counseling is the absence of physical presence (*bodily presence*). Mangeghong and Nendissa (2026) demonstrate that digital limitations such as reduced non-verbal communication, screen latency, and the absence of physical touch (like the laying on of hands, which is essential in Pentecostalism) distort the quality of the therapeutic-hamartiological process.

For congregants struggling with sins rooted in anxiety and depression, expressing genuine repentance through the mediation of screens often feels hollow and unresolved. This creates a tension with the ecclesiology of Acts 2 (Soesilo, 2018), wherein the handling of sin and restoration in the Pentecostal tradition is supposed to possess a communal and relational dimension, rather than being individualistically isolated behind devices. Therefore, current theological discourse demands that pastors develop pastoral-digital literacy to ensure that the assurance of God's forgiveness can still be fully internalized by the counselee, even without physical affirmation.

The Typology of Digital Sin: Expanding the Framework of Pentecostal Hamartiology

Digitalization not only alters the medium of counseling but also spawns new variants of sin. The transformation of the church into the digital realm holds dual significance: it opens an infinite mission field, yet simultaneously catalyzes the manifestation of cyber sin (Leksana, 2022). The literature identifies a shift in the form of sin from previously being physical to becoming virtual (Yabes et al., 2024).

Classical Pentecostal hamartiology must now be expanded to accommodate and address the typology of "digital sin." This includes digital pride through identity manipulation on social media, envy dictated by social comparison algorithms, cyber pornography addiction, and the spread of hoaxes, which constitutes a modern form of the "false witness" transgression. Townsend and Cloud (2018) assert that

addressing these sins cannot be achieved through conventional moral reprimands alone; rather, it requires a healthy theology of boundaries in human relations with technology.

In responding to this disruption, the literature maps a spectrum of attitudes among Pentecostal pastors, ranging from adaptive-pragmatic to conservative-resistive (Simon et al., 2021). However, the common thread uniting successful adaptation is the maintenance of pneumatological fidelity (Manurung, 2021c). The success of digital counseling is not measured by the sophistication of the technology, but by the extent to which the pastor maintains absolute dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Hasibuan, S., & Tupu, A., 2023).

Based on the synthesis of this theological analysis, this study formulates and offers three foundational pillars as the fundamental framework for a Pentecostal Digital Hamartiology: Pneumatological Continuity: The dogmatic understanding that the Holy Spirit, who works to convict of sin in the physical counseling room, is the exact same Person whose authority and power remain undistorted when operating through a virtual medium (Priyono & Silalahi, 2025). The medium of communication may change, but the essence of restorative grace remains absolute. Hamartiological Integrity: The accessibility of digital counseling must not reduce the seriousness of dealing with sin. Digital hamartiology must continue to view sin comprehensively: as an inherited nature (*original sin*), a personal action (*actual sin*), and a cyber manifestation (*digital sin*). Virtual counseling must not stop at "popular psychological counseling" but must penetrate through to radical repentance. Pastoral Contextuality: Relevant theological praxis demands sensitivity to contemporary realities (Nendissa, 2022). Pastors are required to possess dual competencies: theological acuity to diagnose digital sin and pastoral flexibility to facilitate restoration amidst the limitations of cyberspace, without compromising biblical truth.

The Reinterpretation of Repentance Praxis and the Challenge of the Absence of Bodily Presence

One of the most distinctive aspects of the Pentecostal tradition is the somatic dimension within the praxis of repentance. Repentance is not understood solely as a cognitive event or a theological declaration, but rather as a total bodily experience characterized by weeping, trembling, kneeling, the laying on of hands, and pastoral embraces as a form of confirmation of receiving God's love. This praxis is not merely a liturgical tradition; it is rooted in Pentecostal theology concerning the Holy Spirit who works through and within the concrete human body. Therefore, as repentance counseling migrates to screen-mediated digital spaces, the Pentecostal church faces a fundamental theological dilemma: can the Holy Spirit still operate effectively without actual bodily presence?

This question is not merely a pragmatic technical issue; it touches the core of Pentecostal hamartiology. Arliandy (2023) astutely examines this issue by stating that the migration of liturgy to the digital space creates a profound tension between the body as a sacramental medium and the screen as a mediating medium. According to him, bodily presence is not merely a supplement to worship praxis but a necessary condition that enables authentic theological encounters. In the context of repentance, the absence of physically face-to-face bodies risks reducing an experience that should be holistic involving soul, mind, and body into an emotionally distanced verbal exchange (Arliandy, 2023).

The phenomenon of *disembodiment*, or separation from the body in cyberspace, has received serious attention in contemporary digital theology literature. Thompson (2016) argues that the virtual body of Christ

in a suffering world can never fully replace the physical body of a tangible church community. He posits that Christ's solidarity with humanity is expressed through incarnation a bodily presence that enters concrete space and time meaning that counseling models ignoring the bodily dimension potentially lose profound theological resonance. Nevertheless, Thompson (2016) also opens the space for reflection on how the *communitas* of Christ can be present virtually without sacrificing its theological integrity.

This tension between physical and virtual presence is further emphasized by Kim (2020), who argues in his work that humans are creatures who fundamentally require engagement with real, concrete people, places, and objects. Kim (2020) critiques the tendency of the digital church to too easily assume that meaningful spiritual experiences can be entirely reproduced within digital mediums. In the context of Pentecostal repentance counseling, Kim's argument implicitly questions the capacity of digital platforms to facilitate transformative moments that have historically relied on pastoral touch and a physically present community.

Conversely, several digital theologians open the possibility that the Holy Spirit is not confined to physical space. Spadaro (2014), in his work on cybertheology, offers a more optimistic perspective, stating that the Internet can be understood as a space where the Spirit of God also moves, convicts, and renews. Spadaro invites the church not to equate the limitations of the physical body with the limitations of the Holy Spirit's work, because the God who created the material world also holds dominion over the human-created digital world. This perspective provides a theological foothold for Pentecostal pastors to continue opening spaces for repentance ministry in the cyber medium, albeit with vigilance against potential reductions.

Campbell and Garner (2016) provide a more systematic framework for reading this tension through the concept of "negotiated faith" in digital culture. They argue that faith communities migrating to digital spaces do not merely transfer old forms into new containers; rather, they engage in an active negotiation process regarding what is essential and what can be adapted. In Pentecostal repentance praxis, this means pastors must consciously discern which elements are theologically constitutive (such as confession of sin, intercessory prayer, and the anointing of the Spirit) and which are culturally contextual (such as the physical format of laying on of hands) that might be creatively adapted in the virtual space (Campbell & Garner, 2016).

Keriapy et al. (2022) make a significant contribution by proposing the concept of humans as "simultaneously digital and spiritual beings," asserting that humanity in the cyber era does not lose its spiritual dimension simply by being in a virtual space. On the contrary, human spirituality finds its new expressions and challenges within cyberspace. For the Pentecostal tradition, this means the experience of the conviction of sin, the longing for forgiveness, and surrender to God can still occur in the digital space, although it requires a pastoral approach that is more contextual and sensitive to the limitations of the medium (Keriapy et al., 2022).

Therefore, the reinterpretation of repentance praxis in the digital context cannot be handled carelessly or seen merely as a technical-operational issue. It requires a mature theology of the body from a Pentecostal perspective one that acknowledges the body is not a prison for the spirit, but a partner of the spirit in the experience of faith coupled with a hermeneutical openness that a sovereign God is not bound by any specific medium. Arliandy (2023) proposes that the church develop a "new theology of presence" that does

not merely preserve old forms in digital containers, but rather seriously contemplates how presence, touch, and community can be rearticulated theologically within a continuously evolving digital ecosystem.

The Typology of Digital Sin: Expanding the Framework of Pentecostal Hamartiology

Conventional Hamartiology

Conventional Pentecostal hamartiology, as inherited from the Evangelical tradition and enriched by the theology of the Holy Spirit, generally describes sin in categories rooted in the pre-digital world: physical fornication, physical violence, material greed, and various relational transgressions occurring in concrete physical spaces. The greatest challenge presented by the digital era is not merely the issue of new mediums for old sins, but the emergence of a typology of sins that are structurally different sins committed by and through a "virtual body" in the form of accounts, profiles, and avatars, which paradoxically seem detached from the physical bodily accountability of the perpetrator.

Challies (2011) is one of the first Christian theologians to seriously document the moral transformation brought about by the digital explosion. He identifies that digital technology is not morally neutral; rather, it shapes the disposition of its users' souls conditioning mindsets, desires, and habits that can lead to good or evil. Challies (2011) specifically observes how the availability of pornographic content through digital algorithms creates a new type of addiction that is structurally different from conventional pornography exposure: it is personal, hidden, instantly accessible, and designed by algorithms to maximize the user's emotional engagement.

Detweiler (2013) expands this analysis by demonstrating how digital technology, particularly social media platforms, reshapes human identity in such a way that the boundary between the "real self" and the "constructed self" becomes increasingly blurred. He observes that the creation of false identities or digital avatars is not merely a technical lie, but an expression of a deeper spiritual condition namely, the rejection of a God-given identity and the attempt to create oneself according to one's own desired image. In the perspective of Pentecostal hamartiology, this is not just a lie, but a form of idolatry directed toward self-construction (Detweiler, 2013).

Dyer (2022) provides a comprehensive theological-narrative framework for understanding the relationship between technology and human sin. By placing technology within the grand narrative from the Garden of Eden to the City of God, Dyer argues that every human-created technology carries a dual capacity: to glorify God and to express human ambitions independent of His sovereignty. In the context of digital sin typology, Dyer (2022) reminds us that cyberbullying bullying mediated by digital platforms is not merely "youthful mischief," but a serious expression of the sin of hatred, contempt for the image of God in others, and the destruction of community, which Paul refers to as the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19–21).

Borrong (2019), in the context of Indonesian Christian theology, highlights the ethical challenges the church faces when responding to the ever-evolving digital reality. According to him, conventional Christian ethical frameworks often stutter when confronting virtual sins because there are no "physically visible victims" and no "pinpointable crime scenes." Virtual infidelity, for instance, is often not considered true adultery by its perpetrators because it does not involve physical contact. Theologically, however, Borrong (2019) asserts that virtual infidelity violates the integrity of the marriage covenant, destroys trust, and severs

the spiritual bond established by God, and thus must be categorized as a serious sin within the framework of Christian hamartiology.

Schuurman (2013) offers a more systematic perspective on how the Christian faith should shape and assess digital culture. He argues that the church needs adequate normative categories to evaluate digital phenomena theologically not merely reacting to their negative consequences, but building an evaluative framework grounded in the concepts of creation, fall, and redemption. For Pentecostal hamartiology, Schuurman's proposition is highly relevant: there is a need for a conceptual expansion that incorporates digital sins into a complete hamartiological narrative, rather than leaving them in an uncharted moral gray zone (Schuurman, 2013).

Sopacoly and Lattu (2020) provide a vital contribution from the perspective of Indonesian cybertheology by examining how Christianity confronts online spirituality. They identify that cyberspace is not merely a tool but has become a sort of "lifeworld" where humans express, shape, and sometimes destroy their spiritual relations. Within this framework, sins committed in the digital space cannot be treated as second-class or superficial sins, because their impact on the perpetrator's soul, on the victim, and on the faith community is as real as sins in the physical world (Sopacoly & Lattu, 2020).

Arifianto (2021) explicitly proposes the need for a digital theology capable of reflecting the Christian faith contextually in the cyber era. He emphasizes that the church cannot continue operating with hamartiological categories shaped by a pre-digital context while ignoring the reality that a large portion of the congregation's moral life now takes place in the digital space. Arifianto (2021) identifies algorithmic addiction designed to maximize users' screen time without considering its impact on mental and spiritual health as a new form of slavery that contemporary theology of sin must address seriously.

From the review of the various literature above, at least five typologies of digital sin can be formulated that need to be accommodated within contemporary Pentecostal hamartiology:

1. The sin of digital addiction: Encompassing algorithmic pornography addiction and social media addiction that erodes a person's spiritual and relational capacity.
2. The sin of virtual infidelity: The violation of the marriage covenant bond occurring through a digital medium, even without physical contact.
3. The sin of cyber hatred and violence (cyberbullying): An expression of hatred toward the image of God in others.
4. The sin of false identity and digital deception: Reflecting the rejection of a God-given identity and the manipulation of community trust.
5. The sin of privacy violation and data exploitation: Violating the dignity and personal sovereignty of fellow human beings as the image of God.

These five typologies demand a specific pastoral and theological response from Pentecostal pastors who wish to conduct effective counseling in the digital era.

The Construction of a Pentecostal Digital Hamartiology: A Theological Proposal

Having explored the challenge of bodily presence in digital repentance praxis and identified the typologies of new sins born from the cyber ecosystem, this section attempts to formulate an integrative theological construct a Pentecostal digital hamartiology that is not merely reactive to digital phenomena, but

offers a normative framework capable of guiding pastors in conducting biblical repentance counseling without losing their distinct Pentecostal identity. This construct is built upon three main pillars: first, the affirmation of the Holy Spirit's sovereignty beyond the boundaries of the medium; second, the preservation of the nature of the body as an indispensable theological category; and third, the development of digital spiritual literacy as a new pastoral competency.

The first pillar requires a strong theological affirmation that the Holy Spirit cannot be confined by technological limitations. Vondey (2017), in his comprehensive study of Pentecostal theology, asserts that the core of Pentecostal theology is a direct and dynamic experience with the Holy Spirit, who moves freely and sovereignly. Within this framework, the assumption that the Holy Spirit can only work effectively in physical gatherings is a theologically unfounded narrowing. Vondey (2017) emphasizes that Pentecostal theology actually possesses a robust pneumatological capacity to embrace new ways in which the Holy Spirit operates including within the digital space as long as the church remains faithful to its confession of faith regarding the sovereignty and freedom of the Spirit.

Nevertheless, this pneumatological affirmation must be balanced by the second pillar: a reverence for the body as a serious theological category. It is here that Pentecostal digital hamartiology needs to critically dialogue with the tendency of *disembodiment* brought about by digital technology. Panuntun (2021) asserts that theology in the digital era must not fall into digital gnosticism namely, the belief that the spiritual is the non-material, and that the purest experience of faith is the one most detached from the bodily dimension. Conversely, Panuntun (2021) invites the church to maintain incarnational theology as a foundation: Jesus taking on human form affirms that the body is a legitimate and meaningful arena for God's work.

Purwonugroho (2025) provides a highly contextual perspective by examining the implications of "digital religion" on the transformation of congregants' spiritual lives in Indonesia. He discovers that congregational involvement in digital religious practices does not automatically weaken their spiritual lives; rather, its quality heavily depends on the extent to which the church can provide structured spiritual accompaniment and healthy digital discipline. For Pentecostal digital hamartiology, Purwonugroho's (2025) findings underscore the urgency of establishing digital counseling that is not merely reactive-problematic, but proactive-formative: shaping congregants into morally and spiritually aware individuals in navigating their digital lives.

The third pillar of this construct is the development of digital spiritual literacy as a non-negotiable pastoral competency. Estes (2009) uses the metaphor of *SimChurch* a church in a virtual world to prompt reflection on what it means to be a true church in an increasingly virtual world. Estes (2009) argues that the church must not merely replicate its physical model in a digital format, but must develop an ecclesiology capable of answering fundamental questions: What makes a faith community authentic? What cannot be compromised in pastoral ministry? These questions are directly relevant to Pentecostal pastors conducting repentance counseling within digital mediums.

Santoso (2020), in the Indonesian context, asserts that the digital transformation of the church is not a threat to the church's identity, but an invitation to rediscover the essence of the church's calling in the context of a new era. According to him, a church that successfully transforms digitally is one that does not merely adopt technology, but builds a coherent theology of technology that is, a clear understanding of why, how, and for what purpose technology is used in ministry (Santoso, 2020). In the context of digital repentance

counseling, this means pastors need clear theological guidelines on what must be preserved, what can be adapted, and what must be avoided when utilizing digital technology for pastoral care.

Suseno et al. (2025) provide a concrete example of this digital spiritual literacy through their study on the role of podcasts in digital evangelism. They found that digital mediums can become effective tools for mission and ethical-theological formation when utilized with mature theological reflection and a commitment to holistic character development. The same principle applies to digital repentance counseling: the digital medium becomes pastorally meaningful not because of the technology itself, but because the pastors utilizing it possess adequate spiritual and theological competencies (Suseno et al., 2025).

Dalensang and Molle (2021) add an educational dimension to this construct by emphasizing that the church needs to actively develop relevant Christian education for the younger generation in the digital technology era. Within the framework of digital hamartiology, this means repentance counseling cannot be episodic occurring only when a problem erupts but must be integrated into a continuous spiritual formation process that includes education on digital ethics, awareness of moral risks in cyberspace, and the formation of a strong Christian identity amidst the pressures of digital culture (Dalensang & Molle, 2021).

Based on the synthesis of all the literature discussed above, the construction of Pentecostal digital hamartiology offered in this article can be formulated into four complementary theological-pastoral principles: First, the principle of pneumatological sovereignty: The Holy Spirit is sovereign over all mediums, including digital mediums, and Pentecostal pastors are called not to limit the work of the Spirit, but to open space for Him to work contextually within the digital ecosystem.

Second, the principle of somatic integrity: The body is a serious theological category; digital repentance counseling must be designed with an awareness of the limitations arising from the absence of bodily presence, and the church needs to actively seek creative ways to reintegrate the bodily dimension into digital pastoral care. Third, the principle of hamartiological expansion: Digital sin is real and serious sin; the Pentecostal church must boldly expand its hamartiological framework to encompass the typology of cyber sins born from the contemporary digital ecosystem, without diminishing their moral weight compared to conventional sins.

Fourth, the principle of digital spiritual literacy: Pentecostal pastors in the digital era are required not only to be technically literate but spiritually and theologically literate capable of evaluating, directing, and accompanying the congregation in their moral and spiritual navigation of the digital world. This construct rejects two equally dangerous extremes: first, a naive anti-technology stance, which assumes that Pentecostal authenticity can only be preserved by rejecting digital mediums; and second, an uncritical technophilia, which readily adopts all digital innovations without adequate theological reflection. Schuurman (2013) rightly positions the Christian faith as a force that must shape digital culture not be dominated by it, nor flee from it. Within this framework, a Pentecostal pastor equipped with a mature digital hamartiology is one who is able to be relevantly present in the digital ecosystem of their congregation, offer biblical repentance guidance, and uphold the rich Pentecostal pneumatological heritage amidst the challenges of ever-changing times.

Finally, this construct affirms that the fundamental question every Pentecostal pastor must continuously ask in the digital era is not, "Are we allowed to use digital technology?" but rather, "How do we use digital technology in such a way that the work of the Holy Spirit in repentance and the restoration of human souls remains the center and goal of all our pastoral ministry?" This question cannot be answered merely through technical-organizational policies; it requires a living theology, sensitive pastoral care, and a

faith community continuously renewed by the Holy Spirit both in face-to-face gatherings and in the digital spaces that are increasingly becoming an inseparable part of contemporary human life.

CONCLUSION

This study has formulated a constructive framework of Pentecostal Digital Hamartiology that addresses a significant gap within contemporary Pentecostal pastoral theology, particularly in the Indonesian context. By engaging digital theology, Pentecostal hamartiological tradition, and the realities of virtual pastoral counseling, this research affirms that the digital era should not be understood as necessitating a change in the ontological nature of sin, but as requiring a careful and systematic rearticulation of how sin is expressed, mediated, and pastorally addressed within digitally mediated environments. In this sense, the three major areas identified in this study namely the reconfiguration of pastoral sacred space, the rearticulation of repentance praxis, and the contextual expansion of sin's manifestations in digital forms represent not doctrinal shifts, but theological developments in response to changing contexts of human interaction.

This study concludes that virtual space constitutes a legitimate context for theological and pastoral engagement. Acts of sin committed in digital environments retain their full moral and theological weight, as they are performed by the same moral agents who remain accountable before God. Therefore, digital mediation does not diminish the seriousness of sin, nor does it relativize the necessity of repentance and restoration. Instead, it calls for a more intentional and contextually aware pastoral approach that faithfully brings the full weight of biblical hamartiology into digital pastoral practice.

Furthermore, this research affirms that the notion of sacred space in pastoral counseling must be understood primarily in relational and pneumatological terms, rather than as a function of physical locality. The presence of the Holy Spirit, which is central to Pentecostal theology, is not constrained by technological mediation. Consequently, virtual pastoral counseling can serve as an authentic space of spiritual encounter, provided that it is conducted with theological intentionality, spiritual discernment, and dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the absence of physical co-presence must be acknowledged as a real limitation that requires pastoral wisdom and creative theological response, rather than being ignored or overstated.

In relation to the typology of digital sin, this study emphasizes that what emerges in digital contexts are not new sins in an ontological sense, but context-specific manifestations of enduring categories of sin. Practices such as digital addiction, virtual infidelity, cyberbullying, identity manipulation, and violations of digital integrity represent expressions of classical moral failures such as lust, pride, deceit, and injustice within technologically mediated environments. Therefore, Pentecostal hamartiology must be contextually extended to address these realities, while maintaining its doctrinal continuity and theological depth.

The framework of Pentecostal Digital Hamartiology proposed in this study rests upon four interrelated principles. First, pneumatological continuity, which affirms that the Holy Spirit remains fully active and sovereign across both physical and digital contexts. Second, embodied integrity, which recognizes the theological significance of the human body while acknowledging that embodiment may be experienced in mediated or extended forms within digital interaction. Third, hamartiological continuity with contextual expansion, which maintains the classical understanding of sin while attending to its contemporary manifestations. Fourth, pastoral contextuality, which calls for the integration of theological depth and

contextual sensitivity in addressing the moral and spiritual realities of digital life. These principles are not optional but must be held together as a coherent theological and pastoral framework.

Practically, this study demonstrates that faithfulness to Pentecostal theological identity and relevance to digital culture are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they constitute a productive tension that must be navigated with theological maturity. Rejecting digital engagement risks losing pastoral connection with contemporary congregations, while uncritical adaptation risks theological dilution. The appropriate path is one of critical engagement doing theology faithfully within the realities of digital culture.

The implications of this study extend across several domains. In theological education, there is a need to integrate digital hamartiology and biblically grounded digital ethics into ministerial formation. In pastoral praxis, there is a need to develop approaches that are not only responsive to crises but also formative and preventive in shaping digital moral discipline. In ecclesiology, the church must reconsider its understanding of community and accountability to include the digital dimension, ensuring that spiritual responsibility is not limited to physically observable contexts.

This study acknowledges its limitations as a literature-based theological inquiry. The framework proposed here requires further empirical validation through qualitative and quantitative research, particularly studies that examine the lived experiences of pastors and counselees within digital pastoral counseling contexts. Such future research will be essential for refining and strengthening the theological construct developed in this study.

Ultimately, this research serves as a call for the Pentecostal church to engage the realities of digital life with both theological fidelity and pastoral responsibility. Digital hamartiology, as proposed here, is not a final or closed system, but an open and developing framework. As human interaction continues to evolve, so too must the church's theological reflection without compromising the enduring truth of Scripture, the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, and the pastoral calling to guide individuals toward genuine repentance and restoration in every sphere of life, including the increasingly central domain of digital existence.

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