

Spirit-Led Formation: Pentecostal Pneumatology and Children's Spirituality in the Digital Era

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana pneumatologi Pentakosta memberikan dasar teologis untuk pembentukan spiritualitas anak di era digital. Permasalahan utama yang diangkat adalah meningkatnya kecenderungan superfisialitas iman di kalangan Generasi Alfa yang tumbuh dalam budaya digital yang sarat dengan konektivitas, namun sering kali miskin kedalaman rohani. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan teologi kualitatif dengan metode hermeneutik dan grounded theory, yang menggabungkan kajian eksegesis terhadap teks biblika (Kisah Para Rasul 2 dan Yoel 2) dengan analisis kepustakaan atas penelitian-penelitian terkini dalam bidang teologi Pentakosta dan pendidikan Kristen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Roh Kudus tetap berkarya secara aktif dalam konteks digital, membentuk anak-anak sebagai peserta yang berdaya rohani dalam misi penebusan Allah. Melalui kerangka Spirit-Led Transformative Formation, ditemukan bahwa pembentukan spiritualitas anak dapat dikembangkan melalui lima dimensi, yaitu pengalaman, relasional, kognitif, etis, dan misioner. Dengan demikian, teknologi tidak harus dipandang sebagai ancaman bagi iman, tetapi dapat menjadi media kudus untuk pendidikan rohani apabila diarahkan oleh bimbingan Roh Kudus serta didukung oleh pendekatan pedagogis yang berpusat pada karya-Nya.

Kata kunci: budaya digital; formasi rohani; pendidikan Kristen; pneumatologi Pentakosta; spiritualitas anak

Abstract

This study explores how Pentecostal pneumatology provides a theological foundation for shaping children's spirituality in the digital era. The research addresses the problem of spiritual superficiality among Generation Alpha, which grows up in a technology-saturated environment that both connects and distracts. Using a qualitative theological approach that integrates hermeneutic and grounded theory methods, this study analyzes biblical texts (Acts 2; Joel 2) and recent scholarly findings in Pentecostal and Christian education. The results show that the Holy Spirit continues to work powerfully in digital contexts, forming children as active participants in God's redemptive mission. A Spirit-led transformative framework is proposed, encompassing experiential, relational, cognitive, ethical, and missional dimensions that guide Christian education and family discipleship. The study concludes that technology can serve as a sacred medium for faith formation when it is directed by the Holy Spirit and supported by a Spirit-centered pedagogy.

Keywords: Christian education; digital culture; Pentecostal pneumatology; spiritual formation; spirituality of children

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology in the twenty-first century has profoundly reshaped patterns of human thought, communication, and learning. Generation Alpha, the cohort born after 2010, represents the first generation to grow up entirely within a digital environment.¹ Smart devices, social media, and instant information have deeply influenced how they perceive reality, including dimensions of faith and spirituality. For children, the digital sphere is not merely a platform for play and learning; it has become a formative environment shaping their values, moral imagination, and identity. Within Christian theology, this phenomenon presents a critical question for both church and family: how can children's spirituality be nurtured in a culture dominated by immediacy, distraction, and superficial spiritual engagement?

Pentecostal theology offers a vital lens for addressing this question. Rooted in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4), Pentecostalism affirms the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that God will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, including sons and daughters (Joel 2:28–29). This intergenerational promise signifies that children are not peripheral recipients of faith but active participants in the Spirit's redemptive mission.² The Pentecostal vision thus challenges traditional paradigms that limit theological agency to adults and opens the possibility of experiencing the Spirit's fullness across age boundaries. Feller and Lombaard affirm that children are capable of authentic encounters with the Holy Spirit, which must be recognized, nurtured, and integrated into the communal life of the church.³

Yet, the digitalization of human experience has dramatically altered how spirituality is formed and expressed. Constant exposure to technology without adequate spiritual guidance may weaken essential faith disciplines such as prayer, Scripture reading, and communal worship. Pattipeiluhu and Tasijawa found that excessive use of digital media diminishes children's spiritual attentiveness within both family and church contexts.⁴ However,

¹ Ilga Novianti, Ria, Hukmi, Maria, "Generasi Alpha-Tumbuh Dengan Gadget Dalam Genggaman," *Educhild (Pendidikan dan Sosial)* 8, no. 2 (2019): 66.

² Elia Tambunan and Haqqul Yaqin, "Beragama Yang Disruptif Di Era Post-Truth: Klausu 'Yaitu Di Dalam Nama Tuhan Yesus Kristus'Isi Doktrinal Pantekostalisme Di Indonesia Dipangungkan Aktor Digital Media Sosial," *DIEGESIS: Jurnal Teologi Kharismatika* 8, no. 1 (June 28, 2025): 19–58, <https://ojs.sttrealbatam.ac.id/index.php/diegesis/article/view/658>.

³ Jeremy Feller and Christo Lombaard, "Spiritual Formation towards Pentecostal Leadership as Discipleship," *Koers - Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 83, no. 1 (October 18, 2018), <http://www.koersjournal.org.za/index.php/koers/article/view/2254>.

⁴ Krislina Pattipeiluhu and Riski Tasijawa, "Fungsi Kontrol Keluarga Kristen Dan Pembentukan Karakter Anak Generasi Alpha: Sebuah Studi Kasus Di GKI EL-ROI Sentani,"

Simangunsong and Hermanto demonstrate that technology can also serve as an effective medium for faith formation when employed theologically and guided by the Holy Spirit.⁵ This tension reveals the dual nature of the digital environment, as both a challenge and an opportunity for the Spirit's transformative work.

Pentecostal spirituality, which emphasizes *experiential faith* (faith encountered and embodied through the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit) provides a relevant paradigm for digital-age formation. Smith contends that genuine faith is not merely intellectual but is cultivated through habits that reorient human desires toward God.⁶ Willard adds that spiritual character develops through consistent disciplines that shape the believer's inner transformation.⁷ Within the Indonesian context, Gultom underscores that Pentecostal theology strengthens Christian education in the digital era by positioning the experience of the Spirit at the heart of learning and discipleship.⁸ This view aligns with the Pentecostal conviction that the Spirit's work is not confined to ecclesial rituals but extends into all spheres of life, including digital interactions.

Furthermore, Tambunan and Yaqin emphasize that children's spirituality cannot be detached from the family context. Parental modeling, shared prayer, and warm relational communication are essential for fostering faith amid digital saturation.⁹ Waruwu and Lawalata support this perspective, noting that Spirit-led digital ministry can bridge generational gaps within the church, creating intergenerational discipleship rooted in Pentecostal

Real Kiddos: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini 3, no. 1 (September 20, 2024): 40–53, <https://ojs.sttrealbatam.ac.id/index.php/kiddos/article/view/589>.

⁵ Meriko Zonnediy Simangunsong and Yanto Paulus Hermanto, "Strategi Pembinaan Pemimpin Berkarakter Kristen Sebagai Upaya Gereja Mempersiapkan Generasi Muda Menghadapi Bonus Demografi 2030," *Didache: Journal of Christian Education* 4, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 208–224, <https://journal.sttsimpson.ac.id/index.php/DJCE/article/view/727>.

⁶ James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Michigan: Brazos Press, 2016).

⁷ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado: Navpress, 2021).

⁸ Joni Manumpak Parulian Gultom, "Transformative Theology in the Digital Era: A Qualitative Exploration of Generation Z's Perception of the Fullness of Life in Christ (Colossians 2: 6-7)," *Jurnal Jaffray* 23, no. 1 (April 30, 2025): 35, <https://ojs.sttjaffray.ac.id/JJV71/article/view/1006>.

⁹ Tambunan and Yaqin, "Beragama Yang Disruptif Di Era Post-Truth: Klausu 'Yaitu Di Dalam Nama Tuhan Yesus Kristus' Isi Doktrinal Pantekostalisme Di Indonesia Dipangungkan Aktor Digital Media Sosial."

pneumatology.¹⁰ In this sense, the household becomes a microcosm of the Spirit-filled community envisioned in Acts 2:42–47, where fellowship, prayer, and teaching converge as means of grace.

However, despite growing interest in children's spirituality and the use of digital media in religious formation, no existing studies have systematically linked Pentecostal pneumatology to the digital formation of children, particularly within the Indonesian Pentecostal context. Most research remains descriptive or pedagogical, lacking an integrated theological framework that situates digital engagement within the dynamics of the Holy Spirit's transformative work. This gap underscores the need for a Pentecostal theological model that connects pneumatology, spirituality, and digital formation.

In light of these realities, the digital era should not be perceived merely as a technological disruption but as a providential opportunity to renew Pentecostal approaches to children's spirituality. Within the Indonesian context, many Pentecostal congregations (such as GPdI, GSJA, and GBI) have begun adapting to digital transformation through online Sunday schools, hybrid worship, and the creative use of platforms like YouTube, Zoom, and WhatsApp for children's discipleship. These initiatives, which became especially prominent during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, reveal both the potential and the challenge of maintaining authentic encounters with the Holy Spirit in virtual spaces. The same Holy Spirit who was poured out on the Day of Pentecost continues to work powerfully in today's digital world, forming a generation of Spirit-empowered children who embody godly character, wisdom, and witness amid technological complexity. Therefore, this study aims to develop a Pentecostal theological model of children's spirituality in the digital era by bridging biblical pneumatology with empirical insights from the Indonesian context, offering both theological depth and practical guidance for Spirit-led formation in contemporary Christian education.

THEORY

Pentecostal Pneumatology and Spiritual Formation

Pentecostal theology centers on the transformative work of the Holy Spirit as the empowering presence of God who renews individuals and communities. Pneumatology in Pentecostal thought is inherently experiential,

¹⁰ Elfin Warnius Waruwu and Mozes Lawalata, "Membangun Masyarakat Digital Yang Beretika: Mengintegrasikan Nilai-Nilai Kristen Di Era Teknologi Digital 5.0," *Didache: Journal of Christian Education* 5, no. 1 (June 25, 2024): 22–46, <https://journal.sttsimpson.ac.id/index.php/DJCE/article/view/747>.

emphasizing divine encounter, empowerment, and participation.¹¹ The Pentecostal narratives of Acts 2:1–4 and Joel 2:28–29 forms the biblical foundation for understanding the Spirit’s work across generations “your sons and daughters will prophesy”, indicating that children are vital participants in God’s redemptive mission.

Tambunan and Yaqin highlight how Indonesian Pentecostal theology affirms this inclusivity, emphasizing the doctrinal clause “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” as central to a disruptive theology of the Spirit in the post-truth digital era. Their findings demonstrate how Pentecostalism engages social media as a pneumatological space, where faith and digital expression intersect.¹² This provides theological grounding for reimagining spiritual formation not only within the church but also within digital ecosystems.

Feller and Lombaard argue that Pentecostal formation must orient leadership and discipleship around authentic spiritual transformation through the Spirit. Their study presents a model where formation (*discipleship*) is both a divine and communal process shaped by the Spirit’s continual guidance. In this sense, Pentecostal spirituality moves beyond cognitive instruction to embody *Spirit-led transformation*.¹³ The implication for children’s formation is clear: spiritual growth occurs through participation in the Spirit’s life rather than mere transmission of doctrine.

A grounded theory synthesis from these sources reveals that Pentecostal spirituality frames learning as *an encounter and an imitation*. The Holy Spirit becomes the central agent of transformation, nurturing habits, affections, and imagination toward Christlikeness, a view that resonates with Smith’s notion that spiritual formation flows from love-oriented practices that direct desire toward God.¹⁴

In contrast to Evangelical traditions, which often emphasize cognitive understanding and personal decision for Christ, and Catholic traditions, which highlight sacramental participation and ecclesial nurture, Pentecostal theology introduces a pneumatological distinctiveness. It views children not merely as passive recipients of religious instruction but as active participants in the

¹¹ Mark J. Cartledge and Wolfgang Vondey, *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

¹² Tambunan and Yaqin, “Beragama Yang Disruptif Di Era Post-Truth: Klausu ‘Yaitu Di Dalam Nama Tuhan Yesus Kristus’ Isi Doktrinal Pantekostalisme Di Indonesia Dipangungkan Aktor Digital Media Sosial.”

¹³ Feller and Lombaard, “Spiritual Formation towards Pentecostal Leadership as Discipleship.”

¹⁴ Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*.

Spirit's empowering presence. Whereas Evangelical and Catholic approaches tend to mediate faith formation through institutional or doctrinal frameworks, the Pentecostal perspective underscores *direct encounter*, that the Spirit Himself forms, teaches, and empowers even the youngest believers. This experiential and participatory dimension constitutes the theological novelty of Pentecostal formation, especially relevant in addressing the challenges of digital culture.

Children's Spirituality in the Digital Era

Children's spirituality in the contemporary age is profoundly shaped by the digital environment. Novianti et al., describe Generation Alpha as a cohort raised with "gadgets in hand," where technological familiarity profoundly influences their cognitive and affective development. While this generation benefits from expanded access to knowledge, digital overstimulation can diminish attention spans and reduce sensitivity to the reflective and relational dimensions of faith.¹⁵ Nevertheless, spiritual formation does not depend on technology itself, but on the Spirit of God who works through every medium to awaken faith, conviction, and worship in the hearts of children.

Pattipeiluhu and Tasijawa emphasize that within Christian families, excessive digital consumption can disrupt the moral and spiritual control functions of parents, weakening the formation of Christian character in Generation Alpha.¹⁶ However, they also affirm that the family remains the primary locus of spiritual nurture when digital engagement is guided by Christian ethics, prayer, and sensitivity to the Spirit's leading. Within Pentecostal understanding, the family becomes a sacred space where the Holy Spirit mediates transformation, turning even digital interactions into opportunities for grace, guidance, and relational intimacy with God.

In line with this, Simangunsong and Hermanto examine leadership formation within the Indonesian church, arguing that intentional mentoring and character-based education (supported by digital tools) can prepare young believers for responsible service amid societal shifts such as the 2030 demographic bonus. Their study indicates that technology, when contextualized within Spirit-led pedagogy, becomes an instrument through which the Spirit enables discernment, wisdom, and spiritual resilience. Thus,

¹⁵ Novianti, Ria, Hukmi, Maria, "Generasi Alpha-Tumbuh Dengan Gadget Dalam Genggaman."

¹⁶ Pattipeiluhu and Tasijawa, "Fungsi Kontrol Keluarga Kristen Dan Pembentukan Karakter Anak Generasi Alpha: Sebuah Studi Kasus Di GKI EL-ROI Sentani."

technology's redemptive potential depends not on its functions but on its submission to divine purpose.¹⁷

A grounded analysis of these findings reveals a central theological insight: the digital sphere both challenges and expands children's capacity for spiritual experience, but the Spirit remains the agent who sanctifies and animates all genuine spirituality. Children's spirituality must therefore be re-envisioned as both embodied and mediated, rooted not merely in psychological development or cultural adaptation, but in the mysterious, transformative presence of the Holy Spirit who continues to form believers, even within the complexities of digital life.

Integrating Spirit-Led Pedagogy in Digital Formation

Recent scholarship has begun bridging Pentecostal theology and digital discipleship through *Spirit-led pedagogy*. Gultom explores how transformative theology can help Generation Z and Alpha perceive the "fullness of life in Christ" (Colossians 2:6-7) even in a digitally saturated world. His qualitative findings show that Spirit-empowered teaching fosters relational awareness, gratitude, and moral stability among young believers, countering the fragmented identity often produced by online culture.¹⁸

Waruwu and Lawalata complement this view by proposing ethical digital citizenship grounded in Christian values. They argue that digital transformation must be integrated with moral formation inspired by the Holy Spirit, producing socially responsible and ethically engaged believers.¹⁹ Willard supports this by describing Christian character as the result of consistent spiritual disciplines that align the inner self with divine intention.²⁰

Theologically, Pentecostal formation situates these practices within *koinonia* (Spirit-empowered fellowship) where learning is communal, relational, and embodied. As Feller and Lombaard observe, discipleship in Pentecostal contexts is relational rather than hierarchical, nurturing leaders and children alike to embody Spirit-shaped virtues in daily life.²¹ Compared to Evangelical

¹⁷ Simangunsong and Hermanto, "Strategi Pembinaan Pemimpin Berkarakter Kristen Sebagai Upaya Gereja Mempersiapkan Generasi Muda Menghadapi Bonus Demografi 2030."

¹⁸ Gultom, "Transformative Theology in the Digital Era: A Qualitative Exploration of Generation Z's Perception of the Fullness of Life in Christ (Colossians 2: 6-7)."

¹⁹ Waruwu and Lawalata, "Membangun Masyarakat Digital Yang Beretika: Mengintegrasikan Nilai-Nilai Kristen Di Era Teknologi Digital 5.0."

²⁰ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*.

²¹ Feller and Lombaard, "Spiritual Formation towards Pentecostal Leadership as Discipleship."

emphasis on biblical literacy and Catholic focus on catechetical tradition, Pentecostal pedagogy uniquely centers on *encounter-based learning*, where the Spirit's presence transforms digital learning environments into spaces of divine revelation and communal empowerment.

Theological Synthesis and Research Gap

Collectively, these studies reveal a convergence between Pentecostal pneumatology, spiritual formation, and digital theology. Yet, a distinct research gap remains in connecting Pentecostal understandings of the Spirit's work with the lived spirituality of children in digital culture. Most studies focus either on leadership development or on general digital ethics, with little systematic attention to how Pentecostal pneumatology can inform the spiritual formation of children specifically.

This study thus positions itself within that emerging field. It proposes a grounded theological synthesis: that the Holy Spirit, as the transformative presence of God, actively forms children's spirituality within both ecclesial and digital spaces. By integrating biblical pneumatology (Acts 2; Joel 2) with educational and technological insights, this paper advances the novelty of a Pentecostal model of Spirit-led digital formation, offering a theological framework particularly relevant to Indonesian charismatic Christianity.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative theological design combining hermeneutical analysis and grounded theory interpretation to explore the relationship between Pentecostal pneumatology, children's spirituality, and digital formation. The method is analytical and interpretive rather than quantitative, grounded in biblical exegesis, theological reasoning, and systematic synthesis of contemporary scholarship. Following the principles of practical theological inquiry,²² the research proceeds from textual interpretation to contextual reflection, integrating Scripture, theology, and educational insights.

A document-based qualitative analysis was conducted using both primary and secondary sources. Primary texts include Acts 2:1–4 and Joel 2:28–29, providing the biblical foundation for intergenerational spirituality. Secondary data consist of 32 peer-reviewed journal articles and books

²² Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008).

published between 2016–2025, purposively selected for theological and contextual relevance to Indonesian Pentecostalism and digital spirituality. Key international sources include Cartledge,²³ Smith,²⁴ and Willard,²⁵ complemented by Indonesian theological studies such as Tambunan & Yaqin,²⁶ Pattipeiluhu & Tasijawa,²⁷ and Gultom.²⁸

The grounded-theory process followed three interpretive stages. *First*, hermeneutical interpretation examined biblical and theological texts contextually to uncover the pneumatological meaning of the Pentecost narratives and their implications for children's inclusion in the Spirit's mission. This analysis applied Gadamer's dialogical hermeneutic, adapted to a Pentecostal interpretive framework that emphasizes divine encounter, experiential knowledge, and the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit in shaping faith communities.²⁹

Second, grounded theological categorization was conducted by analyzing a range of relevant sources, generating several open codes that were then organized into five major categories: Spirit-led pedagogy, digital spirituality, intergenerational formation, moral-ethical discernment, and ecclesial-digital integration. The process followed Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory approach, modified for theological inquiry, enabling key themes to emerge inductively from textual and contextual data rather than from predetermined doctrinal systems.³⁰

Third, the integrative theological reflection stage synthesized the emergent categories into a conceptual model of Spirit-led digital formation, uniting biblical exegesis, theological constructs, and empirical insights from Indonesian Pentecostal practices. Interpretations were validated through theological triangulation, linking scriptural exegesis, academic literature, and practical expressions such as digital Sunday schools and online children's

²³ Cartledge and Vondey, *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*.

²⁴ Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*.

²⁵ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*.

²⁶ Tambunan and Yaqin, "Beragama Yang Disruptif Di Era Post-Truth: Klausu 'Yaitu Di Dalam Nama Tuhan Yesus Kristus' Isi Doktrinal Pantekostalisme Di Indonesia Dipangungkan Aktor Digital Media Sosial."

²⁷ Pattipeiluhu and Tasijawa, "Fungsi Kontrol Keluarga Kristen Dan Pembentukan Karakter Anak Generasi Alpha: Sebuah Studi Kasus Di GKI EL-ROI Sentani."

²⁸ Gultom, "Transformative Theology in the Digital Era: A Qualitative Exploration of Generation Z's Perception of the Fullness of Life in Christ (Colossians 2: 6-7)."

²⁹ Amos Yong, *Renewing the Church by the Spirit: Theological Education after Pentecost* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2020).

³⁰ Kathy Charmaz, "Grounded Theory in Global Perspective," *Qualitative Inquiry* 20, no. 9 (November 28, 2014): 1074–1084, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1077800414545235>.

ministries. Methodological triangulation across Scripture, theology, and contextual practice strengthened validity, while reliability was ensured through consistent coding and engagement with both Indonesian and international peer-reviewed Pentecostal research.

The overall analysis is structured around three interconnected dimensions: (1) the Biblical-Theological Foundation, which explores the pneumatological inclusion of children as Spirit-receivers; (2) Contextual Dynamics, which examine the challenges and opportunities of digital culture for children's spiritual formation; and (3) the Transformative Framework, which presents a Spirit-led model of digital discipleship integrating Pentecostal theology and Christian education. This integrated structure ensures coherence between hermeneutical exegesis, grounded analysis, and theological synthesis, resulting in a methodologically transparent and theologically rigorous model.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study are derived from a hermeneutical analysis of Scripture and a grounded synthesis of contemporary theological research on Pentecostal pneumatology, Christian education, and digital formation. The primary aim is to reveal the conceptual linkages between Pentecostal theology and children's spirituality within Generation Alpha's digital culture. The analysis crystallizes into a Spirit-Led Transformative Model (Figure 1), which visualizes the dynamic relationship between the movement of the Holy Spirit, pedagogical practice, digital engagement, and the outcomes of children's spiritual formation. This model presents a coherent theological and practical framework for nurturing faith in technologically mediated environments.

Biblical-Theological Findings

The hermeneutical reading of Acts 2:1–4 and Joel 2:28–29 affirms that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is intergenerational and inclusive, embracing children as active participants in God's redemptive mission, "your sons and daughters will prophesy." This inclusivity dismantles hierarchical assumptions about spiritual maturity and establishes that divine encounter, not age, defines spiritual participation. Within Pentecostal pneumatology, such inclusion signifies that children are not passive recipients of doctrine but Spirit-empowered agents within the community of faith.

The Spirit is both the source of charismatic gifts and the divine agent who initiates formation, transformation, and participation across all ages. As

Feller and Lombaard emphasize, authentic Pentecostal leadership and discipleship emerge through spiritual formation guided by the Spirit rather than by institutional mechanisms.³¹ This interpretation aligns with Tambunan and Yaqin, who argue that Indonesian Pentecostal theology must reclaim its biblical inclusivity amid post-truth digital disruption.³² Hence, the Spirit's role in children's lives is formative, relational, and transformative, cultivating spiritual sensitivity, moral awareness, and participation in the life of the Spirit-filled community.

Contextual and Educational Findings

Empirical theological research reveals that Generation Alpha is deeply shaped by digital technology as both a learning and socialization medium. Novianti et al. describe this generation as "born into connectivity," highlighting the omnipresence of screens, media, and information flow in their upbringing. However, this technological immersion has ambivalent effects.³³

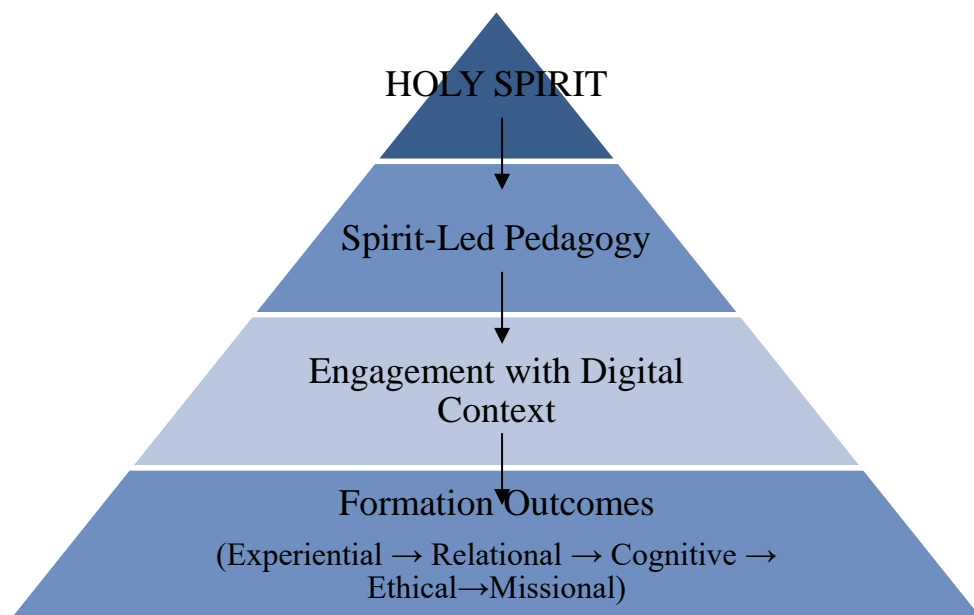


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Spirit-Led Digital Formation

³¹ Feller and Lombaard, "Spiritual Formation towards Pentecostal Leadership as Discipleship."

³² Tambunan and Yaqin, "Beragama Yang Disruptif Di Era Post-Truth: Klausua 'Yaitu Di Dalam Nama Tuhan Yesus Kristus' Isi Doktrinal Pantekostalisme Di Indonesia Dipangungkan Aktor Digital Media Sosial."

³³ Novianti, Ria, Hukmi, Maria, "Generasi Alpha-Tumbuh Dengan Gadget Dalam Genggaman."

Pattipeiluhu and Tasijawa found that excessive digital exposure weakens parental authority and diminishes the function of faith-based moral control within Christian families. At the same time, they suggest that intentional parental mediation (praying, dialoguing, and setting spiritual rhythms) restores balance and sustains spiritual growth.³⁴ Similarly, Simangunsong and Hermanto demonstrate that church-based mentoring utilizing digital platforms enhances moral awareness and leadership potential among youth, indicating that technology can facilitate faith formation when guided by theological intentionality.³⁵

These findings converge on a grounded observation: digital culture is not inherently detrimental to spirituality but requires *Spirit-guided engagement*. Gultom supports this through his study on transformative theology, revealing that digital pedagogy becomes redemptive when integrated with biblical reflection and experiential learning in Christ.³⁶

Emerging Theological Patterns

Through thematic coding of the reviewed studies, three dominant patterns emerge: *First*, Pneumatological inclusivity. Children are theological agents within the Spirit's work, capable of experiencing and expressing faith. *Second*, Digital ambivalence. Technology functions both as a threat and as a pedagogical tool for spiritual formation. *Third*, Integrative formation. The Spirit unites biblical instruction, family practice, and digital engagement into a holistic process of transformation. To conceptualize these relationships, a synthesis model was developed (Table 1). This table illustrates that Pentecostal spirituality does not reject digital culture but redefines it as a domain for divine encounter, ethical formation, and witness.

Discussion

The findings presented above reveal a convergent pattern between biblical pneumatology and contemporary studies on children's spirituality in the digital age. The analysis demonstrates that Pentecostal theology, with its emphasis on the experiential and transformative work of the Holy Spirit, provides a coherent theological foundation for addressing the challenges posed

³⁴ Pattipeiluhu and Tasijawa, "Fungsi Kontrol Keluarga Kristen Dan Pembentukan Karakter Anak Generasi Alpha: Sebuah Studi Kasus Di GKI EL-ROI Sentani."

³⁵ Simangunsong and Hermanto, "Strategi Pembinaan Pemimpin Berkarakter Kristen Sebagai Upaya Gereja Mempersiapkan Generasi Muda Menghadapi Bonus Demografi 2030."

³⁶ Gultom, "Transformative Theology in the Digital Era: A Qualitative Exploration of Generation Z's Perception of the Fullness of Life in Christ (Colossians 2: 6-7)."

by digital culture. Children are shown to be genuine recipients and participants in the Spirit's work, capable of spiritual discernment and witness within technologically mediated environments. At the same time, the reviewed literature underscores that digital engagement requires intentional spiritual direction, integrating family, church, and educational influences under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

These results collectively affirm that the formation of Generation Alpha cannot rely solely on traditional pedagogical models but must be reimagined as a *Spirit-led and contextually adaptive process*. Therefore, the following discussion elaborates on the theological interpretation of these findings, exploring how Pentecostal pneumatology can serve as a transformative framework for nurturing godly character, ethical discernment, and digital discipleship among children in contemporary Christian education and pastoral contexts.

Table 1. Spirit-Led Formation Framework for Children's Spirituality in the Digital Era

DIMENSION	PENTECOSTAL PRINCIPLE	DIGITAL CONTEXT EXPRESSION	THEOLOGICAL OUTCOME	SUPPORTING SOURCE
EXPERIENTIAL	Encounter with the Holy Spirit	Interactive prayer, worship apps, digital devotionals	Children experience God personally	Feller & Lombaard (2018); Womack (2020)
RELATIONAL	Koinonia and communal growth	Family-centered online worship, shared reflection	Strengthened faith bonds and empathy	Pattipeiluhu & Tasijawa (2024)
COGNITIVE	Scriptural illumination by the Spirit	Digital storytelling, Christian learning media	Deeper biblical understanding	Simangunsong & Hermanto (2023)
ETHICAL	Transformation of character through sanctification	Digital citizenship with Christian ethics	Moral discernment and integrity	Waruwu & Lawalata (2024)
MISSIONAL	Spirit-empowered witness	Creative digital testimony, social media mission	Public expression of faith and compassion	Tambunan & Yaqin (2025); Gultom (2025)

Reaffirming the Biblical Foundation of Intergenerational Spirituality

The results affirm that Pentecostal pneumatology provides a robust theological foundation for understanding the inclusion of children in God's redemptive mission. The prophetic declaration in *Joel 2:28–29* “*I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy*” establishes a divine vision that transcends generational boundaries. This prophetic text, fulfilled in *Acts 2:1–4*, portrays a Spirit who is not confined to the mature or the religious elite but who fills the community of believers without discrimination. The phrase “all flesh” encapsulates a radical inclusivity that encompasses children as part of the Spirit's activity in history. This continuity between promise and fulfillment constructs a biblical framework in which every believer, regardless of age, is invited to participate in the ongoing narrative of salvation and mission.

From this biblical premise, Pentecostal theology asserts that the Holy Spirit's work in children is not derivative but direct. Children are both recipients and bearers of the Spirit who empowers adults for ministry. Their capacity to experience and respond to God's presence challenges traditional hierarchies that often view spiritual depth as dependent on age or intellectual maturity. Feller and Lombaard affirm that authentic Pentecostal discipleship involves *participation in divine life*, a dynamic process of transformation through communion with the Spirit. Within this perspective, faith formation becomes more than the transmission of doctrine; it becomes an experiential journey of encounter, empowerment, and embodiment of the divine presence in everyday life.³⁷

This theological stance reframes Christian education for children as *relational transformation* rather than mere cognitive indoctrination. Pentecostal formation prioritizes the shaping of affections and habits over the accumulation of information. Smith articulates that the essence of spiritual formation lies in directing human desire toward God through worshipful practices that shape identity and imagination.³⁸ This aligns with the Pentecostal emphasis on affective spirituality, where songs, testimonies, and communal prayer serve as formative encounters with the Spirit. In this way, children are not passive learners but active participants who absorb faith through the rhythms of Spirit-filled community life.

³⁷ Feller and Lombaard, “Spiritual Formation towards Pentecostal Leadership as Discipleship.”

³⁸ Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*.

Consequently, Pentecostal theology must re-envision children's ministry as *Spirit-driven discipleship*, integrating experiential, relational, and missional elements. Spiritual encounter must be nurtured alongside biblical instruction, allowing children to experience God's reality within their cultural and technological context. The biblical narrative provides both epistemological grounding and practical guidance for responding to the challenges of digital modernity. Just as the Spirit bridged cultural and linguistic barriers at Pentecost, the same Spirit empowers the church today to cross digital boundaries, transforming online environments into spaces of worship, learning, and witness. Intergenerational spirituality thus becomes a living testimony to the universality of the Spirit's work, binding together children, youth, and adults in one divine fellowship that transcends both time and technology.

Navigating Digital Culture: Between Distraction and Discipleship

The rise of Generation Alpha represents a paradox of unprecedented connectivity and growing spiritual superficiality. Born into an age where screens mediate nearly every aspect of life, these children inhabit a digital ecosystem that both informs and deforms spiritual awareness. Novianti et al. describe this generation as "growing up with gadgets in hand," suggesting that constant digital exposure forms their cognitive and affective development in ways previous generations never experienced. While technology provides vast access to knowledge and global communication, it also cultivates instant gratification, shortened attention spans, and reduced capacity for contemplation.³⁹ In Christian families, these dynamics risk producing a faith that is shallowly informational rather than transformational, one that knows about God but seldom encounters Him personally.

Pattipeiluhu and Tasijawa identify this tension in their study on Christian families in Papua, revealing that unregulated media use erodes moral boundaries and weakens parental spiritual influence. Yet their findings also present hope: when digital consumption is shaped through intentional family prayer, worship, and discussion, the same technology becomes a catalyst for moral renewal.⁴⁰ Their insight resonates with Deuteronomy 6:6-7, where the command to "teach them diligently to your children" extends to every context of daily life, including the digital sphere. Thus, digital engagement does not

³⁹ Novianti, Ria, Hukmi, Maria, "Generasi Alpha-Tumbuh Dengan Gadget Dalam Genggaman."

⁴⁰ Pattipeiluhu and Tasijawa, "Fungsi Kontrol Keluarga Kristen Dan Pembentukan Karakter Anak Generasi Alpha: Sebuah Studi Kasus Di GKI EL-ROI Sentani."

inherently oppose spirituality; rather, it demands Spirit-led stewardship. Families and churches must reclaim technological tools as sacred instruments for cultivating faith, transforming devices of distraction into channels of devotion.

Pentecostalism offers a distinctive theological response to this cultural complexity by emphasizing *Spirit-led discernment*. The Pentecostal worldview recognizes that the Holy Spirit actively guides believers not only in worship but also in the ethical navigation of everyday life. Discernment, therefore, becomes a digital virtue a way of listening to the Spirit amid the noise of online culture. Simangunsong and Hermanto demonstrate that character-based mentorship, when supported by digital platforms, enhances moral resilience and leadership qualities among young believers. Their findings affirm that digital media, when used under the Spirit's direction, can amplify discipleship rather than hinder it.⁴¹ Pentecostal pedagogy thus moves beyond rejection or passive acceptance of technology toward a missional integration where faith formation occurs within, rather than outside, the digital environment.

From a theological perspective, this integrative vision extends Willard's notion of *disciplined grace* into digital spaces. Spiritual disciplines (such as prayer, meditation, and scriptural study) remain essential habits that shape the believer's inner life, even when practiced through digital formats like devotional apps, online study groups, or virtual worship.⁴² Within Pentecostal spirituality, these practices are not mechanistic but relational, enabling believers to encounter the Spirit's presence across physical and virtual boundaries. The digital realm, therefore, must not be viewed as a secularized territory but as a contemporary mission field infused with the Spirit's redemptive activity. When guided by discernment and spiritual discipline, technology becomes a vessel of divine grace, empowering families, educators, and churches to raise a generation whose digital fluency is matched by spiritual depth. The digital world, therefore, becomes not a secularized space but a mission field infused by the Spirit's presence.

In this light, the paradox of digital culture transforms into an opportunity for Pentecostal renewal. The same tools that once fragmented attention can now be repurposed for prayer, fellowship, and evangelism. The church's challenge is not to withdraw from the digital world but to inhabit it

⁴¹ Simangunsong and Hermanto, "Strategi Pembinaan Pemimpin Berkarakter Kristen Sebagai Upaya Gereja Mempersiapkan Generasi Muda Menghadapi Bonus Demografi 2030."

⁴² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*.

faithfully, bringing Pentecostal vitality into virtual spaces where meaning, identity, and faith are contested. By cultivating Spirit-led discipleship, the Pentecostal community bears witness that the outpouring of the Spirit on “all flesh” (Acts 2:17) includes digital natives. Through intentional formation and Spirit-empowered engagement, Generation Alpha can become a generation that not only navigates technology but sanctifies it, turning the digital landscape into a living testimony of God’s ongoing mission in the world.

The Spirit-Led Transformative Model

Integrating the findings yields a cohesive theological construct of *Spirit-Led Formation*. This model articulates how Pentecostal spirituality can renew both educational praxis and pastoral strategy for nurturing children’s spirituality in the digital age. Rooted in biblical pneumatology and supported by grounded research, this framework positions the Holy Spirit as the central agent of transformation, guiding children toward holistic growth (spiritual, moral, intellectual, and relational) within a technologically mediated world.

The experiential dimension reaffirms that personal encounters with the Holy Spirit serve as foundational moments of faith formation that are fully accessible to children. Within Pentecostal spirituality, divine encounter is not limited by age or environment; rather, it is cultivated through affective engagement that touches the heart and imagination. As Sidabutar and Prasetya explain, Pentecostal formation emphasizes songs, stories, and prayer as spiritual practices that open children to experience the living presence of God. In this sense, spirituality is not merely *taught* but *caught* embodied through worship, testimony, and shared spiritual experience.⁴³

The relational dimension underscores the vital role of family and church as *laboratories of faith*, where the Spirit works through relationships to nurture spiritual maturity. Digital media, when guided by the Spirit, extend these spaces of fellowship beyond physical boundaries, enabling intergenerational connection through online worship, devotionals, and collaborative learning platforms. This dynamic redefines *koinonia* for the digital generation, affirming that fellowship remains authentic even when mediated through screens, as long as it is animated by love, prayer, and mutual edification.⁴⁴

⁴³ Dewi Lidya Sidabutar and Didimus Sutanto B. Prasetya, “Digital Storytelling: Menstimulasi Minat Spiritualitas Pada Anak Generasi Alfa Di Era Posdigital,” *KURIOS* 10, no. 2 (August 31, 2024): 529–536, <https://sttpb.ac.id/e-journal/index.php/kurios/article/view/1064>.

⁴⁴ Pattipeiluhu and Tasijawa, “Fungsi Kontrol Keluarga Kristen Dan Pembentukan Karakter Anak Generasi Alpha: Sebuah Studi Kasus Di GKI EL-ROI Sentani.”

The cognitive and ethical dimensions integrate learning and moral responsibility under the direction of the Spirit. As Waruwu and Lawalata emphasize, Christian formation in the digital era must cultivate discernment, integrity, and responsible in media engagement as expressions of holiness in everyday life. Spirit-led education therefore aligns biblical wisdom with moral practice, teaching children to navigate digital content through the lens of Christlike character. Knowledge divorced from spiritual ethics risks producing superficial faith; yet, when guided by the Spirit, learning becomes transformative, uniting intellect with obedience and love.⁴⁵

Finally, the missional dimension envisions children as Spirit-empowered witnesses who embody the gospel in digital culture. The Pentecostal understanding of mission extends beyond geographical boundaries into the virtual realm, where testimonies, creative arts, and social media expressions can become instruments of grace. Children, empowered by the same Spirit poured out at Pentecost, are called to manifest godly values through kindness, creativity, and digital communication that reflect Christ's love.⁴⁶

In summary, the *Spirit-Led Transformative Model* offers a theologically grounded yet contextually adaptive paradigm that bridges biblical pneumatology, educational theory, and digital practice. It affirms that the Holy Spirit (who empowered the early church) is actively present in today's digital world, transforming technology into a sacred arena for worship, learning, and mission. This framework challenges Christian educators, parents, and churches to view the digital landscape not as a threat to spirituality but as a divine opportunity to cultivate godly character and intergenerational discipleship in the power of the Spirit.

Theological and Practical Implications

Theologically, this study contributes to Pentecostal scholarship by affirming that pneumatology is not confined to charismatic experience but extends to pedagogical formation and cultural engagement. Practically, it calls for an intentional reorientation of Christian education and pastoral care toward Spirit-led digital literacy. Churches and Christian schools are encouraged to

⁴⁵ Waruwu and Lawalata, "Membangun Masyarakat Digital Yang Beretika: Mengintegrasikan Nilai-Nilai Kristen Di Era Teknologi Digital 5.0."

⁴⁶ Didimus Sutanto B. Prasetya, Dewi Lidya S, and Alton Waruwu, "Menumbuhkan Jiwa Misional Pada Anak Usia Dini Melalui Pendidikan Kristen Yang Holistik," in *Prosiding Simposium Nasional Alusia: Indonesia for World Mission* (Batam: Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Real Batam, 2024), 188–196.

design curricula and media resources that foster reflective faith, emotional intelligence, and ethical awareness among children.

Furthermore, the findings open dialogue for future interdisciplinary research between theology, psychology, and communication studies, exploring how Spirit-centered pedagogy can sustain faith identity amid technological acceleration. The study thus reinforces the relevance of Pentecostal-charismatic theology in shaping a godly Generation Alpha, spiritually resilient in the age of algorithms.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Pentecostal pneumatology offers a profound theological foundation for understanding and nurturing children's spirituality in the digital era. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit affirms that children are not passive recipients of faith but active participants in God's redemptive mission. True spiritual formation arises from the transformative presence of the Spirit, who sanctifies and renews every dimension of human life, including digital engagement. Within this framework of Spirit-led formation technology is not a determining factor but a contextual medium that serves, rather than supplants, the Spirit's formative work. Accordingly, the church, family, and Christian educators are called to collaborate in cultivating digital discipleship that remains grounded in pneumatological and incarnational theology. The task of nurturing Generation Alpha is therefore not merely pedagogical but spiritual, centering on participation in the life of the Spirit who continues to form, guide, and empower believers across generations. Future research may explore practical implementations of Spirit-led Formation in digital ministries and Christian educational settings to ensure that technology remains a servant of divine purpose in shaping godly character and enduring faith.

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