



## Phenomenological psychodiagnostics and testology: Advantages and disadvantages of methods in wartime conditions

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◆ **Abstract.** The relevance of this topic is driven by the growing need for high-quality psychodiagnostic support for military personnel and veterans who have experienced combat and related psychologically traumatic events. The aim of the study was to conduct a comparative analysis of phenomenological and testological approaches, identifying their advantages, limitations, and possibilities for integration within psychological support practice. The study employed theoretical-methodological, systemic, comparative, and SWOT analysis methods. The specific features of qualitative and quantitative methods for assessing an individual's mental state in wartime conditions, as well as the peculiarities of interpreting psychodiagnostic results, were examined. It was established that the phenomenological approach provides a deep understanding of an individual's subjective experience, allowing consideration of personal characteristics in experiencing combat, loss, fear, and post-traumatic changes; however, it is characterised by a high degree of subjectivity and difficulties in standardisation. The testological approach, in turn, is distinguished by its objectivity, standardisation, and capacity for rapid assessment of psycho-emotional status, which is particularly important within systems of psychological support for military personnel. At the same time, its application has certain limitations related to the insufficient consideration of the individual context in experiencing traumatic events: the standardised response format leaves little room for expressing the unique meanings individuals attribute to their experiences, while numerical scales are unable to capture the complexity of existential states, survivor guilt, moral injury, or loss of identity, all of which are characteristic of wartime experience. The study substantiates the appropriateness of integrating phenomenological psychodiagnostics and testology as complementary approaches, making it possible to combine the objectivity and standardisation of psychometric methods with a profound understanding of an individual's subjective experience. The practical significance of the study lies in the potential application of its findings to improve psychodiagnostic support for military personnel and veterans, as well as in the professional training of military psychologists

◆ **Keywords:** interpretation; client-centred approach; psychological assessment; psychological trauma; quantitative methods

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## ◆ Introduction

In the context of contemporary armed conflicts, military and crisis psychologists face the pressing challenge of conducting a rapid yet thoroughly comprehensive assessment of the mental state of military personnel, veterans and civilians who have been affected by combat operations. Psychodiagnostics is currently caught between two demands: on the one hand, it must ensure speed, objectivity and reproducibility of results for mass screening; on the other, it must preserve the integrity, uniqueness and authenticity of an individual's psychological experience. This methodological tension between objective test measurements and a subjective understanding of the individual is central to extreme and military psychology. In their practical work, specialists are constantly faced with a dilemma: standardised tests allow for the rapid assessment of stress resilience and the identification of risks of PTSD or depressive states, which is critically important for professional selection and monitoring the combat readiness of units. However, as noted by T.J. VanderWeele *et al.* (2025), the uncritical, linear use of tests alone carries the risk of reductionism: complex existential experiences, and the experience of combat-related psychological trauma or moral injury, are often reduced to dry numerical scores. At the same time, moving beyond formal scales through the analysis of subjective meanings, survivor guilt or the loss of comrades requires a qualitative understanding of a person's lived world. Consequently, resolving the conflict between the speed of measurement and the depth of understanding is of the utmost relevance to contemporary science. M. Sapkota's (2024) historical and methodological analysis demonstrated that the priorities of scientific research in psychodiagnostics have changed in stages, progressing from rigid standardisation to profound human-centredness and subsequent synthesis. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the testometric (psychometric) method gained unquestionable popularity, as the author emphasised. Thus, the classics formulated the fundamental principles of testing, established criteria for reliability, validity, standardisation of procedures, and mathematical and statistical analysis of data. When dealing with unique war-related trauma, purely quantitative methods demonstrate their limitations, as they are unable to capture the unique context of an individual's experiences.

In contrast, the phenomenological approach has been gaining popularity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. T. Fuchs & H. Wendler (2023) focused on a person's immediate subjective experience and their individual meanings. Phenomenological epistemology has called into question the rigid reductionist strategies of purely testological or Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)-oriented diagnosis. In this context, psychodiagnostics has transformed into a space for the researcher's empathetic engagement, where the interview and dialogue themselves become therapeutic factors and the basis for establishing a trusting relationship with veterans. The current stage of scientific development, namely the 2020s, is characterised by researchers increasingly adopting and developing an

integrative approach. B. Nelson *et al.* (2021) argued that no single approach, taken in isolation, is sufficient for studying the complex nature of the psyche. In particular, B. Nelson *et al.* (2021) demonstrated the need to combine objective clinical quantitative assessment with in-depth phenomenological profiling of the patient's subjective experience. In a wartime context, such a methodological synthesis makes it possible to combine the efficiency of initial screening with an understanding of an individual's life history. Identifying previously unaddressed aspects of the overall problem. Despite significant scientific progress, the issue of the systematic integration of phenomenological and testological approaches in the context of wartime conditions remains under-researched. Most contemporary works focus either on the statistical aspects of standardising psychometric instruments or on considering phenomenology as a distinct humanities-based approach. At the same time, interpretative phenomenological analysis is gaining popularity as a means of studying personal life experience from the narrator's perspective. In O. Bayer's (2024) work, experience was interpreted as a phenomenal, rather than an objective, reality, with an emphasis on the importance of the sociocultural context.

However, a clear conceptual model combining methods within a single applied algorithm for crisis psychologists has not yet been proposed. This highlights the need for in-depth methodological reflection, which is a prerequisite for the development of contemporary scientific knowledge. A systematic examination of all the strengths and weaknesses of each approach is of fundamental importance for psychologists who work directly with issues of PTSD and war-related psychological trauma. A thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of testology and phenomenology equips specialists with clear guidelines for selecting diagnostic tools at various stages of rehabilitation. This makes it possible to avoid methodological bias, the oversimplification of complex traumatic symptoms, and regrettable diagnostic errors. Furthermore, the results of this analysis will be useful in developing and refining specialised training courses in military psychology and the methodology of psychological research for the training and professional development of specialists. The aim of this study was to conduct a systematic comparative analysis of the phenomenological and testological approaches in psychodiagnostics, to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to substantiate a conceptual model for their integration into the practice of psychological support for military personnel and veterans under martial law.

## ◆ Materials and Methods

The study was conducted as a theoretical and methodological analysis, which is an appropriate type of research design for the comparative study of methodological approaches in psychological science. The object of the study was phenomenological psychodiagnostics and testology as two leading methodological systems for assessing an

individual's mental state. The subject was their comparative characteristics, advantages, limitations and potential for integration in wartime conditions. The research source base comprised scientific publications, monographs and teaching guides covering three key areas: (1) classical and contemporary works on psychometrics and testology; (2) the phenomenological tradition in psychology and psychiatry; (3) integrative and military-psychological approaches. The criteria for selecting sources were: relevance to the research topic, the scientific authority of the publication, and the chronological principle – priority was given to publications reflecting both classical principles and the current state of the debate; The source base included materials indexed in leading scientometric databases – Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar. Overall, the analysis incorporated the concepts of E. Husserl (1970), J. Parnas & L.A. Sass (2008) and G. Messas *et al.* (2018).

The study employed a range of complementary methods. The theoretical and methodological analysis enabled a systematic review of academic sources and the identification of the key characteristics of each approach. Systemic analysis made it possible to consider phenomenological psychodiagnostics and testology as coherent methodological systems with their own epistemological logic, rather than as a set of separate techniques. Comparative analysis was used to compare the two approaches across nine criteria – data type, depth, objectivity, speed, individual approach, purpose of diagnosis, field of application, risk of retraumatisation, and suitability for wartime conditions – resulting in a consolidated comparative table. SWOT analysis was chosen as the methodological tool due to its ability to structure a multidimensional comparative characterisation of the two approaches within a single analytical matrix: unlike a linear list of advantages and disadvantages, it allows for the simultaneous consideration of both the internal properties of the methods (strengths and weaknesses) and the external conditions of their application (opportunities and threats), which is appropriate in the context of the extreme conditions of martial law, where the choice of diagnostic tools depends not only on their psychometric characteristics but also on situational, resource-related and ethical factors.

## ◆ Results

Contemporary psychodiagnostics under martial law is characterised by the intense coexistence of various methodological approaches, amongst which the phenomenological and psychometric (testological) approaches occupy a prominent place. Each of these reflects a specific understanding of the nature of the psyche, the ways in which it is understood, and the interpretation of the results obtained (Danylyan & Dzoban, 2019). In wartime conditions, the choice of approach is determined not only by theoretical preferences, but also by factors such as extreme circumstances, time constraints and the specific nature of the traumatic experiences of military personnel and the civilian population. Phenomenological psychodiagnostics

focuses primarily on exploring the inner world of the individual, their subjective experience, unique experiences of existential crisis, loss and combat trauma, as well as the meanings that a person ascribes to their own life during wartime. This approach is based on the idea of the integrity of the individual, which cannot be reduced to individual indicators or measurable variables (Messas, 2022). Within the phenomenological tradition, the diagnostic process is dialogical in nature: the interaction between the psychologist and the client is not merely a means of gathering information, but also a direct factor in psychological change and primary therapeutic support. As emphasised by E. Husserl (1970), in wartime conditions, the psychologist is an active participant in the process of understanding, which requires an exceptionally high level of reflection, empathy, interpretative skills and a readiness to work with severe psychological trauma. This ensures a deep and holistic understanding of the individual, taking into account their wartime context, personal history (for example, experiences of being under fire or under occupation) and value system. The main advantage of phenomenology in wartime is that it helps to avoid retraumatisation, which can be triggered by dry, formulaic test questions, and enables the identification of a specific individual's unique adaptive or destructive coping mechanisms. At the same time, such depth is accompanied by significant drawbacks in a state of war: a reduction in the objectivity and standardisation of results, as the significant role of subjective factors complicates their verification and replication; excessive resource consumption (in terms of time and emotional energy) – this approach is less suitable for mass or rapid screenings (for example, during mobilisation screening or rapid assessments during evacuation), and is therefore most effective in hospital clinical practice, in-depth psychotherapy and long-term counselling (Holiardyk & Kupchyshyna, 2021).

In contrast, testology is grounded in the principles of objectivity, standardisation, and the quantitative measurement of psychological characteristics (levels of anxiety, depression, symptoms of PTSD, or combat-related psychological trauma). It involves the use of standardised instruments with fixed responses, the results of which are subject to quantitative processing and comparison with normative indicators, thereby enabling the formulation of standardised conclusions (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The popularity of the testological approach during wartime is attributable to its exceptional effectiveness in situations requiring rapid and reliable assessment of large numbers of individuals. The standardisation of procedures ensures the relative independence of results from the personality of the researcher, thereby increasing the objectivity of diagnosis in extreme field conditions. The use of quantitative indicators makes it possible to apply mathematical and statistical methods to assess the reliability and validity of tests, which makes them an important tool in military scientific research. However, testology has critical limitations in wartime. Firstly, standardised responses often oversimplify the complex structure of the wounded or traumatised

personality, reducing acute suffering to numerical indicators while failing to take into account the individual context, the dynamics of stress, and deeper meanings. Secondly, under the influence of defence mechanisms, simulation, or dissimulation – for example, when a serviceman conceals symptoms in order to return to comrades or, conversely, to secure demobilisation – responses may be consciously or unconsciously distorted. Furthermore, another problem is the uncritical use of tests by non-specialists, such as commanders or volunteers. The apparent simplicity of these instruments may create an illusion of universality and encourage their use without proper professional training, which in wartime sharply increases the likelihood of erroneous interpretations and potentially disastrous decisions, such as mistakenly granting access to weapons to a person experiencing acute stress.

A comparative analysis of phenomenological and testological approaches leads to the conclusion that they differ fundamentally in their understanding of the nature of psychological phenomena and the methods used to study them under martial law. Whereas the phenomenological approach is aimed at revealing the uniqueness and integrity of the individual experiencing war, testology focuses on identifying general patterns (for example, the percentage of maladjustment within a military company) and measurable characteristics. Accordingly, the former provides depth and meaningfulness of analysis, while the latter ensures accuracy, efficiency, and reliability. Contemporary

military and crisis psychology increasingly adopts an integrative approach that combines the capacities of testology and phenomenology. Testology provides the initial structuring of information through rapid screening and helps to identify general personality characteristics and critical problem areas (such as acute suicidal risk or high levels of psychotic symptoms), whereas phenomenological psychodiagnostics deepens these findings during personal interviews, giving them individual meaning within the context of the person's combat or life experience. Effective psychodiagnostics in wartime is based not on the opposition but on the complementarity of approaches. Combining "objective" and "subjective" methods makes it possible to achieve a balance between the speed and accuracy of decision-making and the safety and depth of understanding the individual from a humanistic perspective. Differences between these approaches should also be considered within the context of scientific paradigms. The phenomenological approach, rooted in the tradition of "understanding psychology", is oriented towards the interpretation of subjective experience and the uniqueness of personality (Frankl, 1966; Husserl, 1970). In contrast, as noted by N.A. Holiardyk & V.Ch. Kupchyshyna (2021), testology developed within the natural-scientific paradigm, in which the psyche is regarded as a system of measurable variables subject to quantitative analysis and generalisation. A comparison of the methods according to nine principal criteria is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Comparative characteristics of the phenomenological and testological methods of psychodiagnostics

| Comparison criteria      | Phenomenological method                                                                                                     | Testological method                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of data             | Qualitative                                                                                                                 | Quantitative                                                                                                                |
| Depth                    | High                                                                                                                        | Moderate                                                                                                                    |
| Objectivity              | Low                                                                                                                         | High                                                                                                                        |
| Speed                    | Low                                                                                                                         | High                                                                                                                        |
| Individual approach      | Maximum                                                                                                                     | Limited                                                                                                                     |
| Application              | Therapy, counselling                                                                                                        | Selection, assessment                                                                                                       |
| Purpose of assessment    | A profound understanding of unique traumatic experiences, existential crises, and personal meanings during wartime          | Measurement of symptom severity (PTSD, depression, anxiety), assessment of combat readiness or occupational suitability     |
| Risk of retraumatisation | Low, owing to the flexibility of the specialist, who carefully regulates the emotional burden during dialogical interaction | High. Rigid closed-ended test questions may inadvertently activate triggers without the immediate support of a psychologist |
| Main area of application | Hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and long-term individual therapy for combatants and affected individuals                 | Mobilisation screening, field-based rapid screening, and large-scale scientific and statistical monitoring                  |

*Source: compiled by the authors*

The comparative analysis of the two approaches across nine criteria demonstrates their fundamental methodological differences, which do not indicate incompatibility but rather highlight their complementary nature. The principal distinction lies in the type of data employed: the phenomenological method operates with qualitative data, whereas the testological method relies on quantitative data. This basic difference determines all subsequent distinctions between the approaches. The phenomenological approach provides considerable depth of analysis and the highest degree of individualisation, yet it is inferior to testology in terms of objectivity and speed, both of which are significantly higher in standardised instruments. This

inversion is not accidental but structurally inherent: the very features that make phenomenology profound – its dialogical nature, flexibility, and orientation towards unique experience – simultaneously complicate its standardisation and scalability. Particularly illustrative is the criterion concerning the purpose of diagnosis. The phenomenological method aims to understand unique traumatic experiences, existential crises, and the personal meanings individuals attach to their wartime experiences. In contrast, the testological method is directed towards measuring the severity of symptoms – PTSD, depression, and anxiety – and assessing functional characteristics such as combat readiness or occupational suitability. Differences in objectives directly

determine the fields of application: phenomenology is predominantly employed in inpatient facilities, rehabilitation centres, and long-term therapy, whereas testology is used for rapid field screening, mobilisation selection, and large-scale monitoring.

Special attention should be paid to the criterion of re-traumatisation risk, which acquires particular significance in the wartime context. Phenomenological interviews are characterised by a low level of such risk, as specialists can flexibly regulate emotional strain within the dialogue. In contrast, rigid closed-ended questions contained in standardised tests may unexpectedly activate traumatic triggers without providing the possibility of immediate psychological support from the assessor. Differences in paradigmatic foundations also determine the organisation of research. In phenomenological psychodiagnostics, statistical representativeness is not the primary concern; rather, emphasis is placed on depth of analysis. Consequently, it relies on small samples or individual cases to reconstruct in detail the inner world and unique structures of meaning of the individual. Testology, by contrast, is based on large samples, which are necessary to ensure statistical validity, verify the reliability of instruments, and establish normative scales that facilitate large-scale assessments and professional selection procedures. Substantial differences are also evident in the nature of the results obtained. In phenomenological psychodiagnostics, the outcome consists of a profound and contextualised description of subjective phenomena, reflecting the individual logic of personal experiences, life history, and systems of meaning (Szuła, 2024; 2025). Such results are predominantly qualitative and require interpretation that takes into account the broader context of the individual's life. In testology, however, results are presented in the form of generalised quantitative indicators that enable comparison between an individual and a specific norm or reference group. This allows for the rapid acquisition of structured information, but simultaneously entails a degree of simplification, as complex and multidimensional psychological reality is reduced to average scores and scales. It should also be noted that differences in paradigms influence the nature of data interpretation. Within the phenomenological approach, interpretation is an integral component of the research process itself. It is dialogical and open in nature, allowing for multiple meanings and remaining dependent on context. In testology, interpretation is largely standardised and based on predefined norms and algorithms for processing results, which enhances reliability but reduces flexibility.

The comparative analysis presented in Table 2 demonstrates that phenomenological psychodiagnostics and testology are not mutually exclusive approaches but rather

represent different levels of understanding the psyche. The former is oriented towards comprehending the unique and individual, whereas the latter is aimed at identifying the general and regular. Their combination enables a more comprehensive and multidimensional investigation of personality, in which quantitative indicators are supplemented by qualitative analysis and objective data are enriched with subjective meaning. SWOT analysis reveals not only the internal characteristics of each approach but also the external conditions that determine the effectiveness or potential risks of their application in real psychodiagnostic practice during wartime. The strengths of the phenomenological approach – depth, individuality, and therapeutic value – reflect its unique capacity not only to identify a person's psychological condition but also to contribute directly to psychological recovery during the diagnostic interaction itself. Testology, in turn, is distinguished by objectivity, speed, reliability, and standardisation, qualities that are critically important for making operational decisions under conditions of mass psychological strain. The weaknesses of both approaches are, in many respects, mirror images of their strengths. The phenomenological method is labour-intensive, time-consuming, and subjective, which considerably limits its applicability in situations characterised by shortages of time and resources.

Testology, despite its high degree of standardisation, inevitably sacrifices the individuality of the client and tends towards superficiality and formalism, reducing complex inner experiences to numerical indicators. The developmental opportunities associated with each approach also differ fundamentally. Phenomenology opens up prospects for in-depth assessment and the establishment of trusting relationships, which is especially valuable when working with veterans who often avoid formal requests for assistance. Testology possesses considerable potential for technological development through computerisation, automated processing of results, and scalability to large populations. The matrix of threats is particularly revealing. The phenomenological approach is vulnerable to excessive subjectivism on the part of the moderator, since the psychologist's personality may unconsciously distort the interpretation of results. Testology, by contrast, entails a different risk – that of trivialisation arising from the apparent simplicity of the instrument, which encourages its mechanical use by inadequately trained practitioners. In the wartime context, such misuse may have serious practical consequences. The SWOT matrix presented in Table 2 confirms that neither approach is self-sufficient and that their integration constitutes not only a theoretically justified but also a practically necessary response to the challenges facing psychodiagnostics under conditions of war.

**Table 2. SWOT analysis of psychodiagnostic methods**

| Criteria   | Phenomenological approach                                                                    | Testological approach                                |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Strengths  | Depth, individuality, and therapeutic value                                                  | Objectivity, speed, reliability, and standardisation |
| Weaknesses | Labour-intensive nature, difficulty in comparing results, subjectivity, and lengthy duration | Loss of individuality, superficiality, and formalism |

Table 2. Continued

| Criteria      | Phenomenological approach                                                                                              | Testological approach                                                        |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Opportunities | Establishing a trusting relationship and conducting in-depth assessment                                                | Computerisation, large-scale studies, and selection procedures               |
| Threats       | High degree of moderator subjectivity and distortion of results due to the influence of the psychologist's personality | Risk of trivialisation due to ease of implementation, mechanical application |

Source: compiled by the authors

The results of the theoretical analysis conducted may be directly integrated into the content of educational components related to psychodiagnostics and the methodology of psychological research, with particular emphasis on the training of military and crisis psychologists. In courses on psychodiagnostics, it would be advisable not to limit instruction solely to psychometric instruments for screening PTSD or combat stress, but to broaden the curriculum by incorporating the phenomenological approach as an alternative and complementary methodology. This would enable future specialists to develop a holistic understanding of the diagnostic process during wartime, where, alongside the quantitative measurement of psychological states, an understanding of the individual experience of war, loss, and moral injury is of critical importance. Such an approach would foster professional reflexivity and reduce the risk of formalistic or “mechanical” application of tests, which is unacceptable when working with profoundly traumatised individuals. Within the educational component entitled “Methodology of Psychological Research”, the findings may be used to illustrate differences between paradigms within the context of extreme psychology. The analysis of phenomenological psychodiagnostics and testology as representatives of distinct methodological approaches allows students to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry and to appreciate the limitations inherent in each approach – from the risk of reducing personality to numerical indicators in testology to the high degree of subjectivity associated with phenomenology. Particular attention should be devoted to the development of methodological synthesis skills, enabling specialists to make informed choices between rapid personnel screening and in-depth interviews for the rehabilitation of veterans. The practical implementation of these principles may be achieved through the introduction of interactive forms of learning, including the analysis of real wartime cases, the simulation of personnel selection scenarios, and comparative examinations of the results obtained through testing and phenomenological interviews concerning experiences such as survivor guilt or combat adaptation. It is important to teach psychologists that the test results of military personnel cannot be considered in isolation from their unique “war history” and require supplementation through qualitative analysis. Thus, integrating the principles of combining objective measurement with subjective understanding into psychological education will contribute to the preparation of specialists capable of applying diagnostic instruments comprehensively under wartime conditions. This will enhance the quality of psychological assistance, reduce the

risk of diagnostic errors, and promote the development of a professional culture among future psychologists grounded in the synthesis of scientific precision and profound respect for the individual.

### ◆ Discussion

In times of war, psychologists face a contradiction between the need to rapidly assess the condition of large numbers of individuals and the necessity of preserving the integrity and uniqueness of each person's psychological experience. In situations of mass psychological strain, testology serves as an indispensable tool for rapid screening, personnel selection, and monitoring the combat readiness of military personnel. The uncritical use of exclusively standardised tests carries significant risks. Complex traumatic experiences, such as moral injury or an existential crisis, as described by V.E. Frankl (1966), can be reduced to formalised numerical indicators. This leads to a loss of an individualised approach and a reduction in the effectiveness of subsequent psychological support, as noted by B.T. Litz *et al.* (2009). The field of psychodiagnostics is interdisciplinary in nature and has developed within various scientific traditions, each of which defines the nature of psychological measurement and the understanding of personality in different ways. Within the psychometric approach, key contributions were made by P.E. Meehl (1954), L.J. Cronbach (1951) and R.B. Cattell (1957), who formulated the basic principles for the construction of psychological tests: standardisation of procedures, verification of the reliability and validity of methods, and statistical justification for the interpretation of results. This idea was also developed by R.R. McCrae (1987) and H.J. Eysenck (1991), who supplemented their colleagues' work with new interpretations. Their work laid the methodological foundations of modern test theory and made it possible to view psychodiagnostics as a scientifically validated system for measuring psychological characteristics, thereby enhancing its objectivity and reproducibility. Psychometric approaches have taken on particular significance in military psychology, where standardised methods are used to assess combat readiness, psychological resilience and the risks of maladjustment among military personnel (Adler *et al.*, 2008).

In parallel with this, the phenomenological approach in psychodiagnostics developed as an alternative to reductionist approaches, emphasising the uniqueness of a person's subjective experience. In the works of E. Husserl (1970), the importance of an individual's personal experience in psychodiagnostics was noted. This idea was only taken up at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by

J. Parnas & L.A. Sass (2008). The phenomenological idea was further developed in the work of A. Giorgi (2012), which emphasised the significance of direct experience, the context of the lifeworld, and individual meanings that cannot be fully reduced to quantitative indicators. In this approach, psychodiagnostics is viewed not merely as measurement, but as a process of in-depth understanding of the individual, which requires the researcher's empathetic engagement and the interpretation of phenomena in their entirety (Morgun & Titov, 2009). This is of particular significance for military psychology, as experiences of war often go beyond standardised categories and require consideration of individual meanings, existential experiences and moral conflicts within the individual. The current stage of psychodiagnostics' development is characterised by integrative trends aimed at combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. Researchers such as T.R. Insel (2014), P.D. McGorry *et al.* (2018) and G. Messas *et al.* (2018) have emphasised that neither approach, taken in isolation, is sufficient for a complete understanding of the complex nature of the psyche. Instead, their complementarity allows for greater diagnostic accuracy, broadens interpretative possibilities and ensures a more holistic approach to the study of the individual, particularly in clinical, crisis and military psychology. In the context of war, the integration of phenomenological and testological methods allows for the combination of the speed and standardisation of psychological screening with a deep understanding of the individual traumatic experience of a serviceperson or civilian.

The results of the comparative analysis are generally consistent with the conclusions of other researchers, although they also contain several important distinctions that attest to the scientific value of the present study. A key point of convergence is the recognition of the complementary rather than antagonistic relationship between phenomenological and testological approaches. In particular, B. Nelson *et al.* (2021) substantiated the need to combine clinical staging, which is predominantly a quantitative instrument, with phenomenological profiling of the patient's subjective experience. The findings of the SWOT analysis support this position: testology indeed provides speed and structure in primary assessment, whereas the phenomenological approach compensates for its relative insensitivity to context. Particular attention should be paid to the debate concerning the superiority of statistical methods over clinical judgement. Although P.E. Meehl (1954) advocated the primacy of actuarial methods, the present analysis demonstrates that, in addressing moral injury, survivor guilt, and existential crises characteristic of wartime experiences, the phenomenological approach offers a depth of understanding that cannot be achieved through testing alone. This corresponds with the position of A. Giorgi (2012), who regarded phenomenology as a necessary complement to quantitative strategies. The results of the SWOT analysis revealed the therapeutic potential of phenomenological diagnosis: the very process of the interview and dialogue

becomes a factor in psychological change, which is particularly important for veterans with combat experience. This is supported by the research of G. Messas *et al.* (2022), who regarded phenomenological understanding as the basis of therapeutic dialogue.

At the same time, the findings obtained differ fundamentally from certain positions within the literature. In his work on statistical and clinical prediction, P.E. Meehl (1954) argued for the superiority of actuarial (statistical) methods over clinical judgement in most situations. The present analysis does not dispute this proposition in the context of large-scale assessments and personnel selection; however, it demonstrates that in clinical, psychotherapeutic, and counselling contexts the phenomenological approach provides a depth of understanding that psychometric instruments are inherently incapable of delivering. This is consistent with A. Giorgi's (2012) argument that the descriptive phenomenological method is not an alternative to quantitative strategies in psychological science, but rather an indispensable complement to them. Within military psychology, the phenomenological approach enables practitioners to move beyond formal scales and address the subjective meanings that servicemen and servicewomen attribute to their experiences. This method is particularly effective in addressing profound conditions such as survivor guilt, the experience of losing comrades, and the complex processes of psychological adaptation following combat. Unlike tests, phenomenological interviews are dialogical in nature, whereby the interaction with the psychologist itself becomes a factor promoting psychological change and the establishment of trust, which is critically important for veterans with combat experience. Comparing the findings of the present study with research in the field of psychopathology, it is worth noting that J. Parnas *et al.* (2013) substantiate the key role of phenomenological epistemology in understanding the nature of psychiatric phenomena, questioning the reductionist strategies of DSM-oriented psychodiagnostics, which were subsequently developed by D. Zahavi (2013) and F.W. Weathers *et al.* (2013). These positions resonate with the conclusion drawn in the current study regarding the therapeutic potential of the phenomenological approach, which in the SWOT matrix is identified as a unique "opportunity" unavailable to the testological approach. G. Messas *et al.* (2022) likewise highlighted the practical effectiveness of phenomenological psychopathology within therapeutic strategies, thereby confirming the promise of the integrative model described here. A.O. Tatiianchykov (2021; 2025) also examined in detail the mathematical aspects of standardising psychodiagnostic methods, emphasising the necessity of adhering to psychometric standards. O.A. Chumak & O.M. Tovstukha (2024), in their educational and methodological manual, identified both approaches as equally important components of contemporary psychodiagnostics. However, none of the aforementioned authors proposes a comprehensive conceptual model of integration, which distinguishes the present study

from existing publications. At the same time, O.H. Danylyan & O.P. Dzoban (2019) emphasised the significance of methodological reflection for scientific inquiry in general, thereby providing methodological justification for the strategy of theoretical synthesis adopted in this study.

Effective psychodiagnostic strategy in wartime conditions is based on complementarity, whereby testology and phenomenology perform different but equally important functions. Within this model, testology provides the initial structuring of information, enabling the rapid identification of general personality characteristics and potential risk areas (for example, levels of PTSD or depression). At the same time, phenomenological psychodiagnostics deepens these results by providing them with individual meaning within the context of a person's unique life history. Such a synthesis makes it possible to combine the objectivity of measurement with depth of understanding, providing a reliable foundation for humanistically oriented psychological support. It is also worth emphasising that the theoretical propositions and conclusions of this study are highly appropriate for inclusion in educational components related to psychodiagnostics, as well as the theory and methodology of psychological research in higher education institutions. Integrating the proposed conceptual model into training and professional development programmes for psychologists (particularly within courses on military, crisis, and clinical psychology) would significantly modernise academic content in accordance with contemporary challenges. This would facilitate the development of flexible methodological thinking among students and practitioners, aimed at balancing the instrumental precision of testing with the humanistic depth of phenomenological analysis under the real conditions of martial law. Thus, the findings of this study do not contradict existing scientific discourse but rather develop and complement it, offering a more systematic and practice-oriented perspective on the problem of integrating approaches in psychodiagnostics.

### ◆ Conclusions

The conducted theoretical and methodological study confirmed that, under contemporary wartime conditions, phenomenological psychodiagnostics and testology should be regarded not as competing but as complementary methodological systems, each representing its own level of understanding psychological reality. The testological approach has been identified as an indispensable tool for rapid screening, personnel selection, and monitoring the

condition of large groups of military personnel and civilians, as it ensures objectivity, speed, and the possibility of quantitative comparison of results. At the same time, it was found that the uncritical use of standardised tests alone carries the risk of reducing complex traumatic experiences to formal indicators, potentially leading to the loss of the individual context of wartime experiences. In contrast, phenomenological psychodiagnostics provides a profound and contextualised understanding of the individual's inner world, focusing on the unique subjective meanings associated with combat stress, moral injury, and existential crises. A particular strength of the phenomenological approach lies in its therapeutic potential, whereby dialogical interaction between psychologist and client becomes not only a means of data collection but also a factor in psychological support and change. The study substantiates the appropriateness of implementing an integrative diagnostic strategy in which testology performs the function of initial information structuring and identification of problem areas, while the phenomenological method provides meaningful interpretation of results within the framework of the individual's unique life history. Such an approach makes it possible to combine scientific precision of measurement with a humanistically oriented depth of understanding personality. Integrating the proposed conceptual model into educational and professional development programmes for psychologists (particularly within courses on military, crisis, and clinical psychology) would significantly modernise academic content in response to contemporary challenges. This would contribute to the development of flexible methodological thinking among students and practitioners under the real conditions of martial law. Furthermore, the results of the study are directly applicable to improving practical systems of psychological rehabilitation for veterans. Prospects for further research lie in the empirical verification of the proposed model and the development of specific protocols for combining phenomenological interviews with standardised psychometric scales in clinical practice.

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None.

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## Феноменологічна психодіагностика та тестологія: переваги та недоліки методів в умовах війни

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♦ **Анотація.** Актуальність теми зумовлена зростанням потреби у якісному психодіагностичному супроводі військовослужбовців та ветеранів, які пережили бойові дії та пов'язані з ними психотравмуючі події. Метою дослідження було здійснення порівняльного аналізу феноменологічного та тестологічного підходів, визначення їх переваг, обмежень і можливостей інтеграції у практиці психологічної допомоги. Використано теоретико-методологічний, системний, порівняльний та SWOT-аналіз. Проаналізовано специфіку якісних і кількісних методів оцінювання психічного стану особистості в умовах війни, а також особливості інтерпретації результатів психодіагностики. Встановлено, що феноменологічний підхід забезпечує глибоке розуміння суб'єктивного досвіду особистості, дозволяє враховувати індивідуальні особливості переживання бойових дій, втрати, страху та посттравматичних змін, однак характеризується високим рівнем суб'єктивності та складністю стандартизації. Тестологічний підхід, своєю чергою, вирізняється об'єктивністю, стандартизованістю та можливістю швидкого оцінювання психоемоційного стану, що є особливо важливим у системі психологічного забезпечення військовослужбовців. Водночас його застосування має певні обмеження, пов'язані з недостатнім урахуванням індивідуального контексту переживання травматичного досвіду: стандартизований формат відповідей не залишає простору для вираження унікальних смислів, якими людина наділяє пережите, а бальні шкали не здатні відобразити складність екзистенційних станів, провини вцілілого, моральної травми чи втрати ідентичності, що є типовими для досвіду війни. Обґрунтовано доцільність інтеграції феноменологічної психодіагностики та тестології як взаємодоповнювальних підходів, що дає змогу поєднати об'єктивність і стандартизованість психометричних методів із глибиною розуміння суб'єктивного досвіду особистості. Практичне значення дослідження полягає у можливості використання його результатів для вдосконалення психодіагностичного супроводу військовослужбовців і ветеранів, а також у професійній підготовці військових психологів

♦ **Ключові слова:** інтерпретація; клієнт-центрований підхід; психологічне оцінювання; психотравма; кількісні методи