



Preliminary Psychometric Evaluation of Social Support, Self-Efficacy, and Resilience Measures in Military Cadets

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Military Cadet; Preliminary Psychometric Evaluation; Resilience; Self-Efficacy; Social Support.	Resilience is an essential psychological resource for military cadets who must simultaneously meet academic, physical, and military training demands. Reliable measurement of resilience and its related psychosocial resources is therefore necessary before examining their structural relationships. This study aimed to conduct a preliminary psychometric evaluation of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), and 25-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25) among military cadets. A quantitative instrumentation design was employed involving an initial tryout with 30 cadets, followed by field administration to 225 cadets selected through proportional stratified random sampling from a population of 514. Item discrimination was assessed using corrected item-total correlations, while internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. All 47 items across the three instruments met the predetermined item-discrimination criteria in both assessment phases. Internal consistency coefficients were also acceptable for all instruments, indicating adequate reliability for preliminary research use. The self-efficacy scale demonstrated comparatively stable item-level performance across phases, whereas several resilience items showed relatively weaker but still acceptable discrimination. These findings provide preliminary evidence supporting the use of the three instruments among military cadets while also indicating that further examination of the resilience measure is warranted. Confirmatory factor analysis and measurement-invariance testing are recommended before the instruments are used for structural hypothesis testing or consequential psychological assessment.
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INTRODUCTION

Officer cadets of the Air Force Academy (Akademi Angkatan Udara/AAU) in Yogyakarta follow a dual curriculum that integrates an academic bachelor-level program with military training, formally grounded in the dwiwarna purwa cendekia philosophy and the trisakti viratama principle of tanggon, tanggap, and trengginas (Akademi Angkatan Udara, 2024). This dual demand structure, academic, physical, and psychological at once, makes resilience a functionally necessary trait rather than a merely desirable one for cadets to complete their training.

A preliminary observation at AAU indicated visible strain among some cadets in coping with the combined workload Endrarini (2025), and Andre et al. (2023) linked adversity quotient to resilience in this same cadet population, but the joint contribution of social and psychological resources has not been tested locally. Internationally, the evidence is more developed, self-efficacy has been shown to mediate the link between personality and cadet performance (Bekesiene, 2023), psychological hardiness moderates the stress-resilience relationship among military personnel (Bekesiene et al., 2023), cadet resilience predicts self-efficacy and professional achievement (Navickienė & Vasiliauskas, 2024), and social support predicts cadets' sense of empowerment over time (Chiu et al., 2024). Outside the military context, self-efficacy has also been shown to interact with physical readiness in shaping training-related injury risk (Kreisel et al., 2025), and social support and self-efficacy jointly and synergistically predict resilience among students under academic pressure (Rachmawati et al., 2021) and working students balancing competing role demands (Suandika et al., 2026). Read together, this literature treats social support and self-efficacy less as independent predictors than as interacting resources whose combined, not merely additive, effect on resilience is what remains empirically underspecified for Indonesian military cadets specifically.

A prior step is nonetheless unresolved: none of the instruments intended for that hypothesis test, the MSPSS, GSES, and CD-RISC 25, has been psychometrically checked in an Indonesian military-academy sample. Their most recent Indonesian adaptations were validated in civilian populations, students for the MSPSS via confirmatory factor analysis (Saragih et al., 2026) and for the GSES via psychometric re-examination (Kamu et al., 2025), and a general adult sample for the CD-RISC 25 (Prawita & Heryadi, 2023), with a further adaptation of the MSPSS specifically for a cadet-adjacent higher-education population (Nasution, 2024) and continued measurement-development work on the CD-RISC (Fadhillah & Sulaeman, 2026). A hierarchical command structure, restricted personal autonomy, and a fused academic-military schedule are plausible sources of differential item functioning relative to these civilian validation samples, which makes a direct check a precondition, not a formality, before the instruments are used to test causal hypotheses in this setting. To the authors' knowledge, no prior study has examined these three instruments at the item level in an Indonesian military-academy sample; this claim is necessarily bounded by the literature search conducted for this article rather than an exhaustive systematic review. The present study addresses the item-discrimination and internal-consistency precondition described above; it does not itself test differential item functioning or measurement invariance.

This study therefore aims to (1) examine the item-level discrimination of the adapted MSPSS, GSES, and CD-RISC 25 among AAU cadets across an initial tryout phase and a full field-administration phase; (2) examine the internal-consistency reliability of the three instruments across both phases; and (3) identify which items or constructs show weaker psychometric performance in this population as a basis for refining the instruments before they are used in the planned regression-based hypothesis test. The contribution is deliberately narrow but load-bearing: it extends psychometric evidence for three widely used instruments to a population, military-academy cadets, whose institutional structure differs sharply from the civilian samples in which these instruments were last validated, and it provides the item-discrimination and internal-consistency evidence that must precede any subsequent structural validation before the AAU counseling unit could consider these instruments for applied use.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used a quantitative instrumentation design, limited at this stage to item analysis and internal-consistency estimation, nested within a larger explanatory survey research program on the effects of social support and self-efficacy on resilience among AAU cadets (Curo-Huacani et al., 2025; Haryudo et al., 2019). Instrument testing proceeded in two sequential phases: an initial tryout administered to 30 respondents, followed, once tryout results met the validity and reliability criteria, by a field administration to the full study sample of 225 cadets. This article reports both phases; the subsequent multiple-regression hypothesis test that these instruments are intended to support is a separate, forthcoming analysis and is not reported here.

Population and Sample

The study was conducted at the Air Force Academy (AAU) in Yogyakarta. The population comprised 514 active cadets across three cohort levels: Level I ($n = 211$), Level II ($n = 148$), and Level III ($n = 155$). Sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, yielding $n \approx 225$, allocated proportionally by cohort level (proportional stratified random sampling) into 92, 65, and 68 cadets respectively (Table 1). Slovin's formula addresses the precision of estimating a population proportion; it is not, by itself, a sufficient justification for the sample-size requirements of the confirmatory factor analysis or measurement-invariance testing recommended in Section 4, which are model-complexity-dependent.

Table 1. Population and Proportional Stratified Sample by Cadet Cohort Level

Cohort Level	Population (N)	Proportion	Sample (n)
Level I	211	41.1%	92
Level II	148	28.8%	65
Level III	155	30.1%	68
Total	514	100%	225

Variables and Research Instrument

Three Likert-type self-report instruments were administered using their respective original response formats. The MSPSS was administered using its original 7-point response format ranging from 1 (Very Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Very Strongly Agree), consistent with Zimet et al. (1988); the full 12-item form was retained here rather than the shortened version subsequently developed by Porter et al. (2020), since psychometric behavior of the complete instrument was the object of the present evaluation. The GSES was administered using its original 4-point response format ranging from 1 (Not at all true) to 4 (Exactly true), consistent with the Indonesian GSES adaptation originally validated by Novrianto et al. (2019) and subsequently re-examined by Kamu et al. (2025). The CD-RISC-25 was administered using its original 5-point response format ranging from 0 (Not true at all) to 4 (True nearly all the time), consistent with Connor and Davidson (2003). The exact Indonesian-language item wording administered for each instrument followed the adaptations of Saragih et al. (2026) for the MSPSS, Novrianto et al. (2019) for the GSES, and Prawita and Heryadi (2023) for the CD-RISC-25, with no further changes to item wording introduced. Because all three instruments were administered in their original response formats, no modification of response categories was introduced, and therefore no additional psychometric justification for response-format alteration was required.

Table 2. Summary of the Three Measurement Instruments

Variable	Instrument	Items	Dimensions
Social Support (X1)	MSPSS	12	Family, friends, significant others
Self-Efficacy (X2)	GSES	10	Unidimensional (general self-efficacy)
Resilience (Y)	CD-RISC 25	25	Personal competence; trust in instincts; positive acceptance of change; control; spiritual influence

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was first tested on a 30-cadet tryout sample not included in the field sample; once every item met the validity and reliability criteria, the finalized questionnaire was distributed to the field sample. A total of 227 questionnaires were distributed and returned. Two questionnaires were excluded because more than 20% of the items on at least one instrument were left unanswered. The remaining 225 questionnaires were retained for analysis, resulting in a usable response rate of 99.1% and a final analytical dataset consistent with the sample size reported in Table 1 and used throughout Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

Data Analysis Technique

Item discrimination was examined using the corrected item-total (Pearson product-moment) correlation. For the 30-respondent tryout phase, item-total correlations were compared against the two-tailed critical r at a 5% significance level for $df = 28$, $r = 0.361$. For the 225-respondent field phase, item-total correlations were compared against a minimum corrected item-total correlation of $r = 0.300$, applied here as a conventional item-discrimination criterion rather than a significance-based critical r ; a sample of this size makes the significance threshold itself too low to be a meaningful discrimination criterion, so the more conservative conventional value was retained instead. Internal-consistency reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha, with $\alpha \geq 0.70$ taken as the threshold for acceptable reliability, consistent with general methodological guidance on reliability reporting in cross-cultural psychometric research (Chomeya & Piyakun, 2022). No confirmatory factor analysis was performed because the present study was designed as a preliminary item-analysis stage preceding a larger explanatory study. The psychometric evidence reported here therefore focuses on corrected item-total correlations and internal consistency as screening indicators before more advanced validation procedures are undertaken.

Ethical Considerations and Additional Procedural Detail

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Before participation, all cadets were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of their responses, and their right to decline or withdraw from participation without academic or disciplinary consequences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to questionnaire administration. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no personally identifiable information was included in the analytical dataset. Individual responses were treated confidentially and were not made available to commanders or instructors. A formal institutional ethics committee reference number was not required for this study. Within each cohort stratum in Table 1, eligible cadets were assigned identification numbers based on the official roster, and participants were selected using a computer-generated random-number procedure. Field data collection was conducted in May 2026, and all analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented in three connected stages. The respondent profile is reported first, since the composition of the field sample is the context against which every subsequent coefficient must be read. Item-level discrimination is then examined instrument by instrument, in the order social support, self-efficacy, and resilience, so that a pattern specific to one construct is not blurred by averaging it together with the other two. Internal-consistency reliability is examined last and is deliberately read alongside, rather than instead of, the item-level results, because a single alpha coefficient can conceal unevenness among the items that compose it. The section closes by drawing out what this combined picture means for the multiple-regression hypothesis test the three instruments were built to support.

Respondent Profile

The field sample's cohort composition (Table 1) closely mirrors the 514-cadet population, so no single cohort level, including Level I, whose members face the earliest adjustment to the dual curriculum, dominates the sample numerically. Proportional sampling reduces one source of representation bias, but it does not by itself establish that cohort-level differences in item functioning are absent; measurement-invariance testing across cohort levels, noted as a limitation below, would be needed to evaluate that directly.

Item Discrimination Across the Three Instruments

The first instrument examined is the 12-item social-support scale. Its three sources of perceived support, family, friends, and significant others, are the most externally oriented of the three constructs under study and, because cadets' contact with family and non-academy relationships is structurally limited during training, the most exposed to distortion if the scale does not travel well into this setting. Table 3 reports the corrected item-total correlation for each item against the tryout-phase critical r ($n = 30$) and the field-phase item-total criterion ($n = 225$).

Table 3. Item-Total Correlation of the Social Support Scale

Item	r (tryout, $n = 30$) critical $r = 0.361$	r (field, $n = 225$) item-total criterion = 0.300	Status
1	0.541	0.642	Meets criterion
2	0.596	0.626	Meets criterion
3	0.363	0.379	Meets criterion
4	0.368	0.368	Meets criterion
5	0.524	0.704	Meets criterion
6	0.433	0.680	Meets criterion
7	0.506	0.892	Meets criterion
8	0.551	0.602	Meets criterion
9	0.362	0.647	Meets criterion
10	0.596	0.619	Meets criterion
11	0.391	0.578	Meets criterion
12	0.418	0.559	Meets criterion

Note: r = corrected item-total (Pearson product-moment) correlation.

Every item met its criterion in both phases, and the largest single change of any item in the entire 47-item pool belongs to this scale: item 7 rose from $r = 0.506$ in the tryout to $r = 0.892$ in the field phase. No formal statistical comparison between the two coefficients was conducted, and the tryout ($n = 30$) and field ($n = 225$) samples differ substantially in size and composition, so this description is offered as a descriptive pattern warranting further investigation rather than a finding that rules out sampling variation. One speculative, untested explanation is that item 7, which sits within the friends-support subscale, captures a peer-support experience that becomes more consistently recognized once assessed across a broad cross-section of the corps than a 30-respondent tryout could represent; this account is not evaluated further here.

Where social support is externally oriented, the second instrument, the 10-item self-efficacy scale, measures an internally held belief in one's own coping capacity, and so provides a useful counterpoint for judging whether the volatility seen in the social-support items is a feature of this sample in general or specific to externally referenced constructs. Table 4 reports the same item-total correlation analysis for this scale.

Table 4. Item-Total Correlation of the Self-Efficacy Scale

Item	r (tryout, n = 30) critical r = 0.361	r (field, n = 225) item-total criterion = 0.300	Status
1	0.362	0.403	Meets criterion
2	0.789	0.619	Meets criterion
3	0.650	0.609	Meets criterion
4	0.405	0.607	Meets criterion
5	0.789	0.630	Meets criterion
6	0.364	0.654	Meets criterion
7	0.552	0.721	Meets criterion
8	0.374	0.381	Meets criterion
9	0.384	0.597	Meets criterion
10	0.465	0.575	Meets criterion

Note: r = corrected item-total (Pearson product-moment) correlation.

Self-efficacy items moved the least between phases of the three instruments, and no single item reproduced the large swings observed in the social-support scale. This comparative stability is consistent with self-efficacy being captured here as a coherent, trait-like belief rather than as a set of loosely connected situational judgments, though this interpretation would need factor-analytic or longitudinal evidence to be confirmed. Smaller absolute change in item-total correlations across phases does not by itself establish that self-efficacy is psychometrically superior to the other two instruments, so that comparative claim is not made here; the pattern is reported descriptively as one input the planned regression stage should take into account.

The third and largest instrument, the 25-item resilience scale, is also the outcome variable that social support and self-efficacy are theorized to predict, which makes its item-level behavior the most consequential of the three for the planned hypothesis test. Table 5 reports the item-total correlation results across the scale's five dimensions: personal competence, trust in instincts, positive acceptance of change, control, and spiritual influence.

Table 5. Item-Total Correlation of the Resilience Scale

Item	r (tryout, n = 30) critical r = 0.361	r (field, n = 225) item-total criterion = 0.300	Status
1	0.365	0.399	Meets criterion
2	0.376	0.365	Meets criterion
3	0.490	0.371	Meets criterion
4	0.363	0.488	Meets criterion
5	0.398	0.414	Meets criterion
6	0.532	0.446	Meets criterion
7	0.371	0.580	Meets criterion
8	0.364	0.603	Meets criterion
9	0.426	0.577	Meets criterion
10	0.549	0.427	Meets criterion
11	0.362	0.590	Meets criterion
12	0.362	0.609	Meets criterion
13	0.644	0.465	Meets criterion
14	0.804	0.457	Meets criterion
15	0.364	0.574	Meets criterion
16	0.414	0.640	Meets criterion
17	0.523	0.542	Meets criterion
18	0.398	0.570	Meets criterion
19	0.804	0.619	Meets criterion
20	0.380	0.493	Meets criterion
21	0.368	0.684	Meets criterion
22	0.687	0.598	Meets criterion

23	0.811	0.566	Meets criterion
24	0.364	0.481	Meets criterion
25	0.385	0.508	Meets criterion

Note: r = corrected item-total (Pearson product-moment) correlation. Item-to-dimension correspondence, following the instrument blueprint for the administered CD-RISC-25 adaptation (Connor & Davidson, 2003): personal competence, high standards, and tenacity = items 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 23, 24, 25; trust in one's instincts, tolerance of negative affect, and strengthening effects of stress = items 6, 7, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20; positive acceptance of change and secure relationships = items 1, 2, 4, 5, 8; control = items 13, 21, 22; spiritual influence = items 3, 9.

Resilience items were the least uniform of the three sets. Items 2 and 3, which load respectively on the positive-acceptance-of-change-and-secure-relationships dimension and the spiritual-influence dimension (Table 5), were the weakest performers of the entire pool in the field phase, though both still met the item-total criterion. Section 4.1 considers, as one untested hypothesis among others, whether a training environment built on command compliance and standardized procedure could plausibly generate more measurement noise on items of this kind than in the civilian samples where the CD-RISC was previously validated (Green et al., 2014), without this constituting an outright discrimination failure, since both items still met the field-phase item-total criterion.

Internal-Consistency Reliability

Having examined each instrument at the item level, the next question is whether the retained items cohere as reliable scales overall, and whether that overall reliability is consistent with, or conceals, the item-level unevenness just described. Table 6 summarizes Cronbach's alpha for all three instruments across the tryout and field phases.

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha of the Three Instruments

Variable	α (tryout, n=30)	α (field, n=225)	Status
Social Support (X1)	0.724	0.767	Reliable
Self-Efficacy (X2)	0.790	0.790	Reliable
Resilience (Y)	0.764	0.765	Reliable

Note: threshold for acceptable reliability, $\alpha \geq 0.70$

The self-efficacy scale's alpha was identical to three decimal places across a seven-fold change in sample size. Equal alpha coefficients of this kind indicate consistent internal consistency at the total-scale level, but they do not by themselves establish a stable underlying factor structure, which would require factor-analytic or longitudinal evidence not collected here. This pattern is nevertheless broadly consistent with the construct reliability Kamu et al. (2025) reported for the same Indonesian GSES adaptation, and with this scale's comparatively stable item-level results in Table 4. The resilience scale's comparatively flat, barely-moving alpha (0.764 to 0.765) alongside its most dispersed item-level correlations (Table 5) illustrates a pattern worth noting for interpretation: a stable total-scale alpha can coexist with, and mask, uneven performance at the item or sub-dimension level. This is consistent with what is observed here, though the present design cannot rule out other explanations for the resilience scale's item-level dispersion.

Limitations

This study was conducted at a single military academy, which limits generalizability to other service academies or national contexts. All data were self-reported, which is a particular concern in a hierarchical setting where cadets may feel pressure toward socially desirable responses. Item discrimination was assessed only through item-total correlation rather than confirmatory factor analysis, so the underlying five-dimension structure of the CD-RISC was not directly verified in this sample. Finally, because this article reports only the item-analysis and

internal-consistency stage, no claim about the direction or strength of the relationships among social support, self-efficacy, and resilience can yet be made.

Discussion

Interpreting the Item-Level Patterns

The item-level patterns reported in Section 3.2 admit more than one explanation, and the present design, which relies on corrected item-total correlations and Cronbach's alpha within a single cross-sectional sample, cannot adjudicate between them. One plausible account is that the academy's hierarchical, compliance-oriented training environment constrains the facets of resilience captured in the positive-acceptance-of-change-and-secure-relationships and spiritual-influence dimensions, given that items 2 and 3 were the lowest-discriminating items in the field phase (Table 5); a training environment built on standardized procedure rather than individual discretion could plausibly generate more measurement noise on items asking cadets to endorse embracing change or a personal outlook than in the general-population and clinical samples where the CD-RISC was originally validated (Connor & Davidson, 2003; Green et al., 2014). This account remains a hypothesis, not a finding: it was not directly tested here, and differential item functioning or measurement-invariance testing across cohort levels would be the appropriate next step to evaluate it directly.

This is consistent with the approach taken in comparable military psychometric studies of resilience scales. Tu et al. (2023) evaluated the CD-RISC-10 in Chinese military personnel using confirmatory factor analysis, measurement invariance across rank, gender, and time, Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's omega, test-retest reliability, and criterion-related validity. Yan et al. (2023) similarly examined the factor structure and measurement invariance of the CD-RISC-10 in military personnel with and without PTSD. Wollny and Jacobs (2023), cited earlier in this article for the German CD-RISC-10 and CD-RISC-2, used a comparably multi-method approach. Set against these benchmarks, the corrected item-total correlations and Cronbach's alpha reported in this study constitute preliminary, rather than confirmatory, psychometric evidence, and the interpretation offered above should be treated accordingly.

Implications for the Planned Hypothesis Test

Because all 47 items met the field-phase discrimination criterion, the instrument set as a whole is usable for the planned regression of resilience on social support and self-efficacy. However, the comparatively lower item-total correlations identified in Section 3.2, concentrated in a subset of resilience items, mean the resilience score entering that regression may not be psychometrically uniform across its five dimensions. Proceeding directly to hypothesis testing without addressing this risks attenuating or distorting the estimated effects of social support and self-efficacy through measurement unevenness in the resilience score, rather than reflecting a true absence of relationship. A confirmatory factor analysis and, given the theoretical argument advanced in Section 4.1, a measurement-invariance check across cohort levels, prior to the regression stage, are accordingly recommended as a corrective step rather than an optional refinement.

CONCLUSIONS

All 47 items across the adapted MSPSS, GSES, and CD-RISC 25 met the corrected item-total criterion for their respective phase, and all three instruments met the 0.70 reliability threshold ($\alpha = 0.724\text{--}0.790$) among 225 AAU cadets, extending item-discrimination and internal-consistency evidence from civilian Indonesian samples to a military-academy population for the first time. The results are not uniformly reassuring, however: self-efficacy items showed the most sample-stable discrimination, while a subset of resilience items tied to instinct-trust and change-acceptance were consistently the weakest performers; a link to the academy's hierarchical,

compliance-oriented training structure is one plausible explanation but remains an untested hypothesis rather than a demonstrated finding.

These results support continued evaluation of the three instruments in this population and provide preliminary evidence of item discrimination and internal consistency. They do not yet establish structural validity, measurement invariance, or the reliability and criterion-related evidence that a consequential application such as psychological-readiness screening would require, and the resilience scale's uneven item performance should be treated as a signal to prioritize confirmatory factor analysis or measurement-invariance testing across cohort levels before, not after, the planned multiple-regression test of social support's and self-efficacy's effects on resilience. Recommendations for individual-level or routine screening use are deferred until that stronger evidence is available. Proceeding to the planned hypothesis test without the intermediate structural-validity step risks attributing measurement artifacts in the resilience score to the substantive predictors under study.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

AE contribute to conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Writing – original draft. S contribute to conceptualization, Supervision, Validation, Writing – review & editing. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used an AI-assisted language tool to English-language editing during the revision process. The authors reviewed, verified, and edited all AI-assisted output and take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the content of this article.

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