The Implications of International Conflicts for Energy Security and Energy Policy Responses in the Philippines: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Energy security is a critical concern for import-dependent and geographically fragmented states such as the Philippines. International conflicts, maritime disputes, supply chain disruptions, and global fuel price volatility threaten energy availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability, and these risks are compounded by dependence on imported fossil fuels, the declining Malampaya gas field, growing exposure to liquefied natural gas (LNG) markets, and unresolved tensions in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea). This systematic literature review examined the implications of international conflicts for Philippine energy security and the corresponding energy policy responses. The review followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines and used the SPIDER framework to define eligibility. Searches of Scopus, Google Scholar, ProQuest, and supplementary institutional and grey-literature sources identified 901 records, of which 24 studies published between 2010 and 2025 were included. Methodological quality was appraised using the MMAT, AACODS, and JBI checklists, and findings were integrated through narrative and thematic synthesis. Results show that conflicts affect Philippine energy security mainly through three frames: geopolitical risk, maritime territorial contestation, and disruption of global and regional energy flows. Dependence on imported fossil fuels emerged as the principal structural vulnerability, followed by offshore and maritime insecurity, infrastructure and access constraints, and reliance on external cooperation. Energy diversification, renewable energy expansion, LNG development, strategic fuel reserves, and regional cooperation were the most frequently proposed responses, although their effectiveness depends on governance capacity, infrastructure, financing, and diplomatic balance. The evidence base is predominantly qualitative and policy-oriented, with few Philippines-specific empirical studies measuring conflict effects on fuel prices, electricity costs, or supply reliability. The review concludes that energy resilience requires integrated, conflict-informed energy governance that reduces external vulnerabilities while accelerating a secure, diversified, and sustainable energy transition.

Keywords: Energy security; international conflicts; energy policy responses; Philippines; systematic literature review

INTRODUCTION

Energy security is a central concern for national development, economic stability, and public welfare. It is commonly understood through the dimensions of availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability (Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre [APERC], 2007). These dimensions are particularly important for states whose energy systems depend on imported fuels, maritime transport routes, international markets, foreign investment, and policy coordination among domestic and international actors. For developing and import-dependent countries, energy insecurity can adversely affect electricity generation, transportation, household welfare, industrial productivity, commodity prices, and overall economic performance. International conflicts have long influenced global energy security. Wars, economic sanctions, embargoes, maritime disputes, territorial confrontations, attacks on strategic transportation routes, and geopolitical rivalries affect the production, movement, pricing, and accessibility of oil, coal, natural gas, and liquefied natural gas (LNG). Even countries that are not directly involved in armed conflicts may experience indirect consequences through supply disruptions, fuel price volatility, trade diversion, shipping-route insecurity, investment uncertainty, and

policy pressures (Li, Yang, et al., 2021; Yilmazkuday, 2024). These risks are particularly significant for countries that rely heavily on international energy markets and possess limited domestic energy resources.

The Philippines presents a relevant case for examining the relationship between international conflicts and energy security. Although the country possesses domestic energy resources, including geothermal energy and natural gas, it remains highly dependent on imported fossil fuels, particularly oil and coal (Brahim, 2014; Navarro et al., 2023). The declining production of the Malampaya natural gas field, increasing exposure to LNG markets, persistently high electricity and fuel prices, and infrastructure challenges associated with the country's archipelagic geography further increase its vulnerability to external disruptions (Navarro & Camara, 2023). These structural conditions indicate that international conflicts may influence Philippine energy security through both geopolitical and market-based mechanisms.

The South China Sea, referred to by the Philippines as the West Philippine Sea, represents a particularly significant strategic energy space. Beyond its implications for national sovereignty and maritime security, the region is associated with offshore energy resources, sea-lane security, exclusive economic zone claims, the Reed Bank, the Spratly Islands, and broader issues concerning national energy self-sufficiency (Abdul Rani, 2025; Allas, 2025; Zhao, 2011). Continued tensions in these waters may constrain offshore energy exploration, complicate resource development, and reinforce the country's dependence on imported energy. Likewise, global geopolitical events, such as the Russia–Ukraine conflict, have demonstrated how international crises can indirectly affect the Philippines through fuel price volatility, inflationary pressures, supply chain disruptions, and uncertainty in global energy markets (Agaton, 2022; Ilman & Anam, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024).

Despite growing scholarly attention to energy security, Philippine energy policy, international conflicts, maritime disputes, energy transition, and geopolitical risk, the existing literature remains fragmented. While some studies examine renewable energy development, energy affordability, LNG expansion, nuclear energy, or import dependence (Brahim, 2014; Li, Wang, et al., 2021; Navarro & Camara, 2023; Trajano, 2022), others focus on the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea), China–Philippines relations, and great-power competition (De Castro, 2016; De Guzman, 2014; Imanuddin & Sugito, 2021; Strating, 2020), the energy implications of the Russia–Ukraine conflict (Ilman & Anam, 2023; Prabowo & Sihaloho, 2024), or regional energy cooperation (Kanchana et al., 2016; Zhao, 2011). These research areas are often examined independently, limiting a comprehensive understanding of how international conflicts collectively influence Philippine energy security and the country's policy responses.

This systematic literature review addresses this gap by synthesizing scholarly and policy literature published between 2010 and 2025. It contributes by (a) bringing together evidence on conflict-driven market shocks, maritime contestation, and policy responses that has largely been examined in separate research streams; (b) appraising the quality of a heterogeneous evidence base using tools suited to each source type; and (c) identifying evidence gaps that can guide future research and policy development. Specifically, the review addresses four research questions:

- **RQ1.** How are international conflicts conceptualized in relation to Philippine energy security?
- **RQ2.** Which energy security dimensions and policy responses are most frequently discussed in the literature?
- **RQ3.** What are the Philippines' principal vulnerabilities to conflict-related energy risks?
- **RQ4.** What research approaches, methodological limitations, and evidence gaps characterize the literature?

METHODOLOGY

Review Design

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to identify, screen, appraise, extract, and synthesize

literature on international conflicts, Philippine energy security, and energy policy responses. The review was conducted and reported with reference to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021), particularly for study identification, screening, eligibility assessment, inclusion, and synthesis reporting. A review protocol, prepared with reference to PRISMA-P (Shamseer et al., 2015), was developed in advance to guide the research questions, eligibility criteria, search strategy, study selection procedures, quality appraisal, data extraction, and synthesis approach.

A meta-analysis was not conducted because the included studies were heterogeneous in research design, source type, conceptual framing, and outcome measures. Instead, narrative and thematic synthesis were employed to identify patterns, areas of convergence and divergence, and evidence gaps across academic, policy, institutional, and grey literature.

Review Framework

The review adopted the SPIDER framework (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, and Research Type; Cooke et al., 2012) to guide study selection and evidence synthesis. SPIDER was selected because the review focused on conceptual framings, vulnerability conditions, policy responses, methodological patterns, and heterogeneous evidence rather than a single intervention or standardized quantitative outcome (Table 1).

Table 1. SPIDER framework applied in the review

SPIDER component	Operationalization in this review
Sample	The Philippines and its energy sector, including studies where the Philippines is the primary focus or a clearly identifiable unit of analysis
Phenomenon of Interest	Implications of international conflicts and geopolitical disruptions for Philippine energy security and energy policy responses
Design	Qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, case study, document analysis, legal analysis, policy analysis, and modelling designs
Evaluation	Energy-security dimensions, conflict-related risks, vulnerability factors, strategic conditions, and policy responses
Research Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, institutional publications, government documents, theses, dissertations, working papers, and credible grey literature

For this review, international conflict refers to interstate wars, armed confrontations, militarized disputes, sanctions, embargoes, territorial and maritime disputes, energy-related coercion, and conflict-related disruptions affecting energy supply, prices, infrastructure, maritime access, or policy decisions. Geopolitical disruption is treated as a broader concept encompassing conflict-related external shocks, geopolitical tensions, resource nationalism, supply-chain disruptions, shipping-route insecurity, energy market volatility, and political instability in energy-producing or energy-transit regions.

Eligibility Criteria

English-language studies published between 2010 and 2025 were considered eligible if they examined the Philippines or included the Philippines as a clearly identifiable unit of analysis in relation to international conflicts, geopolitical disruptions, energy security, external supply disruptions, conflict-related energy risks, or energy policy responses. Eligible sources included Philippines-focused studies, regional or comparative studies with extractable Philippine evidence, and policy or institutional documents relevant to Philippine energy security.

Studies were included if they examined at least one of the following: (1) the relationship between international conflicts or geopolitical disruptions and Philippine energy security; (2) Philippine energy policy responses to geopolitical risks or external disruptions; (3) conceptualizations of conflict in relation to Philippine energy

security; (4) energy security dimensions, including availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability; or (5) Philippine vulnerabilities, strategic conditions, and policy responses.

Studies were excluded if they did not examine the Philippines or its energy sector, focused exclusively on other countries, mentioned the Philippines only incidentally, discussed Philippine energy issues without linking them to international conflict or geopolitical disruption, focused solely on technical or engineering issues without policy relevance, consisted of opinion pieces or editorials without sufficient analytical content, or were published outside the 2010–2025 period or in a language other than English. Methodological quality was not used as an exclusion criterion (see Section 2.8).

Table 2. Eligibility criteria

Criterion	Included	Excluded
Timeframe and language	English-language sources published from 2010 to 2025	Sources published before 2010 or after 2025, or not in English
Geographic scope	Philippines-focused studies or regional/global studies with clearly extractable Philippine evidence	Studies with no Philippine unit of analysis or only passing mention of the Philippines
Phenomenon of interest	International conflict, geopolitical disruption, external energy shock, maritime dispute, energy-security risk, or policy response	Energy studies without conflict/geopolitical/external-risk connection
Study design	Qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, modelling, case study, legal, document, policy, or institutional analysis	Purely technical/engineering studies without policy, conflict, or security relevance
Research type	Journal articles, policy reports, institutional publications, government documents, theses, dissertations, working papers, credible grey literature	Editorials, opinion pieces, letters, and unsupported commentary

Information Sources and Search Strategy

The primary bibliographic databases were Scopus, Google Scholar, and ProQuest because of their multidisciplinary coverage of energy security, political science, international relations, public policy, economics, development studies, and related disciplines. These searches were supplemented with Philippine-specific sources, government publications, institutional reports, energy organizations, geopolitical and security think tanks, regional development organizations, academic repositories, and relevant grey literature (Table 3).

The search strategy comprised four concept blocks. The first included geographic terms such as Philippines, Filipino, Philippine energy sector, and Philippine energy security. The second focused on energy security concepts, including energy security, energy policy, energy vulnerability, energy supply, energy imports, energy resilience, energy transition, oil, coal, natural gas, LNG, renewable energy, Malampaya, and the Philippine Energy Plan. The third covered international conflicts and geopolitical risks, including international conflict, war, Russia–Ukraine, South China Sea, West Philippine Sea, territorial dispute, maritime dispute, sanctions, oil embargo, energy crisis, fuel price shock, geopolitical risk, and supply chain disruption. The fourth focused on policy responses, including energy diversification, energy reform, strategic reserves, renewable energy targets, LNG development, and energy resilience policy.

The primary search combined the first three concept blocks using Boolean operators, while the fourth block was applied as a supplementary or narrowing search where appropriate. Searches were conducted within titles, abstracts, and keywords whenever database functionality permitted. Owing to platform limitations, shorter search strings were used in Google Scholar. Searches were last run on May 17, 2026, and the 854 database

records comprised Scopus n = 223; Google Scholar n = 338; ProQuest n = 212; final checking search across all three databases (n = 31).

To enhance transparency and reproducibility, all searches were documented in a search log recording the database or source searched, search strings, search dates, filters applied, records retrieved, records screened, and potentially eligible studies. This audit trail supported the PRISMA flow diagram and the overall review process.

Table 3. Search strategy and information sources

Source type	Sources searched	Search focus
Bibliographic databases	Scopus, Google Scholar, ProQuest	Philippines + energy security/policy + international conflict/geopolitical disruption
Philippine-specific sources	Philippine Institute for Development Studies, Department of Energy, Official Gazette, Philippine E-Journals, university repositories	Philippine energy policy, energy security, domestic vulnerabilities, policy responses
Energy and institutional sources	International Energy Agency, U.S. Energy Information Administration, International Renewable Energy Agency, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, ASEAN Centre for Energy	Energy-security context, regional cooperation, energy transition, policy reports
Geopolitical/security and grey literature	Security thinks tanks, development organizations, institutional reports, theses/dissertations, working papers	Maritime disputes, South China Sea/West Philippine Sea, geopolitical risk, external shocks

Study Selection Process

Study selection followed the PRISMA 2020 process, including identification, removal of records before screening, title and abstract screening, full-text eligibility assessment, and final inclusion (Page et al., 2021). The first author conducted the searches, screening, data extraction, coding, and synthesis. A second reviewer (acknowledged below) independently verified the screening decisions and the quality appraisal, including the risk-of-bias assessment, and did not participate in data extraction, coding, thematic synthesis, interpretation of findings, or manuscript preparation. Disagreements and borderline decisions were resolved through discussion until consensus was achieved, and the reconciled decision determined inclusion in the final synthesis.

A total of 901 records were identified from all sources: 854 from Scopus, Google Scholar, and ProQuest, and 47 from supplementary sources, including government publications, institutional reports, Philippine-specific databases, energy organizations, geopolitical think tanks, regional organizations, academic repositories, and grey literature. Before screening, 156 duplicate records were removed from the database stream and 11 from the supplementary stream. The remaining 698 database records underwent title and abstract screening, and 658 were excluded, leaving 40 database reports for full-text assessment. From the supplementary stream, 36 reports were sought and assessed for eligibility. All reports were retrieved. Following full-text assessment against the SPIDER-based criteria, 24 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final synthesis. The numbers of records at each stage and the reasons for exclusion are shown in Figure 1.

PRISMA Flow Diagram

Figure 1 presents the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of studies.

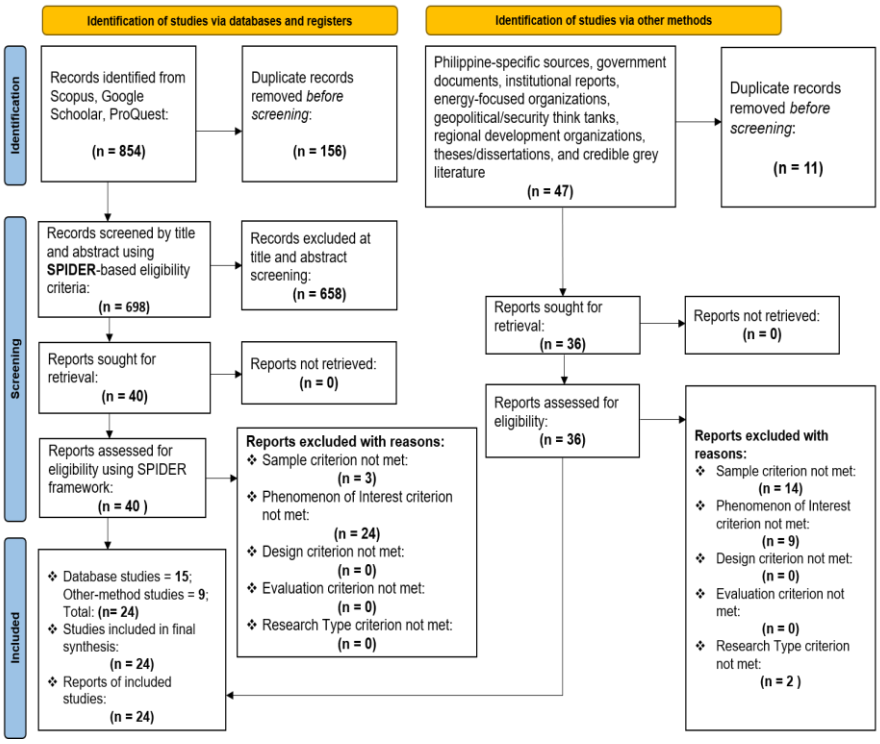

Figure 1. *PRISMA 2020 flow diagram of the study selection process*

Data Extraction

Data were extracted using a standardized extraction framework. The extracted information included study identification, title, author(s), publication year, publication type, source, conceptual or theoretical framework, geographic focus, Philippine relevance, type of international conflict, type of geopolitical disruption, energy security dimensions, policy responses, research design, data sources, principal findings, methodological limitations, and identified evidence gaps.

A master codebook was developed using line-by-line coding based primarily on each study's principal findings, with additional codes assigned to conflict framing, policy responses, research methods, methodological limitations, and evidence gaps.

Quality Appraisal and Risk-of-Bias Assessment

Methodological quality was assessed using appraisal tools appropriate to each source type. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018) was applied to empirical studies, the AACODS checklist (Tyndall, 2010) was used for grey literature, and the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Checklist for Text and Opinion Papers (McArthur et al., 2015) were applied to non-empirical sources. Because these tools do not produce a standard overall rating, each source was assigned an overall judgment of low risk, some concerns, or high risk based on the appraisal criteria. Quality appraisal informed the interpretation of findings rather than serving as a basis for excluding studies that otherwise satisfied the eligibility criteria.

Data Synthesis

Because of the heterogeneity of the included studies, quantitative meta-analysis was not appropriate. Instead, the review employed narrative synthesis to summarize the evidence and thematic synthesis to identify

recurring patterns, similarities, differences, and evidence gaps across the literature. This approach enabled the integration of diverse forms of evidence concerning international conflicts, Philippine energy security, and energy policy responses.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Included Studies

The final synthesis included 24 studies (S1–S24; Table 4). The included literature comprised Philippines-specific studies, regional Southeast Asian studies with extractable Philippine relevance, emerging-country studies including the Philippines, and geopolitical analyses focused on the South China Sea. Publication types included journal articles, policy reports, discussion papers, working papers, theses, conference proceedings, policy reviews, legal analyses, geopolitical studies, quantitative modelling studies, and econometric analyses. By appraisal category, nine were empirical studies (MMAT), nine were grey-literature sources (AACODS), and six were text and opinion papers (JBI). Seventeen studies (71%) were published between 2020 and 2025, three between 2015 and 2019, and four between 2010 and 2014, indicating that the literature has grown most rapidly in recent years.

Table 4. Characteristics of included studies

ID	Author(s), year	Title / study focus	Publication type	Main relevance to review
S1	Allas, 2025	Energy Security in Southeast Asia: The Philippines Amidst Rising Geopolitical Tensions	Master's thesis	Philippine energy security, geopolitical tensions, WPS/SCS, external vulnerability
S2	Brahim, 2014	Renewable Energy and Energy Security in the Philippines	Journal/conference article	Renewable energy, import dependence, oil supply disruption, price fluctuation
S3	Agaton, 2022	Will a Geopolitical Conflict Accelerate Energy Transition in Oil-Importing Countries?	Journal article	Russia-Ukraine war, oil-importing vulnerability, energy transition investment
S4	Soliman, Lopez, & Biona, 2019	Evaluation of Political Risk Factors Influencing Energy Supply Disruption	Conference proceedings	Political risk, crude-oil suppliers, energy supply disruption
S5	Navarro, Ortiz, & Camara, 2023	How Energy Secure is the Philippines?	Policy report / discussion paper	Philippine energy-security assessment, import dependence, vulnerability
S6	La Viña, Dulce, & Saño, 2011	National and Global Energy Governance	Journal article	Philippine energy governance, global energy prices, regional cooperation
S7	Baladjay & Carlos, 2024	Critical Industries in the Time of Asia-Pacific Geopolitics	Policy report / discussion paper	Critical industries, energy, geopolitics, supply-chain vulnerability
S8	Nguyen, Nong, Simshauser, & Pham, 2024	Economic and Supply Chain Impacts from Energy Price Shocks in Southeast Asia	Journal article	Russia-Ukraine-related price shocks and Southeast Asian impacts

S9	Kanchana, McLellan, & Unesaki, 2016	Energy Dependence with an Asian Twist?	Journal article	Energy dependence, external supply disruption, regional energy relations
S10	Navarro & Camara, 2023	Mapping the Energy Sector Issues in the Philippines	Policy report / discussion paper	Malampaya decline, LNG, WPS/SCS, Philippine energy-sector issues
S11	Strating, 2020	Small Power Hedging in an Era of Great-power Politics	Journal article	China, Southeast Asia, South China Sea, small-power hedging
S12	Shukor, 2023	The Rise of Clean Energy Nationalism in Southeast Asia	Graduate research paper	Critical minerals, clean-energy nationalism, trade dynamics
S13	Prabowo & Sihaloho, 2024	The Impact of the Ukraine-Russia Conflict on the Stability of Energy Geopolitics in Southeast Asia	Journal article	Russia-Ukraine conflict, ASEAN energy stability, supply-demand dynamics
S14	Abdul Rani, 2025	Energy Dominance in the South China Sea	Journal article	South China Sea resources, legal/geopolitical conflict, UNCLOS/PCA issues
S15	Forbes, 2025	Geopolitics, Energy Security and Soft-Shoe Diplomacy in the South China Sea	Unpublished manuscript	South China Sea diplomacy, energy security, claimant-state behavior
S16	Li, Wang, Lu, & Li, 2021	Renewable Energy Applications in the Philippines and China	Journal article (critical survey)	Renewable energy cooperation, PESTEL factors, external disruption
S17	Ilman & Anam, 2023	Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on the Energy Sector in Southeast Asia	Journal article	Russia-Ukraine war, energy prices, Southeast Asian energy impacts
S18	Trajano, 2022	Ready for Nuclear Energy?	Journal / policy review	Nuclear energy, ASEAN regulatory cooperation, Philippine energy planning
S19	De Castro, 2016	Strategic Balance in East Asia and the Philippines in the South China Sea Dispute	Journal article	Philippine strategy, WPS/SCS dispute, small-power security context
S20	Yilmazkuday, 2024	Geopolitical Risks and Energy Uncertainty	Working paper	Geopolitical risk, domestic and global energy prices
S21	Li, Yang, Li, & Failler, 2021	Does Geopolitics Have an Impact on Energy Trade?	Journal article	Geopolitical risk and energy trade in emerging countries
S22	Zhao, 2011	Energy Security Concerns of China and ASEAN	Working paper	China-ASEAN energy security, South China Sea, conflict/cooperation
S23	De Guzman, 2014	Philippines-China Relations, 2001–2008	Journal article	JMSU, Philippine-China relations, energy cooperation
S24	Imanuddin & Sugito, 2021	The Strategy of Power Politics of the Philippines in Facing China	Journal article	Philippine strategy, China, South China Sea conflict

Quality Appraisal and Risk-of-Bias Results

The evidence base was suitable for synthesis but varied in methodological quality. Of the 24 included studies, 7 were assessed as low risk of bias, 14 as having some concerns, and 3 as high risk of bias (Table 5). Studies classified as low risk generally demonstrated identifiable authorship, transparent publication contexts, clearly

reported data sources, appropriate analytical approaches, and strong evidentiary support. Studies with some concerns remained relevant but exhibited limitations in methodological transparency, source-selection procedures, country-specific disaggregation, objectivity, or reporting completeness. High-risk studies were retained because of their topical relevance but were interpreted cautiously during synthesis.

Table 5. Risk-of-bias summary

Tool	Study IDs	Count	Overall pattern
MMAT 2018	S2, S3, S4, S8, S9, S13, S16, S17, S21	9	One low-risk study, five with some concerns, and three high-risk studies
AACODS	S1, S5, S7, S10, S12, S18, S20, S22, S23	9	Two low-risk sources and seven sources with some concerns
JBI Text and Opinion	S6, S11, S14, S15, S19, S24	6	Four low-risk studies and two with some concerns
Overall	All included studies	24	7 low risk; 14 some concerns; 3 high risk; 0 no information

Among studies appraised using the MMAT, methodological transparency varied considerably. Nguyen et al. (2024) was assessed as low risk because it employed a recognized computable general equilibrium modelling framework with explicit energy-price shock scenarios. Agaton (2022), Brahim (2014), Kanchana et al. (2016), Prabowo and Sihaloho (2024), and Li, Yang, et al. (2021) were assessed as having some concerns, primarily because of limitations in representativeness, source selection, or reporting completeness. Soliman et al. (2019), Li, Wang, et al. (2021), and Ilman and Anam (2023) were assessed as high risk because of limitations in confounding control, systematic source selection, coding transparency, or analytical derivation.

Sources appraised using the AACODS checklist were generally relevant and credible, although several grey-literature publications, policy papers, working papers, and thesis-type documents were assessed as having some concerns because of limited peer review or incomplete methodological reporting. Studies assessed using the JBI checklist were predominantly classified as low risk, although De Castro (2016) and Imanuddin and Sugito (2021) were interpreted cautiously because of limitations in verifiable author standing or transparency in the library research process.

NARRATIVE FINDINGS

Framing of International Conflicts in Relation to Philippine Energy Security (RQ1)

Across the reviewed literature, international conflicts are framed not merely as diplomatic or military events but as external conditions that shape Philippine energy vulnerability. Three recurring frames emerged: geopolitical risk, maritime territorial contestation, and disruptions to global or regional energy flows.

The first frame conceptualizes geopolitical risk as uncertainty affecting investment, trade patterns, supply reliability, and domestic energy prices. Studies examining geopolitical risk, energy trade, and global energy markets consistently position the Philippines as vulnerable because of its dependence on international markets, external suppliers, and regional strategic competition (Baladjay & Carlos, 2024; Li, Yang, et al., 2021; Soliman et al., 2019; Yilmazkuday, 2024).

The second frame emphasizes maritime territorial contestation. The South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) dispute is consistently portrayed as an energy-security issue associated with contested offshore resources, exclusive economic zone access, sea-lane security, Reed Bank, the Spratly Islands, and the country's ability to develop domestic energy resources (Abdul Rani, 2025; Allas, 2025; De Castro, 2016; Forbes, 2025; Imanuddin

& Sugito, 2021; Zhao, 2011). Rather than being limited to sovereignty disputes, this literature frames maritime tensions as constraints on offshore exploration, maritime transport security, and long-term efforts to reduce dependence on imported fuels.

The third frame focuses on disruptions to global and regional energy flows. The Russia–Ukraine conflict is frequently discussed as a source of oil-price volatility, supply-chain disruption, inflationary pressure, and increased exposure to global energy markets (Agaton, 2022; Ilman & Anam, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024; Prabowo & Sihaloho, 2024). Unlike the South China Sea literature, this perspective emphasizes indirect market-based mechanisms through which international conflicts affect Philippine energy security.

Energy Security Dimensions and Policy Responses (RQ2)

The most frequently examined dimensions of energy security were availability, affordability, and accessibility, whereas acceptability appeared less consistently and was primarily associated with renewable energy, nuclear energy, and low-carbon transition policies.

Availability was commonly discussed in relation to import dependence, supply disruption, supplier-country risks, offshore resource access, LNG imports, and the decline of the Malampaya gas field (Brahim, 2014; Navarro & Camara, 2023; Navarro et al., 2023; Soliman et al., 2019). Affordability focused on oil and gas price volatility, electricity costs, inflationary pressures, fuel-price shocks, and the economic burden of imported energy (Brahim, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2024; Yilmazkuday, 2024). Accessibility was examined through the country's archipelagic geography, grid limitations, off-grid communities, maritime transport routes, and sea-lane vulnerabilities (Allas, 2025; Navarro & Camara, 2023; Navarro et al., 2023). Acceptability was primarily linked to renewable energy development, climate policy, critical minerals, and the transition toward low-carbon energy systems (Brahim, 2014; Li, Wang, et al., 2021; Shukor, 2023; Trajano, 2022).

Energy diversification emerged as the dominant policy response in the thematic synthesis (Table 6). Diversification strategies included renewable energy expansion, LNG development, nuclear energy, supplier diversification, strategic fuel stockpiling, emergency planning, offshore resource development, and broader low-carbon transition initiatives (Agaton, 2022; Li, Wang, et al., 2021; Navarro & Camara, 2023; Shukor, 2023; Trajano, 2022). However, the literature consistently indicates that diversification alone is insufficient because its effectiveness depends on governance capacity, regulatory readiness, infrastructure development, financing, diplomatic conditions, and foreign partnerships.

Regional and international cooperation represented the second major policy response. The reviewed studies discussed ASEAN energy mechanisms, bilateral cooperation, maritime-security partnerships, defense cooperation, nuclear regulatory collaboration, and potential joint development arrangements (De Guzman, 2014; Kanchana et al., 2016; La Viña et al., 2011; Trajano, 2022; Zhao, 2011). Although cooperation is widely recognized as necessary for addressing conflict-related energy risks, the literature remains divided regarding whether such arrangements ultimately reduce vulnerability or create new forms of dependence within sovereignty-sensitive geopolitical contexts (Abdul Rani, 2025; Imanuddin & Sugito, 2021).

Philippine Vulnerabilities and Strategic Conditions (RQ3)

The reviewed literature identifies four principal vulnerabilities influencing Philippine exposure to conflict-related energy security risks.

The first is dependence on imported fossil fuels, which consistently emerges as the country's most significant structural vulnerability (Allas, 2025; Brahim, 2014; Kanchana et al., 2016; Navarro et al., 2023). This dependence exposes the Philippines to international fuel-price volatility, import-cost increases, supply disruptions, and inflationary pressures associated with global geopolitical crises.

The second vulnerability concerns maritime and offshore insecurity. Studies examining the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) emphasize disputed maritime zones, strategic sea lanes, offshore resource access, and maritime chokepoints as conditions that shape the country's energy security (Abdul Rani, 2025; De Castro, 2016; Forbes, 2025; Navarro & Camara, 2023; Zhao, 2011).

Third, domestic infrastructure and energy-access limitations amplify the effects of external shocks. High electricity prices, grid constraints, uneven energy access, declining domestic reserves, and uncertainty

regarding Malampaya replacement collectively increase national vulnerability (La Viña et al., 2011; Navarro & Camara, 2023; Navarro et al., 2023).

Fourth, dependence on external cooperation presents both opportunities and risks. While international partnerships may provide investment, technology transfer, regulatory support, and maritime-security cooperation, they may also generate new forms of dependence, foreign influence, bargaining asymmetries, and sovereignty-related concerns (Imanuddin & Sugito, 2021; Strating, 2020; Trajano, 2022; Zhao, 2011).

Research Designs, Methodological Limitations, and Evidence Gaps (RQ4)

The reviewed evidence demonstrates considerable diversity in publication type but uneven methodological depth. Most studies employed qualitative, document-based, legal, geopolitical, and policy-oriented approaches using government documents, policy reports, international agreements, institutional publications, and secondary literature.

A smaller number of studies adopted quantitative or modelling approaches, including computable general equilibrium modelling (Nguyen et al., 2024), real-options modelling (Agaton, 2022), composite-index and risk analysis (Navarro et al., 2023; Soliman et al., 2019), and econometric and time-series analysis (Li, Yang, et al., 2021; Yilmazkuday, 2024). These studies provided valuable evidence on geopolitical risk, energy trade, price shocks, investment uncertainty, and regional energy-market dynamics but often lacked Philippines-specific analyses.

The most significant evidence gaps concern the limited empirical measurement of how specific international conflicts directly affect Philippine energy outcomes. Although existing studies consistently identify the Russia–Ukraine conflict, the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) dispute, geopolitical uncertainty, and great-power competition as important contexts, comparatively few provide measurable evidence regarding their effects on fuel prices, electricity costs, import expenditures, supply reliability, offshore exploration, investment decisions, or policy effectiveness.

Thematic Synthesis

The thematic synthesis identified five overarching themes (Table 6):

1. External conflict as structural energy vulnerability;
2. Maritime insecurity and offshore resource constraints;
3. Diversification as the dominant policy response;
4. Energy transition as a security strategy; and
5. Cooperation as necessary but strategically uncertain.

Table 6. Thematic synthesis results

Theme	Evidence pattern	Representative studies
External conflict as structural energy vulnerability	International conflicts affect the Philippines through fuel-price shocks, import exposure, supply-chain disruption, inflationary pressure, and energy-market uncertainty.	Agaton, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2024; Navarro & Camara, 2023; Prabowo & Sihaloho, 2024; Ilman & Anam, 2023; Yilmazkuday, 2024
Maritime insecurity and offshore resource constraints	The South China Sea/West Philippine Sea is framed as both a sovereignty issue and an energy-security issue affecting offshore resources, Reed Bank, Spratly-related spaces, sea lanes, and maritime access.	De Castro, 2016; Abdul Rani, 2025; Forbes, 2025; Zhao, 2011; Imanuddin & Sugito, 2021

Diversification as the dominant policy response	Renewable energy, LNG, nuclear energy, supplier diversification, strategic reserves, emergency planning, and offshore development are proposed to reduce exposure to imported fuel dependence and geopolitical shocks.	Trajano, 2022; Li, Wang, et al., 2021; Shukor, 2023; Navarro & Camara, 2023
Energy transition as a security strategy	Renewable energy, nuclear energy, clean-energy cooperation, and critical-mineral development are framed as pathways to energy independence, affordability, reliability, and reduced fossil-fuel dependence.	Brahim, 2014; Agaton, 2022; Li, Wang, et al., 2021; Shukor, 2023; Trajano, 2022
Cooperation as necessary but strategically uncertain	ASEAN, bilateral, maritime-security, defense, nuclear-regulatory, and possible joint-development cooperation are discussed as responses, but may also create dependence or sovereignty risks.	Trajano, 2022; Zhao, 2011; Abdul Rani, 2025; Imanuddin & Sugito, 2021; De Guzman, 2014

Code Frequency and Evidence Patterns

The master codebook generated 35 unique codes and 188 coded occurrences. The most frequently occurring codes related to exposure to global energy-price shocks, dependence on imported fossil fuels, energy transition and low-carbon policies, the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) as an energy-security issue, offshore resource constraints arising from sovereignty disputes, renewable energy as a resilience strategy, and affordability pressures associated with fuel and electricity prices (Table 7). Frequency refers to the number of times each code was assigned across the 24 included studies.

Table 7. Most frequent codes in the master codebook

Code	Frequency	Interpretation
Exposure to global energy price shocks	14	The most frequent evidence pattern; links conflict and geopolitical risk to affordability and import exposure
Imported fossil-fuel dependence as core vulnerability	11	Identifies structural dependence as a central Philippine vulnerability
Acceptability through climate and low-carbon transition	11	Shows energy transition as an energy-security and acceptability issue
SCS/WPS dispute framed as energy-security conflict	10	Highlights maritime dispute as an energy-security issue
Offshore energy access constrained by sovereignty disputes	9	Links contested maritime space to domestic resource constraints
Renewable energy transition as resilience response	9	Frames renewable energy as a resilience and diversification strategy
Affordability pressure from fuel and electricity costs	9	Links conflict and market volatility to energy affordability
Limited Philippines-specific disaggregation	8	Indicates a recurring evidence limitation
Maritime insecurity and sea-lane vulnerability	7	Shows transport-route and maritime-security risks
Governance, regulatory, and implementation gaps	7	Identifies domestic policy and institutional constraints

DISCUSSION

This systematic literature review demonstrates that international conflicts influence Philippine energy security through multiple, interconnected pathways. The synthesized evidence indicates that Philippine energy security extends beyond the domestic energy sector and should be understood as a broader issue of geopolitical governance shaped by international energy markets, maritime disputes, external partnerships, and strategic uncertainty. The findings map onto the four commonly used dimensions of energy security (APERC, 2007): conflict-related price shocks bear mainly on affordability, import dependence and offshore constraints on availability, geography and infrastructure on accessibility, and the energy transition on acceptability.

The first major finding identifies dependence on imported fossil fuels as the principal mechanism through which international conflicts affect Philippine energy security. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that geopolitical events, particularly the Russia–Ukraine conflict, contribute to fuel price volatility, higher import costs, inflationary pressures, and supply chain disruptions (Agaton, 2022; Ilman & Anam, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024). These findings suggest that Philippine energy security cannot be understood solely in terms of domestic energy production and consumption but must also be examined within the context of conflict-sensitive global energy markets (Navarro et al., 2023; Yilmazkuday, 2024).

The second major finding highlights maritime insecurity as a defining feature of the Philippine energy security landscape. The South China Sea, referred to by the Philippines as the West Philippine Sea, is consistently framed in the literature as an energy security concern because of its implications for offshore resource exploration, exclusive economic zone claims, maritime transportation, and sea-lane security (Abdul Rani, 2025; De Castro, 2016; Forbes, 2025; Zhao, 2011). These findings underscore the close relationship between energy planning, maritime security, diplomacy, legal strategy, and foreign policy (De Guzman, 2014; Imanuddin & Sugito, 2021; Strating, 2020).

The third major finding concerns energy diversification as the dominant policy response identified across the literature. Renewable energy development, LNG, nuclear energy, offshore resource development, supplier diversification, strategic fuel reserves, and emergency preparedness are consistently presented as strategies for reducing vulnerability to conflict-related energy risks (Agaton, 2022; Brahim, 2014; Navarro & Camara, 2023; Trajano, 2022). However, the literature also emphasizes that diversification is not a stand-alone solution. Its effectiveness depends on governance capacity, regulatory readiness, infrastructure investment, institutional coordination, financing mechanisms, and diplomatic balancing (La Viña et al., 2011). Furthermore, diversification may reduce certain vulnerabilities while creating new dependencies associated with imported technologies, foreign investment, critical minerals, and international supply chains (Li, Wang, et al., 2021; Shukor, 2023).

The fourth major finding indicates that international cooperation is both necessary and strategically complex. Regional and bilateral partnerships can strengthen investment, technical capacity, nuclear regulation, maritime security, and energy infrastructure development (Kanchana et al., 2016; Trajano, 2022). Nevertheless, the reviewed studies also caution that such cooperation may increase external dependence, expose the Philippines to foreign influence, and complicate sovereignty-related issues in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) (De Guzman, 2014; Imanuddin & Sugito, 2021; Zhao, 2011). Consequently, cooperative arrangements should be evaluated not only for their immediate contributions to energy security but also for their long-term implications for national resilience, strategic autonomy, and bargaining capacity.

The fifth major finding concerns the methodological characteristics of the existing evidence base. Current scholarship provides a substantial conceptual and descriptive understanding of the relationship between international conflicts and Philippine energy security through qualitative, legal, policy, and geopolitical analyses. However, empirical evidence remains comparatively limited. Although quantitative and modelling studies contribute valuable insights into geopolitical risk, energy trade, investment uncertainty, and price shocks (Agaton, 2022; Li, Yang, et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2024; Yilmazkuday, 2024), many operate at regional or global scales and provide limited Philippines-specific evidence. As a result, important questions regarding the direct effects of international conflicts on fuel prices, electricity costs, supply reliability, offshore exploration, investment decisions, and policy effectiveness remain insufficiently addressed.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Taken together, these findings suggest that Philippine energy security should be approached through a framework of conflict-informed energy governance. Such an approach requires integrating long-term energy planning with geopolitical risk assessment, maritime security considerations, supplier-risk monitoring, infrastructure resilience, and institutional preparedness. The reviewed literature points to the following priorities for policymakers and energy planners:

- Integrate geopolitical risk and supplier-risk monitoring into national energy planning, including the Philippine Energy Plan.
- Strengthen domestic renewable energy capacity and implement well-governed LNG development to offset the decline of the Malampaya field.
- Maintain strategic fuel reserves and emergency preparedness mechanisms to buffer short-term supply and price shocks.
- Expand domestic resource assessment and reinforce maritime security coordination to protect offshore energy interests.
- Enhance regional cooperation while evaluating its long-term implications for dependence, strategic autonomy, and sovereignty.
- Promote transparent regulatory governance to build the institutional capacity on which the effectiveness of diversification depends.

LIMITATIONS

This review has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the review was limited to English-language literature published between 2010 and 2025. Consequently, relevant studies published in other languages, particularly from Southeast Asia or China, may not have been captured.

Second, although Scopus, Google Scholar, and ProQuest provided broad multidisciplinary coverage, these databases may not have indexed all relevant policy documents, legal analyses, institutional publications, or grey literature. Supplementary searches helped mitigate this limitation but could not eliminate it entirely.

Third, the included studies exhibited considerable variation in publication type, research design, and methodological transparency. The evidence base comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, working papers, theses, an unpublished manuscript, legal analyses, geopolitical studies, and modelling research. While this diversity enabled comprehensive evidence mapping, it precluded quantitative meta-analysis and required cautious interpretation of the synthesized findings.

Fourth, several included studies adopted regional or comparative perspectives rather than focusing exclusively on the Philippines. Although only studies with identifiable Philippine relevance were included, the degree of country-specific evidence varied considerably, limiting the precision of conclusions regarding direct Philippine energy outcomes.

Fifth, the appraisal tools employed (MMAT, AACODS, and the JBI checklist) evaluate different aspects of methodological quality and source credibility. Accordingly, appraisal results were used to guide the interpretation of evidence rather than to generate a single composite quality score. In addition, data extraction, coding, and synthesis were carried out by a single reviewer, with independent verification limited to screening and quality appraisal, which may have introduced interpretive bias.

Finally, the available evidence remains constrained by a limited number of Philippines-specific empirical studies. Many publications rely primarily on secondary data, document analysis, policy review, legal interpretation, or regional comparison. Comparatively few studies employ primary data collection, causal

modelling, sector-specific datasets, or scenario-based analyses focused on the Philippines, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships between international conflicts and specific energy outcomes.

Directions for Future Research

The evidence gaps identified in this review point to several research priorities: (a) country-specific quantitative analyses that measure the effects of specific conflicts on Philippine fuel prices, electricity costs, import expenditures, and supply reliability; (b) scenario-based and modelling studies of conflict-related supply disruptions and offshore development constraints; (c) longitudinal assessments of the effectiveness of diversification, LNG, renewable energy, and strategic reserve policies; (d) primary-data studies, such as stakeholder interviews and sector-specific datasets, to complement the predominantly document-based evidence; and (e) interdisciplinary research linking energy planning, maritime security, and foreign policy.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review synthesized evidence published between 2010 and 2025 to examine the implications of international conflicts for Philippine energy security and energy policy responses. The findings demonstrate that international conflicts influence Philippine energy security through interconnected geopolitical, economic, and maritime pathways. Dependence on imported fossil fuels, declining domestic natural gas production, exposure to global fuel markets, maritime disputes in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea), and disruptions arising from international crises collectively increase the country's vulnerability to external energy shocks.

The review further shows that energy diversification, renewable energy expansion, LNG development, strategic fuel reserves, regional cooperation, and strengthened governance are the most frequently proposed policy responses in the literature. However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on sustained institutional capacity, regulatory consistency, infrastructure investment, and the ability to balance national energy objectives with broader geopolitical and security considerations.

Methodologically, the review identified a predominance of qualitative, policy-oriented, legal, and geopolitical studies, while comparatively few empirical investigations directly measured the impacts of international conflicts on Philippine energy outcomes. This highlights a continuing need for country-specific quantitative analyses, scenario-based modelling, longitudinal assessments, and interdisciplinary research to strengthen the evidence base supporting Philippine energy policy.

Overall, the review demonstrates that Philippine energy security should be understood not only as a matter of energy supply and infrastructure but also as an issue of national resilience, geopolitical risk management, and strategic governance. By integrating fragmented literature across energy security, international conflict, and public policy, this study contributes a comprehensive synthesis that may inform future research, energy planning, and evidence-based policymaking aimed at strengthening the resilience of the Philippine energy sector.

Declarations

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no financial, professional, personal, institutional, or other conflicts of interest that could have influenced the design, conduct, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of this systematic literature review.

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Ethical Approval

Not applicable. This study is a review of published and publicly available literature and did not involve human participants or animals.

Data Availability Statement

All studies included in this review are cited in the reference list. The search log, data extraction sheet, codebook, and quality appraisal records generated during the review are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Author Contributions

J.B.M.C.: Conceptualization, methodology, protocol development, literature search, study selection, data extraction, quality appraisal, formal analysis, thematic synthesis, manuscript drafting, visualization, and project administration. A.G.O.: Supervision, methodological guidance, validation, critical review and editing of the manuscript, interpretation of findings, and final approval of the manuscript for publication. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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