

The Strategic View: 'South China Sea Conflict' based on The View of Nationals from Different Countries

Victor Chang

School of Computing, Engineering and Digital Technologies, Teesside University, UK

Email: victorchang.research@gmail.com

Prof. Victor Chang is a Full Professor of Data Science and Information Systems, Middlesbrough, UK, since September 2019. Previously, he was a Senior Associate Professor, Director of PhD and of MRes at IBSS, XJTU, China, between June 2016 and August 2019. Prior that, he worked as a Senior Lecturer at Leeds Beckett University, UK, for 3.5 years. Within four years, he completed PhD (CS, Southampton) and PGCert (Fellow, Greenwich) while working for several projects at the same time. Before becoming an academic, he has achieved 97% on average in 27 IT certifications. He won a European Award in 2011, 2015 IEEE Outstanding Service Award, best papers in 2012, 2015 and 2018, the 2016 European award. He is a visiting scholar/PhD examiner at several universities, an Editor-in-Chief of IJOCI and OJBD, Editor of FGCS (former) and Info Fusion, Associate Editor of TII. He is conference chair of IoTBDSC, COMPLEXIS, FEMIB and IIoTBDS.

Abstract

This article has investigated 'The South China Sea conflict' based on citizens' views from different countries and compares the territorial disputes. It discusses conflicts in the South China Sea and their implications and resolutions viewed from the International Law and citizens' opinions in Southeast Asia. This paper aims to reach the different nationalities' genuine perceptions of the South China Sea conflicts, including their perceptions of the South China Sea conflict versus the views based on their countries of origin, particularly for Chinese and Filipino. Furthermore, this paper identifies whether peaceful solutions are appropriate based on different nationalities' perceptions. Through a mixed-method with both quantitative method and qualitative approaches, questionnaires, data analysis and interviews are used to investigate in-depth perceptions of 'The South China Sea conflict'.

The research objectives, questions, and hypotheses can be verified. The research outcome is then used to compare with previous research conducted by other researchers.

Keywords: The South China Sea conflict; different nationalities' perceptions on the conflict; surveys and discussions on the conflict

1. Introduction and background

1.1 Background

In the 21st century, the trends of world globalization and world economic development are reflected in intergovernmental organizations, such as United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These intergovernmental organizations accelerate the process of globalization in terms of political aspects and economic aspects worldwide. However, during the process of globalization and economic development, the relations between nations are significant. While there are diplomatic, business and social interactions between nations, both positive and negative influences can happen at different extents. On the positive side, nations can develop their domestic economy by trading with foreign countries. On the negative side, it might lead disputes between nations, even conflicts, due to differences in opinions, cultures and concepts.

These positive and negative effects can influence people's daily life in a country. For example, migration from foreign countries might inflict the local labor market, further influencing the country's domestic economy. Therefore, people from different countries should pay attention to the politics of current affairs, caring about the recent political events that might affect the domestic economy. Although citizens may think it makes no sense that they should care about or know about the politics of current affairs, they might change their views by experiencing once themselves.

- Politics of current events

First, according to Cowell (2017), he said that 'referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union delivered its results' on 23 June 2016, 'UK has begun the political process of exiting the EU'-or 'Brexit' for short, with the result that '51.9% of voters supporting leave against 48.1% voting for remain'. The UK also decided to terminate her 45 years of membership with the EU. In Cowell's article, he mentioned that the UK's event leaves the EU from the referendum results on 23 June 2016. It has potentially affected planning and environment policy for the UK. Cowell (2017) listed some significant questions might raise when the referendum seems stability for planning practice in around five months, and moves to renegotiate the relations between UK and Europe, includes whether an erosion of firms environmental standard and target characteristic of EU environmental policy will be seen? Through arguing that Brexit needs further supporting measures, will business interests and infrastructure proponents are successful? What are pieces of evidence that immigration, sovereignty and identity concerns can shape planning and environmental policy? Whether the developed governments will redirect the 'leave' process? Through knowing the political events, like the British referendum on Europe, and reviewing Cowell's article. It proved that people care about the politics of current events is necessary since recent political events like Brexit will affect people's daily lives. For instance, during the referendum on 23 June 2016, when the UK voted to leave the EU, its effects on the sterling exchange rate attracted foreigners to travel and consume in the UK. Furthermore, international students would choose the UK as a foreign country for overseas study, and businessmen would enter the UK for business purposes.

The second political hot event of current affairs is Donald Trump became the 45th president of the United States of America. Paul (2016) stated that the Washington words: insurgent Republican Donald Trump has amassed just enough voters supporting him to enter into the White House. The Associated Press projected that Trump was the 45th president of the US by 2:39 am (Paul, 2016). No one could understand this agenda, just like a man who has never been in public office, became the president of the US. Moreover, 'a confessed sexual predator who offered to restore jobs that probably could not be brought back and a wall that he did not want to pay for', became the president (Paul,

2016). 'He also encourages violence, racism and bigotry-and tell hundreds of lies while accusing everyone else of lying' (Paul, 2016). When knowing Trump is the 45th president of the US, nearly half of people on the earth are concerned about 'who would be the next president of the US in 2016 presidential election'. The main reason is that the 2016 presidential election can influence the US's incoming policy and decision-making in other policies. Trump's relevant policies about immigration have affected the relations between the US and other countries, including the trade war with China, and trade protection and tariff against products from a large number of countries. In other words, foreign countries' peoples' life in the US will be affected by recent political decisions, particularly after Trump became the president of the US.

After reviewing these politics of current affairs, and some events will influence people's daily life to a certain extent, particularly news related to trade wars, sanctions and trade tariffs. Therefore, people should know the politics of current events, like the British referendum on Europe, Trump became the US president. This paper also investigates one topic on the politics of current events, which is the South China Sea conflict. The dispute over the South China Sea is fierce. Wherever it is from the country's position or nationals' position, researchers are looking forward to peace the dispute through the appropriate method and relief the relations between relevant countries in the dispute. Although there are many research papers about dealing the dispute and joint development, the situation of the dispute over the South China Sea can remain intensive. Furthermore, the South China Sea conflict case is often conducted from the disputed country with an almost one-sided view. As a result, we propose finding the appropriate recommendation for the country to deal with disputes. In this article, we focus on investigating the nationals of two disputed countries in the South China Sea conflict.

This paper's research question is about investigating the general public's perceptions of the South China Sea conflict. This is different from the past research on this topic since the current issue and challenge are meaningful while taking recent global affairs and their changes in considerations. In this paper, although knowing or without knowing the South China Sea dispute seems to have no effects on people's daily life. It can help those interested in international relations, strategy planning, and policy practice to understand how to reach peaceful solutions and

win-win situations. It also aims to assist them in understanding when people look at politics of current events, like conflict or dispute between nations, whether it will affect by their nationality. In addition, this paper also investigates participants' agreements on some statements from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration. This result can use to prove that The South China Sea Arbitration did cause a lot of controversies in worldwide. Moreover, this paper is useful for the country to realize its nationals' perception of the South China Sea conflict and seek a more appropriate solution to deal with conflict or dispute. Since China has many researchers to contribute their objectives for it to deal with the South China Sea conflict, but there are controversies about the South China Sea conflict until now.

In this paper, it will propose clear research questions and hypotheses to readers, after the reviewing the relevant pieces of literature, including the past conflicts that are the territorial dispute between Great Britain and Argentina in 1986 and the dispute over the Kurile Islands between Japan and Russia in the 1990s, the past research about the South China Sea conflict, and statements from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration. Using quantitative and qualitative methods to reach the research objectives and verify the hypotheses can be presented in discussion and conclusion.

- Literature review

- The territorial dispute between Great Britain and Argentina

One of the past conflicts in this paper's literature used is the conflict of a territorial dispute between Great Britain and Argentina over the relevant Islands in the South Atlantic in 1982 (Blitzer, 2013). According to Blitzer (2013), after Argentina's independence from Spain in 1811, Argentina began its postcolonial inheritance, which indicates that people are unwilling to colonization by other countries, building regime and rights by fighting goal ultimately. In the literature of conflict of the territorial dispute between Great Britain and Argentina in 1982, 'The Malvinas were 300 kilometers off their coast, so why they should belong to the faraway empire?' (Blitzer, 2013) Argentina announced that Malvinas should be its territory because Argentina wares the significance of the Malvinas. But under this circumstance, the weapon trade between Great Britain and Argentina still continued (Blitzer, 2013). In this aspect, Argentina lacked a

completed territorial policy to protect its territorial water sovereignty. In other aspects, it can be seen as there is stable diplomacy between Great Britain and Argentina unless two countries' nationalist fervor met political exigency, it might lead to armed conflict between them (Blitzer, 2013). Blitzer (2013) also stated that in Argentina, the number of veterans' suicide is more than battlefield death even 30 years after the war. Like the literature mentioned, 'for war so localized and relatively short-lived, so apparently minor against the backdrop of a century's colossal carnage, the trauma is outsized' (Blitzer, 2013). So the skirmish to this territorial dispute is a tragic war in Argentina, but the British official stated it as a 'conflict' (Blitzer). In summary, Blitzer (2013) said the skirmish to the territorial dispute between Great Britain and Argentina is no winner until today the relevant Islands sovereignty has not solved. Therefore, dealing with the conflict of territorial dispute, peaceful solutions like negotiation, building diplomatic policy might be more appropriate than armed conflict as this literature mentioned.

- **The dispute between Russia and Japan**

Another past conflict is the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan over the Kurile Islands in the 1990s. According to Okuyama (2003), he stated that Russia and Japan's conflict of the territorial dispute over the Kurile Islands is into a circumstance that needs two countries to shelve it and lead to the peaceful solutions, after two times of negotiation and one military action between them. Since both diplomatic and military interaction happened, the Russian border with Japan is affected by both historical and political aspects (Okuyama, 2003). Therefore, both countries' boundary activities are the significant factors to influence the diplomatic relationship between them, Russia and Japan both look forward to a stable relationship. Due to the territorial dispute between them over the Kurile Islands is unavoidable, both countries have a distance to deal with activities in political aspects even they are neighboring countries.

From the historical view to review this past conflict, Russians occupied the Kurile Islands which includes Etorofu, Kunashiri, Habomai, and Shikotan in August 1945, after they declared war to Japan, the territorial dispute over their

borders appeared, in that time the Soviet Union has not disintegrated (Okuyama, 2003). Since Japan has never stopped to announce that the relevant Islands over Kurile are its territory, it is obvious a historical heritage for Russia and Japan's territorial dispute. In other words, the territorial dispute over the Kurile Islands is the political issue left by the historical war that is World War Two and the Cold War. Okuyama (2003) also mentioned that intergovernmental negotiation has obstacles caused by the Cold War; this war offers incentives to countries that pursuing self-interest without consideration of the international circumstance. Hence, it is hard to say the dispute over the Kurile Islands could be solved by building national policies or principles of territorial negotiation between these two nations in the 1990s (Okuyama, 2003). According to Okuyama (2003), Japan changed its democratic system after World War II. The Soviet Union disintegrated because the institution inside it was evolved after the Cold War. The reason for these relevant historical issues is that they emphasize democracy more or less. Both two nation's governments absorb public interest and preferences and apply them to constructing their policy. So Okuyama (2003) addressed the territorial dispute between Japan and Russia over the Kurile Islands in three levels: governmental, regional administration, local resident, to see territorial policymaking in his essay. Therefore, according to the literature of past conflicts, building territorial policy is feasible for dealing with the territorial dispute under special circumstances, like the historical background mentioned in this past conflict.

This research topic is about different countries' nationals' perceptions of the South China Sea conflict in light of past conflicts. It is also helpful to review the past research outputs on the South China Sea conflict. Many researchers have conducted investigations on analyzing the South China Sea conflict and standing the position of China to protect its national territorial water sovereignty, marine rights and interests, and the principles of national security. Jiang (2012) said that there is possible for a peaceful settlement of the relevant marine conflict between China and the Philippine as one of the relevant countries in the South China Sea by knowing diplomatic and judicial ways under the international environment. In Jiang's article (2012), he analyzed the maritime dispute between China and Philippine over the Nansha Islands from the following points:

the maritime dispute between China and Philippines over the Nansha Islands' background, international law's sovereignty jurisdiction about the South China Sea Islands, legal dispute according to principles of national security of Philippine, and for dealing the dispute over the Nansha Islands, Chinese military strategy plans. In most circumstances, Jiang's journal in 2012 is standing China's side to research.

- **Past researches about The South China Sea conflict**

In Jiang's article in 2012, he mentioned that China's inherent sovereignty has infringed by the statement from Philippine's legislative determination that is sovereignty over the Nansha Islands is within itself. Under the situation that the international environment and geographical circumstance over the Nansha Islands are complicated, Chinese diplomatic strategy making should be cautious. However, China will never stop using legal means to enable a flexible diplomatic strategy to handle the maritime dispute (Jiang, 2012). Furthermore, according to pre-empt principle in international law (River, 1896), it is affirmed that sovereignty over the Nansha Islands is within China. However, the jurisprudence is groundless about protecting its principles of national security from the Philippines' territorial claim (Zou, 1999). Moreover, International Judicial Practice also has no sample about the justification (Jiang, 2012). Therefore, China claims in international court and its available diplomatic strategy formulation, and both have the relevant laws to support (Jiang, 2012). From Jiang's Journal and other kinds of literature about international law, it indicates that China should consider the international circumstance of the diplomatic and judicial methods when dealing the marine dispute between China and Philippines over the Nansha Islands, further for achieving the goal that 'shelving dispute' and 'developing jointly' in its diplomatic strategy.

Jiang (2012) also showed marine significances in the global background in his journal. He said that since modern marine exploration has developed in advance, many countries have noticed the importance of marine resource and ocean strategy. Also known as that 21 century is full of marine oil and gas, so oceans are mainly battlefields for many countries to strive for natural resources (Jiang, 2012). Therefore, many countries expand their blue enclosure

movement rapidly. This indicates that once countries develop their marine exploration, the dispute over some free space at sea with natural resources and many countries have transportation to it, which will involve the relevant countries. According to Rothwell (2008), he mentioned that International Journal of Marine and Coastal law stipulates that the UN Commission on demarcation needs get the relevant papers about all contracting countries' out continental shelf by 13 May in 2009. In this circumstance, there is legal support for countries to protect its territorial waters sovereignty, marine rights and interests. Jiang (2012) also mentioned that China has sovereignty over the Nansha Islands in light of the pre-empt principle in International Law (Catley and Keliat, 1997), but the Philippines did not have it.

In addition, China will insist on 'shelving dispute' and 'joint development' as the principle of diplomatic strategy considering the condition of no negotiation for territorial waters sovereignty (Jiang, 2012). However, according to Tong (2011), he said it is unavoidable for China to change the principles of the diplomatic strategy, which is 'shelving dispute' and 'developing jointly' when dealing with the South China Sea dispute because there is a conflict between them. Tong (2011) showed his opinion in terms of further explanations about the principles that 'shelving dispute' and 'developing jointly' in diplomatic strategy. They explained the recent situation of using this principle to deal with the South China Sea dispute, the conflict in this principle in diplomatic strategy to the South China Sea dispute, and change this principle to 'facing controversy and developing actively' into Chinese diplomatic strategy. In Tong's article in 2011, he mentioned that since International law's relevant theories and practices, the conflict between the principles that 'shelving dispute' and 'joint development' is hard to reconcile. Furthermore, for this principle in diplomatic strategy to deal with the South China Sea dispute in recent years, China did not relax the relations with those countries surrounding the South China Sea. The dispute became more drastic between China and relevant countries (Tong, 2011). So Tong (2011) stated that the principle which is 'facing controversy and developing actively' might be more appropriate than the principles which are 'shelving dispute' and 'jointly developing' in diplomatic strategy for dealing the

South China Sea dispute and protect the Nansha Islands' sovereignty within China.

- The press release of The South China Sea Arbitration

Reviewing the past research papers about the South China Sea conflict makes it necessary for this paper to discuss the South China Sea Arbitration, which causes controversies worldwide. In the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration (2016), it stated that the arbitration is about the historic rights for the role of the South China Sea and maritime entitlements sources of it, China is generating its certain naval features and maritime entitlements. Chinese lawful specific actions were alleged by the Philippines to violate the law, which is the United Nations Convention on the law of the sea (the 'Convention'). Considering limitations of Convention include compulsory dispute settlement, the Tribunal emphasized that this Convention does not rule on any question about land territorial sovereignty, also does not delimit any boundary between the Parties.

Additionally, the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration (2016) stated that China always shows its opinion on this event: 'China will neither accept nor participate in the arbitration unilaterally initiated by the Philippines.' However, according to Annex VII, which provides 'Absence of a party or failure to defend its case shall not constitute a bar to the proceedings'. Furthermore, in Annex VII, it provides that once a party does not participate in the proceedings of the event, a tribunal 'must satisfy itself not only that it has jurisdiction over the dispute but also that the claim is well-founded in fact and law.' According to these proceedings end-to-end, the Tribunal has tested the accuracy of the Philippines' claims step by step. These steps include requesting the Philippines' further written submissions, questioning the Philippines and appointing experts to report to the Tribunal about technical matters, and by providing the obtaining historical evidence in the South China Sea to the parties for comment. Moreover, China has announced that the Tribunal lacks jurisdiction in this matter, from a public Position Paper in December 2014 and

some official statements. In summary, China expressed its attitude to The South China Sea Arbitration, neither China participates in it, nor does China admit it.

According to some statements from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration (2016), the Tribunal found lawful Chinese actions in certain areas in the South China Sea have been founded within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. Furthermore, the Tribunal found China had violated the Philippines' exclusive economic zone's sovereign rights from the following statements:

Chinese actions interfere with Philippine fishing and petroleum exploration.

China is constructing artificial Islands.

The Philippines failing to prevent Chinese fishers from fishing in the zone

The Tribunal also found that China had interfered with Philippine fishermen's fishing rights because Chinese fishers were fishing at the Scarborough Shoal, restricting access for them. Additionally, the Tribunal found that Chinese law enforcement vessels created a collision with the Philippines for physically obstructed Philippine vessels.

Chinese actions can be harmful to marine environments in the South China Sea: The Tribunal found that China's recent large-scale land reclamation and constructing artificial islands in the Spratly Islands harm the coral reef environment, and violated the obligation of protecting fragile ecosystems and species that near extinction. Besides, the Tribunal also found that Chinese fishers have captured a substantial scale of near-extinct sea species, like sea turtles, coral, and giant clams in the South China Sea, which is aware of Chinese authorities. Still, China did not carry out its obligations to stop these activities, one of the statements from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration (2016).

Another statement from The South China Sea Arbitration (2016) is that China's actions aggravate the dispute between China and the Philippines. The Tribunal found that the dispute between the parties involved military activities, so it was excluded from compulsory settlement in the Convention. Due to the implications of a stand-off between Chinese naval and Philippine marines, then Chinese law enforcement vessels at Second Thomas Shoal. To sum up, the statements from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration (2016)

include China's actions that interfere Philippines' developments in the exclusive economic zone. China constructed artificial Islands and recent large-scale land reclamation harm marine environment in the South China Sea; China destroyed evidence of the natural condition of features in the relevant sea, lead to part of the parties' dispute and aggravate the dispute by involving military activities. After reviewing the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration, it is hard to say that it might not cause controversies from different countries' nationals, especially for Chinese and Filipinos.

- **Research question and research objectives**

Reviewing the literature about the past conflicts, such as the conflicts of the territorial dispute between Great Britain and Argentina over the relevant Islands in 1982, and the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan over the Kurile Islands in the 1990s, the South China Sea conflict is a hot topic in politics of current events about the battle over the relevant nation's territorial dispute. The results of The South China Sea Arbitration have been announced to the world. However, it causes a lot of controversies from its press release, especially in China and the Philippines. Therefore, these kinds of literature can mainly be based on the view of nations' statements and official statements from governments to research the conflict of the territorial dispute over the relevant nations and propose the appropriate strategy to nations' diplomatic policy for dealing with the relevant conflict between nations over the Islands. This article investigates different countries' nationals' understandable perceptions of politics of current events by using the South China Sea conflict as the case. The point of view is taken collectively based on different countries' nationals' perceptions on the shallow information about the politics of current events for the South China Sea conflict. Their agreement on some statements about the South China Sea conflict, like some statements from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration.

- **Research questions**

This paper investigates and interviews different countries' nationals' plain perceptions of current events' politics, using the South China Sea conflict as the case. The research questions proposed in the paper include 1) Whether different

nationalities might be a factor that affects their perceptions of the relevant shallow information of the South China Sea conflict. 2) Whether there is a potential relation between different countries' nationals' nationality and their opinion on some statements from The South China Sea Arbitration. 3. In light of past conflicts, various nationalities' perceptions of the appropriate solutions for a country to deal with its relevant territorial dispute.

- **Research objectives and hypotheses**

Since many past research papers are based on the view of the country, more or less the results from previous research papers are affected by the nation. In this paper, these research questions proposed after literature reviewing will lead the hypotheses to include

1. There is a high ability that respondents' perceptions of politics of current events, like the South China Sea conflict, are affected by their nationality.

2. Participants' opinions about the statements in The South China Sea Arbitration might be seriously influenced by their nationality, especially in Chinese and Filipino.

3. From the past conflicts, peaceful solutions should be appropriate as nations' actions to deal with their relevant territorial dispute in mainly participants' perception.

- **Research Methodology**

This paper has used a mixed methodology, including a quantitative and qualitative method for research. The quantitative method used in this research can be conducted by a questionnaire and data analysis. By doing so, it is less complicated to state that different countries' nationals' general perceptions on politics of current events, using the South China Sea conflict as the case in light of past conflicts, with a sample have 100 different country's nationals in it. In order to prove the hypothesis 1 in the research, the participants' nationality and age are highly possible to affect their perceptions on politics of current events which is the South China Sea conflict in light of past conflicts, this paper used the quantitative method that using a random sample with 100 people who are from different nations to do a questionnaire.

Furthermore, to validate hypothesis 2, there is a relation between participants' opinions on some statements from The South China Sea Arbitration and their nationalities, and hypothesis three. Respondents' perception of the peaceful solutions for countries to deal with territorial disputes requires this paper to use a methodology that is usually applied in market research areas by a quantitative method, a questionnaire. However, this research with such research questions should use the qualitative method. The quantitative method has characteristics, including that the quantitative method can get the data more structured, so the collected data can be processed in tables and charts and convenient for describing and analyzing the research's finding parts. The quantitative method usually used by the research involved with the larger sample. It is convenient to replicate under the circumstance that there is no Internet access but with a large sample in research; the collected data can quantify the incidence of particular attitudes, and the sample in the study with a quantitative method can be understood as a representative characteristic.

On the other hand, this paper also used the qualitative method. After all, the research is about different countries' nationals' perceptions of the South China Sea conflict in light of past conflicts. Considering that there are 100 participants in our research, a challenge is the lack of time and resources to interview all respondents with details of their opinions recorded. There are still 25 participants willing to provide their opinions further by interviews through social media. This is also significant to the research questions and hypotheses because interviews are helpful to verify our hypotheses and evaluate our analysis. It will explain the participants' reason and depth perceptions of the South China Sea conflict in the past, present and future status. Interview feedback can be valuable since participants' knowledge of political issues still will be affected by nations.

The qualitative method is useful since it can extract further information about different nationalities' perceptions of the South China Sea. In general, this report used qualitative and quantitative approaches to answer the research question.

After reviewing the literature and proposing the research question and hypotheses, the author decided to use quantitative and qualitative methods. As discussed earlier, the next step is to design the questionnaire. Since the topic of

this report investigates different nationalities' perceptions of the South China Sea conflict, the research questions to narrow to the specific issues which could be an option. The research team also pays attention to the questionnaire design to make all questions neutral and independent. The research questionnaire has a few questions for participants to warm-up to further investigation, such as their perception about the politics of current affairs and their recognition of the South China Sea conflict.

Considering that the objective is to collect people's perceptions of the South China Sea conflict, it is also essential for the research team to avoid leading or biasing questions about the research topic. Therefore, the questionnaire was designed to collect participants' feedback before the interviews. The questionnaire consists of neutral and independent questions, not biased to Chinese, Filipino and other nationalities in the South China Sea. The aim is also to find participants' perceptions of the free space at sea with natural resources since several ASEAN countries and the USA have interests and activities in this area. In addition, the questionnaire should cover the questions which include information about past and present conflicts. Therefore, the research team briefly summarizes related literature materials to design a better question to investigate participants' perceptions of the solutions for nations to deal with relevant territorial disputes. In this way, the team can reach research objectives to verify hypotheses three, which proposed in previous sections. It is pertinent to verify the hypotheses 2 in this research, so that the team can design questions about participants' perception of agreement about some statements in The South China Sea Arbitration in the questionnaire.

Another part of the questionnaire is that it has to investigate participants' age and nationality to reach the research objectives. In this questionnaire, the demographic questions are about respondents' gender, age, nationality, and schooling. Therefore, this research questionnaire includes a dichotomous question, a multiple-choice question, a multiple-choice question, a Likert-scale question, a demographic question, and some open-ended questions.

Regarding the question about identification information in the questionnaire, the aim is to let participants willing to be the author's interviewees and leave their contact information. Hence, the qualitative method is more suitable. Using interviews as a method helps collect primary information and allow mutual

interactions between the interviewer and interviewees. Besides, interviews can help to obtain valuable information and details in their perceptions on the topic for the hypotheses' verification. The related interviewing questions are about interviewees' depth perception of the South China Sea conflict, reasons they support either China or the Philippines or other options, and whether the interviewees carry the patriotism to see the South China Sea conflict.

This research used the Internet as an intermediary to investigate participants. After the author finishes the questionnaire design, the questionnaire is public for all access to people worldwide. In the research, a software called JinShuJu was used to create the designed questionnaire and share the link with participants so that participants can be involved in this survey. After collecting the data from the questionnaires, the author uses Microsoft office ware (Excel) to process the data to charts for data description and result evaluation, in further to verify the hypotheses in this report. For participants who are willing to be the interviewees in this research, their depth perceptions of the South China Sea conflict and reasons for their comments can be recorded by the research team. Audio recorder and note-taking during the interview can be used to enhance the authenticity and quality of the feedback collected.

- **The sample**

In this paper, we used the interview as the approach by interviewing 100 people from different countries, including China, the Philippines, Canada, as the top three countries. The other countries also included the UK, Russia, Japan, German, the Netherlands, France, Brazil, South Africa, and Nigeria. There are 33 participants from China, 31 respondents are Filipino, 23 respondents are from Canada and the rest are from different countries, as mentioned above. We initially invited 500 people with 25 nationalities, including those in Southeast Asia and other continents, to get more points of view from neighboring countries and perceptions internationally. Nationalities from Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand declined to be interviewed, as they felt this topic could be subjective and caused potential misunderstanding in this matter. Therefore, our objective became focused on getting opinions from nationalities, not in Southeast Asia, as follows. First, this allowed more neutral points of view to be undertaken. Second, it would

give more independent points of view based on different parts of the world, from the points of view of China and the Philippines. In the end, only 100 took part, with 12 nationalities shown in Figure 1. It was a coincidence that there were more than 20 Canadian participants were willing to take part.

Each person shared their views between 10 and 30 minutes. The aim was to collect reasonable results to the research question related to different nationalities' perceptions of 'The South China Sea Conflict' in light of past conflicts. The participants from different countries in this survey were asked about Chinese perceptions on 'the South China Sea conflict', and were also asked about Filipino's view and the views of other nationalities like Canadians.

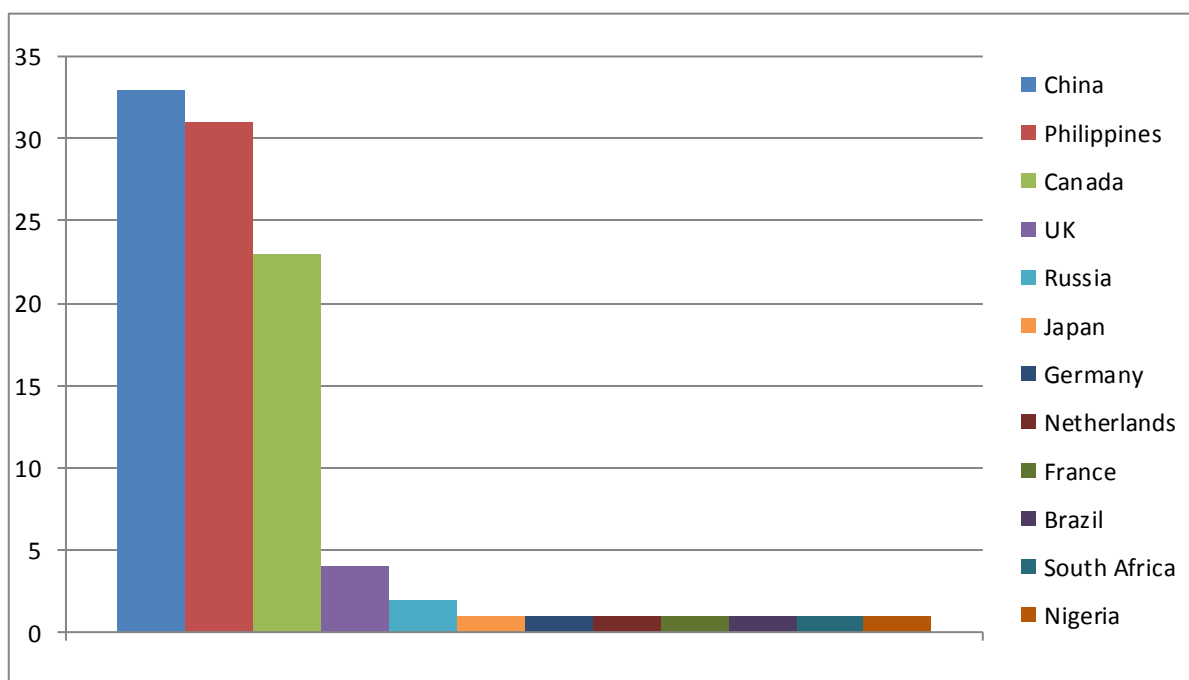


Figure 1: The distribution of participants' nationalities

As Figure 1 shows, the distribution of participants' nationalities includes several developed and developing countries. The use of non-Chinese and non-Filipino can provide neutral points of view regarding the case about 'The South China Sea Conflict' with more independent points of view.

- **The limitation of the methodology**

The methodology is based more on the qualitative method. Quantitative analysis is only conducted through the analytics. Feedback from the qualitative

approach can help understand more about others' points of view on this topic. Additionally, the research question is more suitable to use the interviews as a qualitative method. However, due to a lack of time and resources, the research cannot achieve the goal of interviewing a sample with 100 people from different countries. So the researcher used a mixed methodology to investigate different nationalities' general perceptions on the South China Sea conflict. Apart from data analysis, interviewing some participants required further information and details in their perception of the South China Sea conflict. This hybrid methodology approaches this research and reaches the research objectives, verifying the hypotheses.

Another limitation of this report's methodology is the sample. Since the research question is on different nationalities' perceptions of the South China Sea conflict, the sample should involve more countries. The majority of participants in the sample are mainly from China, Philippine, and Canada. The participants in the sample from other countries are small, so it has the limitation of seeing their perceptions on the topic in this research. The participants of other countries are from the UK, Russia, Japan, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Brazil, Nigeria, South Africa, and 12 in total. In this aspect, the sample in this research has a lack of fairly distributed representation. However, there are 33 Chinese, 31 Filipino, 23 Canadians in this research sample, in the aspect that investigating their perception of the South China Sea conflict can get the third opinion mainly from Canadians, which may reflect neutral views for the topic.

- **Data description and results evaluation**

The pie chart shows that respondents are primarily in 18~35 ages, 73 of them in this stage. There are 27 respondents in 35~50 ages and older, 4% in 27% is older than 45 years old.

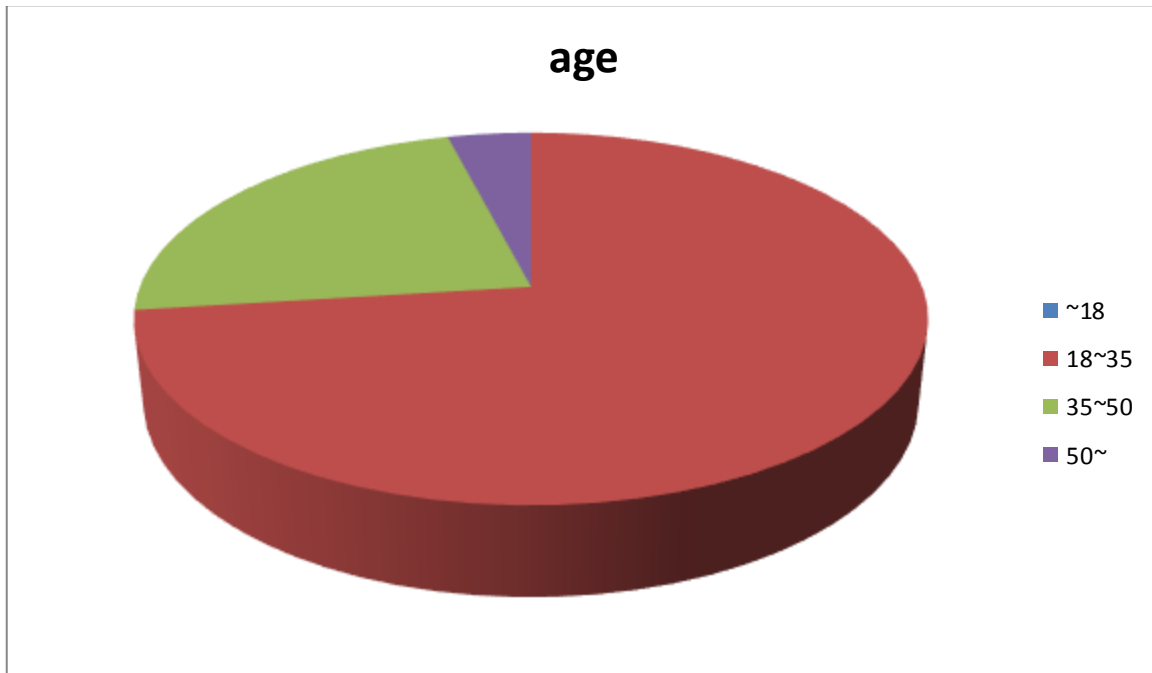


Figure 2: The participants' age distribution

Figure 2 shows that the participants' age distribution in the survey. In this paper, the collected data shows that 93 participants thought it is necessary for people to care about current events' politics, and only 7 participants disagree. From the opposition to that, people need to concern about politics or current events. There are 6 participants in the 18~35 age group, and only one person in the 35~50 age group, as Figure 3 states. It could be seen that respondents from different age groups and their concerns about the politics of current events are diverse. In a general word, the majority of this survey's participants in the age group of 18~35 ages care about the politics of current events. A few participants in this investigation are 50 years of age or older. They also agree caring politics of current events is necessary. Therefore, it can be seen that mainly respondents care about the politics of current developments in their daily life in this research.

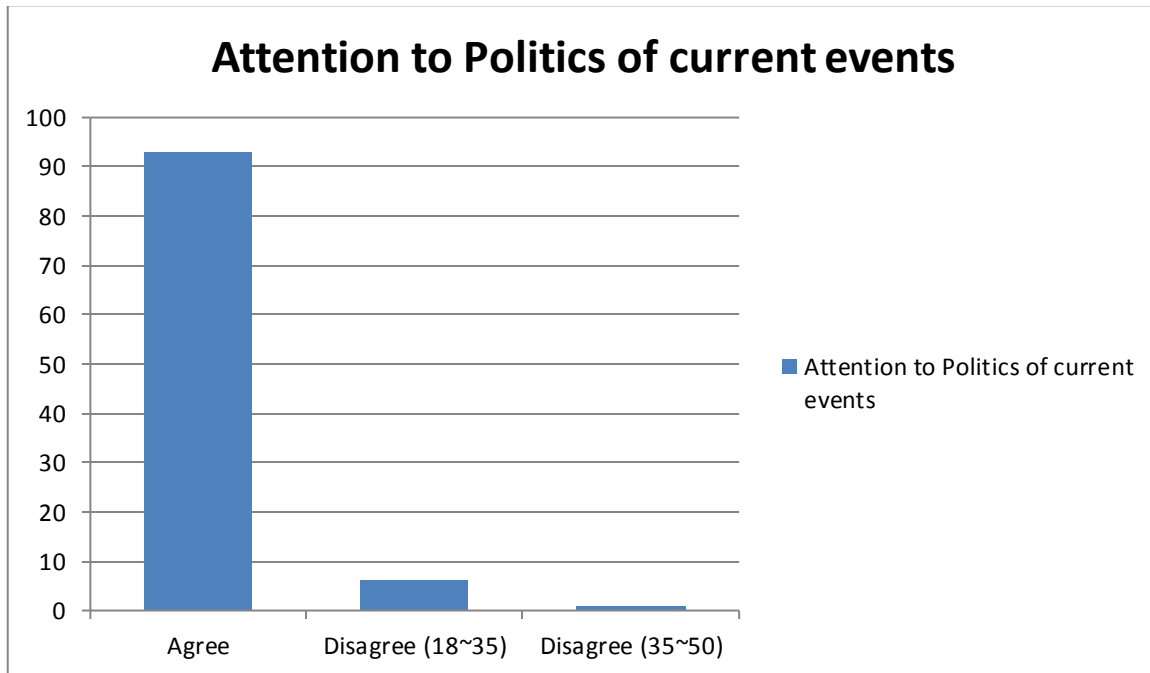


Figure 3: Attention to Politics of current events

- Hypothesis 1

The collected data show the relations between participants' nationality and their view of 'the South China Sea conflict'. This relation can be illustrated in figure 4. The results show that participants are from China, the majority of them choose the relevant countries of the South China Sea conflict are China and countries surrounding the South China Sea, seven of them think the South China Sea conflict is the conflict between China and the Philippines. From this point, it can be seen as these participants might regard the South China Sea conflict as the conflict between China and the countries surrounding by the South China Sea, rather than the conflict between two nations, which are China and the Philippines. On the contrary, 20 participants from the Philippines choose the relevant countries of the South China Sea conflict: China and the Philippines. Only 11 Filipino think the conflict should be between China and the surrounding counties. Form the view of Filipino. It is hard to say that participants' nationality is not a factor influencing their view of conflicts between the two nations. The third mainly participants are from Canada. Their choice for the conflict of The South China Sea is mostly like participants from the Philippines. 13 Canadians show their view of the South China Sea conflict is the conflict between China and the Philippines, 10 Canadians choose China and the surrounding countries. For the rest of the participants who

are from other countries, half of them think the conflict should be between China and the neighboring countries. Besides, the other half believe it should be between China and the Philippines.

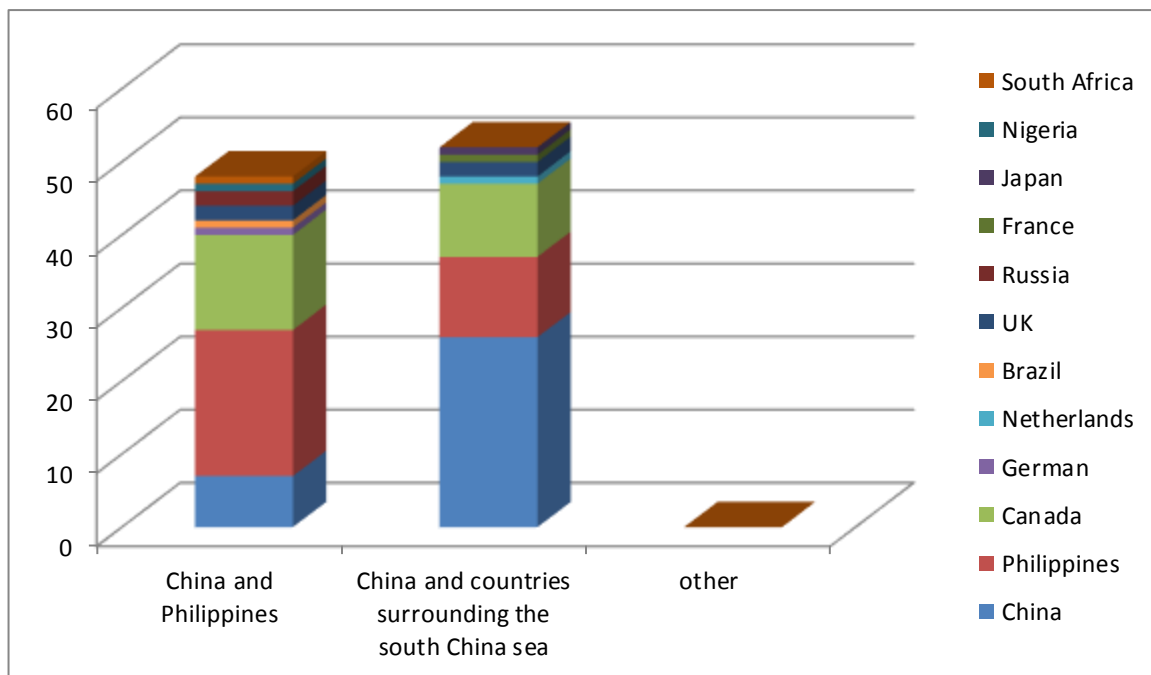


Figure 4: participants' nationality and their view of 'the South China Sea conflict'

In summary, Figure 4 can state that participants' nationality has a relationship with their view of 'the South China Sea conflict', but it is hard to say the relationship is positive or negative. In a critical sight, considering the sample of this survey is limited, and the result of this question seems balanced. Therefore, it could say that participants' nationality might not have a big difference in their view of the South China Sea.

The results above demonstrate that people's nationality might affect their view of 'the South China Sea conflict'. However, the results from figure 4 show an unclear answer to whether participants should regard the South China Sea conflict as a conflict between two nations, or the conflicts between China and the surrounding countries in the South China Sea. So the next part in this section will state that participants' perceptions of the South China Sea conflict should be free space at sea with natural resources and major transportation ways for many countries, instead of considering it be a territorial conflict between China and the Philippines.

Although according to the relevant official statements of government, the International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law (Rothwell, 2008), and pre-empt principle in international law (River, 1896). These materials will affect respondents' views on the sovereignty over the South China Sea, in order to get participants' perceptions of the South China Sea, instead of seeing it be a territorial conflict between two nations. The collected data also proved reasonable of the idea that free space at sea with natural resources and major transportation way for many countries, these free spaces should be the area that many countries are developing jointly and shelving disputes. Figure 5 shows that 40 respondents think this idea is feasible. However, 59 respondents consider that is reasonable but not feasible; only one person chooses the other option. So from the participants' perceptions for the free area at sea, that should be the area where many countries are developing jointly and shelving disputes. It can be seen as near half of respondents think the idea is feasible. But to idealization under such a globalization environment, there are multiple reasons for nations to protect itself interests, including national territorial sovereignty, principle of national security, and nation's marine rights and interests (natural resource). Additionally, once the respondents consider their nationality, it cannot help them choose one side. Therefore, most participants think it is reasonable but not feasible for both internal and external reasons. For instance, considering their nationality when deciding whether this idea can be feasible, this is within the internal factor. External factors reflect that nations mostly protect their interests, as mentioned before.

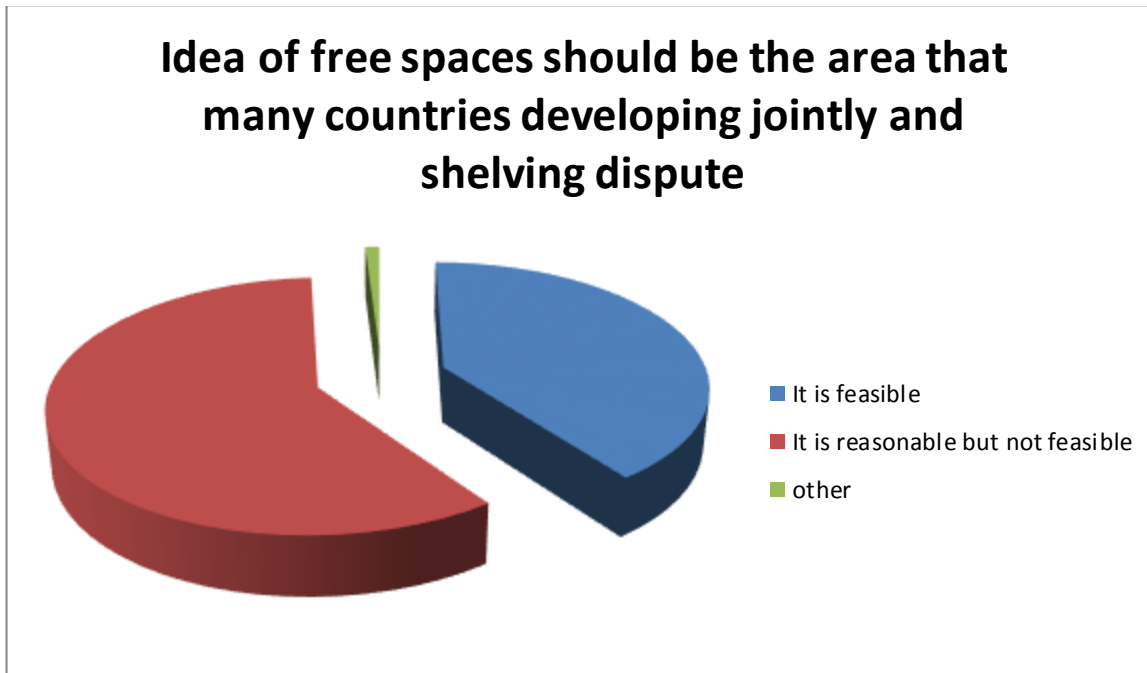


Figure 5: Idea of free spaces should be the area that many countries developing jointly and shelving dispute

The participants' perception includes that the free spaces at sea should be the area where many countries can develop jointly and shelving disputes is reasonable. The respondents' perceptions of the South China Sea Conflict will be affected by their nationality, but the effect is small. Respondents' plain perceptions of the South China Sea conflict are on a neutral attitude, which can be seen from Figure 5.

This paper also collected the information about respondents' recognition of past conflicts, such as the conflict between Great Britain and Argentina, and the conflict between Japan and Russia, to see whether there is a relation between their recognition of past conflicts and their recognition of the South China Sea conflict. In this paper's literature review, the conflict between Great Britain and Argentina over the relevant Islands in the south Atlantic in 1982, the Islands were known as Falklands in England, in Argentina as Malvinas (Blitzer, 2013). The battle was the solution to this dispute, but it is not solved until today. Another past conflict is the territorial conflict between Japan and Russia over the Kurile Islands in the 1990s.

Figure 6 demonstrates the relationship between respondents' recognition of the South China Sea conflict and the recognition of past conflicts. In Figure 6, 41 respondents express that they heard of past conflicts before, such as the conflict

between Great Britain and Argentina, and the conflict between Japan and Russia. In this group, 18 of them know about the South China Sea conflict, but not too much detail about it; 8 people know a lot of the South China Sea conflict; 15 of them heard of it. So it seems that participants who heard of past conflicts hear about the South China Sea conflict at least, some participants know it, and even a few of them are familiar with the information of the South China Sea conflict. Furthermore, 21 respondents are familiar with the information about past conflicts; they also heard of the South China conflict. The majority of this group knows the South China Sea conflict; 9 of them heard of it; 4 people in this group see a lot of the South China Sea conflict. So it proves that participants who know about past conflicts understand the South China Sea conflict again. From these two relevant results, it might be seen that participants' recognition of recent conflicts has a relation with their recognition of the South China Sea conflict.

When it moves to the group of participants who do not know past conflicts, 26 respondents still hear about the South China Sea conflict. Among them, the majority recognizes the South China Sea conflict, but not in detail; 3 people know a lot of it; 7 of them also hear of the South China Sea conflict. Only 2 participants do not know anything about past conflicts, express that they neither hear about the South China Sea conflict. Therefore, in further standard, participants' recognition of recent conflicts is related to their recognition of the South China Sea conflict.

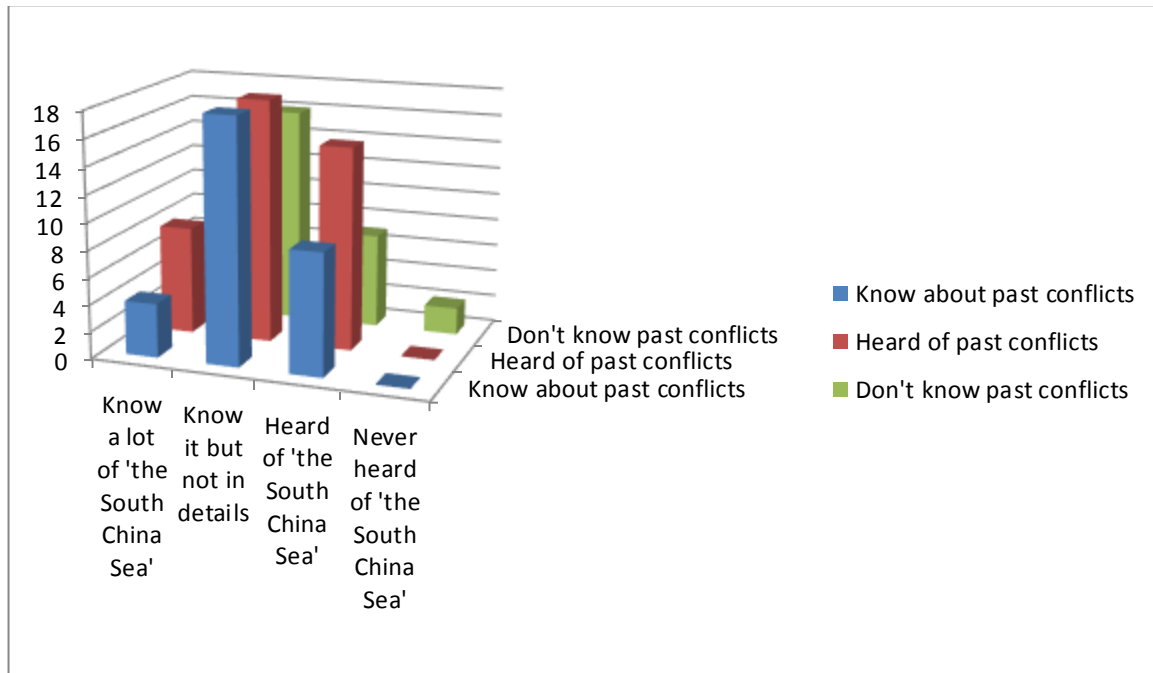


Figure 6 recognition of past conflicts and recognition of the South China Sea conflict

There is an interesting finding in this section. Participants in this survey are foreigners to China who have a higher probability of hearing and know about past conflicts than Chinese. This can be seen in Figure 7, 20 foreign participants know about past conflicts, and most foreign participants heard of it. Only 14 foreigners show that they do not know about it. However, Chinese participants in the survey, 11 interviewees know about past conflicts, only a few heard of it. On the contrary, there are 14 Chinese participants in this investigation, expressing that they do not know about past conflicts. So using Figure 7 shows the data collected from the questionnaire survey; it can calculate the probability that Chinese participants who heard of and know about past conflicts in all Chinese participants' recognition of the past disputes are around 58% ($P=11+8/11+8+14=0.575757\dots$). In the same method, the probability that Foreign participants who heard of and know about past conflicts in all foreign participants' recognition of the past conflicts are around 79% ($P=20+33/20+33+14=0.791044\dots$).

Since $P=58\%$ (Chinese participants which heard of and know about the past conflicts in all Chinese participants' recognition of the past conflict) is less than $P=79\%$ (Foreign participants which heard of and know about the past conflicts in all foreign participants' recognition of the past conflicts), it could be seen as that foreign participants have a higher probability to heard of and know about the past conflicts than Chinese participants.

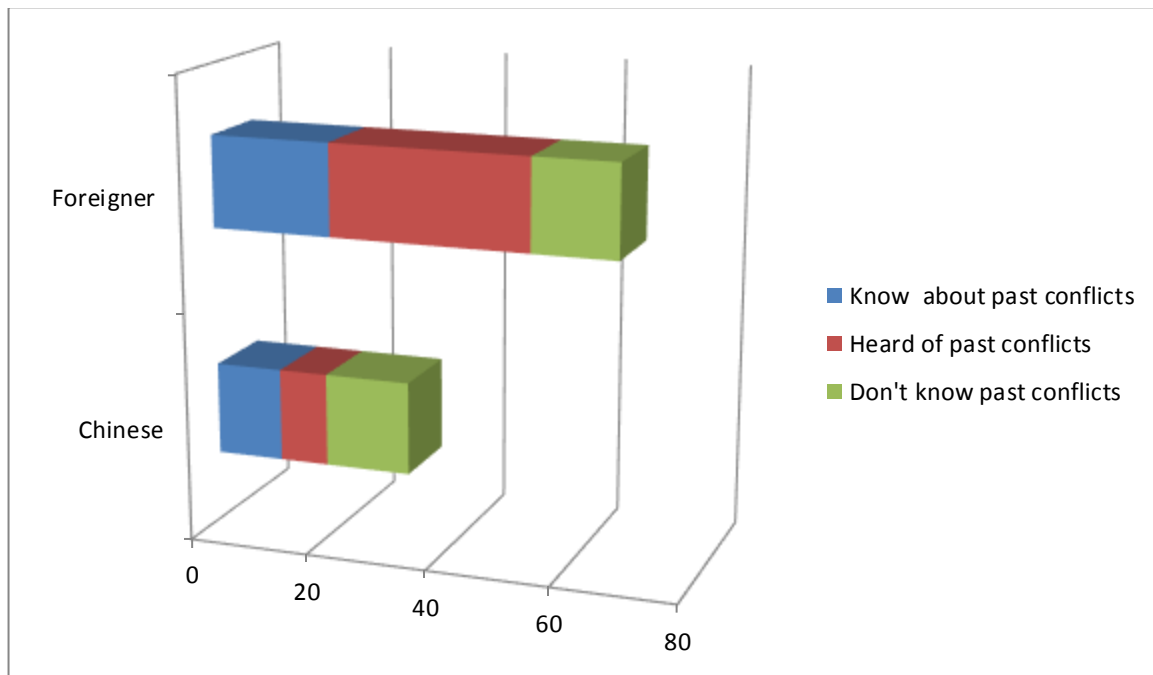


Figure 7 Chinese's recognition of past conflicts VS Foreigner's recognition of past conflicts

While looking at these past conflicts, it is significant for research to find an appropriate method to solve disputes between nations. However, it is still a difficult task for researchers because of the multiple factors to consider when initiating a strategy to resolve conflicts under the globalization environment, like political, economic, and cultural. In the previous section in this paper, the multiple factors that affect the nation's action for solving the relevant conflicts over the Islands, including protection of its interests like principles of national security, national territorial sovereignty, and the marine rights and interests (natural resources). So this paper also investigates respondents' perceptions of the factors that nation's action for protecting its territorial water sovereignty. The collected data is from a multiple-choice question, and accessed by the Microsoft office ware (Excel), as Figure 8 has shown.

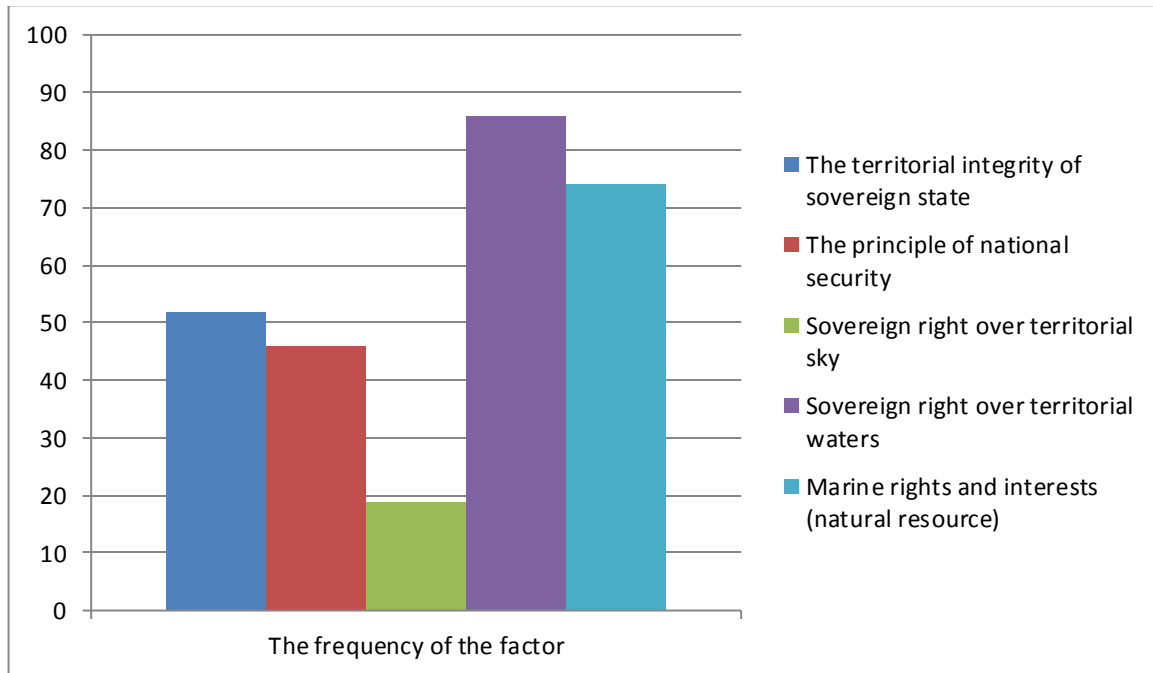


Figure 8 the frequency of the factor (Results from a multiple choice question)

Figure 8 shows that investigating the participants considering that they are a country's citizens, the results state their perception of factors that influence a country's action for protecting national territorial water sovereignty. In this diversification of factors, the most frequent element chosen by participants is sovereignty right over territorial waters. Respondents selected it at 86 times in this survey; the second frequency of the factor is Marine rights and interests (natural resources); this factor was chosen by participants at 74 times. The rest of the factors that were chosen by participants are 52 times the territorial integrity of the sovereign state, 46 times the principle of national security, and 19 times of sovereign right over the territorial sky. Therefore, when participants are considered as a country's natives, it is significant to see their perceptions on factors which influence the country's actions on national territorial water sovereignty protection are sovereign right. So it can be seen as these two factors (sovereign right over territorial waters; Marine rights and resources) might be the two top factors that affect a country's action for protecting its territorial water sovereignty in participants' perception. It also reflects the literature about the significance of marine resource and ocean strategy under the globalization background.

These results from participants' perception of factors that affect the relevant actions in a country for protecting its territorial waters sovereignty, supported the points that external factors for nations' efforts. In figure 8, it is obvious to see the

two top factors influencing the nation's protection for its interests in the respondents' view. So it also explained the reason why mainly countries protected their interests when the relevant conflicts and disputes happened over the relevant Islands. Like the literature review mentioned, they usually make strategies and actions to protect their territorial water sovereignty and marine rights and interests.

- **Hypothesis 2**

This paper intends to find different countries' nationals' perceptions of the South China Sea conflict in light of past conflicts. In order to find participants' depth perceptions on the action of a country for protecting its interests and some results from international law, such as the result of the South China Sea Arbitration. This paper also investigates participants' agreement about some of the South China Sea Arbitration results. From the data collected by investigating participants' agreement of some statements from The South China Sea Arbitration, Figures 9, 10, and 11 demonstrate whether there is a relation between participants' nationality and their perception of the agreement of some statements from The South China Sea Arbitration.

In this paper, some statements from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration were mentioned in the literature review section. Figure 9 shows the participants' nationality and agreement on the statement (1) from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration, which states, including 1. Chinese legal actions have interfered with Philippine fishing and petroleum exploration; 2. Chinese constructing artificial Islands; 3. Philippine failing to prevent Chinese fishermen from fishing in the relevant zone.

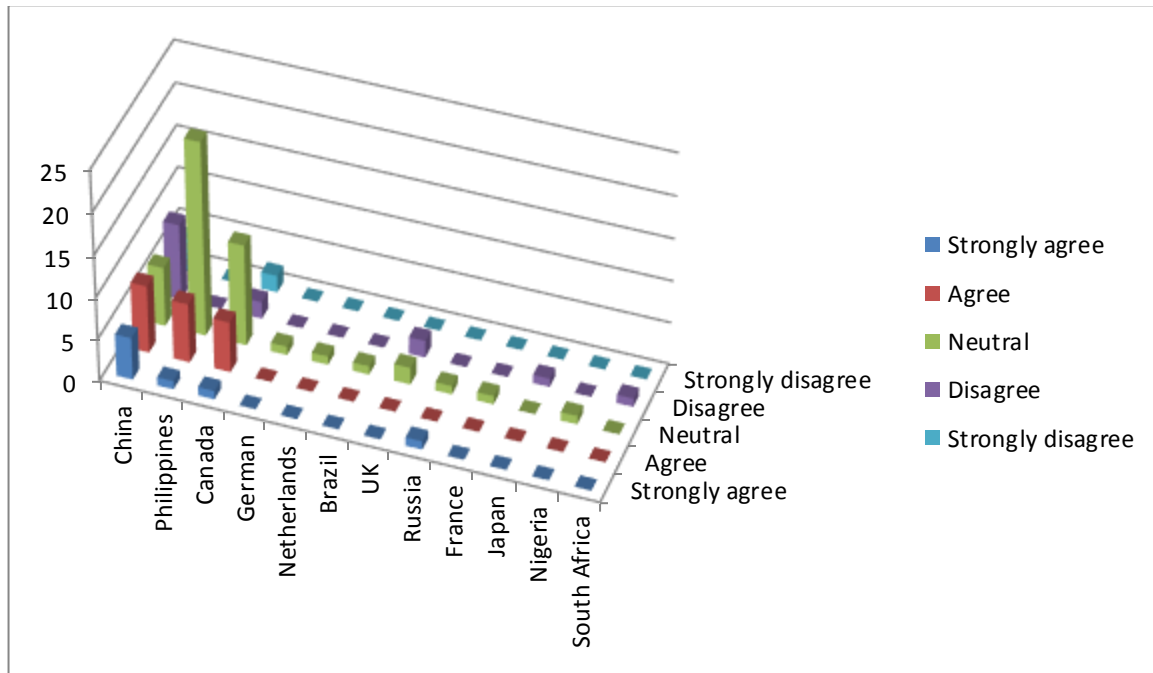


Figure 9 Participants' nationality and their agreement on the statement (1)

Figure 9 shows respondents' agreement about the statement (1) from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration, which is influenced by their nationality. In Chinese participants, there are five people express that they strongly agree with the statement (1); 8 people think that the statement (1) is grantable, so they agree with it; 7 people have no clear opinion about the statement (1). Therefore, they choose the agreement of the statement (1) is at a neutral attitude. Nine participants who are the highest in the Chinese participants chose not to agree with the statement (1) from The South China Sea Arbitration. The other four Chinese participants express that they strongly disagree with it. Since almost all Chinese participants are separately balanced in each agreement of the statement (1), it is not easy to say that Chinese participants' agreement (1) is affected by their nationality. In order to know whether there is a relation between participants' citizenship and their agreement about the statement (1), the results of Philippine participants might be useful to find.

In the group of Filipino participants, in Figure 9, there are thirty-one Filipino as participants in this investigation in total. Most of them hold a neutral attitude (1); seven Filipino agree with the statement (1); only one person strongly agrees with it. It is easy to see most participants who are from the Philippines. They chose agreement on the statement (1) is neutral, even considering their nationality. Once again, these processed results still cannot show a clear relation

between participants' nationality and their agreement about the statement (1). When the participant group moves to Canadians, the result from Canadian participants is almost like the result of the participants who are from the Philippines. In Figure 9, the majority of Canadian participants stay the neutral point in the agreement of the statement (1); 6 Canadians agree with it; the agreement of the statement (1) in the option of disagreeing and strongly disagree both have two participants chosen; 1 person strongly agrees with it.

Therefore, from the main participants who are from China, Philippines, and Canada, their agreement of the statement (1), it could be seen as there is a relation between participants' nationality and their agreement about the statement (1) from the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration. For instance, 9 Chinese participants disagree with the statement (1). Also, 7 participants who are from the Philippines agree with the statement (1). These can prove that participants' nationality has a potential ability to influence their perceptions on the statement (1) from the press release of South China Sea Arbitration. However, it is not enough to prove that a clear relationship between them like positive or negative.

This finding also can reflect in Figures 10 and 11. According to The press release of the South China Sea Arbitration, the statement (2) is that Chinese actions are harmful to the marine environment, and the statement (3) is Chinese actions also aggravate the dispute between China and the Philippines. This survey investigates participants' perception of the statement (2) and statement (3) from the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration, investigating their agreement about it. Figure 10 states that participants' nationality and their agreement of the statement (2) from the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration.

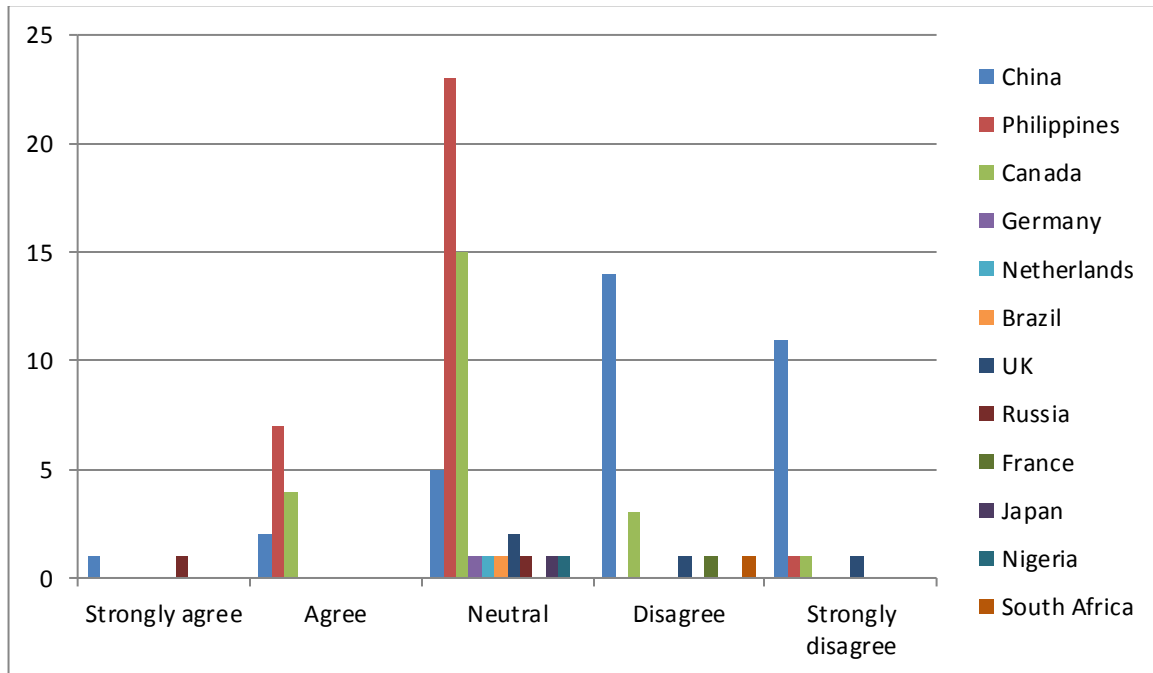


Figure 10 participants' nationality and their agreement on the statement (2)

In Figure 10, the respondents who are from China, the majority of them, including 14 respondents, disagree and 11 people strongly disagree. They stand the opposite of the statement (2) that stated Chinese actions are harmful to the marine environment. 5 Chinese hold the neutral point for this statement; only a few Chinese participants, which include 2 with agree and 1 with a strong agree, support this statement that Chinese actions make the marine environment surrounding the South China Sea worse. Through processing results from the Chinese participants in figure 10, it also could prove the finding mentioned in the previous paragraph, said there does exist a relation between respondents' nationality and their perception of the statements from the South China Sea Arbitration. This section might be more likely to say that their nationality potentially influences Chinese participants' perceptions of agreement about the statement (2).

However, while looking at processed results from Philippine participants, twenty-three participants still hold neutral attitudes to the statement (2) that saying Chinese actions harm to the South China Sea's marine environment; even one Filipino strongly disagrees with it. Only seven participants express that they are supporting the statement (2); they agree that Chinese actions are harmful to the marine environment of the South China Sea. Since figure 10 shows that mainly Philippine participants keep the neutral point for the statement (2), even one

person disagrees with it. They are all under the circumstance that they are Philippine nationals. This could be seen as that their nationality does not have much effect on their agreements on the statement (2) from the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration.

In addition, in Figure 10, fifteen Canadians stand the neutral point in their agreement of the statement (2), which from the South China Sea Arbitration said that Chinese actions are harmful to the marine environment over the South China Sea. Four Canadian participants, including three with disagreement and one in a strong argument, show that they are in the opposite position with the agreement of this statement; only four participants from Canada agree with the statement (2). Therefore, these processed results from the Canadian participants also show that their nationality might not be a powerful influence, which can affect their agreements on the statement (2) from the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration.

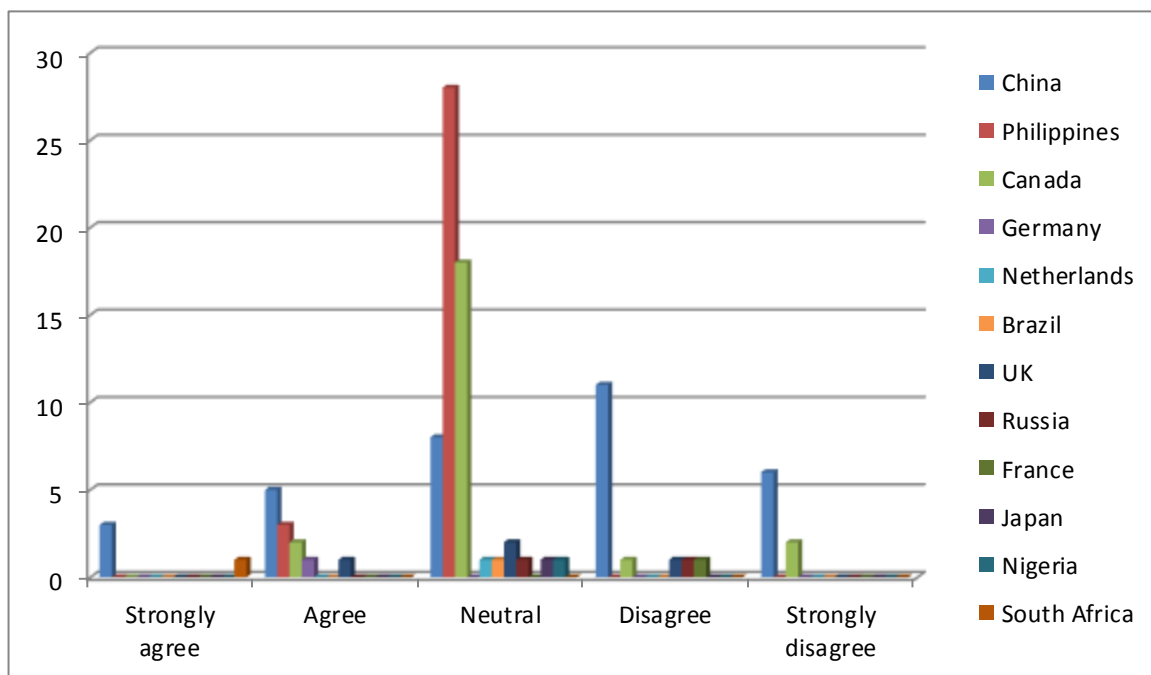


Figure 11 interviewees' nationality and their perceptions on the statement (3)

Figure 11 shows participants' nationality and their agreement about the statement (3) from the South China Sea Arbitration, which states Chinese actions aggravate the dispute between China and the Philippines. For the participants from China, eleven of them expressed that they are not supporting the statement that China aggravates disputes between China and the Philippines, so they

disagree with it. There also are six participants in the position of disagreement that they strongly disagree with the statement (3). However, Figure 11 states that eight Chinese participants agree with the statement that Chinese actions aggravate the dispute between China and the Philippines in the position of supporting side, including five people who agree with it, and three people strongly agree with it. Eight people chose the neutral as their agreements on the statement (3). From these results described from Figure 11, and it might not be seen as the participants' nationality has affected their perceptions on the statement (3) since Chinese participants' agreements about the statement (3) are almost separately balanced in each option on the agreement. However, it could say that Chinese participants' nationality has potentially affected their agreement of the statement (3) because over half of them disagree with the statement that Chinese actions aggravate the dispute between China and the Philippines.

Once again, Figure 11 shows that mainly Philippine participant's choice of the agreement about the statement (3), which said China aggravates the dispute between China and the Philippines, is neutral; only 3 Filipino agree with it. It reflects the findings from Figures 9 and 10. It proves the Philippine participants' nationality might not influence their agreement about the statement (3) from the press release of The South China Sea Arbitration. Furthermore, mainly Canadian participants show that they hold the neutral point to the statement (3). It might be seen as that Canadian participants' nationality may not be able to affect their agreements on the statement that Chinese actions aggravate the dispute between China and the Philippines.

Therefore, the finding is that participants' nationality does have a relation with their agreements about some statements, including the statements (1), (2), and (3) from the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration. Besides, participants' agreement about some statements from the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration is potentially affected by their nationality, especially the participants from China in this research paper. But, participants' nationality might not be able to influence their agreement about some statements from the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration, like the participants are from the Philippines and Canada involved in this investigation in Figures 9, 10, and 11 illustrate it.

In a word, there is a relation between participants' nationality and their perceptions on some statements from the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration. Indeed participants' nationality has the potential to be a factor that affects their perceptions on some statements in the South China Sea Arbitration. However, in most circumstances, participants' perceptions of some statements in the South China Sea Arbitration might not be influenced by their nationality, like foreign participants in this report.

- **Hypothesis 3**

This finding has exposed one of the different nationalities' in-depth perceptions of some international law results, such as the press release of the South China Sea Arbitration. Other participants' depth perception of a nation's actions is to protect its interests and deal with the relevant dispute and conflict in light of past conflicts. In this paper's literature, the strategies and actions for a country to deal with the territorial dispute between nations over the relevant Islands, including that battle in a conflict of the territorial dispute between Great Britain and Argentina, but it has not solved until nowadays; building territorial policy like the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan. On the other hand, Chinese principles' change in its diplomatic strategy from 'shelving dispute and joint development' to 'facing the controversy and developing actively' in the South China Sea conflict.

Therefore, this paper also investigated the participants' perception of a country's strategies and actions to protect its interests once the conflict can happen between nations over the territorial dispute. It investigated participants' opinions on appropriate solutions for a country to deal with the territorial dispute between nations over the relevant Islands, in light of past conflict. Figure 12 shows that the participants' recognition of past conflicts and their opinions on an appropriate solution for a country to deal with the territorial dispute between nations over the relevant Islands.

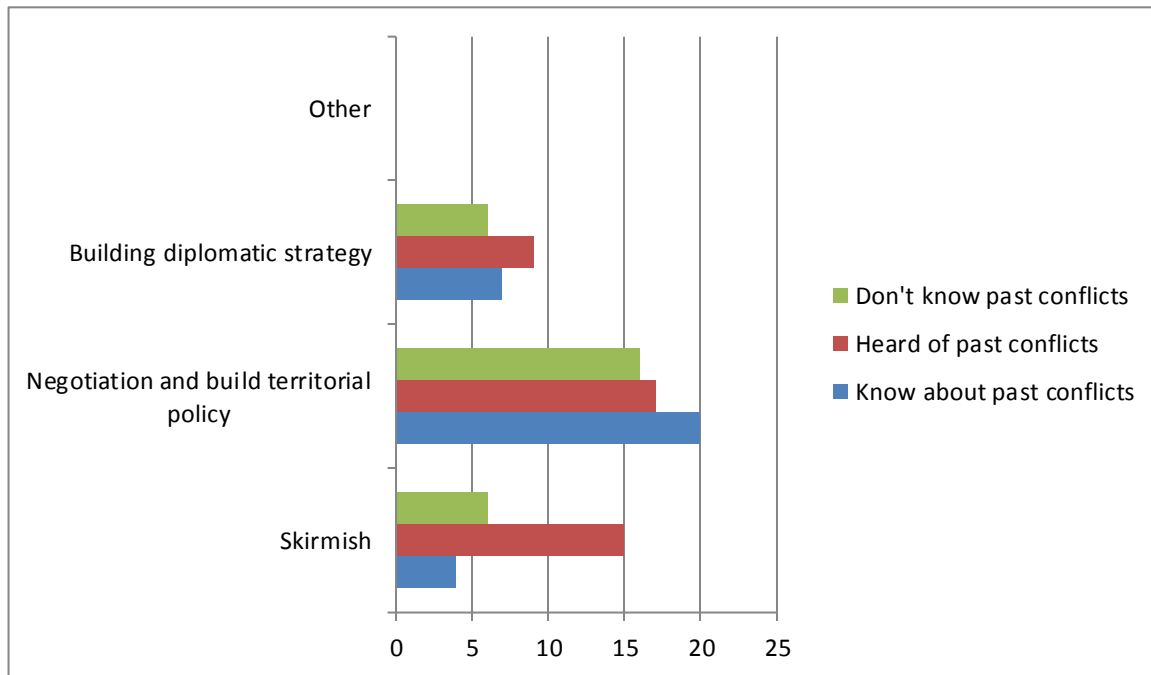


Figure 12 participants' recognition of past conflicts and their perceptions on appropriate solutions for a country deal with the relevant disputes

In Figure 12, the majority of participants who know about the past conflicts thought one of the appropriate solutions for a country to protect its interest when dealing with the territorial dispute between nations over the relevant Islands is the peaceful solutions, which is a negotiation and building territorial policy. Seven participants knowing the past conflicts expressed that building diplomatic strategy is also one of the appropriate ways to deal with the relevant dispute. Four participants know about past conflicts thought the skirmish, which indicates an armed conflict between the two countries is one of the appropriate solutions. From these results, mainly participants who with the knowledge about past conflicts, they support the peaceful solutions for nation's actions to deal with the relevant dispute. However, a few of them also support the skirmish as a nation's action to solve a territorial dispute over the suitable Islands, like one of past conflicts, which is the conflict between Great Britain and Argentina in literature.

In the group of participants who heard of past conflicts, 26 participants show that they prefer peaceful ways as a country's action to solve the dispute over its relevant Islands, including nine people who chose the solution of building diplomatic strategy. Seventeen of them thought negotiation and building territorial policy as an appropriate method. There are still 15 people in this group who hold

their supporting opinions on the appropriate solution for the nation's action to deal with a relevant territorial dispute should be the armed conflicts, as a skirmish.

The results from participants without knowing past conflicts: 16 participants chose the solution that is negotiation and building territorial policy as a country's action to territorial dispute; 6 people support the solution, which is building diplomatic strategy; 6 participants still support their opinions on the skirmish should be appropriate.

These results above show the participants' perception of the appropriate solutions for a country's action to a territorial dispute can be related to their understanding of the past conflicts and their governments' points of view.

Their recognition of past conflicts, but it cannot say that their perceptions on a country's actions to deal with territorial dispute has direct correlation affected by their recognition of past conflicts. Because 19 participants with knowledge of and heard of past conflicts still thought the skirmish should be an appropriate solution to the nation's territorial dispute. Also, with 16 participants without knowing past conflicts, they agree with the solution: the negotiation and building territorial policy should be appropriate for the nation's action to the territorial dispute. However, from Figure 12, mainly participant in the survey supports the solutions, which is the negotiation and building territorial policy, might be the most appropriate for a country's action to the territorial dispute. These participants are majorly knowing of and heard of past conflicts, so it could say that under the circumstance of knowing and heard about past conflicts, participants in this investigation thought the most appropriate solution as a country's action to the territorial dispute should be negotiation and building territorial policy. This is the finding which shows another participants' depth perception of a nation's actions for protecting its interests in dealing with dispute and conflict, like when the relevant conflict of the territorial dispute between nations over the Islands, in light of past conflicts.

- Discussion and limitation

From the data description and result evaluation, the results show respondents' nationality is a factor that can affect their perceptions of the South China Sea conflict. However, it does not indicate that respondents' perceptions of

the South China Sea conflict are highly affected by their nationality. Hypothesis 1 shows that respondents' nationality is a factor that will affect their views on the South China Sea conflict, but it is biased that respondents' nationality is an absolute factor to their perceptions of the South China Sea conflict. Hypothesis 2 is one-sided that their nationality seriously influences participants' agreements on the statements in The South China Sea Arbitration. However, the South China Sea Arbitration causes many controversies worldwide, and respondents' nationality is potentially affecting their perceptions on the statements from The South China Sea Arbitration, such as Chinese respondents.

Furthermore, the result evaluation states the reason for the idea that free space at sea with natural resources and many countries have transportation way to it should be the area for many countries shelving disputes and joint development. But considering the internal factor and external factor, respondents' perceptions of the idea is limited. The external factors in respondents' views on nations' actions for protecting their interests when facing the relevant dispute are various. The past conflicts help respondents decide the appropriate solutions as nations' actions to deal with the dispute. This also verifies hypothesis 3 in this paper. The peaceful solutions like negotiation, building territorial policy, and building diplomatic strategy will be appropriate for countries to solve the relevant conflict or dispute in light of past conflicts in participants' perceptions. In a word, when participants are looking at the South China Sea conflict, their nationality will almost not affect their views about it.

Apart from the limitations of the methodology mentioned in the methodology section, the limitation in this paper includes the lack of time and resources to interview all participants. The number of participants from a few countries in the paper's sample is little. Another limitation of this paper is that it lacks past researching supports for investigating people's perception of the South China Sea conflict. Since the past research work about the South China Sea conflict is based on the view of nations with conflicts of interests, this paper investigates the South China Sea conflict, based on the view of nationals involved and without involvement in the conflict.

- Conclusion

This research paper is about investigating different nationalities' perceptions of the South China Sea conflict. Knowing the changes and consequences in politics of current affairs is essential because any decisions can change our life, businesses and policies turning overnight. Recent examples included the Brexit, and Trump became the 45th president of the US and the trade war between the US and China. For instance, Brexit can affect depreciation of the sterling exchange rate, further influencing people's traveling, oversea study, business and immigration. Similarly, like Trump's immigration policy affecting the migration of different nationalities to the US. This paper focused on one politics of current affairs, the South China Sea conflict, based on the view of nationals involved or without any involvement in the conflict. The research emphasized that it was helpful to people interested in international relations, strategy planning, and policy practice. It is essential for citizens from different countries to know the South China Sea conflict independently, understand together with the globalization background, so that the appropriate solutions for nations to deal with their relevant dispute or conflict over the Islands can be possible and available.

The related literature with similar cases, justification of research methods, results and its analysis, general discussions, and limitations of this paper were described earlier in the paper. Concerning the contributions, our paper addressed three research questions in this paper:

1. Different nationalities could be a factor that can affect their perceptions of the South China Sea conflicts.
2. There was a potential relation between different nationalities' perceptions of some statements of The South China Sea Arbitration and their own nationality.
3. Appropriate solutions for nations' actions were required to deal with their relevant territorial dispute in participants' perceptions.

From the evaluation section, research objectives were met and the proposed hypotheses were validated in this paper. It concluded that

1. Participants' nationality was a factor that can affect their perceptions of the South China Sea conflict. However, hypothesis 1 was biased that participants' nationality could be highly affecting their views on the South China Sea conflict;

2. There was a direct relation between participants' nationality and their perceptions of the statements in the South China Sea Arbitration, but hypothesis 2 was also biased. Their nationality seriously influenced participants' perceptions of the South China Sea Arbitration statements;
3. Reviewing the past conflicts, peaceful solutions like negotiation, building territorial policy, and building diplomatic strategy, were appropriate methods for nations to deal with its relevant territorial dispute in participants' perceptions.

This also verified hypothesis 3. It could be seen as when participants' nationality would almost not affect their views about the South China Sea conflict.

Furthermore, this research paper concludes the limitations in it, including two limitations in methodology and one in limitation part. In summary, this report highlighted the South China Sea conflict from the past and present points of view. However, there were two limitations. The shortage of time and resources interview all participants with full details, and also the sample size could be more substantial. It was also partly because some participants (not included in this research) felt there was nothing much to say, or either side's story could be one-sided during the conflict. At least our work took a much more neutral and independent point of view while studying the subject of conflicts, and interviewed more nationals outside this region to make their comments seriously.

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