

Outline

[Abstract](#)[Keywords](#)

1. Introduction
 2. Literature reviews
 3. Research method
 4. Results
 5. Discussion on factors affecting VCY
 6. An appraisal of VCY in Sri Lanka
 7. Conclusions
- [Glossary](#)
- [References](#)



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The reality of container exchange between shipping lines: Clearing the pathway to virtual container yard

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The Reality of Container Exchange between Shipping Lines: Clearing the Pathway to Virtual Container Yard

Abstract

Container inventory imbalance (or under / over balanced, i.e. one carrier can be in an excess situation while the other will be in deficit) is a severe problem that adds a substantial expense on ocean freight. The ocean containers are built for continuous transportation with cargo. However, due to the imbalance in world trade and other inherent characteristics of shipping the import volumes and export volumes of laden containers in a port are not equal. This variation leads carriers reposition empty containers from excess ports to elsewhere that the empty containers are in demand. If carriers retain containers in a port pending exports demands the sole purpose of containers cannot be met. Thus, it may add storage cost and wear and tear that makes the container shipping uneconomical. This paper appraises the potential of the container exchange and its practical aspects using real container data. Further, it focuses on several factors that may influence container exchange among carriers. Finally, it concludes that the organizational factors play the key role in container exchange thus recommends for further research based on statistical analysis of this paper.

Keywords

Freight containers, inventory, exchange, virtual container yard