

Perceptions of Agribusiness Professionals on the Hidden Generation of Electronic Waste in Agribusiness

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Abstract:

Contemporary agribusinesses are rapidly adopting digital and mechanical technologies to enhance their efficiency and productivity. As a result, they contribute to generating electronic waste (E-waste), and a considerable amount of which is disposed of in the environment. Therefore, this study aims to explore the agribusiness professionals' perception of e-waste generation and management practices within the agribusiness sector. This is a qualitative study which applies in-depth semi-structured interviews with twenty-two agribusiness professionals in Sri Lanka. The data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and emerging themes. The findings highlight that there is an emerging trend in generating e-waste as digital transformation is still ongoing within agribusiness. Agribusiness experts acknowledge the generation of e-waste within agribusiness operations; however, they have given insufficient attention to identifying and managing it effectively. The main reason is the lack of knowledge about identifying e-waste and the limited awareness of how to prevent it. The unavailability of a structured forum about e-waste generation in agribusinesses has become a major challenge to overcome this issue. This study further highlights the importance of having such a conversation to overcome the significant and future challenges in the waste stream. In addition, this study encourages agribusiness professionals to consider e-waste generation while transforming their agribusinesses into digital and technological transformation. This study contributes to the emerging literature on sustainability and the Circular Economy in waste management by providing insights to develop an effective e-waste management framework for this stream.

Keywords:

Electronic waste (e-waste), agribusiness, Sri Lanka, waste management.