

# The Dynamics of Knowledge, Action and Liberation: A Study of Jñāna Karma Samuccaya in Śaṅkara's Taittirīyopaniṣad Commentary

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**Abstract.** The footwear industry in India has undergone a remarkable transformation in the past two decades, evolving from a largely unorganised sector to a competitive, brand-driven market. Among the significant players in the affordable footwear segment, Walkaroo International Pvt. Ltd. has carved a distinct niche, particularly in South India. This article presents a detailed study of consumer satisfaction towards Walkaroo footwear products in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu a city that holds special cultural and commercial significance as a major footwear consumption hub. The study investigates key dimensions of consumer satisfaction, including product quality, design and aesthetics, comfort and fit, pricing, durability, brand perception, after-sales service, and distribution availability. Data was gathered through structured questionnaires administered to 150 respondents across various demographic groups in Coimbatore. The findings reveal high levels of satisfaction on dimensions of affordability and comfort, while suggesting scope for improvement in premium design variety and after-sales support. The article concludes with strategic recommendations for Walkaroo to strengthen its consumer relationship and market position.

**keywords:** Consumer Satisfaction, Walkaroo Footwear, Footwear Industry, Coimbatore, Brand Perception, Product Quality, Purchase Behaviour.

## I INTRODUCTION

The footwear industry in India is one of the largest in the world, ranking second only to China in terms of production volume. India produces approximately 22,000 million pairs of footwear annually and is also a major exporter. The Indian footwear market, valued at over USD 20 billion, is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 7–8% over the next five years. This growth is driven by rising disposable incomes, rapid urbanisation, changing fashion sensibilities, and the increasing importance of branded footwear among Indian consumers.

Within this dynamic landscape, Coimbatore often referred to as the 'Manchester of South India' stands as one of the key consumption centres for footwear. The city's large

working-class population, an expanding middle class, thriving textile and engineering industries, and vibrant retail ecosystem make it an ideal market for both branded and unbranded footwear. Retail markets such as Oppanakara Street, Crosscut Road, and large shopping malls in the city offer an extensive array of footwear choices to consumers.

Walkaroo International Pvt. Ltd., established in 2013 and headquartered in Coimbatore itself, has quickly grown to become one of India's fastest-growing footwear brands. Founded by the VPPL (Varun Plastics Private Limited) group, Walkaroo specialises in EVA (Ethylene Vinyl Acetate) footwear, offering a range of slippers, sandals, and casual shoes under multiple sub-brands. The brand's unique selling proposition lies in its blend of style, comfort, and affordability a combination that has resonated strongly with price-sensitive yet quality-conscious Indian consumers.

Consumer satisfaction, defined as the degree to which a product or service meets or exceeds consumer expectations, is a critical determinant of brand loyalty, repeat purchase, and positive word-of-mouth. Understanding what drives satisfaction among Walkaroo's consumers especially in the brand's home district of Coimbatore — holds both academic and managerial significance. This article seeks to bridge the gap between consumer expectations and actual product experiences, providing actionable insights for the brand.

### **1. Significance of the Study**

Coimbatore being the headquarters of Walkaroo makes this study particularly relevant. Consumer feedback from this district can serve as a barometer for the brand's performance at the grassroots level. Moreover, understanding consumer satisfaction in a city with high footwear market activity provides a competitive intelligence that is valuable for brand managers, retailers, and marketing strategists.

### **2. Scope of the Study**

The study is limited to consumers residing in Coimbatore District who have purchased Walkaroo footwear at least once in the past 12 months. The study covers various product categories offered by Walkaroo, including daily wear slippers, fashion sandals, and sports-style casual footwear. The scope encompasses consumers across different age groups, genders, income levels, and occupations.

## **II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Consumer satisfaction has been extensively studied in the marketing literature. Oliver (1980) proposed the Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory, which posits that satisfaction results from the comparison between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase performance. When actual performance exceeds expectations, positive disconfirmation leads to satisfaction; when it falls short, negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction. This framework forms the theoretical backbone of the present study.

Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasise that customer satisfaction is the foundation of customer loyalty and that even a slight improvement in satisfaction scores can lead to disproportionate increases in customer retention and profitability. In the context of footwear specifically, research by Sundaram and Krishnamurthy (2019) found that comfort,

durability, and price-value ratio were the three most important satisfaction determinants among South Indian consumers, followed by brand reputation and aesthetic design.

A study by Murugesan and Annamalai (2020) on branded footwear consumption in Tamil Nadu found that Walkaroo and Bata were among the top three preferred brands in the affordable segment, with Walkaroo demonstrating particularly strong growth in semi-urban and tier-2 city markets. Their findings indicated that Walkaroo's focus on EVA technology contributed significantly to perceived comfort and value satisfaction.

Rajan and Priya (2021) explored the influence of social media advertising on footwear purchase decisions among young adults in Coimbatore, finding that digital campaigns and influencer endorsements had a measurable positive effect on brand consideration and trial purchase. Their study highlighted the growing importance of digital touchpoints in the footwear consumer journey in Tier-1 Tamil Nadu cities.

Research by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) on service quality dimensions (SERVQUAL) has been adapted to product satisfaction measurement, with scholars such as Sivakumar (2022) applying adapted SERVQUAL dimensions to footwear retail satisfaction in Chennai. Their work found that the in-store experience, staff knowledge, and product availability significantly moderated overall brand satisfaction scores.

The literature thus converges on a multi-dimensional view of consumer satisfaction in the footwear sector — one that integrates product attributes (quality, comfort, durability), price perceptions, brand equity, retail experience, and post-purchase support. The present study builds upon this foundation with specific application to Walkaroo in Coimbatore.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study is guided by the following specific objectives:

- To assess the overall level of consumer satisfaction towards Walkaroo footwear products among residents of Coimbatore District.
- To identify the key product attributes quality, comfort, design, durability, and pricing that influence consumer satisfaction.
- To analyse demographic variations (age, gender, income, occupation) in satisfaction levels towards Walkaroo footwear.
- To evaluate consumer perceptions of Walkaroo's brand image, value for money, and retail availability in Coimbatore.
- To examine post-purchase behaviour, including repeat purchase intention and willingness to recommend, among satisfied consumers.
- To identify areas for improvement and provide strategic recommendations to strengthen Walkaroo's consumer satisfaction performance.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1. Research Design**

This study adopts a descriptive research design, which is suitable for systematically describing the characteristics of consumer satisfaction in a defined population. Both primary and secondary data sources are employed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

**2. Data Collection**

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 150 respondents in Coimbatore District. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: (i) demographic profile of respondents, (ii) purchase behaviour and brand awareness, and (iii) satisfaction ratings across key product and service dimensions. Responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Highly Dissatisfied) to 5 (Highly Satisfied). Secondary data was sourced from published research articles, industry reports, brand publications, and reputable online databases.

**3. Sampling**

A purposive sampling method was employed to ensure that all respondents had purchased Walkaroo footwear within the past 12 months. Samples were drawn from diverse locations across Coimbatore, including RS Puram, Gandhipuram, Singanallur, Saravanampatti, and Peelamedu, to capture a representative cross-section of the district's consumer population.

**4. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Sub-Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58%
	Female	42%
Age Group	Below 20 years	12%
	20–30 years	31%
	31–40 years	28%
	41–50 years	20%
	Above 50 years	9%
Occupation	Students	18%
	Salaried Employees	34%
	Business Owners	22%
	Homemakers	16%
	Others	10%
Monthly Income	Below ₹15,000	20%
	₹15,000–₹30,000	38%
	₹30,000–₹50,000	28%
	Above ₹50,000	14%

## IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### 1. Brand Awareness and Purchase Behaviour

Among the 150 respondents surveyed, 87% were aware of the Walkaroo brand prior to purchase, indicating strong brand visibility in Coimbatore. The primary sources of brand awareness included retail store displays (42%), word-of-mouth from friends and family (31%), television and radio advertisements (16%), and social media platforms (11%). This distribution underscores the continued dominance of traditional retail discovery channels, even as digital media gains ground.

In terms of purchase frequency, 38% of respondents purchased Walkaroo footwear more than twice a year, 34% purchased once or twice a year, and 28% were first-time buyers participating in the study. The relatively high repeat purchase rate among existing customers reflects a positive base level of satisfaction and brand loyalty.

### 2. Consumer Satisfaction – Product Quality

Product quality was assessed across sub-dimensions including material finish, stitching and bonding quality, resistance to wear, and consistency in sizing. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Consumer Satisfaction on Product Quality Dimensions

Quality Dimension	Satisfied (%)	Neutral (%)	Dissatisfied (%)
Material and Finish Quality	74%	18%	8%
Bonding and Sole Durability	69%	21%	10%
Size Consistency	72%	20%	8%
Water Resistance	65%	23%	12%
Overall Build Quality	71%	19%	10%

Overall, approximately 71% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the build quality of Walkaroo products, citing the use of EVA material as a key factor in their positive experience. Water resistance received comparatively lower satisfaction scores, which is an area the brand may consider addressing through product innovation.

### 3. Comfort and Fit

Comfort and fit are among the most critical determinants of footwear satisfaction. The study found that 79% of respondents rated Walkaroo footwear as comfortable for daily wear, making it the highest-rated satisfaction dimension in the survey. The brand's focus on ergonomic design and lightweight EVA foam has clearly resonated with consumers. Sub-categories of 'arch support' and 'cushioning' received satisfaction scores of 73% and 77% respectively, while 'fit accuracy' stood at 70%.

These results align with Walkaroo's brand positioning as a comfort-oriented footwear brand and suggest that comfort remains the brand's strongest competitive advantage in the Coimbatore market.

**4. Design and Aesthetics**

Design satisfaction was measured on dimensions of colour variety, contemporary styling, seasonal collection availability, and gender-specific design relevance. The findings indicate a moderately positive satisfaction level: 62% of respondents were satisfied with the overall design aesthetics of Walkaroo products. However, among respondents in the 20–30 age group, only 55% expressed design satisfaction, suggesting that younger, fashion-forward consumers have higher design expectations that the brand does not fully meet.

Female respondents reported lower design satisfaction (57%) compared to male respondents (68%), indicating that the brand may benefit from investing in more varied, fashion-forward designs tailored to women's preferences.

**5. Pricing and Value for Money**

Pricing satisfaction is one of Walkaroo's strongest performance areas. A substantial 84% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the brand's pricing, and 81% agreed that Walkaroo offers good value for money relative to competitors such as Bata, Liberty, and local unbranded alternatives. The brand's price range — typically between ₹200 and ₹700 — is perceived as accessible and fair across income segments.

Table 3: Consumer Satisfaction on Pricing Attributes

Pricing Attribute	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Price is affordable	84%	11%	5%
Value for money compared to competitors	81%	13%	6%
Price justified by quality	76%	16%	8%
Pricing competitive with unbranded footwear	78%	14%	8%

**6. Brand Perception and Loyalty**

Brand perception was evaluated through respondents' association of Walkaroo with attributes such as trustworthiness, modernity, Indian identity, and quality reliability. The brand scored highly on trustworthiness (78%) and Indian identity (82%), reflecting the success of its 'Made in India' positioning. Modernity scored at 64%, confirming that while the brand is trusted, it faces challenges in projecting a contemporary, aspirational image.

On brand loyalty, 68% of respondents indicated they would purchase Walkaroo again for their next footwear need, and 72% stated they would recommend the brand to friends or family. These figures indicate a strong but improvable loyalty base that the brand can cultivate through targeted engagement and product portfolio expansion.

### Key Findings

The analysis of the primary data leads to the following key findings:

- Comfort and affordability are Walkaroo's strongest performance dimensions, with satisfaction scores of 79% and 84% respectively, making them the brand's primary competitive advantages in Coimbatore.
- Overall consumer satisfaction with Walkaroo footwear stands at approximately 73% across all measured dimensions, which is a positive indicator but leaves significant room for improvement toward excellence.
- Design and aesthetic satisfaction lags behind other dimensions at 62%, particularly among younger and female consumers, indicating a critical area for product development investment.
- Water resistance and long-term sole durability received relatively lower satisfaction scores, suggesting a need for material and manufacturing quality improvements.
- Brand awareness is very high (87%) in Coimbatore, benefiting from the brand's local origin and extensive retail distribution across the district.
- Repeat purchase intention (68%) and recommendation willingness (72%) confirm a functional but not exceptional level of brand loyalty among current consumers.
- Middle-income consumers (₹15,000–₹30,000 monthly income) represent the brand's most satisfied and loyal segment, aligning well with Walkaroo's positioning in the affordable quality space.
- After-sales service and complaint resolution mechanisms received the lowest satisfaction scores in the study (54%), indicating a significant service gap that could undermine long-term brand trust.

## V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study paint a nuanced picture of Walkaroo's consumer satisfaction landscape in Coimbatore. The brand has clearly succeeded in its core mission of delivering comfortable and affordable footwear to Indian consumers. The high satisfaction scores on comfort and pricing reflect a well-executed product strategy that aligns with the needs and constraints of its primary target segments — working professionals, students, and homemakers from middle-income households.

However, the study also surfaces important tensions that the brand must navigate as it seeks to grow and premiumise. The design satisfaction gap, particularly among younger consumers, is symptomatic of a broader challenge facing affordable Indian brands: the tension between cost-efficiency and aesthetic innovation. As consumer aspirations rise with increasing income levels and exposure to global trends through social media, brands like Walkaroo face pressure to upgrade their design quotient without compromising affordability.

The after-sales service finding is perhaps the most strategically important. In an era where post-purchase experience is increasingly central to overall brand satisfaction, Walkaroo's relatively weak performance on this dimension (54% satisfaction) represents both a risk and an opportunity. Investing in streamlined return and exchange policies, consumer helplines, and responsive retailer training programs could yield significant improvements in overall satisfaction and loyalty.

The brand's strong association with Indian identity and trustworthiness is a valuable equity asset that should be leveraged more deliberately in marketing communications. As Indian consumers become increasingly patriotic in their purchasing decisions — a trend amplified by the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' movement — Walkaroo's local Coimbatore origins and manufacturing credentials can become powerful differentiators.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and discussion, the following strategic recommendations are proposed for Walkaroo International:

#### **Invest in Design Innovation**

Walkaroo should establish a dedicated design innovation team that keeps pace with evolving fashion trends. Collaborating with fashion design institutes in Tamil Nadu and releasing limited edition seasonal collections can help attract younger, style-conscious consumers while maintaining the brand's core affordable identity.

#### **Strengthen After-Sales Service Infrastructure**

A structured consumer redressal mechanism including a dedicated customer care helpline, online complaint portal, and a clear return/exchange policy communicated at the point of sale would significantly improve post-purchase satisfaction. Empowering retail partners in Coimbatore with proper training on complaint handling is an immediate priority.

#### **Address Water Resistance and Durability Concerns**

Product R&D investment should target improving water resistance in daily-use models and reinforcing sole bonding durability. Communicating these improvements through product labelling and in-store demonstrations can rebuild and enhance consumer trust in product longevity.

#### **Leverage Digital Marketing for Younger Segments**

Given that only 11% of brand discovery currently occurs through social media despite it being the primary communication channel of younger demographics, Walkaroo should significantly scale up its digital marketing efforts — including influencer partnerships, Instagram campaigns featuring styling tips, and YouTube content showcasing product quality and comfort testing.

#### **Develop Women-Specific Product Lines**

The lower design satisfaction among female respondent's points to an underserved opportunity. Launching a dedicated women's footwear line with a wider range of designs, colours, and occasional fashion-forward styles can increase female consumer satisfaction and expand the brand's market share in this segment.

#### **Loyalty and Referral Programmes**

To capitalise on the brand's already strong word-of-mouth dynamics, Walkaroo should formalise its consumer loyalty efforts through a structured rewards programme. Points-based systems redeemable at partner retail stores in Coimbatore, along with referral discounts, can convert satisfied customers into active brand advocates.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study has provided a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of consumer satisfaction towards Walkaroo footwear in Coimbatore District. The findings affirm that Walkaroo has successfully established itself as a trusted, affordable, and comfortable footwear brand with strong brand recognition and a loyal consumer base. The brand's strength lies in its excellent price-to-quality ratio and comfort-oriented product design — attributes that continue to drive repeat purchase and positive recommendations.

At the same time, the study has highlighted areas where the brand must evolve to meet the rising expectations of a changing consumer landscape. Design modernisation, enhanced after-sales service, improved durability, and stronger digital engagement are the key levers that Walkaroo must pull to move from being a satisfactory brand to an exceptional one.

Coimbatore, as the brand's home city, represents both its strongest market and its most critical proving ground. Consumer feedback from this district carries symbolic and strategic weight a highly satisfied Coimbatore consumer base would serve as both a solid foundation and a powerful testimony to the brand's credentials as it scales nationally and internationally.

The findings of this study are intended to inform brand strategy, product development decisions, and marketing investments at Walkaroo. Future research may extend this investigation to other cities in Tamil Nadu and across different demographic segments to provide a more complete picture of Walkaroo's consumer satisfaction landscape across India.

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