From birth and up to around three years children use mainly their senses to perceive and form concepts. To be able to interpret children's cognitive processes one must know how well their senses function and whether they perceive what is presented to them. Parents have a role to play in stimulating the formation of concepts through sensory inputs. However, to be best of our knowledge and form the literature reviewed, no studies were reviewed on the parents' characteristics in stimulation of their children's concepts formation through olfactory perception while children are young and at home. Like all other senses, children form concepts through olfaction should equally be stimulated for perception. Yet the few studies done have revealed that it is one of the most neglected and its significance in children's concepts formation frequency taken for granted (Almanack, 1997).

The relevant theories of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygostky, Jerome Bruner and Albert Bandura were reviews to develop a fundamental understanding of both physical and social environments important in children's concept formation at an early stage of cognitive development.

This study was an explorative study adopting quasi-experimental design, appropriate for both parents and their children who were studied in their own natural homes, with freedom of interaction with their social and physical environments. The independent variables measured included:

(i) the parents' quality of interaction time, (ii) the parents' initiated use of olfactory-related materials, and (iii) the parents' initiated involvement of the children in olfactory-related activities and (iv) the parents level of education. The dependent variables were the children's ability perceive through olfaction. Extraneous variables were the parents Socio-Economic Status and the children's temperamental characteristics.

A stratified random sample of 40 parents with 21/2 year-olds were purposively selected, regardless of their gender, from Soweto and Zimmerman areas of Kasarani Division in Nairobi. In each area, 20 parents and their 20 children were studied. Three instruments were used to collect the data. Parents' questionnaire was administered focusing on the quality of interaction time, initiated use of olfactory-related materials, the initiated involvement of children of olfactory-related activities and the parents' level of education. Parents' observation schedule was also administered to validate data obtained through the questionnaire. Finally, a two-part simple test was administered to the children to assess their ability to discriminate and name objects through olfactory perception.

In data analysis, the descriptive findings were mainly presented in the form of frequencies, mean scores, standard deviations, rangers and graphs. The results of the eight hypotheses were tested at alpha = 0.05 level of significance. This was done through Spearman's Rank Order of Correlation Coefficient to assess the strength and the direction of relationships between the influence of parents' characteristics and the children ability to identify objects through smelling. The data were processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data analysis showed significant positive correlation on parents quality of interaction time and their level of education, and their insignificant positive correlations or no positive correlations in the other parents' characteristics in relation to children's performance in olfactory perception test. Finally, various recommendations were made to professionals, policy makers, curriculum developers, Early Childhood Stakeholders and others researchers.