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**Abstract for an oral presentation**

Title: A taste of celebrity chefs: initial findings from a review of the literature

Author: Ariane Lengyel – London School of Hospitality and Tourism

Supervisors: Dr Andy Gatley (London School of Hospitality and Tourism), Professor Angela Roper (London School of Hospitality and Tourism) and Professor Jeremy Strong (School of Art, Media and Design)

Food is an essential part of our lives and is no longer simply a physiological function. This presentation aims to introduce an initial exploration of the literature with relations to the

potential relationship between celebrity chefs and the construction of taste. Taste is intrinsically linked to food, both from a gustatory aspect as well as from an aesthetic perspective. Within this arena, the celebrity chef has become an important part of contemporary British society as an actor in transmitting concepts of taste and distinction through television and media. However, as such, the specific association between celebrity chefs and taste remains under-examined.

A systematic and extensive review of the literature has been carried out using key words in databases, as well as an examination of important texts. The significant themes arising from the review may suggest that certain conceptual frameworks are emerging such as the significance of the structuralist approach which suggests that taste is socially and culturally constructed. This contrasts with the materialist approach which argues that taste is connected to external influences such as economic and political changes whilst a post-structuralist approach posits that individual identity is central to the construction of taste. Finally, a very useful categorisation and clustering of the chefs has arisen. This has informed the methodological approach which will be a qualitative discourse analysis of the television shows and cookbooks in order to extract the possible link between the chefs and the construction of taste. Findings so far may suggest that the celebrity chef has developed into a modern cultural figure that embodies important notions of contemporary shifts in attitudes towards gender, cooking, ethics, consumption, culinary taste and cultural capital and that they are becoming key players as a wider sociological phenomenon.

Keywords: Food, taste, celebrity chef, media