

Article

Traditional Italian Agri-Food Products: A Unique Tool with Untapped Potential

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Abstract: In the agri-food market, there is an increasing interest in local and traditional food products. In a context characterised by private labels and European Geographical Indications (GIs), the Italian Traditional Agri-food Product (TAP) denomination seems to be a particularly interesting tool for the promotion of agri-food products. This work analysed the effectiveness of this denomination in promoting local and traditional Italian products with a particular focus on vegetable products and landraces, which is the most represented category in the TAP list. The analysis included literature and bureaucratic reviews, a questionnaire administered to consumers and a comparison of the TAP denomination with European GI schemes in order to identify the opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of the TAP denomination. True to the SWOT analysis, the TAP denomination appears not to be very incisive in terms of commercial protection and promotion, although it can represent a useful first step for the designation of traditional Italian products to the European GI schemes (56.94% conversion rate) and the unique recognition of Italian cultural heritage. In conclusion, the suggestion is to improve the TAP denomination by developing activities to increase consumer awareness, by allocating more financial resources for TAP productions (local products) and by proposing better integration with regional and private labels to protect the unique characteristics of Italian traditional agri-food products.

Keywords: common agricultural policy; cultural heritage; marketing; promotion; rural development; SWOT analysis; traditional agri-food products; vegetables



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1. Introduction

Local and traditional agri-food products have seen increasing interest from European consumers in recent years [1,2]. Already in 2017, Italian consumers expressed a marked preference for buying products with the following features: products produced predominantly in Italy—also defined as “made in Italy”—(74.1%), with the origin certified by the European schemes of Geographical Indication (GI) and Traditional Specialities (TSG) (53.1%), whose origin is close to the point of purchase (“km 0” products) (59.3%) and seasonal (80.4%) [3]. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the need to encourage sustainable, resilient and environmentally balanced production typical of local production [4–6]. Moreover, the growing interest of consumers towards the healthiness of products—expressed in terms of food safety and nutritional aspects of the product—and the spread of new purchasing channels (e.g., online market), favoured by the pandemic situation, have allowed the greater commercial development of local and traditional food products [2,7–10].

Despite these trends, the characteristics and definitions of a “local product” and “traditional product” are still not unambiguously defined. A product is generally defined as local if the area in which it is marketed coincides with the production area, although there is no unique definition of the so-called local area [1,11]. For example, in the United States, this distance can be hundreds of kilometres, including the entire provincial territory

and beyond; in France, instead, the so-called “short circuit” (“*circuit court*”) is defined as 150 km from the production area; in Italy, “kilometre zero products” are defined as “agricultural and livestock products, including aquaculture . . . originating from places of production and processing of the raw material or primary agricultural raw materials used at a distance of not more than 70 km from the place of production or processing sale, or coming from the same province of the place of sale” [12].

Regarding traditional products—the subject of this work—the concept has been defined in the literature as “a product frequently consumed or associated with particular celebrations or seasons, normally transmitted from one generation to the next, produced precisely according to the gastronomic heritage, with little or no processing or handling, distinguished and known for its sensory properties and associated with a certain local area, region or country” [13]. This definition is based on the opinions collected among consumers during the TRUEFOOD Project (Traditional United Europe Food), an integrated project funded by the European Commission in 2009, whose aim was to improve quality and safety and introduce innovation into traditional European food production systems through research, demonstration, dissemination and training activities [14].

In Italy, the legislature has chosen to protect traditional products by giving them an explicit definition and a specific method of identification, defining traditional agri-food products (TAPs) as those products “whose methods of processing, storage and maturing are consolidated over time”. For the identification of these products, “the regions and autonomous provinces . . . ensure that these methods of processing are carried out on their territory in a homogeneous manner and according to traditional rules and protracted over time; however, for a period not less than twenty-five years” (article 1, paragraph 1, D.M. 8 September 1999, n. 350) [15]. This denomination was introduced in the Italian legislation with the adoption of article 8, paragraph 1, Legislative Decree (D. Lgs.) n. 173/1998 [16]. The Italian legislator has included this rule in a program of enhancement of the national gastronomic heritage whose purpose, among others, is to “promote and disseminate typical Italian quality food products . . . as part of an integrated programme to enhance the national cultural, craft and tourist heritage” (article 8, paragraph 3, D.Lgs. n. 173/1998) [16]. The objective of this recognition is, therefore, to promote and valorise the products that are recognised as traditional in each Italian region, in order to promote the national gastronomic heritage and strengthen small- and medium-sized farms structurally. Previously, the decree provided for an identifying mark for TAPs and an atlas of TAPs, integrated with references to the cultural, artisanal and artistic heritage that these products intrinsically present; provisions that were never entirely fulfilled.

The one mentioned in the Italian legislation is the only formal definition that identifies this category of products [13,17,18]; the term “traditional agri-food products”, in fact, is not found in any other national European legislation. The only other use of the term “traditional” referring to agri-food products is offered in jurisprudence in Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012, in which “traditional” is defined as “the proven use on the national market for a period that allows to pass on knowledge from one generation to another; this period must be at least thirty years” (article 3, paragraph 1, pt. 3) [18,19], a definition that is applied only in European Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) scheme.

The aim of this work was to analyse the current effectiveness of TAP recognition in relation to the objectives set by Italian legislation, considering the hypothesis that despite the recognised status of more than 5000 traditional food products in Italy, actually this recognition is not sufficient to promote these products on the Italian and international markets. Furthermore, we considered the assumption that the TAP recognition is currently not extensively known in the national territory and has not been the subject of particular attention by the scientific community in the past. Finally, we considered the assumption that this recognition is, despite these drawbacks, a useful promotional lever for Italian TAPs, which could be used to support other trademarks or commercial initiatives. Therefore, an overall assessment of this recognition was made, considering: (a) the state of the art in the academic research; (b) the bureaucratic procedure and the current state of the

art; (c) market perception and knowledge of the TAP denomination by the consumers; (d) the current and potential commercial effectiveness of TAP recognition. The results of these analyses were summarised and presented in a SWOT analysis, developed with the aim of assessing the efficiency of the TAP denomination in terms of the promotion and valorisation of traditional Italian agri-food products. Finally, considering the results of the developed analyses, the future opportunities for this instrument were explored, with particular attention paid to traditional vegetable products. This category of products is in fact deserving of special attention, as it is representative not only of food traditions but also of Italy's rich horticultural agrobiodiversity, composed of a great number of cultivated plants and wild species that often are enhanced historically in traditional preparations. The list of TAPs includes numerous local varieties (also called "landraces"), wild herbs and traditional preparations involving their use, which are representative of the agrobiodiversity that exists in the different Italian regions. These categories of products represent one of the expressions of agrobiodiversity to be safeguarded for various aspects, including historical and cultural ones. Therefore, enhancing and promoting such preparations means protecting indigenous varietal genetic resources (VGR) and especially local varieties, defined as follows: "a local variety of a crop that reproduces by seed or vegetative propagation is a variable population, however well identifiable, and usually has a local name. It has not been the subject of an organised program of genetic improvement, is characterised by specific adaptation to the environmental and growing conditions of a given area, and is closely associated with the customs, knowledge, habits, dialects, and recurrences of a human population that has developed it or continues its cultivation" [20].

2. Materials and Methods

In order to better illustrate the methodological procedures used in the research, a flowchart summarising the performed activities is presented below (Figure 1).

To our best knowledge, the literature lacks information with regard to a comprehensive analysis of TAP recognition. For this reason, the first activity was to analyse the state of the art of the academic research on TAP recognition, with the aim of identifying benchmark scientific papers analysing TAP recognition comprehensively or in one of its applications. In order to do this, we chose the search terms "TITLE-ABS-KEY ("traditional agri-food products") OR ("traditional food products") AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "re") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "cp"))" as key terms for searching within the article title, abstract and keywords using the Scopus database. For the literature review, we considered only articles, conference papers and reviews, excluding book chapters. Quality criteria, such as journal rankings, were not used for exclusion purposes because this research aimed to give a comprehensive academic overview of the TAP denomination. Subsequently, a review protocol for the content analysis of the publications was determined. The review protocol encompassed two sections: (i) bibliographic data for each publication, such as the author(s), year and title of the publication; authors' affiliations; and type of publication (and if it was a journal the journal's name); (ii) the content of the publication. Finally, a manual selection of articles was carried out, identifying those articles that placed the main focus on TAP recognition and excluding bibliographies that only mentioned TAPs but did not analyse any aspect of this recognition. For example, we discarded an article that was concerned to highlight the distinctive characteristics of four TAPs, "Caprino", "Pecorino", "Vaccino" and "Cacioricotta", with the objective to compare the microbiological and biochemical characteristics of these cheeses [21]. In this article, TAP recognition was only used to emphasise the traditional character of the products considered and was not in line with our research objectives.

After the literature review, the Italian legislation was perused to evaluate both the TAP definition and characteristics. To better characterise what this denomination has achieved over the years, the current composition of the national list of TAPs, defined by the Ministerial Decree (D.M.) of 25 February 2022 [22], was also analysed through a statistical analysis. The distribution of TAPs in the different Italian regions and among the different

product categories were then defined with reference to vegetable products, as well as the impact that the latter category has on the total number of TAPs for each region.

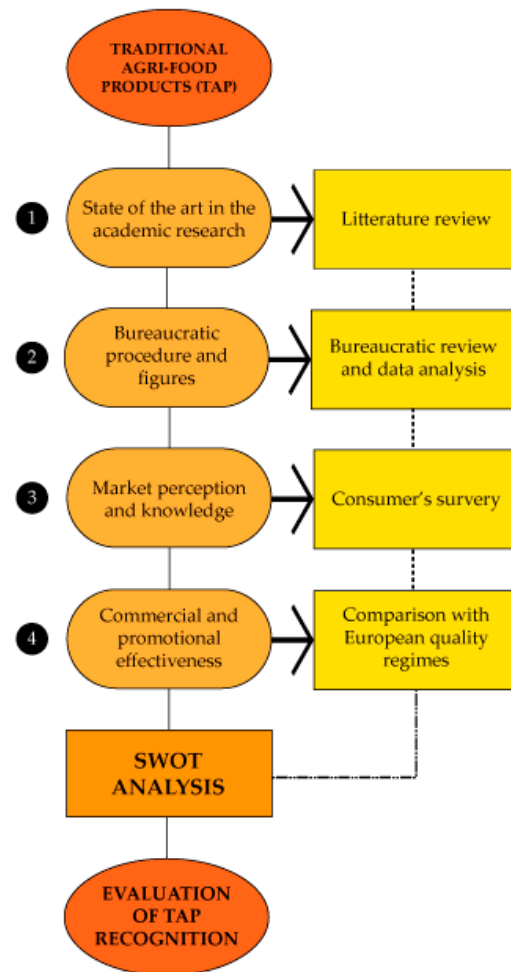


Figure 1. Flowchart of the research activities.

To assess the impact that the TAP recognition has commercially on consumers, with reference to the objective of the diffusion and promotion of Italian agri-food products, a consumer questionnaire was developed and disseminated online between 20 and 30 September 2022. The questionnaire was prepared to understand the consumers' knowledge of TAP recognition, whether TAP recognition provides added value in the purchasing process of agri-food products and what the perception is of consumers about traditional products. The questionnaire participants' eating habits were also assessed with a focus on vegetable products to validate the hypothesis that these products are indeed important and widespread in the Mediterranean diet and traditional cuisine, supporting the focus that this work places on this category of products. In proposing the questionnaire to the public, the aim was to collect the most objective data possible by administering it in a random manner to consumers other than stakeholders, avoiding sector researchers or manufacturing companies. For this reason, the final questionnaire was developed and disseminated online with a Google Form; the distribution was achieved by attempting to involve the average consumers from all Italian provinces through the sharing of the questionnaire in relevant Facebook groups of the main provincial capitals. Previously, a first version of the questionnaire in paper form was disseminated among consumers for a pilot test carried out during two local events linked to the promotion of Apulian TAP, organised in Zollino (LE) (14 July 2022) and Ostuni (BR) (21 July 2022). As part of these events, 50 test questionnaires were collected, which provided important feedback that made it possible to rework the questionnaire so that it

would be clearer to respondents and enhance it with more specific questions on traditional and local vegetable products.

The final questionnaire (available in the Supplementary Materials) comprised three sections: a first biographical section; a second section dedicated to the consumption habits of vegetable products, composed of seven questions (Q1–Q7) (Supplementary Materials); and a final section dedicated to assessing the consumer awareness of TAP recognition and its current and potential impact on the Italian agri-food market, also composed of seven questions (Q8–Q14) (Supplementary Materials). The questions in which respondents were asked to give a score to certain parameters (Q4–Q7, Q12, Q13) (Supplementary Materials) were developed according to a 5-point Likert scale, assigning a value from 1 (lowest score) to 5 (highest score) to the different answers in the analysis phase.

Regarding the data processing, a descriptive statistical analysis was developed. To assess the correlation between the answers offered by the respondents regarding the different perceptions between local and traditional products (Q6, Q7) (Supplementary Materials), a Wilcoxon test was instead developed for non-parametric variables—with the data not being distributed as a normal, due to the use of the Likert scale—using the statistical software R-Studio. Regarding Q13 (Supplementary Materials), which asked participants to list at least three regional TAPs of which they were aware, only answers with three or more valid TAPs were considered valid. In any case, all TAPs indicated were divided by category and Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) or TSG products were excluded. The responses indicating generic product categories (e.g., courgettes, aubergines, onions) were also considered invalid, unless these products were included among the regional TAP with this name (e.g., table grapes, Apulia cherries, mozzarella).

Finally, TAP recognition was compared with the main instruments for the valorisation and promotion of agri-food products recognised in Europe: the PDO, PGI and TSG marks. The analysis was developed both from a regulatory aspect, by comparing the laws governing these instruments, and from a statistical aspect, by comparing the products registered in the different lists. In this last regard, the D.M. of 25 February 2022, containing the 22nd revision of the national list of TAPs, and the European GI Register updated on 8 September 2022 were considered as data sources. The descriptive statistical processing of the data was subsequently performed. The average registration time required to register Italian agri-food products in one of the indicated registers was also calculated; to do this, the average was calculated on the days of difference between the date of submission of the registration application for PDO, PGI and TSG products and the effective registration of the agri-food product in the lists.

A subsequent analysis concerned the calculation of the conversion rate of TAPs into PDO, PGI and TSG products to assess the potential leverage effect that the registration of a product among the TAPs could have for greater valorisation through European trademarks. This analysis was developed considering that agri-food products cannot be simultaneously recognised as a TAP and as a PDO or PGI [23], as better explained in Section 3.2. To develop this analysis, the number of Italian PDO, PGI and TSG products (n. 216) whose registration date was after the publication of the first national list of TAPs, which took place with the D.M. of 18 July 2000 [24], was considered as the basis for calculation, compared with the number of TAPs that subsequently became PDO, PGI or TSG products (n. 123):

$$TAP \text{ conversion rate } (\%) = \frac{Tot.Converted \ TAP}{Tot.PDO, \ PGI, \ TSG \ (registered \ after \ D.M.18 \ July \ 2000)} \quad (1)$$

In addition, the distribution of converted TAPs in the different categories was calculated by relating the number of converted TAPs in each category to the total number of converted TAPs:

$$Converted \ TAP \ distribution \ by \ category \ (\%) = \frac{Tot.Converted \ TAP \ for \ each \ category}{Tot.Converted \ TAP} \quad (2)$$

Finally, the impact that each product category has on the TAP conversion rate was calculated, comparing the number of TAPs converted per category with the number of TAPs that subsequently became PDO, PGI or TSG products:

$$\text{TAP conversion rate by category (\%)} = \frac{\text{Tot. Converted TAP for each category}}{\text{Tot. PDO, PGI, TSG (registered after D.M.18 July 2000)}} \quad (3)$$

At the end of the work, a SWOT analysis was developed to assesses the internal strengths and weaknesses of the analysed element and also external opportunities and threats, following the model of previous work performed to investigate the effectiveness of other types of marks or awards for agri-food product promotion [17,25,26]. The SWOT analysis assesses the internal strengths and weaknesses of the analysed element and also external opportunities and threats. The distinction between strengths and opportunities and between weaknesses and risks is not always clear, so we tend to refer to two strategic dimensions to distinguish them: external and internal. The former refers to the reference environment and influences that are not dependent on the analysed element but which affect it; the latter, on the other hand, looks at the intrinsic and controllable characteristics of the element itself [27]. With this premise, all characteristics of TAP denomination that are inherent to the legislation or the data analysed were considered as strengths and weaknesses (internal factors); on the other hand, all commercial aspects or those collected as consumer opinions, which influence or may influence the efficiency of TAP denomination for the purposes of enhancing and promoting traditional Italian agri-food products, were considered as risks and opportunities (external factors).

3. Results

3.1. TAP Recognition: The Literature Research Results

The literature research developed using the Scopus database returned a total of 250 results. Of these, three articles were immediately discarded because they were published before 1998, the year of the introduction of TAPs into Italian regulations. Regarding the remaining articles, a manual selection process was developed to search out those articles that developed an analysis concerning TAPs or their applications. A total of 16 articles mentioning or analysing TAP recognition were found—all written by Italian research groups—of which only two articles considered TAPs as their main focus (Table 1).

Table 1. Results of the TAP literature review.

Author	Year	Title	Aim of Study	Main Findings
Renna et al. [1]	2018	Traditional Agrifood Products: An Expression of Italian Cultural Heritage	Analysing the numbers and uses of TAP recognition in relation to vegetable landraces.	The article proposes the TAP denomination as a useful leverage for the promotion of “made in Italy”. Calling for the formulation of a model of enhancement, including a simple labelling regime and the creation of a national atlas of TAPs.
Cafiero et al. [28]	2020	Traditional Agri-Food Products as a Leverage to Motivate Tourists: A Meta-Analysis of Tourism-Information Websites	Provide evidence on the extent to which traditional agri-food products (TAPs) constitute leverage to promote tourism in the province of Reggio Calabria, Italy.	The database on the TFPs of the province of Reggio Calabria permits easy reading of the geographical distribution of the different categories of products, useful as a resource for further studies and as a local development policy support tool.

3.2. TAP in Italy: Bureaucratic Procedures and Figures

TAPs were introduced by the Italian legislator in 1998 with D.Lgs. n. 173/1998. This legislative decree was followed by numerous rules in the years that have better defined the registration procedure, the purpose and the effects of this denomination. In addition to the already mentioned D.Lgs. n. 173/1998 and D.M. n. 350/1999, the regulatory framework is complemented by the Ministerial Circular (C.M.) n. 10 of 21 December 1999, in which the elements characterising the TAP identification board and the requirements for requesting a health derogation for registered TAPs have been defined [23]. In the same ministry circular, it is also specified that in the regional lists of TAPs it is not possible to insert products registered in PDO and PGI schemes; in the case of products previously registered in the regional lists of TAPs, it is necessary to remove TAPs from the regional lists at the moment of products' registration in the EU schemes. With the C.M. of 3 July 2000, protocol n. 62359 [29], three important aspects of the TAP scheme have been defined: (a) the name identifying the traditional product cannot be registered as a trademark; (b) the geographical name under which the traditional product is identified cannot assume the value of proof of origin or provenance; (c) at the time of release for consumption, a product registered as TAPs may not qualify as "traditional" but may contain references to that denomination in the labelling. These indications are also present in the Italian legislation in articles 3 and 5 of the D.M. of 18 July 2000, with the addition that "the inclusion of a product in the aforementioned list is not constitutive of rights resulting from publication" (article 3). Finally, the D.M. 9 April 2008, recognised TAP as an expression of Italian cultural heritage [30].

Annually, the Ministry of Agricultural Food and Forestry Policies publishes with a special D.M. a revision of the national list of TAPs. The 22nd revision of the national list, published with D.M. 25 February 2022, counts 5450 TAPs, divided by region and into twelve product categories. The regions with the highest numbers of TAPs are Campania (580), Tuscany (464) and Lazio (456) (Table 2); the most represented product category is 'fresh pasta and bakery products, biscuits, pastries and confectionery' (29.65%), followed by 'natural or processed plant products' (28.94%) and 'fresh meat (and offal) and preparations' (15.08%) (Figure 2). As for the vegetable TAPs, in 2022 there were 911 vegetable products detected considering exclusively the category 'natural or processed plant products', which represented about 17% of the total number of TAPs. The region with the highest number of vegetable TAPs is Campania (126), followed by Tuscany (122), and Apulia (100) (Table 2). Comparing the number of vegetable TAPs with the total number of TAPs recorded for each region, the most performing regions are Puglia (30.40%), Tuscany (26.29%) and Basilicata (24.64%) (Table 2).

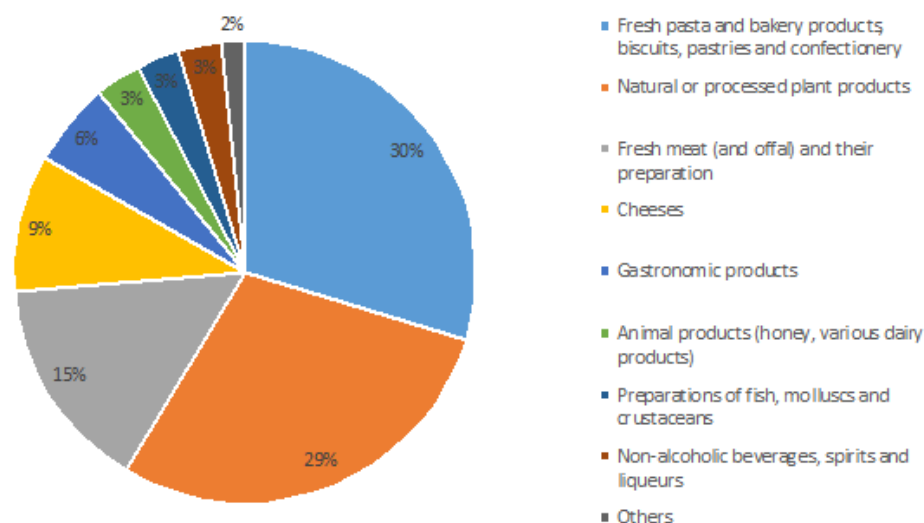


Figure 2. Distribution of TAPs for each product category (2022).

Table 2. TAP distribution in Italy, showing the total number of TAPs registered in each Italian region, number of TAPs registered in the ‘natural or processed plant products’ category for each region, number of vegetable TAPs in the ‘natural or processed plant products’ category for each region, and percentage of vegetable TAPs for each region in relation to the total number of TAPs.

Region	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Abruzzo	149	30	17	11.41%
Aosta Valley	36	2	0	0.00%
Apulia	329	127	100	30.40%
Basilicata	211	81	52	24.64%
Bolzano Aut.Pr.	102	18	6	5.88%
Calabria	269	73	37	13.75%
Campania	580	240	126	21.72%
Emilia-Romagna	398	58	19	4.77%
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	181	49	32	17.68%
Lazio	456	110	73	16.01%
Liguria	300	105	45	15.00%
Lombardy	268	34	18	6.72%
Marche	154	42	13	8.44%
Molise	159	30	22	13.84%
Piedmont	342	94	70	20.47%
Sardinia	222	58	23	10.36%
Sicily	269	81	35	13.01%
Trento Aut.Pr.	105	16	11	10.48%
Tuscany	464	194	122	26.29%
Umbria	69	12	11	15.94%
Veneto	387	123	79	20.41%
Total	5450	1577	911	16.72%

3.3. Consumer Knowledge and Awareness of TAPs

Following the participatory research described in paragraph 2, a total of 317 questionnaires were collected in the survey conducted among consumers throughout Italy. The demographic composition of the respondents is shown in Table 3.

In the second section of the questionnaire, concerning consumer consumption habits of vegetable products, 304 answers were validated, corresponding to those consumers who declared themselves as in charge of food purchases in their household (Q1). Of these, the majority (80.26%) stated that they consume vegetable products in at least five to eight meals per week, with one in three consumers (31.91%) claiming to consume vegetables every day (Q2). The favourite purchasing locations of the interviewed consumers were ‘small traditional shop’ (36.72%) and ‘supermarket, discount or hypermarket (medium and large size)’ (36.72%), followed by ‘local market or directly from the producer (also through group purchasing organisations)’ (20.33%) and ‘food shops within a shopping centre’ (1.87%); among those who indicated other sources of purchase (4.36%), half of them declared that they grow vegetables in their own personal garden (Q3). The parameter that most influences the purchase of vegetable products (Q4) is the seasonality of the products—a character that almost all the interviewees (93.75%) declared to follow during the purchasing process (Q5)—followed, in order, by the nutritional aspects and the regional origin of the product. On the other hand, the traditionality of the product (expressed by the ‘historical and cultural link with the territory of origin’ parameter), the price and the belonging of the vegetable product to a certified origin scheme (e.g., PDO, PGI) or organic regime were rated as less important in the purchasing process (Table 4).

Table 3. Sociodemographic distribution of the collected samples.

Variable	Levels	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Female	216	68.1%
	Male	101	31.9%
Age (in years)	<18	1	0.3%
	18–35	73	23.0%
	35–64	217	68.5%
	>64	26	8.2%
Education	Primary school qualification	0	0.0%
	Junior high school qualification	21	6.6%
	High school qualification	116	36.6%
	Bachelor’s degree	32	10.1%
	Master’s degree	105	33.1%
	Post graduate training/PhD	43	13.6%
Geographical Distribution	North-West	14	4.5%
	North-East	39	12.4%
	Centre	14	4.5%
	South	246	77.6%
	Islands	3	1.0%
Area of origin	Rural	43	13.6%
	Urban	274	86.4%
Economic status	Very difficult	25	7.9%
	Difficult	22	6.9%
	Stable	175	55.2%
	Satisfactory	80	25.2%
	Very satisfactory	15	4.7%
Occupation	Employee (public or private)	155	48.9%
	Entrepreneur	14	4.4%
	Freelance	39	12.3%
	Housewife	15	4.8%
	Retired	31	9.8%
	Student	23	7.3%
	Unemployed	23	7.3%
	Others	17	5.2%

Table 4. Average scores of influence parameters on the purchase of vegetable products, calculated from consumer responses.

Parameter	Mean	Standard Deviation
Historical and cultural link with the territory of origin	2.76	1.11
Nutritional aspects	3.28	1.09
Organic product	2.48	1.06
Price	2.65	0.78
Product of certified origin (PDO, PGI, etc.)	2.57	1.08
Regional origin of the product	3.14	1.08
Seasonality	3.59	1.04

At the end of the second section, the consumer perceptions of the characteristics of traditionality and locality, applied to a vegetable product, were calculated (Q6, Q7). For each of the parameters identified (e.g., qualitative, environmental, social), an average score was calculated from the responses offered by the consumers in order to compare the two types of product characteristics (Table 5), similarly to what has been done in other studies comparing local and organic products [31].

Table 5. Average scores for characteristics of local and traditional food vegetable products, calculated based on responses of the questionnaire (Q6, Q7). LVP = average scores for ‘local vegetable product’ parameters; TVP = average scores for ‘traditional vegetable products’; SD = standard deviation; S = significance test results.

Parameter	(LVP)	(SD)	(TVP)	(SD)	(S)
Healthier product	3.17	1.00	3.14	0.98	
Higher-quality product	3.18	0.95	3.07	0.92	*
Higher level of food safety	2.99	0.98	2.97	0.93	
Improved nutritional values	3.06	1.04	3.05	0.99	
Increased respect for local farmers’ rights	3.17	1.02	2.99	1.05	***
More expensive product	2.64	1.04	2.67	1.01	
More sustainable product	3.46	0.99	3.18	1.04	***

Level of significance: ‘***’ 0.001, ‘*’ 0.05.

Finally, in the third section of the questionnaire it was calculated that of the 317 respondents, 190 (59.94%) stated that they were aware of the term “Traditional Agri-Food Product (TAP)” designation prior to the administration of the questionnaire (Q8). The main communication channels through which consumers learnt about TAPs were ‘online (articles, websites, social networks, etc.)’ (24.92%) and ‘territorial promotion initiatives (meetings, events, fairs, festivals, etc.)’ (24.60%), followed by ‘mass media (television, radio, newspapers, etc.)’ (22.01%) and ‘books, academic publications and trade magazines’ (20.71%). Among those who indicated other options (7.77%), work and university were the most reported sources (Q9). To verify these responses, we asked participants (Q10) to indicate among four different definitions (TAP, PDO, PGI and TSG) which was the correct definition of TAPs. In total, 119 respondents (37.54%) selected the correct option, which was followed by the PDO (30.28%), TSG (13.88%) and PGI (8.52%) definitions. The remaining 9.78% of participants stated that they did not know the correct answer. Furthermore, we asked the interviewees to list at least three TAPs from their region of origin or residence or from other Italian regions (Q14); only 72 participants (22.71%) were able to answer by listing at least three traditional products. Of the 317 participants, about half (49.84%) were not able to correctly list at least one TAP on the appropriate list. Considering all answers, the TAP category most known and mentioned by the participants was ‘natural or processed plant products’ (58.93%), followed by ‘fresh meat (and offal) and preparations’ (12.00%) and ‘fresh pasta and bakery products, biscuits, pastries and confectionery’ (11.20%) (Figure 3).

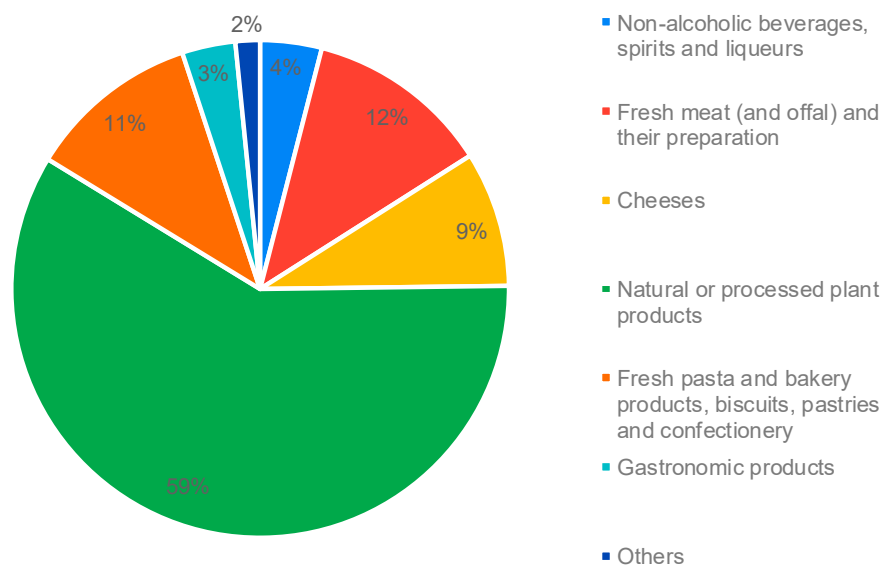


Figure 3. Consumer awareness of TAPs by category, calculated based on responses to the questionnaire (Q14).

In conclusion, we asked participants to indicate how easy it was for them to identify an agri-food product as a traditional product and whether their consumption choice was influenced by agri-food products belonging to the TAP list (Q12, Q13). For these parameters, calculated considering only the answers of the interviewees in charge of the purchase of agri-food products in their household, two similar values were found, with a higher average value calculated for recognisability (μ : 3.09; σ : 1.03) rather than for purchasing influence (μ : 2.99; σ : 0.96).

3.4. TAP and European Quality Regimes: An Analysis and Comparison

In their September 1996 session, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) issued an opinion, published in Official Journal C/034 of 3 February 1997, expressing the need to “significantly improve the framework conditions in favour of typical products of the European Union” [32]. This opinion followed European Council Regulation n. 2081/92, which had already introduced into community legislation the definitions of designations of origin and geographical indications, as well as n. 2082/92 about the certificates of specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs, which was subsequently channeled into the TSG regulations [33,34]. The legislation was then amended by Regulation (EC) n. 509/2006 and Regulation (EC) n. 510/2006 of the European Council, until reaching its final form with Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the council, supplemented and amended by Delegated Regulation (EU) n. 664-665/2014 and Implementing Regulation (EU) n. 668/2014 of the European Commission [35–37].

Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012 defines:

- ‘Protected Designation of Origin’ (PDO): A name that identifies a product: (a) originating in a specific place, region, or in exceptional cases, a country; (b) whose quality or characteristics are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with its inherent natural and human factors; and (c) the production steps of which all take place in the defined geographical area;
- ‘Protected Geographical Indication’ (PGI): A name that identifies a product: (a) originating in a specific place, region or country; (b) whose given quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributable to its geographical origin; and (c) at least one of the production steps of which takes place in the defined geographical area;
- ‘Traditional Specialty Guaranteed’ (TSG): A name that describes a specific product or foodstuff (a) that results from a mode of production, processing or composition corresponding to traditional practices for that product or foodstuff or (b) is produced from raw materials or ingredients that are traditionally used (article 18, paragraph 1). Furthermore, for a name to be registered as a traditional specialty guaranteed, it shall: (a) have been traditionally used to refer to the specific product; or (b) identify the traditional character or specific character of the product (article 18, paragraph 2).

For PDO and PGI products (also identified as GI products), therefore, the intrinsic link between the product’s characteristics and its geographical origin—understood as the place of production—which must be precisely and unambiguously delimited, is relevant. This link is justified by the peculiar characteristics of the geographical environment (e.g., climate, soil, humidity) or human factors (e.g., cultivation techniques, processing, storage). For GI products, the character of traditionality is not expressly required in the European legislation, defined as “proven use on the national market for a period of time . . . of at least thirty years” (article 3, Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012). This character is instead expressly required for the TSG scheme. In the Italian regulations, on the contrary, the traditional link with the territory is also required for PDO and PGI products; as part of the application for registration, in fact, a “historical report, accompanied by bibliographical references, proving the production for at least twenty-five years, even if not continuous, of the product in question, as well as the consolidated use, in commerce or in common language, of the name for which registration is requested” is required (article 6, paragraph 1, D.M. of 14 October 2013) [38].

In 2022, 1592 GIs were registered in Europe, including 676 PDOs (42.46%) and 916 PGIs (57.54%). Among these, the most represented product class was ‘fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh or processed’ with 468 products (29.40%), followed by ‘cheeses’ (254 products, 15.95%) and ‘meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)’ (187 products, 11.75%). The countries with the highest numbers of registered GIs were Italy (315 products, 19.79% of registered European GIs), France (259 GIs, 16.27%) and Spain (202 GIs, 12.69%). Considering only the category ‘fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh or processed’, Italy remained at the top of the ranking with 120 products (25.64% of the total GIs of the category) registered, of which 53 were vegetable products, compared to 56 Italian vegetable products in total, calculated considering all product classes, followed by Spain (63 vegetable GIs, 13.46%) and France (60 vegetable GIs, 12.82%).

As far as TSGs were concerned, a total of 68 traditional specialties had been registered in Europe by 2022. The European country with the largest number of TSG products was Poland with 10 registered products (14.71%), followed by Slovakia (7 TSGs, 10.29%), Belgium, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic (5 TSGs, 7.35%). The most represented product classes were ‘meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)’ with 17 TSGs (25.00%); ‘bread, pastry, cakes, confectionery, biscuits and other baker’s wares’ (15 TSGs, 22.06%); and ‘cheeses’ (7 TSG, 10.29%). Only one product was registered in the category ‘fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh or processed’. Italy had only 4 TSGs (5.88%) registered in 2022, none of which was in the category ‘fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh or processed’ or considered as vegetables.

By comparing Italian PDO, PGI and TSG products with TAPs included in the ministerial list since the first publication, the conversion rate of agri-food products recognised as traditional into products protected by IG designation or registered as a TSG was calculated. The conversion rate, considering products registered as a PDO, PGI and TSG after the publication of the first national list of TAP, was equal to 56.94%. The most converted categories were ‘fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh or processed’ (52.85%), of which the majority (55.36%) were vegetables; ‘cheeses’ (14.63%); and ‘meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)’ (10.57%). This ranking was also stable when considering the number of PDO, PGI and TSG products registered after the first publication of TAPs list, for which 30.09% of the products belonging to the category ‘fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh or processed’ were previously registered in the national list of TAP. Lower percentages were calculated for the categories ‘cheeses’ (8.33%) and ‘meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)’ (6.02%) (Table 6).

Having identified the reference legislation and reported the descriptive statistics, it was, therefore, possible to compare the TAP denomination’s characteristics with those found in European PDO, PGI and TSG schemes. The comparison was aimed at identifying the weaknesses and strengths of the TAP denomination compared to the main tools for the valorisation and promotion of agri-food products active in Europe (Table A1).

Table 6. Numbers of PDO, PGI and TSG products registered; numbers of PDO, PGI and TSG product registered after the first TAPs list published on 21 August 2000; numbers of products registered in the past as TAPs and now registered as PDO, PGI or TSG products; rankings of TAP products converted to PGI, PDO or TSG products by product class; conversion rates for each category; and conversion rates by category.

Class of Product	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)
Fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh or processed	120	96	65	52.85%	67.71%	30.09%
Cheeses	56	25	18	14.63%	72.00%	8.33%
Meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)	43	19	13	10.57%	68.42%	6.02%
Bread, pastry, cakes, confectionery, etc.	16	15	9	7.32%	60.00%	4.17%
Fresh fish, mollusks and crustaceans	6	6	5	4.07%	83.33%	2.31%
Pasta	5	5	4	3.25%	80.00%	1.85%
Oils and fats (butter, margarine, oil, etc.)	49	28	3	2.44%	10.71%	1.39%
Other products of Annex I of the Treaty	7	7	2	1.63%	28.57%	0.93%

Table 6. *Cont.*

Class of Product	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)
Other products of animal origin	5	5	1	0.81%	20.00%	0.46%
Fresh meat (and offal)	6	5	1	0.81%	20.00%	0.46%
Chocolate and derived products	1	1	1	0.81%	100.00%	0.46%
Aromatised wines	1	0	0	0.00%	n.c.	0.00%
Prepared dishes	2	2	1	0.81%	50.00%	0.46%
Essential oils	1	1	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Salt	1	1	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Total	319	216	123	100%		56.94%

4. Discussion

In this study, for the first time, an analysis of TAP recognition and its applications for the purpose of enhancing and promoting traditional Italian agri-food products was carried out. We firstly discussed the research activities summarised in a SWOT analysis. Then, a focus on the protection and valorisation of traditional agri-food vegetable products was reported. Finally, we concluded the discussion section with an analysis of the future prospects and possible applications of TAP recognition for the promotion, protection and valorisation of traditional Italian agri-food products.

4.1. TAP Denomination for Protection and Valorisation of Traditional Agri-Food Products: SWOT Analysis

Compared to the PDO, PGI and TSG marks, the TAP denomination appears to have numerous shortcomings in terms of traditional agri-food products' valorisation and promotion, the objective for which it was introduced into the legislation. The lack of a production specification, protection of the registered name, a single trademark and a control body appear to be the most significant weaknesses for this denomination, which is not sufficient to protect and promote registered products on the market. The regulatory framework, therefore, does not seem to recognise any specific commercial advantages to the Italian TAP [39], framing an instrument aimed at a mere census of traditional Italian agri-food products, susceptible to the risk of commercial fraud to the detriment of the consumer. Another threat noted is the possibility of the same product being present in different regional lists, registered under different names or with the same name but for different products. Nonetheless, the possibility of registering products by regions, autonomous provinces and other public bodies (e.g., universities, research centres), as well as the quick timeframes and the simplicity of the registration procedure, represent advantages that have allowed the registration of a much higher number of traditional products ($\approx 1700\%$) than the number recognised as PDO, PGI and TSG products. Moreover, the similarity between some of the requirements for TAP denomination and the application for PDO, PGI, and TSG products (description; years of production in the territory, bibliographic and historical references; area of origin, etc.) represents an advantage for the TAP denomination, whose descriptive sheets could serve as a basis for the drafting of PDO, PGI and TSG production specifications—as also demonstrated by the high conversion rate calculated (56.94%)—thereby overcoming some of the difficulties often encountered by producer associations during this phase [40].

Considering the opinions collected through the questionnaire, a further criticality found for the TAP denomination is the lack of correct information among consumers, who are not fully aware of the TAP definition and not able to correctly associate national food products with this denomination. Despite this, most of the interviewees admitted that they recognise the term 'traditional food product', demonstrating the high level of attention paid to this type of product. From a commercial point of view, the product's belonging to the TAP list was not considered an influential characteristic in the interviewees' choice of consumption; moreover, products defined as 'local' seem to perform better in terms of perceived quality than 'traditional' products. Finally, among the opportunities that this recognition would appear to offer as a result of the analysis conducted, there is the lack of

use of the recognition of TAPs as an expression of Italy's cultural heritage—which could be better utilised to promote these products—as well as the possibility of improving consumer awareness of these products, considering the high level of interest shown, including in the questionnaire responses.

By comparing these points, it was possible to develop a SWOT analysis, as shown in Figure 4.

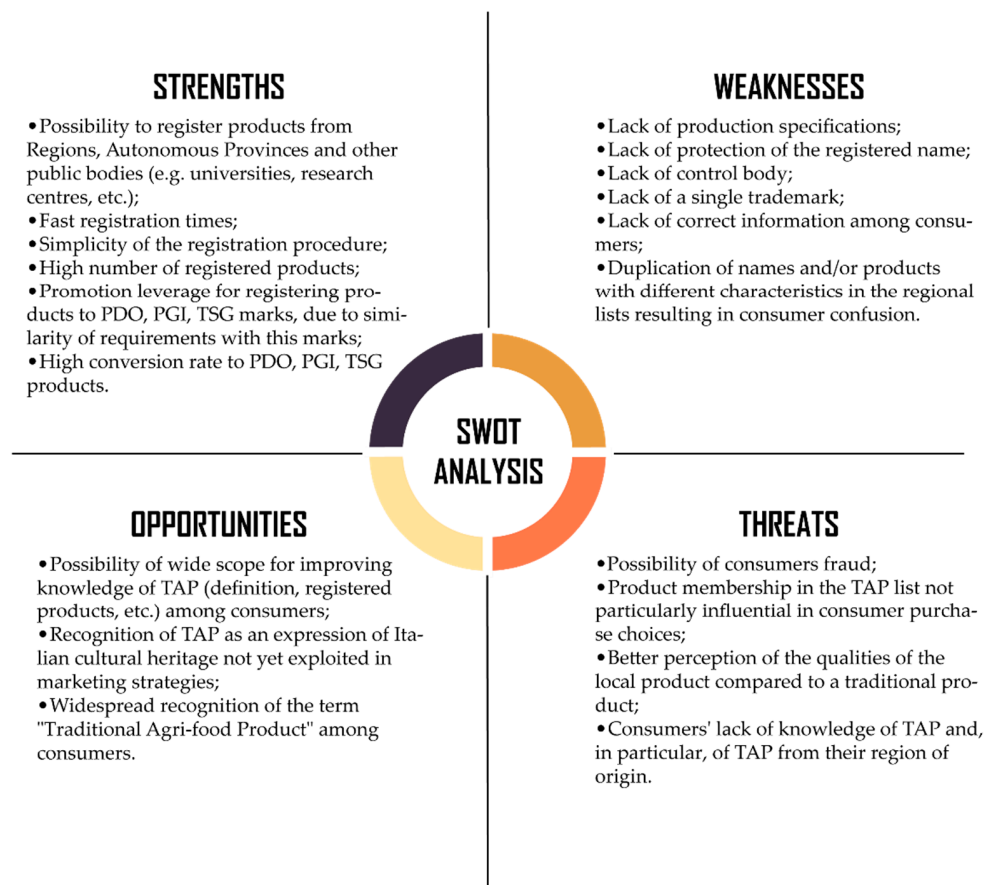


Figure 4. A SWOT analysis of the TAP denomination for the marketing and promotion of traditional Italian agri-food products.

4.2. A Focus on the Protection and Valorisation of Traditional Agri-Food Vegetable Products

Plant-based products, especially vegetables, represent an important sector of Italian agri-food production [41,42]; in fact, they are widely consumed products, as demonstrated by the results of the questionnaire administered to consumers, and a fundamental component of the Mediterranean diet [43,44]. Additionally, in terms of trademarks and awards, it has been calculated in the previous sections how plant-based products, and especially vegetables, are always among the most represented, protected and promoted categories; this is true both for products recognised among the GI and for products on the TAP list. Moreover, a strong correlation was found between these products and environmental sustainability, a topic of growing consumer interest, thanks to the increased use of traditional and more sustainable cultivation techniques in these production areas [40]. Considering these factors, it is easy to see that there is an ample margin for the improved promotion and protection of traditional vegetable agri-food products. However, producers often encounter numerous difficulties in the promotion of vegetable products, and in particular in the registration of vegetable products to European GI marks. On the one hand, there is a fragmented reality, in which most traditional crops are developed in small production areas or family gardens [45], a problem that is also accentuated by the limited ability of producers to come

together in associations and consortia [40]; on the other hand, producers often find the procedures for registering and modifying PDO and PGI products, both at the national and European levels, excessively long and complex [46].

Thus, in terms of the protection and valorisation of this class of products, the TAP recognition may be useful specifically for the local landraces; for these small production areas, obtaining TAP recognition is a first step for the protection and promotion process. It is sufficient to demonstrate a link with the territory concerned for a period no shorter than 25 years and the request can be submitted by any public or private entity.

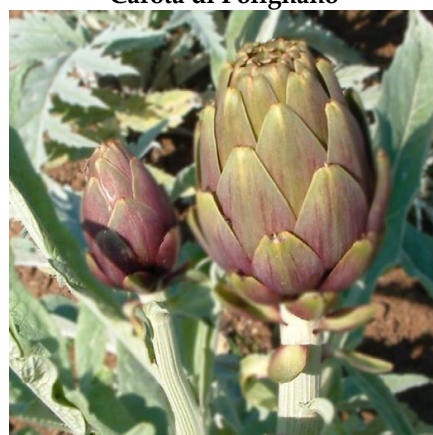
Nevertheless, as also shown in previous sections, TAP recognition alone cannot provide sufficient protection and valorisation for local products and landraces; therefore, it is necessary to improve this model or supplement it with other instruments. In terms of valorisation, the European GI denomination offers a valid promotion and marketing solution, while in terms of protection, the Italian legislation and especially Italian regions in recent years have moved to develop plans to protect local varieties at high risk of genetic erosion. The Apulia region, for example, established Regional Law n. 39/2013 on the Regional Register of Autochthonous Genetic Resources, within which Apulian varieties and breeds at risk of genetic erosion are registered [47,48]; these genetic resources are subsequently also included within the National Register of Biodiversity of Agricultural and Food Interest, established by Law n. 194/2015 [49]. Some of these resources, such as the ‘carota di Polignano’ [50–52], the ‘pomodoro Regina’ [53,54], ‘carciofo locale di Mola’ and ‘cavolo broccolo *mugnulu*’ (Figure 5), are varieties also included within the TAP list, confirming the strong link that exists between agrobiodiversity and local traditions.



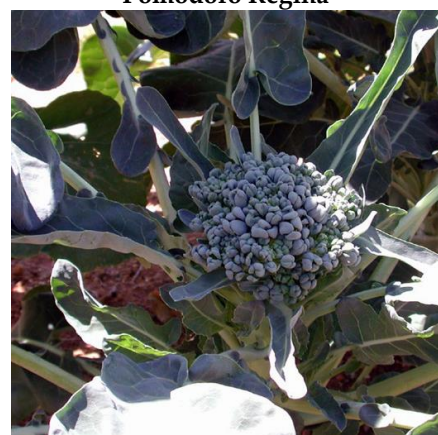
‘Carota di Polignano’



‘Pomodoro Regina’



‘Carciofo locale di Mola’



‘Cavolo broccolo *mugnulu*’

Figure 5. Some examples of Apulian TAPs also included in the Regional Register of Autochthonous Genetic Resources of Apulia Region and in the Italian Register of Biodiversity of Agricultural and Food Interest.

4.3. Italian Traditional Agri-Food Products: Future Evolutions of TAP Recognition

The TAP denomination, introduced more than twenty years ago in the Italian legislation, is a useful tool for the census of traditional Italian food products. In particular, products belonging to the categories ‘fresh pasta and bakery products, biscuits, pastries and confectionery’; ‘natural or processed plant products’; and ‘fresh meat (and offal) and preparations’ benefit from this tool. In addition, the TAP denomination appears to be familiar to average consumers, although they are not always able to correctly associate the term TAP with their region, neither do they have a clear definition of the Traditional Agri-Food Product denomination. Moreover, this denomination appears to be lacking in terms of promotion and commercial enhancement because it lacks its own unambiguous brand, production specifications and an established control system.

In view of this, the following actions could also be taken to improve the effectiveness of the TAP denomination: (1) The development of activities aimed at improving consumer awareness, including through the development of editorial products (e-books, web-sites, etc.) that are easy for consumers to consult, along the lines of what the Apulia region has done with the drafting of the “Atlante dei Prodotti Agroalimentari Tradizionali di Puglia” and the website www.patpuglia.it (accessed on 2 May 2023) [55]. (2) The allocation of more financial resources to producers, associations and entities that promote and enhance the value of traditional Italian agri-food products through targeted operations closely linked to the territory of origin. Encouraging, in this regard, is an amendment in the 2022 budget law that allocated for the first time one million euros for the promotion of Italian TAPs [56]. In addition, the Lazio region (Central Italy), during the COVID-19 emergency in 2020, allocated measures to support restaurant operators and producers of PDO, PGI and TAP products in the Lazio region, in order to boost the recovery of the area, focusing on issues such as the enhancement of regional biodiversity and food safety [57]. (3) The development of a new European trademark; a further possibility could be to envisage a protection and promotion scheme developed along the lines of the “mountain products” label, established by Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012 as part of the Optional Quality Terms. This label, whose registration procedures are far simpler than the GI labels, although it does not provide for production specifications, helps to protect and promote mountain products through the use of a single commercial trademark, obtainable through the compilation of a simple self-declaration by producers and a regional control system. (4) Greater coordination between the TAP recognition and the others promotion tools as regional trademarks (e.g., Apulian “Prodotti di Qualità” trademark—even though it has run into numerous problems related to incompatibility with European GI marks [58]) or private labels or initiatives (e.g., slow food movement promotion initiatives) [59].

Moreover, the still untapped potential of the TAP denomination is extensive. On the one hand, the attribution of the TAP denomination as a representative element of Italy’s cultural heritage has never yet been valorised in marketing terms; on the other hand, the high number of products registered in the TAP list shows how much attention is given to this kind of product and how many products are still waiting to be commercially valorised, despite registration to European GI labels. In connection with the European GI labels, it is also necessary to consider that the European Commission, in its proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2022, proposed a substantial modification of the TSG scheme, which was considered insufficient to protect and promote traditional European products [46]. For TSGs, one of the document’s proposals states that “the TSG scheme is replaced by an official recognition of traditional agricultural and food products by member state authorities, with a limited list of criteria to be defined at the union level, while member states would notify the commission of the names of traditional products in order to make them public”. A scheme similar to the Italian TAP, which could be a model to be followed throughout Europe, not only as a baseline for new regulatory provisions by the European Union’s central administration, but also as a model for individual countries where the attention—scientific and commercial—for local and traditional products, is increasing. For example, there are case studies in the

literature regarding national initiatives for protecting local products, with the establishment of national or regional commercial labels, and initiatives directed at promoting these products [26,60]; however, neither of these takes into consideration the traditional character of these products, a trait that could be an added value that can be extrapolated from the Italian TAP model.

5. Conclusions

This work evaluated the TAP denomination from different points in order to give an overall view of its effectiveness in promoting local and traditional Italian products. The analyses developed allowed for an overall assessment of this recognition, highlighting its characteristics, weaknesses and potential, for the first time in a scientific study. More specifically, the results reported in the SWOT analysis highlighted the lower effectiveness of this denomination in comparison with European GI labels; at the same time, the TAP denomination may be considered a useful first step for the designation of local and traditional Italian products to the European GI schemes, also representing a unique recognition of Italian cultural heritage. With a particular focus on vegetables products, the category most represented among the TAPs, these could benefit more than other types of products with a greater effectiveness of the TAP denomination, also given the possibility of enhancing many local varieties that are an important expression of agrobiodiversity. With reference to this, it would be interesting in the future to analyse how these landraces could be protected and promoted by leveraging the TAP recognition. If from a commercial point of view the link with the PDO, PGI and TSG labels has been analysed in part by this paper, from a protection perspective, it might be interesting to link this recognition to the conservation variety scheme. In the final part of this paper, some future development prospects concerning TAP recognition were discussed, with a focus on the possibility of using TAP recognition as a model for future European brands, a topic left for possible future research.

Considering that this is the first sector research study entirely dedicated to TAP recognition and its applications in terms of the valorisation and promotion of traditional Italian agri-food products, it was not possible to have a benchmark to compare with the results obtained here, especially for the SWOT analysis results and for the consumer questionnaire. It would be useful in the future to replicate and expand the analysis among consumers, considering a wider catchment area, as well as to improve the section dedicated to the future prospects of Italian TAPs and vegetable products by referring to Italian or European success stories, with an analysis of the possible alternative promotion tools that are alternatives to the TAP and European GI schemes.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/agriculture13071313/s1>. Traditional Agri-Food Products—Questionnaire for Consumers.

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Sustainability, Safety and Security—Working ON Foods”; (3) European Union—FESR or FSE, PON Research and Innovation, 2014–2020 (CUP: H99J21010190001).

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. Comparison of the main characteristics of TAP, PDO, PGI and TSG denominations.

Characteristics	TAP	PDO	PGI	TSG
Traditionality and connection to the territory (years) *	Yes (25 years)	Yes (25 years—also non-continuous)	Yes (25 years—also non-continuous)	Yes (30 years)
Guaranteed local origin	No	Yes (all stages of production)	Yes (at least one production stage)	No
Subject entitled to register	Autonomous region or province, public and private entities	Association consisting mainly of producers or processors involved in production (c.d. «group»)	Association consisting mainly of producers or processors involved in production (c.d. «group»)	Association consisting mainly of producers or processors involved in production (c.d. «group»)
Requirements for registration *	(a) Name of the product and any other names (b) Brief description of the product (c) Area of origin of the product and territory concerned (d) Nutritional aspects (e) Description of the processing, storage and maturing methods (f) Materials, specific equipment used for preparation and conditioning (g) Description of the processing, storage and maturing rooms	(a) Constitutive act and/or articles of association, resolution of the assembly referring to the application (b) Name to be protected (c) Description of the product, including main physical, chemical, microbiological and organoleptic characteristics (d) Definition of the defined geographical area (e) Evidence that the product originates in the defined geographical area	(a) Constitutive act and/or articles of association, resolution of the assembly referring to the application (b) Name to be protected (c) Description of the product, including main physical, chemical, microbiological and organoleptic characteristics (d) Definition of the defined geographical area (e) Evidence that the product originates in the defined geographical area	(a) Constitutive act and/or articles of association, resolution of the assembly referring to the application (b) Name to be protected (c) Description of the product, including the main physical, chemical, microbiological and organoleptic characteristics and demonstration of the product's specificity

Table A1. Cont.

Characteristics	TAP	PDO	PGI	TSG
Requirements for registration *	<p>(h) Evidence that the methods have been applied uniformly and according to traditional rules for a period of not less than 25 years</p> <p>(i) Production holdings</p> <p>(j) Promotion initiatives</p>	<p>(f) Description of the method of production and, where applicable, local, fair and consistent methods, as well as information on packaging</p> <p>(g) Elements establishing the link between the quality or characteristics of the product and the geographical environment</p> <p>(h) Historical report, accompanied by bibliographical references, proving the production for at least twenty-five years, even if not continuous, of the product, as well as the established use, in trade or in common parlance, of the name for which registration is sought *</p>	<p>(f) Description of the method of production and, where applicable, local, fair and consistent methods, as well as information on packaging</p> <p>(g) Elements establishing the link between a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the product and the geographical environment</p> <p>(h) Historical report, accompanied by bibliographical references, proving the production for at least twenty-five years, even if not continuous, of the product, as well as the established use, in trade or in common parlance, of the name for which registration is sought *</p> <p>(i) Socio-economic report containing the quantity produced with reference to the last three years of production and the number of companies involved (current and potential)</p>	<p>(d) Description of the production method to be followed by the producers comply with, including, where applicable, the nature and characteristics of the raw materials or ingredients used and the method of production of the product</p> <p>(e) Key elements attesting to the traditional character of the product</p> <p>(f) Historical report, accompanied by bibliographical references, proving that the product is obtained by a method of production, processing or composition corresponding to traditional practice for that product or foodstuff or obtained from raw materials or ingredients used traditionally, as well as the use established in the trade or in common parlance of the name for which registration is sought</p>

Table A1. Cont.

Characteristics	TAP	PDO	PGI	TSG
Requirements for registration *		(i) Socio-economic report containing the quantity produced with reference to the last three years of production and the number of companies involved (current and potential) (j) Cartography on a scale sufficient to permit identification of the production area and its boundaries (k) Name and address of the inspection authority or body (l) Possible specific labelling rules	(j) Cartography on a scale sufficient to permit identification of the production area and its boundaries (k) Name and address of the inspection authority or body (l) Possible specific labelling rules	(g) Socio-economic report containing the quantity produced with reference to the last three years of production and the number of companies involved (current and potential) (h) Possible specific labelling rules
Product Specification	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Protection of the registered name	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monitoring organisation	Absent	Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies— Department of the Central Inspectorate for the protection of quality and repression of frauds of agri-food products; monitoring organisations authorised according to article 14, paragraph 6, L.526/99;	Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies— Department of the Central Inspectorate for the protection of quality and repression of frauds of agri-food products; monitoring organisations authorised according to article 14, paragraph 6, L.526/99;	Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies— Department of the Central Inspectorate for the protection of quality and repression of frauds of agri-food products; monitoring organisations authorised according to article 14, paragraph 6, L.526/99;

Table A1. Cont.

Characteristics	TAP	PDO	PGI	TSG
Monitoring organisation	Absent	protection consortium according to article 14, paragraph 15, L.526/99, in compliance with article 34–40, Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012.	protection consortium according to article 14, paragraph 15, L.526/99, in compliance with article 34–40, Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012.	protection consortium according to article 14, paragraph 15, L.526/99, in compliance with article 34–40, Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012.
Labelling indications	No trademark. Is possible to insert in the label the indication ‘Product on the List of Traditional Agri-Food Products’.	Name of the product; indication of protection (PDO); EU PDO protection symbol; control information; logo of the product or of the Protection Consortium (where present), ex-article 12, Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012 and article 13, Regulation (EU) n. 668/2014.	Name of the product; indication of protection (PGI); EU PGI protection symbol; control information; logo of the product or of the Protection Consortium (where present), ex-article 12, Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012 and article 13, Regulation (EU) n. 668/2014.	Name of the product; indication of protection (TSG); EU TSG protection symbol; control information; logo of the product or of the Protection Consortium (where present), ex-article 12, Regulation (EU) n. 1151/2012 and article 13, Regulation (EU) n. 668/2014.
Number of registered products (Italy)	5450	173	142	4
Number of registered vegetable products (Italy)	911	19	37	0
Average time for registration in days (Italy)	365 **	1107	621	N.R. ***

* With reference to Italian legislation, implementing European provisions; ** considering the annual update of the TAPs list; *** not relevant because of the registration of only 4 products and the registration time of 1822 days for ‘Pizza Napoletana TSG’ and the lack of data for ‘mozzarella TSG’.

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