# Satisfaction with Childcare Quality in the Context of Matthew Effects: The Role of Educational Background and Income Capacities

Aušra Čižauskaitė
University College Dublin

*From the cradle to the grave? Social policy in diverse temporal and spatial contexts*
ESA RN26, Berlin
7-8 October, 2022

# Motivation

‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance.
But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away’ (Matthew 25:29)

- The ‘Matthew Effects’ (MEs) and **the unintended consequences of childcare use** (Cantillon, 2011; Pintelon *et al*., 2013; Garritzmann *et al*., 2018 and others);
- Relatively broad and **fragmented picture of socio-economic characteristics** (e.g., better-off versus worse-off households, etc.) (Bonoli and Liechti, 2018);
- Studies on user satisfaction with childcare quality focusing on individual education and income characteristics remain **limited, suffer from incompleteness, and often provide a contradictory picture.**

# Research Question

**Background:**
- To investigate the role of individual educational background and income on satisfaction with childcare.

**Research Question:**
- Do we see MEs when we analyse the relationship between education and income on satisfaction with childcare?

**Hypotheses:**
- H1: due to initial and institutional advantage, the social position of more educated households ensures a more satisfactory childcare quality compared with less-educated households;
- H2: respondents in higher-income households experience higher subjective childcare quality.

# Conceptual Clarification of Childcare Services

- Variation in the literature about how to define and operationalise childcare services;
- The paper defines childcare services as ECEC + ASC;
- Distinguishes between formal and informal childcare.

## Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) + After-school Care (ASC)

| Age | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Separate setting for younger and older children** | Childcare-type setting | | | Education-type setting | | | | | | | | | |
| **Separate settings with pre-primary class** | Childcare-type setting | | | Education-type setting | | Pre-primary class | | | | | | | |
| **Unitary (single) setting** | Education and care unitary setting | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Unitary (single) setting with pre-primary class** | Education and care unitary setting | | | | | Pre-primary class | | | | | | | |

After-school services (columns 7–12)

*Source: made by the author using Eurydice (2019, p. 31)*

# Data and Methods

## Methods
- Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression modelling;
- Pooled-country sample.

## Data
**European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS)** 2016 (wave 4)
- 27 EU and the UK;
- Adult (18+) population living in private households.

- + country-level data on education expenditure.

### Dependent variable
- *Quality of childcare services*
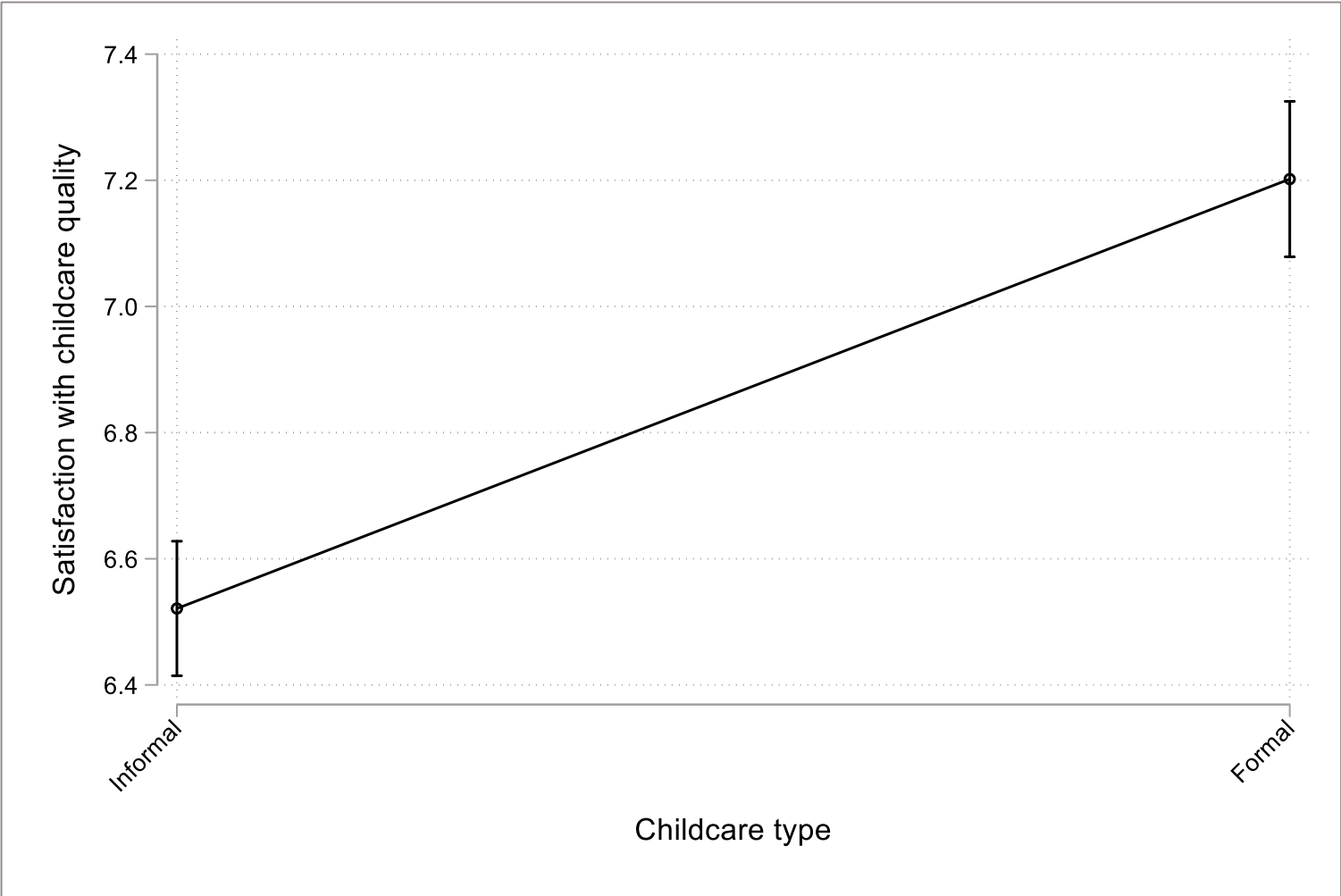*(10-point scale, where 1 is very poor quality and 10 is very high quality)*

### Independent variables
- Formal/informal childcare
- Age
- Gender
- Employment status
- **Educational background**
- **Income quartile**
- Household structure
- Number of children
- Migration background
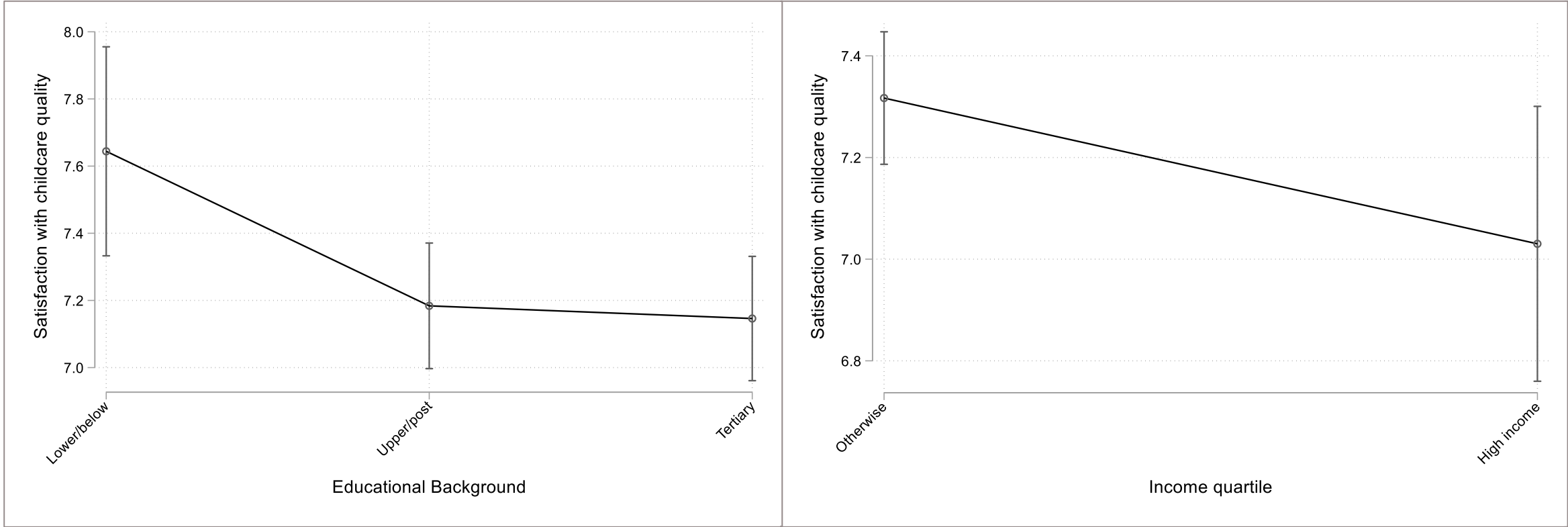- Public expenditure on education*

# Empirical Findings (1)

Predictive margins with 95% CIs

# Empirical Findings (2)
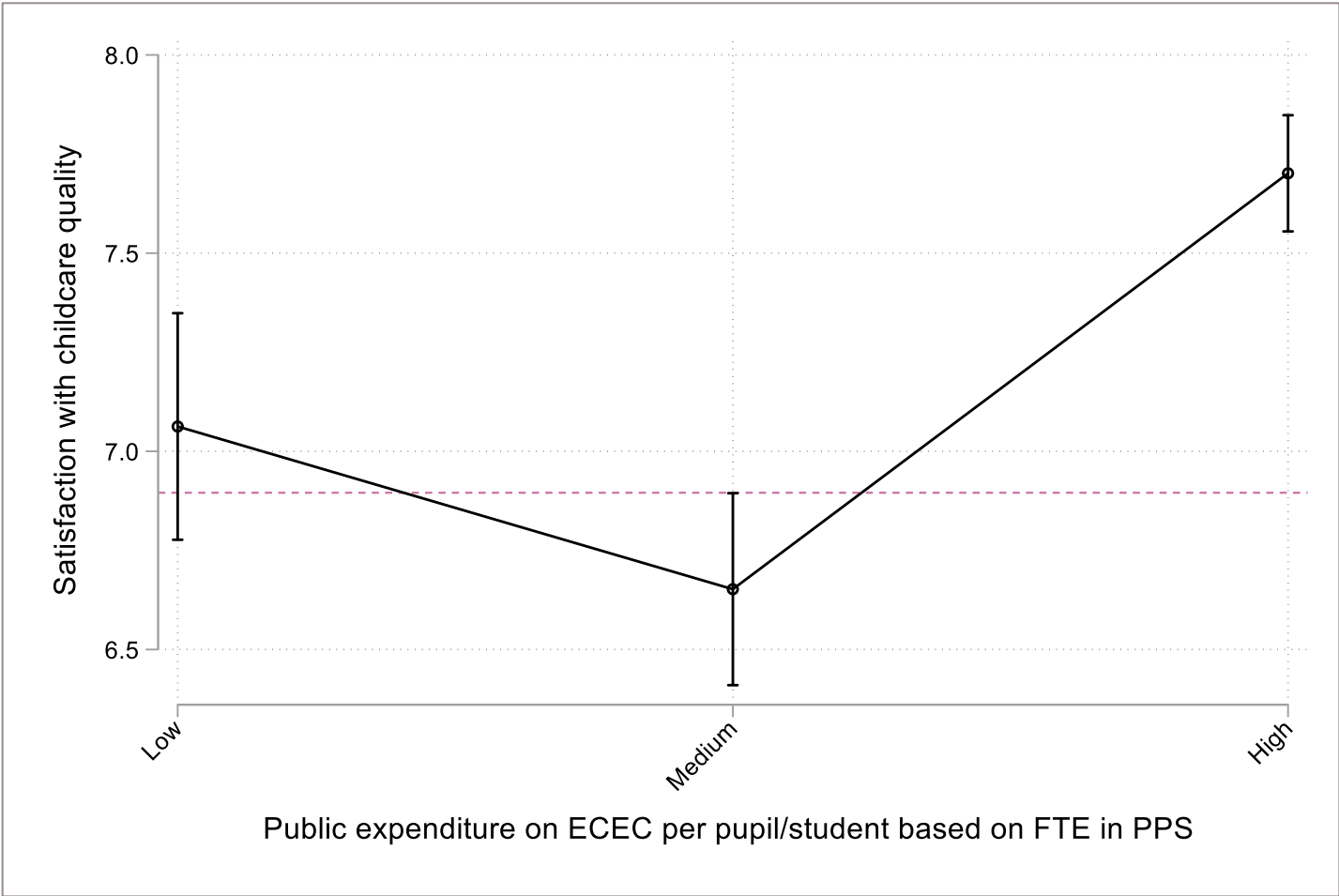
Predictive margins with 95% CIs

# Empirical Findings (3)



Predictive margins with 95% CIs

Satisfaction with childcare quality

8.0
7.5
7.0
6.5

Low — Medium — High

Public expenditure on ECEC per pupil/student based on FTE in PPS

# Discussion (1)

The empirical findings **demonstrate higher satisfaction with childcare quality among formal childcare service users than informal ones.**

Why?

- Theoretical and political agenda of the SI has been focusing on providing **enhanced formal childcare services, which has been the main direction of the SI;**
- MEs in childcare use - mainly benefits better-off households;
- **MEs manifest in satisfaction with childcare quality among formal childcare service users;**
- **Feedback effects;**
- Those directly benefiting from childcare provision are the main supporters of welfare interventions (Neimanns and Busemeyer, 2021 and others).

# Discussion (2)

**Formal childcare users** with **higher education and income** are **less satisfied with childcare quality** than formal users with lower education and income.

- Negative relationship;
- **No evidence for MEs looking at satisfaction with childcare services among formal childcare users;**

Why?

- **The role of expectations:**
  - Are more demanding and tend to take more active interest;
  - Practical considerations, e.g. time constraints related to employment and childcare flexibility;
- **Adaptation:**
  - More critical;
  - 'Settling for less' due to practical reasons;
- **Information asymmetry:**
  - Better available information about existing childcare structures;
  - Do not have enough time to investigate childcare programmes, because usually have limited childcare availability.

# Conclusions

- **MEs are prevalent, but not in satisfaction with childcare services;**
- **Bottom-up perspective**, adding multidimensional approach to SI framework and ME context;
- The findings provide a better understanding of the role of **socio-economic dimension** on **satisfaction with childcare quality;**
- Future research needed to **consider MEs more broadly.**

# Thank you for your attention!

## Questions, comments?

ausra.cizauskaite@ucdconnect.ie

# Results (1)

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Educational background (ref=lower secondary or below)** | | | | | |
| Upper secondary or post-secondary | -0.460** | -0.496*** | -0.484** | -0.504*** | -0.503*** |
| | (0.190) | (0.192) | (0.191) | (0.191) | (0.190) |
| Tertiary | -0.498** | -0.554*** | -0.552*** | -0.551*** | -0.551*** |
| | (0.194) | (0.195) | (0.195) | (0.195) | (0.195) |
| **Income (ref=otherwise*)** | | | | | |
| High income | -0.287* | -0.160 | -0.613*** | -0.618*** | -0.625*** |
| | (0.157) | (0.157) | (0.224) | (0.225) | (0.236) |
| **Gender (ref=male)** | | | | | |
| Female | 0.139 | 0.092 | -0.172 | -0.201 | -0.217 |
| | (0.129) | (0.131) | (0.139) | (0.137) | (0.153) |
| **Age (continuous)** | -0.014 | -0.071 | -0.077 | -0.009 | -0.008 |
| | (0.051) | (0.050) | (0.050) | (0.062) | (0.063) |
| **Age-squared (continuous)** | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.001 | -0.000 | -0.000 |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| **Employment status (ref=employed)** | | | | | |
| Otherwise** | -0.217 | -0.165 | -0.147 | -0.156 | -0.224 |
| | (0.190) | (0.192) | (0.190) | (0.188) | (0.435) |
| **Household structure (ref=couple with children)** | | | | | |
| Single with children | 0.420** | 0.379** | 0.410** | 0.432** | 0.433** |
| | (0.176) | (0.175) | (0.177) | (0.178) | (0.178) |
| Other*** | -0.128 | -0.076 | -0.103 | -0.081 | -0.082 |
| | (0.199) | (0.204) | (0.202) | (0.199) | (0.200) |
| **Number of children (ref=multiple children)** | | | | | |
| 1 child | -0.331** | -0.359*** | -0.370*** | -0.149 | -0.153 |
| | (0.133) | (0.136) | (0.135) | (0.813) | (0.808) |
| Have children outside the household | - | - | - | -2.967*** | -2.972*** |
| | 0.800**** | 0.832**** | 0.820**** | (1.035) | (1.033) |
| | (0.218) | (0.221) | (0.215) | | |

# Results (2)

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-2nd generation migrant | 0.230 | 0.174 | 0.183 | 0.172 | 0.172 |
| | (0.147) | (0.153) | (0.150) | (0.151) | (0.151) |
| **Public expenditure on ECEC per pupil/student based on FTE in PPS (ref=medium)** | | | | | |
| Low | | 0.410** | 0.379** | 0.378** | 0.379** |
| | | (0.193) | (0.189) | (0.188) | (0.188) |
| High | | 1.049**** | 1.049**** | 1.069**** | 1.071**** |
| | | (0.143) | (0.141) | (0.139) | (0.141) |
| **Gender x income (ref=male # high income)** | | | | | |
| Male # otherwise | | | | | |
| Female # otherwise | | | | | |
| Female # high income | | | 0.914*** | 0.923*** | 0.935*** |
| | | | (0.284) | (0.284) | (0.301) |
| **Number of children x age (ref=multiple children # age)** | | | | | |
| 1 child # age | | | | -0.006 | -0.006 |
| | | | | (0.023) | (0.023) |
| Have children outside the household # age | | | | 0.055** | 0.055** |
| | | | | (0.026) | (0.026) |
| **Gender x employment status (ref=male # employed)** | | | | | |
| Male # Other | | | | | |
| Female # Employed | | | | | |
| Female # Other | | | | | 0.098 |
| | | | | | (0.511) |
| _cons | 8.108**** | 8.832**** | 9.361**** | 8.367**** | 8.373**** |
| | (1.069) | (1.069) | (1.052) | (1.297) | (1.289) |
| N | 1547 | 1447 | 1447 | 1447 | 1447 |
| $R^2$ | 0.045 | 0.091 | 0.101 | 0.107 | 0.107 |
| F | 3.806 | 7.669 | 7.693 | 7.614 | 7.370 |