

**LEGAL STUDY OF THE MECHANISM OF APPLICATION FOR  
ADOPTION OF AN ADULT CHILD BASED ON MEDAN DISTRICT  
COURT DECISION NUMBER 703/PDT.P/2025/PN.MDN**

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**ABSTRACT**

Child adoption is a legal act that aims to provide protection and certainty of status for children, as regulated in Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection and Government Regulation Number 54 of 2007 concerning the Implementation of Child Adoption. Normatively, child adoption is only permitted for children who are not yet 18 years old. However, in judicial practice, there are applications for child adoption submitted when the child has reached adulthood, as occurred in the Medan District Court Decision Number 703/Pdt.P/2025/PN.Mdn. This study aims to analyze: (1) the requirements for child adoption according to the provisions of Indonesian positive law; (2) the mechanism for applications for the adoption of adult children based on the decision; and (3) the judge's legal considerations in granting applications for the adoption of children who are 20 years old.

This research uses a normative legal research type with a statute approach and a case approach. Data collection was conducted through a literature review by reviewing laws and regulations, court rulings, and relevant legal literature. The data were analyzed qualitatively based on laws and regulations, legal literature, and court rulings. The results of the study indicate that although Government Regulation No. 54 of 2007 limits the maximum age of adopted children to 18 years, judges still grant applications based on considerations of the existing foster care relationship since childhood, as well as the principle of the child's best interests and the need for legal certainty in population administration. This ruling confirms that judicial practice sometimes utilizes the space for legal interpretation to fulfill the benefit and protection of children, even though it is not entirely in line with normative boundaries.

**Keywords: Adoption, Application, Child Protection, Child Adoption, Age of Adulthood.**

**A. Introduction**

Children are a mandate and a gift from God, which we must always protect because they contain inherent dignity, honor, and rights as human beings which are highly respected.<sup>1</sup> The importance of the presence of a child in a family is a mandate and a gift from God Almighty, in fact children are considered the most valuable wealth compared to other material wealth.

It is a natural state of affairs that in family life, every married couple desires to have children who are their own flesh and blood. Married life reflects the goal of forming a family consisting of a father, mother, and children. In reality, in Indonesian society, many married couples still do not have children.<sup>2</sup> The family is the smallest and primary social group in society, consisting of two or more people who have interpersonal interactions, blood relations, marital relations or adoption.<sup>3</sup>

The importance of offspring in family life is such that families without or without children will strive to have children. Adoption is one legal procedure for obtaining children.<sup>4</sup> In terms of having children, the efforts they make to enliven the family atmosphere even without having children can be achieved by adopting children who are expected to be a source of comfort in times of loneliness, as well as to awaken a sense of responsibility for the father and mother.

Based on Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, child adoption can only be carried out for the best interests of the child, but there are various reasons why a married couple decides to adopt/adopt a child, it could be because they cannot have children or who decide not to have children so they only want to go through child adoption, or for humanitarian reasons because the child was abandoned by his parents.<sup>5</sup>

A court ruling contains the results or conclusions of the case examination, based on legal considerations, both in the application of the law and in legal findings. The judge's decision is expected to achieve legal certainty and justice.

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<sup>1</sup>Dolot A. "Bakung, Child Adoption Mechanism Through District Court and Religious Court Decisions". *Jurnal Legalitas*, Volume 3, No. 2, page 66.

<sup>2</sup>Husnah. (2009). "Implementation of Child Adoption (Adoption) Carried Out by Community Members in Indonesia. Thesis, Faculty of Law, University of Indonesia, page 1.

<sup>3</sup>Arhamnee Sitti Aulia, Tjempaka. (2024). "Division of Children's Inheritance in Balinese Customary Law and Its Implementation in National Law (Court Decision 204/K/Pdt/2021)", *UNES LAW REVIEW*, Volume.6, No.4, page 9991.

<sup>4</sup>Citra Rosa Budiman. (2017). "Legal Aspects of Adoption in Indonesia", *Bidamulia Hukum*, Volume 6, No. 2, page 142.

<sup>5</sup>Husnah, *Op.Cit*, pages 1-2.

In the application for adoption submitted to the Medan District Court Number 703/Pdt.P/2025/PN.Mdn, normatively, Article 1 number (9) of PP No. 54 of 2007 states that adoption can only be carried out on children who are not yet 18 years old and are not married. However, in practice, the judge still grants the application by considering that the caregiving relationship has been going on since the child was small and for the sake of the principle of the best interests of the child, as well as to fulfill legal certainty in population administration.

In the Medan District Court decision Number 703/Pdt.P/2025/PN.Mdn, the judge considered that even though the application was submitted when the child was 20 years old, the relationship of care between the applicant and the adopted child had actually been going on since childhood. The judge was of the opinion that rejecting the application solely on the grounds of age was not in line with the principle of the best interests of the child as stated in Article 39 paragraph (1) No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection.

Adoption in Indonesia is not a new issue. In practice, adoption among Indonesian society has several goals or motivations. One of the goals is to continue the lineage. If a marriage does not produce children, adoption is a legal act that transfers a child from the sphere of parental authority, wrong guardians or other people responsible for the care, education, and raising of the child into the family environment of the adoptive parents. Adoption is expected to continue the family lineage and can provide happiness in the midst of a harmonious family within the small family circle.<sup>6</sup>

Adoption is also carried out due to concerns about marital and family disharmony due to the lack of children. Furthermore, the purpose of adoption is to continue the lineage and is a motivation and a solution as a positive and humane alternative to the instinct of having a child in the arms of a family that has been without one for years. Adoption is expected to provide someone to care for the child in old age, manage the family's assets, and become the next generation.<sup>7</sup>

The problem of child custody is not a new problem, including in Indonesia. Since ancient times, child adoption has been carried out using different methods and motivations, in accordance with the legal system and legal feelings that live and develop in the area concerned.

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<sup>6</sup>Nur Alimah Zainuddin, Ilham Abbas. (2020). "Implementation of Child Adoption and Its Legal Consequences Based on Judge's Decision", *Journal of Lex Generalis (JLS)*, Volume 1, Number 7, pages 960-961.

<sup>7</sup>Citra Rosa Budiman, *Op.Cit*, page 142.

The purpose of the institution of adoption, among other things, is to continue the "offspring", when in a marriage there are no offspring.

This is a justifiable motivation as a positive and humane way out and alternative to the instinct of having a child in the arms of the family, after years of not being blessed with a child.

In Indonesia, people generally prefer to adopt children from within their own family, often without proper adoption papers. This has evolved, with people not only adopting children from their own family but also adopting children from other families in orphanages, shelters for abandoned babies, and so on, although people are still very selective.<sup>8</sup>

Adoption is a form of legal protection for children who do not receive adequate care from their biological parents. In Indonesia, this practice has long been recognized in various legal systems, including customary law, Islamic law, and positive law. However, regulations regarding adoption in positive law aim to ensure that the process not only meets social requirements but also has a strong legal basis to protect the rights of adopted children.

Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, which has been amended by Law Number 35 of 2014, and Government Regulation Number 54 of 2007 concerning the Implementation of Child Adoption, are the main legal basis in regulating the adoption process in Indonesia. This regulation emphasizes the principle of the best interests of the child, which means that every adoption process is carried out with consideration of the physical, mental, and social welfare of the adopted child, so that the child can grow and develop in a safe, stable, and loving environment.<sup>9</sup>

Adoption is also included in legal acts that aim to provide protection and welfare to children, especially for children who do not receive proper care from their biological parents. According to Article 39 Paragraph (1) of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, adoption can only be carried out in the best interests of the child. Thus, adoption is seen as a legal means to guarantee the fulfillment of children's rights to love, education and a decent living.

In Indonesia, adoption as a legal institution is not yet uniform in its motivations or methods. Therefore, the issue of adoption continues to generate debate among the public and

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<sup>8</sup>Muderis Zaini, 1992, *Adoption of a Review of Three Legal Systems*, Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, pages 7-8.

<sup>9</sup>Robby F Setiawan. (2023). "Adoption of Children According to Positive Law", *Journal of Gender and Social Inclusion in Muslim Societies*, Volume 4, No. 2, pages 114-115.

the government, particularly in the context of child protection efforts as stipulated in the Child Welfare Law and Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection.

Child adoption must be carried out through a legal process with a court decision as a product, which is progress towards regulating the legal practice of child adoption within the community, so that the child adoption event in the future has legal certainty for both the child and the adoptive parents.

The practice of child adoption carried out through the court process has developed both in the District Court environment and in the Religious Court environment for those who are Muslim.

Based on the description above, it can be seen that the practice of adoption is widely known among Indonesian society, however, there are still many people who carry out the process of adopting children directly without going through the correct process (through a court decision), namely by contacting the child's parents directly or through an intermediary.

The conditions of child adoption in our society are not as they should be, there are still many people who do not follow the existing regulations, in order to seek their own benefit and smooth the process they carry out, even by falsifying the child's identity of origin by falsifying the child's birth certificate, this is done to hide the identity of the biological parents of the child they adopted.

In fact, Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection states that adoptive parents are obliged to inform their adopted child about the origins of their biological parents, and Law Number 4 of 1979 concerning Child Welfare also states that adoption does not sever blood ties between the child and his parents and his parents' family based on the laws applicable to the child concerned.

However, this kind of child adoption process is still widely carried out today because there is comprehensive socialization regarding the legal Child Adoption Program.<sup>10</sup>

Based on the description above, this thesis is written with the title:

"Legal Study of the Mechanism for Application for Adoption of Adult Children Based on Medan District Court Decision Number 703/Pdt.P/2025/Pn.Mdn.

## **B. Research Methods**

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<sup>10</sup>Husnah. Op-Cit, pages 4-5.

A study cannot be called research if it does not have a research method.<sup>11</sup> Research methods are one of the factors of a problem that will be discussed. The study was conducted using secondary data which was analyzed qualitatively using the Desk Research Method. The literature materials used in writing this research are several references originating from research results, studies, and reviews of several writings which are then summarized into a scientific paper.<sup>12</sup>

## **C. Discussion**

### **1. Requirements for Adoption in Indonesian Law**

Adoption has been a long-standing practice in Indonesia, with various methods and motivations influenced by local legal systems and cultures. Legally, adoption in Indonesia is part of family law, relating to the interests of individuals within the family. Customary law throughout Indonesia recognizes the concept of adoption, while the Civil Code (KUHPer) did not explicitly regulate adoption until 1917, when regulations for Chinese-Indonesian citizens came into effect. At that time, only boys could be adopted, but through Supreme Court Circular Letter (SEMA) No. 6/1983, girls can now also be adopted.

Under Islamic law, the concept of adoption is not recognized because parentage is considered irreplaceable. The Child Protection Law stipulates that adoption must be carried out in the child's best interests, taking into account local customs and applicable regulations. Prospective adoptive parents must be of the same religion as the adopted child, and if the child's origins are unknown, the child's religion must be adjusted to that of the local majority.

The requirements for adoption are regulated by Law No. 35 of 2014 and Law No. 39 of 1999. Children eligible for adoption are those under 18, abandoned, and in need of special protection. Prospective adoptive parents must meet various requirements, including physical and mental health, age, good conduct, and adequate social and economic status.

The adoption procedure involves several steps, including submitting an application to a social agency, conducting a feasibility study, and obtaining a court decision. In customary

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<sup>11</sup> Hanifah, I., Hariyanto, H., Ginting, L., Koto, I., & Syafriana, R. (2026). Legal Protection of Indonesia's Fisheries from Foreign Investment: A Social-State Approach. *Jurnal IUS Kajian Hukum dan Keadilan*, 14(1).

<sup>12</sup> Simatupang, R. S. A., Hanifah, I., & Mansar, A. (2025). The Concept of Restitution as Legal Accountability in the Crime of Human Trafficking. *Pena Justisia: Media Komunikasi dan Kajian Hukum*, 24(1), 3554-3462.

law, procedures vary from region to region, with some traditions allowing adoption for specific purposes, such as marriage.

Adoption practices driven by commercial motives or resulting in child neglect are in stark violation of children's rights. Therefore, adoption must be based on a sincere intention to provide protection and well-being for the adopted child.

## **2. Child Adoption Mechanism Based on Court Decision Number 703/Pdt.P/Pn.Mdn**

This study examines the mechanism of child adoption in Indonesia, focusing on court decisions and the regulations governing the process. Children are considered a national asset, making adoption crucial to ensuring their well-being and protection. Adoption has been practiced for a long time, even before Indonesian independence, with the aim of providing a better life for children in need.

Adoption is regulated by Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 1979 concerning Child Welfare, which emphasizes the protection and welfare of children. Law Number 23 of 2003 concerning Child Protection also regulates the adoption process, with an emphasis on the child's best interests. In this context, the government plays an active role in overseeing and granting permits for adoptions, ensuring that the process is conducted honestly and in accordance with existing regulations.

The adoption process in Indonesia begins with an application to the Social Services Agency for a recommendation, followed by a verification of eligibility by a social worker, a hearing by the Child Adoption Permit Consideration Team (PIPA), and a court decision. Registration with the Population and Civil Registration Agency (Dukcapil) is also crucial to clarify the adopted child's legal status.

The adoption process requires certain requirements, both for the child being adopted and the prospective adoptive parents. The adopted child must be under 18 years of age and meet the criteria for being an abandoned child or needing special protection. Prospective adoptive parents must also meet the health, age, and socioeconomic status requirements stipulated in Government Regulation Number 54 of 2007.

The adoption process at the Medan District Court consists of several stages, including filing an application, appointing a judge, hearing, presenting evidence, considering the judge's legal opinion, and issuing a court ruling. Each stage has strict procedures to ensure the adoption is in the child's best interests.

The Medan District Court has the authority to examine and decide on adoption applications, and this mechanism is not only administrative but also serves as legal protection for the child. With a court ruling, the adopted child gains clear legal status and their rights within the adoptive family are fulfilled.

### **3. Legal Protection for Copyright Holders Harmed by Illegal Film Distribution**

Adoption is a legal act aimed at creating a new legal relationship between adoptive parents and the adopted child, in accordance with the provisions of Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. This process must be carried out in the best interests of the child, whether because the adoptive parents are unable to have children or for humanitarian reasons for the child left behind.

This study focuses on a child adoption petition filed by a long-married couple who have not yet had children. They have fostered a child since childhood and wish to legally adopt him. The petition was submitted to the Medan District Court, accompanied by personal and child identification, as well as permission from the child's 20-year-old biological parents.

During the trial, the judge heard testimony from witnesses, including the biological parents and family members familiar with the child's upbringing. The witnesses testified that the child had been well cared for and that the applicant had sufficient financial means. Based on these facts, the judge considered the legal requirements for adoption and ultimately granted the petition.

An analysis of this ruling indicates that the Medan District Court exercised its authority in handling family law cases, particularly adoption. This petition was filed by an Indonesian citizen residing in Medan, seeking legal approval for the adoption of a 20-year-old man who had been fostered and treated as his own child.

This ruling stipulates two important requirements: formal and material. Adoption not only changes the child's legal status but also involves civil rights and legal protection for the child. The adoption process must be subject to a court order to ensure the adopted child's legal protection.

The Medan District Court has absolute and relative competence to examine this petition, based on existing provisions. The applicants are a legally married couple, and the evidence presented demonstrates a strong emotional and social bond with the adopted child. Written consent from the biological parents has also been granted, confirming that the adoption was voluntary and without coercion.



The application, filed in 2025, demonstrates the need for legal certainty regarding the child's status as a beneficiary under a health insurance policy. Although many adoptions occur without legal legitimacy, this court ruling provides important legal protection.

The judge considered the evidence and witness testimony during the examination and determined that the adoption request was not unlawful. This decision was based on the Child Protection Law and related government regulations, with an emphasis on the best interests of the child.

Although the petition was filed after the child turned 20, the judge took a substantive approach, considering the fact that the adoption had taken place while the child was still a minor. The consent of the child and the biological parents was also an important consideration.

This ruling reflects the progressive application of the law, with judges striving to balance legal certainty and social justice. Adoption, as a formal legal act, must go through proper legal procedures to provide certainty for both the adopted child and the adoptive parents.

The decision states that the applicant's request is granted, and the judge grants permission to register the adopted child's status on the birth certificate. This decision has significant legal implications, providing certainty of status for the adopted child in the new family.

Adoption is carried out for various reasons, such as the desire to have children or compassion for orphans. A clear legal process is necessary to maintain order and ensure that adoptions comply with applicable regulations.

Overall, Medan District Court Decision No. 703/Pdt.P/2025/Pn.Mdn demonstrates the application of the law in line with the principles of child protection and the best interests of the child. Despite deviations from normative provisions, the judge was able to provide logical and fair legal considerations, making this decision a reference in judicial practice regarding actual adoptions.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The requirements for adoption in Indonesian law are explicitly regulated in Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection and Government Regulation Number 54 of 2007 concerning the Implementation of Adoption. These provisions, in principle, limit adoption to children under 18 (eighteen) years of age and unmarried, with the primary objective of ensuring the best interests of the child. Furthermore, these laws and regulations also stipulate strict requirements for prospective adoptive parents, in terms of age, marital status, economic status, and moral

and social readiness. Therefore, the adoption of adult children is not explicitly regulated in Indonesian positive law.

The adoption mechanism based on Medan District Court Decision Number 703/Pdt.P/PN.Mdn is essentially a legal protection instrument for children, which is implemented through legitimate legal procedures starting from submitting an application, a feasibility examination by social agencies, a court hearing, to a court decision and registration at the Population and Civil Registration Office. Through this mechanism, the judge ensures that formal and material requirements are met in accordance with statutory provisions and guarantees that the adoption is carried out in the best interests of the child, so that the legal status of the adopted child is clear and his rights and obligations are legally protected.

Based on the analysis of Medan District Court Decision Number 703/Pdt.P/2025/PN.Mdn, it can be concluded that the adoption in the a quo case is a legal act aimed at providing certainty of status and legal protection for children who have been cared for by the applicants since an early age. The Medan District Court has absolute and relative competence to examine and decide on the application, and during the trial process the judge has carefully considered documentary evidence, witness statements, and the facts of long-standing care. Although normatively, adoption is in principle intended for children under 18 years of age, the judge applies a progressive approach by emphasizing the best interests of the child, so that the application for adoption of an adult child is still granted because the adoption has in fact occurred since the child was still a minor. This determination has important implications in the form of certainty of the legal status of the adopted child, administrative recognition in population documents, and protection of the rights and obligations between the adopted child and the adoptive parents. Overall, the determination reflects a balance between legal certainty, substantive justice, and protection of the child's best interests.

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