

## IMPACT OF MINDFULNESS ON INTOLERANCE OF UNCERTAINTY AND AFFECTIVE LABILITY AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH HISTRIONIC PERSONALITY FEATURES

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** *The study investigated interrelationship among mindfulness, intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability among individuals with histrionic personality features and to investigate the moderating impact of mindfulness between intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability.*

**Study Design:** *Correlational Study.*

**Method:** *The sample of N = 300 individuals with features of histrionic personality was selected by using convenient purposive sampling technique. Four scales; Brief Histrionic Personality Scale (BPHS), Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale-12 (IUS-12) and Affective Lability Scale (ALS) were used to collect the data.*

**Results:** *The results showed that mindfulness has significant negative correlation with intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability. Intolerance of uncertainty has significant positive association with affective lability. The results also indicated that mindfulness is significant negative moderator in the association between intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability among individuals with histrionic features.*

**Keywords:** Intolerance of uncertainty; mindfulness; affective lability.

### INTRODUCTION

Histrionic personality disorder (HPD) is a type of personality disorders, it is commonly known as dramatic personality disorder. It is associated with attention seeking behaviors and emotionality (French & Shrestha, 2019). People having histrionic personality characteristics have intense emotions and have distorted self image. Their self esteem is dependent on social approval. They have the strong need that others will notice them and gave them reassurance about their significant position. This feeling ultimately affect their way the thinks and performing particular behaviors. The people have strong feeling that others show the feelings of love for them. These individuals need love from others because they may feel that if people don't gave then attention then it is very difficult for them to cope with their everyday life problems alone. The word histrionic means theatrical or dramatic. HPD is more common in women than men, and is evident in adolescents and young adults (Casarella, 2020).

People with HPD mostly involve searching intense attention, they are mostly seductive and use extremely dramatic expressions of emotions, and they are emotionally shallow and frequently display

impulsive expression of emotions (American Psychological Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders- fifth edition (DSM-5, 2013).

Mindfulness is a mental state of wakefulness which acts as a practice to promote the level of awareness and also a mode of information processing (Brown et al., 2007). Mindfulness means having awareness, attention, and remembering. Mindfulness is helpful for increasing the valuable emotion regulation in the brain. Mindfulness also promotes awareness at metacognitive level, and also play important role in enhancing attentional abilities through increasing the working memory process. These advancements in the cognitive processes ultimately help for the development of effective strategies of emotion regulation. Mindfulness is helpful in the reduction of symptoms associated with both anxiety and depression by developing/increasing the positive emotional state and decreasing the emotions associated with anxiety and negative (Davis & Hayes, 2011). Mindfulness act as a protecting guard against those emotionally stressful emotional states, which are created by the relationship conflict (Barnes et al., 2007).

Intolerance of uncertainty (IU) is a defined as apprehension of the unknown (Carleton et al., 2012). IU is the propensity to react to uncertain situations or events with negative affective, behavioral and cognitive reactions. IU is considered as a significant contributing factor in a number of anxiety disorders (Ren et al., 2021). Previous research findings concluded that mindfulness has negative correlation with intolerance of uncertainty; high level of mindfulness increases the ability to tolerate uncertain situations and decreases worry (Kraemer et al., 2016). Mindfulness based cognitive therapy is very effective in decreasing the level of IU in patients (Kim et al., 2016).

Affective lability is experiencing strong and inconsistent emotions that disturb the normal functioning and well-being of individuals; it is rapid changes in mood, unstable rapidly changing emotions (Buhle et al., 2014). Affective lability is significant characteristic of personality (Fletcher et al., 2014). Some of the previous studies concluded that mindfulness has positive correlation with emotional regulation, increased level of mindfulness leads to decreased emotional difficulties. Mindfulness has negative association with affective lability (Hill & Updegraff, 2011).

The present research was aimed to investigate interrelationship among mindfulness, intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability, as well as to measure the moderating impact of mindfulness between both intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability among histrionics. As limited research work is available on people with histrionic personality features specifically in Pakistan, so the present study can be helpful to fulfill this missing gap in literature. The current study can be beneficial for histrionics as well as for practitioners by providing findings about association of intolerance of uncertainty with affective lability, and by increasing mindfulness in histrionic patients both intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability can be lessened among histrionics.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. Intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability will be positively correlated among people with histrionic personality features.
2. Mindfulness will has negative association with intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability.
3. Mindfulness will act as significant moderator in relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability among people with histrionic personality features.
4. Gender and birth order are significant predictors of histrionic personality features, intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability.

### **METHOD**

The current research was aimed to investigate interrelationship among mindfulness, intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability, as well as to measure the moderating impact of mindfulness in the relationship existed between both intolerance of uncertainty and affective lability among individuals with histrionic personality features.

#### **Operational Definition of Variables**

Mindfulness can simply be defined as to bring the complete attention of any person to their current experience on moment-to-moment basis (Germer et al., 2005; Janssen et al., 2018). It is operationally defined as scores of participants on Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). Intolerance of uncertainty is fear of unknown. It is feeling difficulty to tolerate and to deal with uncertain situations (Lauriola et al., 2018). It is operationally defined as scores of participants on Intolerance of Uncertainty

Scale. Affective lability is rapid changes in emotions that are not related to external events or stimuli and these changes disturb the functioning and wellbeing (Silvers et al., 2016). It is operationalized as scores of participants on Affective Lability Scale (ALS).

**Sample**

The sample size of the present study was  $N = 300$ . The convenient purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of sample from different cities of Khyber PakhtunKhwa (KP). Participants who met the criteria of histrionic personality features, having high scores on Brief Histrionic Personality Scale (BHPS) were included in the present study. Participants who did not meet the criteria of histrionic personality, having low scores on Brief Histrionic Personality Scale were excluded from the present study. The age range of the participants was 16-35 years.

Following instruments were used for data collection. The Brief Histrionic Personality Scale, with 11 items related conceptually to features of histrionic personality disorder. It was developed by (Ferguson & Negy, 2014). The scoring criteria of BHPS is 4-point Likert scale, with score ranging from 1= never true to 4= always true. Higher the scores higher would be the histrionic symptoms.

MAAS was developed by (Brown & Ryan, 2003). It has 15 items with scoring criteria of 6-point Likert scale (from 1 = almost always to 6 = almost never).

The Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale-12 (IUS) is a self-report instrument. It comprised 12 items designed to measure the individual’s tendency to find uncertainty upsetting and distressing (Carleton et al., 2007). IUS has the scoring criteria of 5-point Likert type scale, with 1 indicating not at all characteristic of me to 5 indicating entirely characteristic of me.

ALS was developed by (Oliver & Simons, 2004). ALS has 18 items with rating on a 4-point likert scale (0 = very uncharacteristic of me to 3 = very characteristic of me). The higher scores indicate higher affective lability.

**Procedure**

Based on the main objectives of the current research, the sample of 1800 individuals was selected from different cities of KP. Brief Histrionic Personality Scale (BHPS) was administered on the sample after taking inform consent from them. Out of these, 300 participants scored high on the BHPS and met the criteria of histrionic personality features. These 300 participants were selected as final sample with features of histrionic personality. Then the questionnaires, Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale, Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale and Affective Lability Scale, along with the demographic sheet were distributed among the sample. All of the participants were given instructions to complete all the scales as honestly as possible. The response rate was 89%. The age range of this sample was 16-35 years.

**RESULTS**

The reliability value for Brief Histrionic Personality Scale was 0.86, for Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale was 0.79, for Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale alpha value was 0.82 and for Affective Lability Scale it was 0.80, which shows that all scales have satisfactory level of reliability. Significant item total correlation of Brief Histrionic Personality Scale, Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale, Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale and Affective Lability Scale indicated that these instruments have good construct validity.

**Table 1**

*Correlation Coefficient among Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale (IUS) and Affective Lability Scale (ALS; N=300)*

Scales	MAAS	IUS	ALS
MAAS	-	-0.43**	-0.37**
IUS	-	-	0.65**
ALS	-	-	-
<i>M</i>	46.50	36.17	46.45
<i>SD</i>	16.17	9.44	12.03

*Note.* MAAS = Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale; IUS = Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale; ALS = Affective Lability Scale; *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation.

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Table one indicated significant negative correlation of Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale with Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale and Affective Liability Scale. Similarly, Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale has significant positive correlation with Affective Liability Scale.

**Table 2**  
*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Affective Liability from Intolerance of Uncertainty and Mindfulness*

Predictor		$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Step I		0.40	
Step II	IUS	0.01	0.64**
Step III	IUS	0.02	0.58**
	MAAS		-0.12**
Total R <sup>2</sup>	IUS	0.43	0.52**
	MAAS		-0.15**
	IUS*MAAS		-0.14**

Note. IUS = Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale; MAAS = Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale;  $\beta$  = standardized beta;  $\Delta R^2$  = delta R square.

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 2 indicated that mindfulness is significant negative moderator between intolerance of uncertainty and affective liability.

**Figure 1**  
*Moderating Effect of Mindfulness on Intolerance of Uncertainty and Affective Liability*

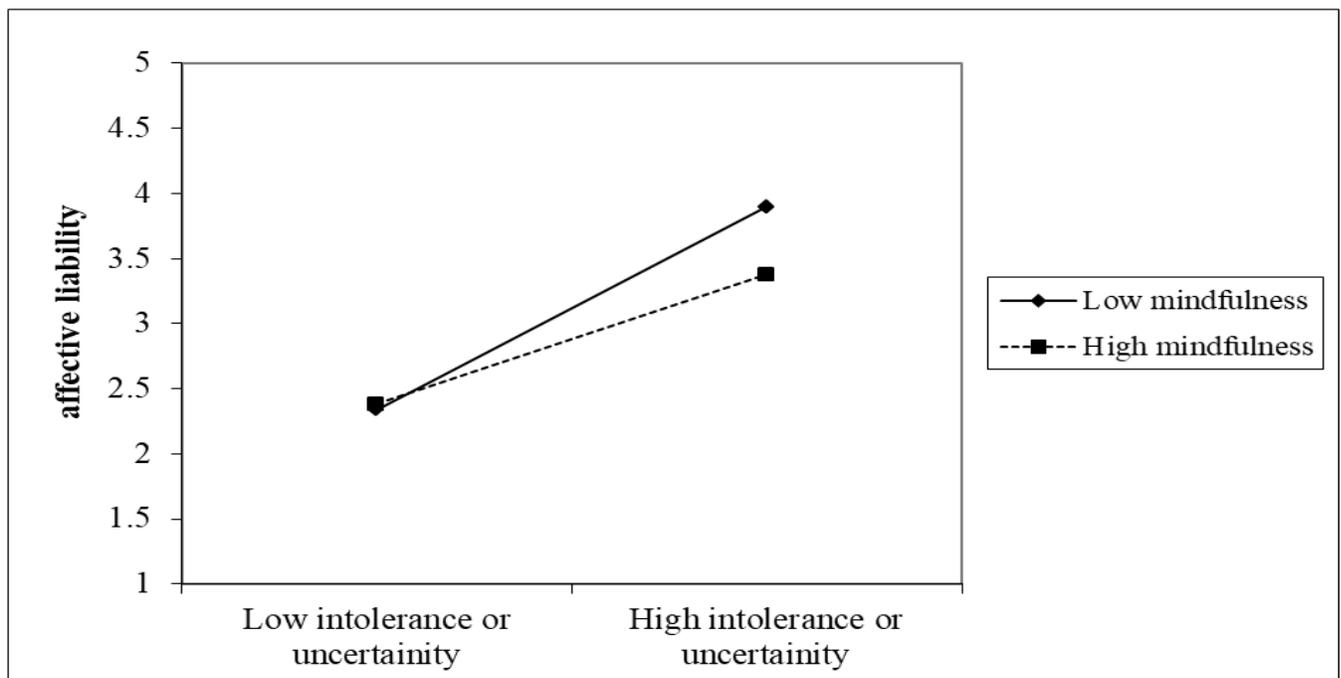


Figure one indicated mindfulness as significant moderator between intolerance of uncertainty and affective liability among individuals with features of histrionic personality.

**Table 3**

*Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Gender on Histrionic Personality, Intolerance of Uncertainty, Affective Liability, and Mindfulness*

	$\Lambda$	$F$	$df1$	$df2$	$p$	$\eta^2$
Gender	.88	9.83	4	295	.000	.11

*Note.*  $\eta^2$  = Partial Eta Squared.

Table 3 indicated that gender has significant impact on Histrionic Personality, Intolerance of Uncertainty, Affective Liability, and Mindfulness  $\{F(4,295) = 9.83, p = .000, Wilk's \Lambda = 0.88, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .11\}$ .

**Table 4**

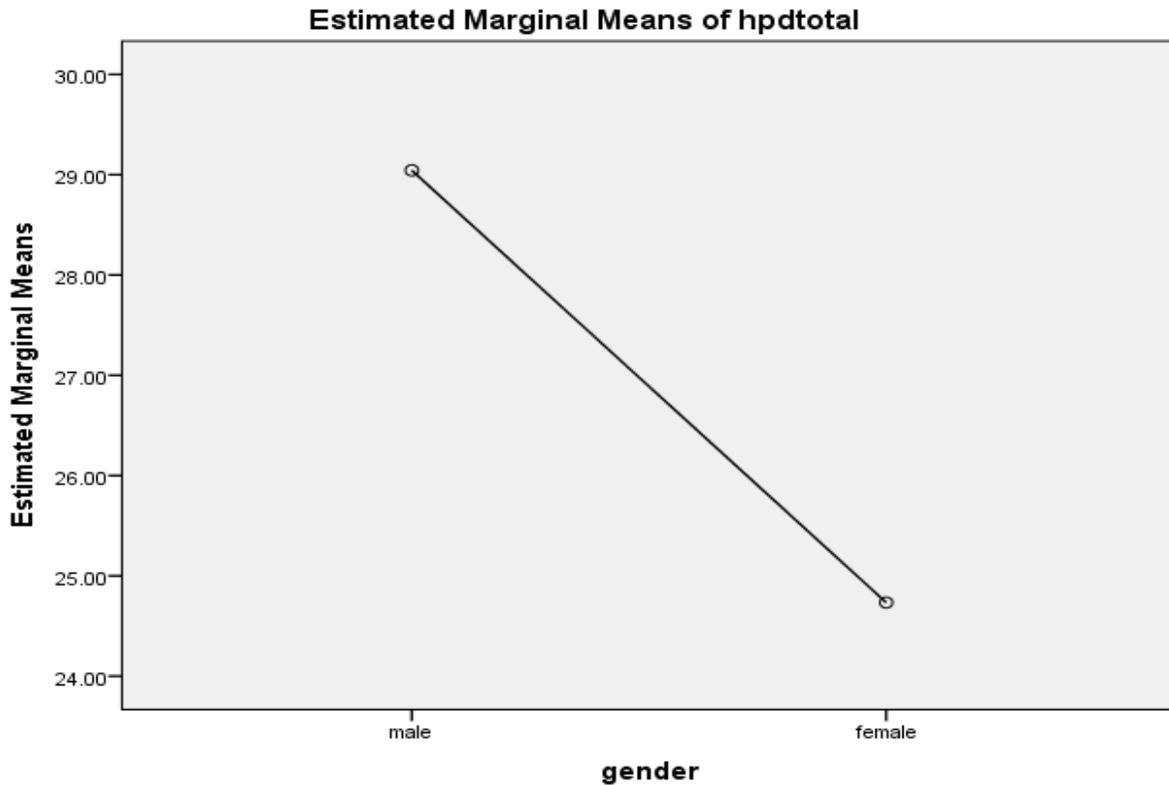
*Test between Subject Effect of Gender on Histrionic Personality, Intolerance of Uncertainty, Affective Liability, and Mindfulness*

Source	DV	SS	df	MS	F	p	$\eta^2$
Gender	Histrionic Personality	1321.26	1	1321.26	25.24	.000	.08
	Intolerance of Uncertainty	64.91	1	64.91	.727	.395	.00
	Affective Liability	47.69	1	47.69	.328	.567	.00
	Mindfulness	385.51	1	385.51	1.47	.225	.00
Error	Histrionic Personality	15594.73	298	52.33			
	Intolerance of Uncertainty	26623.25	298	89.34			
	Affective Liability	43320.90	298	145.37			
	Mindfulness	77747.48	298	260.89			

*Note.* DV = Dependent Variable,  $df$  = Degree of freedom, MS = Mean Square,  $\eta^2$  = Partial Eta Squared.

Table 4 indicated the gender significantly predicted the scores on Histrionic Personality  $\{F(1, 298) = 25.24, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .08\}$ , while non-significantly predicted scores on intolerance of uncertainty  $\{F(1, 298) = .727, p = .395, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00\}$ , affective liability  $\{F(1,298) = .328, p = .567, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00\}$ , and mindfulness  $\{F(1, 298) = 1.47, p = .225, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00\}$ . Significant results of gender on histrionic personality are also depicted in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**  
*Main Effect Graph of Gender on Histrionic Personality*



**Table 5**  
*Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Birth Order on Histrionic Personality, Intolerance of Uncertainty, Affective Liability, Mindfulness*

	$\Lambda$	$F$	$df1$	$df2$	$p$	$\eta^2$
Marital Status	.85	4.05	12	775	.000	.052

*Note.*  $\eta^2$  = Partial Eta Squared.

Table 5 indicated that birth order has significant impact on histrionic personality, intolerance of uncertainty, affective liability, and mindfulness  $\{F(12, 775) = 4.05, p = .000, \text{Wilk's } \Lambda = .85, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .052\}$ .

**Table 6**

Test between Subjects Effect of Birth Order on Histrionic Personality, Intolerance of Uncertainty, Affective Liability, Mindfulness (N= 400)

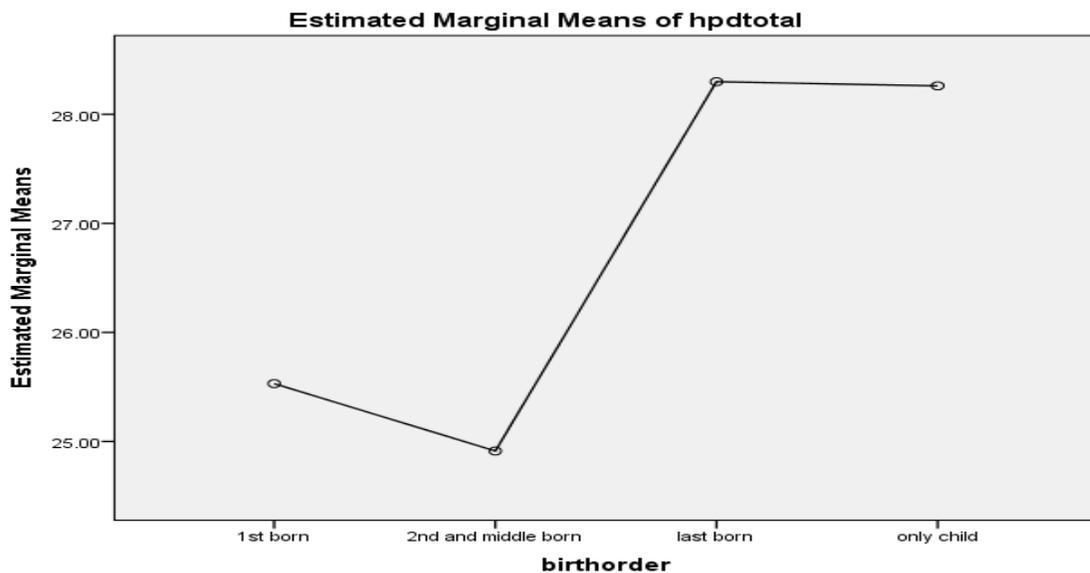
Source	DV	SS	df	MS	F	p	$\eta^2$
Birth order	Histrionic Personality	731.67	3	243.89	4.46	.004	.043
	Intolerance of Uncertainty	429.36	3	143.12	1.61	.186	.016
	Affective Liability	3127.34	3	1042.45	7.67	.000	.072
	Mindfulness	6552.84	3	2184.28	9.03	.000	.084
Error	Histrionic Personality	16184.33	296	54.68			
	Intolerance of Uncertainty	26258.81	296	88.71			
	Affective Liability	40241.26	296	135.95			
	Mindfulness	71580.16	296	241.83			

Note. DV = Dependent Variable, *df* = Degree of freedom, MS = Mean Square,  $\eta^2$  = Partial Eta Squard.

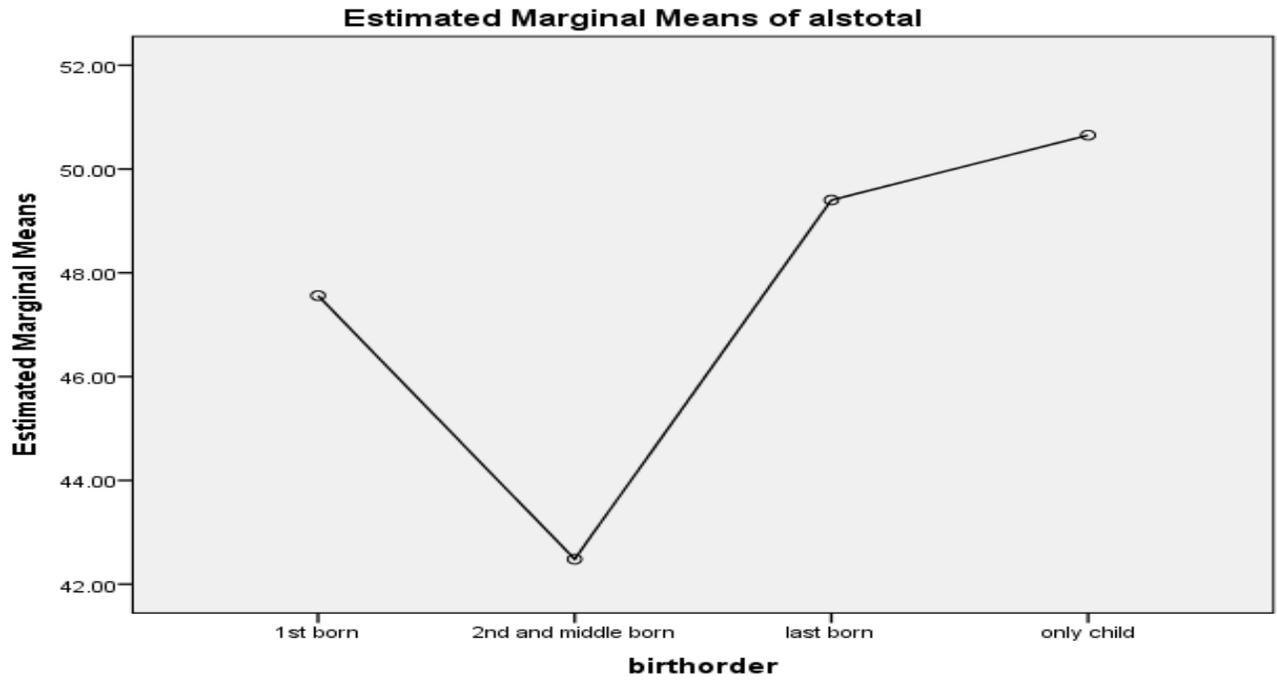
Table 6 indicated that birth order has significant impact on histrionic personality { $F(3, 296) = 4.46, p = .004, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .043$ }, affective liability { $F(3, 296) = 7.67, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .072$ }, and mindfulness { $F(3, 296) = 9.03, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .084$ }. Table also indicated that birth order has non-significant impact on intolerance of uncertainty. The significant results are also displayed in Figure 3, 4, and 5.

**Figure 3**

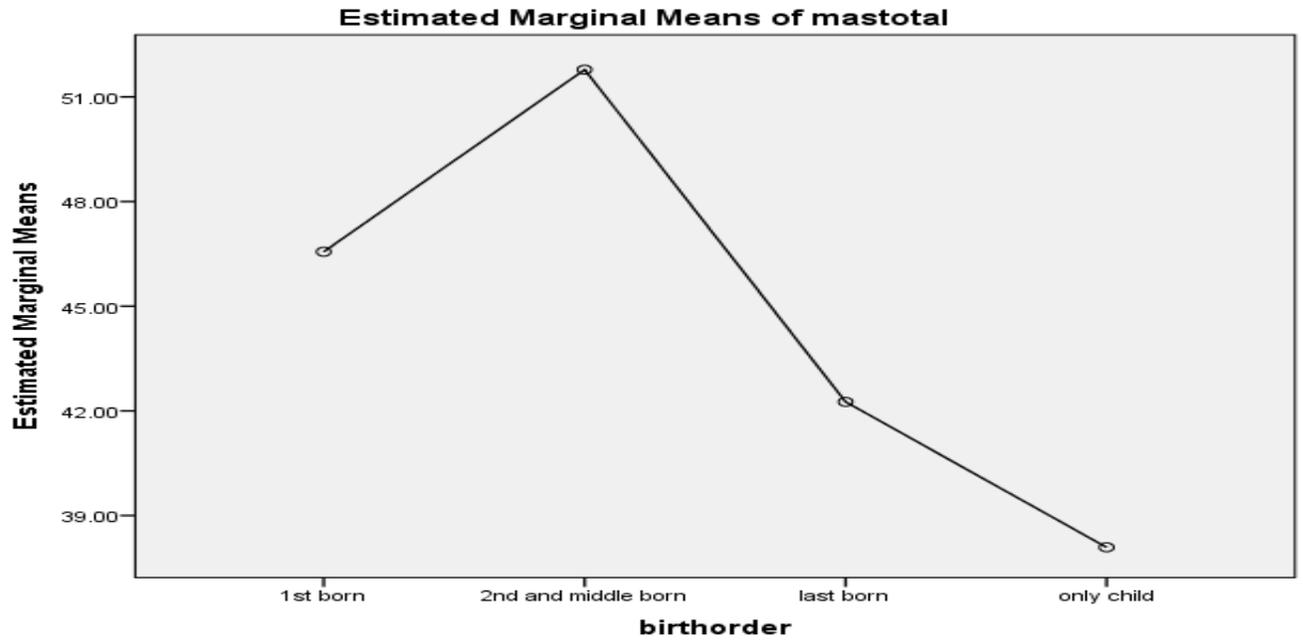
Main Effect Graph of Birth Order on Histrionic Personality



**Figure 4**  
*Main Effect Graph of Birth Order on Affective Lability*



**Figure 5**  
*Main Effect Graph of Birth Order on Mindfulness*



## **DISCUSSION**

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship among mindfulness, intolerance of uncertainty and affective liability. The study also finds out the moderating role of mindfulness between intolerance of uncertainty and affective liability among people with features of histrionic personality.

The results of the present study found significant negative relationship of mindfulness with both intolerance of uncertainty and affective liability. Similarly significant positive correlation between intolerance of uncertainty and affective liability was found in the present study. Some of the previous findings provide support to these results by concluding positive relationship of intolerance of uncertainty with affective liability (Gramszlo et al., 2017). The findings of the present study concluded mindfulness as significant negative moderator in relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and affective liability. Some of the previous studies concluded that by increasing mindfulness in patients, their ability to tolerate and to deal with uncertain situations can be enhanced, similarly mindfulness also has positive association with emotional regulation, and so increased level mindfulness can decrease intolerance of uncertainty and emotional liability (Hill & Updegraff, 2011; Kraemer et al., 2016).

The multivariate analysis also revealed that gender significantly predict the symptoms of histrionic personality as female have higher scores than male on Histrionic Personality Scale. These findings are similar with some of the findings of previous studies. A study concluded that borderline personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder and dependent personality disorders are most commonly existed more in women as compared to men (Skodol & Bender, 2003). Another study found in comparison to males, females are more diagnosed histrionic personality (Sprock, 2000).

Analysis of the current research also revealed that birth order significantly predicts the tendency to develop histrionic personality features, affective liability, and mindfulness. Result showed that first and last born child have higher tendency to develop features of histrionic personality and affective liability, while second born have more mindfulness level than other birth orders.

A study concluded that first born develop more psychopathology than later born. The study further concluded that narcissistic personality tendencies are greater in first born than second born and both of these disorders are cluster B personality disorders (Shafti, 2017).

## **CONCLUSION**

The current study concluded that mindfulness has significant negative relationship with both intolerance of uncertainty and affective liability. Intolerance of uncertainty has significant positive correlation with affective liability. The findings of the current study also revealed mindfulness as significant negative moderator between intolerance of uncertainty and affective liability among histrionics.

### **Limitations and Suggestions**

The present research was confronted with some following limitations. It was conducted only in some cities of KP. So it is suggested for the future research that other areas of Pakistan should also be included. The present study was conducted only on histrionics, while ignoring non-histrionics. So it is suggested that future study should also include non-histrionics for comparison between both histrionics and non-histrionics.

The results of the present study will be very beneficial in both practical and theoretical fields. These findings will be helpful in fulfilling the missing gap in literature. As histrionic personality disorder is least studied variable, especially in Pakistan very little research work is available on histrionics, so the current study will be fruitful for adding new material in literature. These recent findings will also be valuable for clinical psychologists and clinical practitioners to identify different features or characteristics of histrionic individuals. This study can also be beneficial to clinicians to understand that by introducing mindful awareness techniques, their inability to tolerate uncertain situations and their affective liability can be decreased. These findings will also be supportive for the histrionics and non-histrionics to recognize and identify the features of histrionic personality disorder, effects of these features on their daily behaviors and how to lessen these features. The present study will also be beneficial for histrionics to understand that histrionic symptoms are related to lack of emotional control and affective liability, and by increasing their mindfulness they can decrease their affective liability and regulate or control their emotions quite well.

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