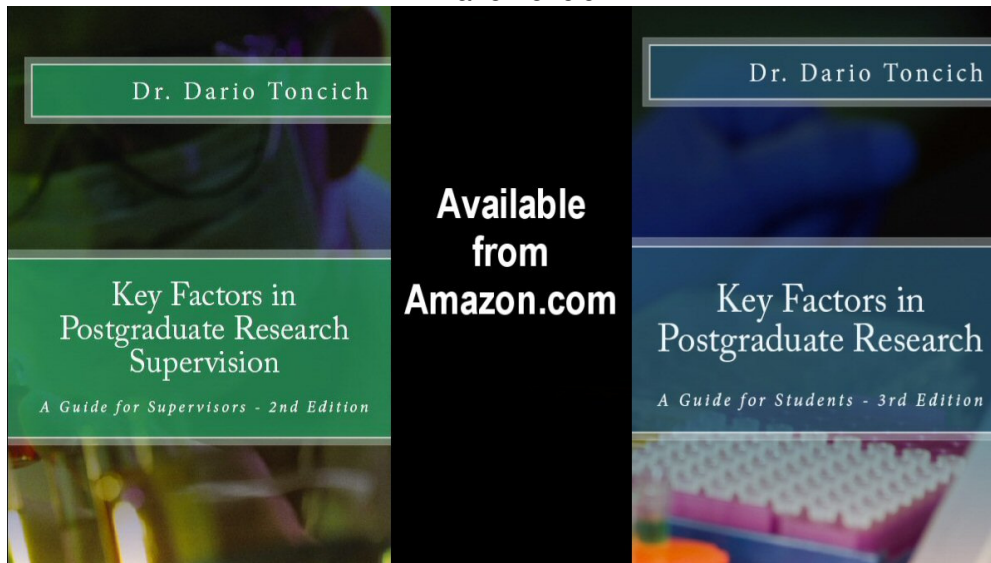


# 10 Tips for PhD Research

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## Tip Number 4 – Diligence, Facts and Data – Not Expertise/Opinions

The PhD is a research apprenticeship and, as such, its assessment is based upon a candidate demonstrating their ability to conduct systematic research in an impartial manner. A PhD student is *not* deemed to be an expert consultant or a learned scholar, and so his/her task is to convince examiners of the merits of the research through hard evidence. The PhD candidate therefore takes on the role of the:

- Humble learner
- Impartial observer
- Evidence-based reporter.

This means that at each point in the research program, a PhD candidate needs to distance himself/herself from personal opinions and ensure that decision making and reporting is based upon:

- Hard evidence/data/facts
- Opinions of other learned scholars.

Impartiality is particularly important – especially because humans naturally want to believe that they have succeeded in their endeavors and because they may inadvertently bias outcomes. The impartial observer always presents the worst interpretation of his/her results against the best possible interpretation of the work of others – then allows the examiner/peer to be the ultimate arbiter.

Where there are multiple/conflicting schools of thought in a particular area of research, the student's task is to present each in a fair and impartial manner – without personal criticism – but with a balanced representation of views from other learned scholars (for and against).