Researching and Writing a Literature Review

Research paper or dissertation structure:

- Introduction/background
- Literature review/theoretical framework
- Methodology/methods
- Results/data
- Discussion
- Conclusion

Reasons for reviewing the literature:

- To conduct a 'preliminary' search of existing materials
- To organise valuable ideas and findings
- To identify other research that may be in progress
- To generate research ideas
- To develop a critical perspective

Short list a paper by reading the abstract and then the conclusion if you have access.

In the proposal you don't have any outcome.

How to focus your literature review?

Your role as a detective:

Your job is to narrow down the range of your search for relevant literature.

- Begin with the broad theories, concepts and definitions
- Then focus down to those that overlap with your study
- Then focus down further to a framework for analysis

Find broad articles to define an area

- Use definitions from authoritative sources
- Compare definitions to find the most useful ones for your purpose
- Find articles that use keywords related to your definitions and research questions
- Look for key articles that are close to your specific area
- Follow the trail to identify related articles

Theoretical Framework versus Literature Review

- A literature review needs to include a theoretical framework
- A theoretical framework is not simply a list of theories - it provides a structured theoretical way of understanding relationships between concepts