

Abstract

Background: Although employees of the maritime sector need – and are characterized by – hard and technical skills, soft skills are required as well. More specifically, these skills are of increasing importance in order to evolve and promote in their professional career. However, in-depth insight in these soft skills in the maritime sector is lacking.

Aim: The aim of this study was two-fold: define soft skills in the maritime sector, and secondly, more in particular to determine a possible gap between soft skills of the Antwerp Maritime Academy and those required by the maritime industry.

Methodology: Five studies were performed to specifically identify which soft skills are considered important, and which ones are currently present in the maritime industry and curriculum. Afterwards, the possible gap was determined between these two sets of skills.

Results: The present study showed that the demands of the maritime sector mostly agree with the skills taught to maritime academy students, however the awareness and application of the employers and employees is missing.

Conclusion: Therefore, we suggest that more emphasis should be put on adequate training of soft skills as well as the recognition of soft skills from employees.