Benjamin Lebrun

PhD Candidate in Psychology

in LinkedIn   ℝ ResearchGate   G GoogleScholar   ⏺ ORCiD

⦿ University of Canterbury, New Zealand   ✉ benjamin.lebrun@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Profile

French neuropsychologist and PhD candidate in Psychology. My research explores how people perceive phantom costs in HRI, including attributions of negative intentions and risks. I specialise in cognitive and social psychology, with a background in neuropsycho-cognitivo psychology. My career goal is to become a University Professor.

Academic Experience

Teaching Assistant in Psychology   *Christchurch, NZ*
University of Canterbury
- ○ "Cognition" (200-level paper)   *2023 – 2025*
- ○ "Neuroscience and Neurological Disorders" (300-level paper)   *2025*
- ○ "Introductory Cognitive and Behavioural Neuroscience" (200-level paper)   *2024*

Research Internship   *Minho, Portugal*
Neuropsychophysiology Lab   *Aug. – Sept. 2022*
- ○ Focus on study design for SOBARAG project (Cerebral and physiological differences in social dominance and the creation of social hierarchy towards robots).

Research Engineer   *Lille, France*
SCALab   *2021 – 2022*
- ○ Study design for SOBARAG project.

Research Internship   *Lille, France*
SCALab   *2021 – 2022*
- ○ Project: physiological variations during the observation of different types of gestures.
- ○ Responsibilities: Helped with experimental setup, physiological data collection using BIOPAC and EYELINK.

Clinical Experience

Neuropsychologist   *Boulogne-sur-Mer, France*
Hospital of Boulogne-sur-Mer   *Sept. – Oct. 2022*
- ○ Geriatric population. Neuropsychological assessments.

Clinical Internship   *Villejuif, France*
Department of Pediatric Oncology, Gustave Roussy Institute   *2021 – 2022*
- ○ Young population with brain tumors. Neuropsychological assessments.

Clinical Internship   *Douai, France*
Memory Consultations, Hospital of Douai   *2021 – 2022*
- ○ Geriatric population. Neuropsychological assessments.

Education

PhD Candidate in Psychology   *New Zealand*
University of Canterbury   *2023 – 2026*
- ○ Supervisors: Andrew Vonasch and Christoph Bartneck.

- Project: Phantom Costs Perception in HRI.

Master of Integrated Psychology *Portugal*
University of Minho *2020 – 2022*
  - GPA: 4.0/4.0 or 9.0/9.0
  - Focus on research in cognitive and social psychology using physiological data. Use of PsychoPy.
  - Supervisors: Tatjana Nazir and Adriana Sampaio.
  - Project: Perceiving Social Beings in Artificial Agents.

Master of Psychology of Neurocognitive Processes and Affective Sciences *France*
University of Lille *2020 – 2022*
  - GPA: 3.85/4.0 or 8.432/9.0 (certificate link)
  - Supervisor: Tatjana Nazir.
  - Project: Perceiving Social Beings in Artificial Agents.

Bachelor of Psychology *France*
University of Lille *2018 – 2020*
  - Highest honours (certificate link)
  - Supervisor: Loris Schiaratura.
  - Project (2020): Emotional Facial Micro-Expressions in Alzheimer's Disease.

School of Medicine *France*
University of Lille *2016 – 2018*

Publications

[1] **Benjamin Lebrun** and Andrew Vonasch. "Perception of Phantom Costs and Personalized HRI". Approved.

[2] **Benjamin Lebrun** et al. *People Perceive More Phantom Costs From Autonomous Agents When They Make Unreasonably Generous Offers*. 2025. arXiv: 2511.07401 [cs.HC]. URL: https://arxiv.org/abs/2511.07401.

[3] **Benjamin Lebrun**, Christoph Bartneck, and Andrew Vonasch. "Phantom Costs in Human-Robot Interaction: A Replication Study". In: *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction*. HRI '25. Melbourne, Australia: IEEE Press, 2025, pp. 1037–1041.

[4] **Benjamin Lebrun**, Andrew Vonasch, and Christoph Bartneck. *Too good to be true: People reject free gifts from robots because they infer bad intentions*. 2024. arXiv: 2404.07409 [cs.HC]. URL: https://arxiv.org/abs/2404.07409.

[5] **Benjamin Lebrun** et al. "Detecting the corruption of online questionnaires by artificial intelligence". In: *Frontiers in Robotics and AI* 10 (2024). ISSN: 2296-9144. DOI: 10.3389/frobt.2023.1277635.

[6] Tatjana A. Nazir, **Benjamin Lebrun**, and Bing Li. "Improving the acceptability of social robots: Make them look different from humans". In: *PLOS ONE* 18.11 (2023), e0287507. ISSN: 1932-6203. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0287507.

Unpublished

[7] **Benjamin Lebrun**, Christoph Bartneck, and Andrew Vonasch. "Plausible Explanations Reduce Phantom Cost Perception in HRI".

[8] **Benjamin Lebrun**, Christoph Bartneck, and Andrew Vonasch. "The Role of Agent's Anthropomorphism in Shaping Phantom Costs".

Presentations

HRI 2026 Conference *Edinburgh, UK*
[1min video + Poster + Talk] The Perception of Phantom Costs in HRI. *March 2026*

HRI 2026 Conference	*Edinburgh, UK*
[Talk] The Role of Agent's Anthropomorphism in Shaping Phantom Costs.	*March 2026*
HRI 2026 Conference	*Edinburgh, UK*
[Short talk + Poster] Plausible Explanations Reduce Phantom Cost Perception in HRI.	*March 2026*
Postgraduate Conference 2025 - CSSE Department	*Christchurch, NZ*
[Talk] Phantom Costs Perception in HRI.	*September 2025*
HRI 2025 Conference	*Melbourne, Australia*
[Short talk + Poster] Phantom Costs in HRI: a Replication Study.	*March 2025*
New Zealand Psychological Society Conference	*Christchurch, NZ*
[Poster] Too good to be true: People reject free gifts from robots because they infer bad intentions.	*September 2024*
Exhibit your Thesis - University of Canterbury	*Christchurch, NZ*
[Poster] Epistemic vigilance in HRI.	*August 2024*
European Society for Cognitive Psychology and	*Lille, France*
Conference of Embodied and Situated Language Processing (ESLP)	*August 2022*
[Poster] Improving the acceptability of social robots.	

Service to the Community

Conference Organisation

- **HRI 2026** – Student Volunteer *Edinburgh, UK*

- **HRI 2025** - Student Volunteer Chair *Melbourne, Australia*

- **HRI 2024** - Student Volunteer Chair *Denver, Colorado, USA*

- **ESLP 2022** - Support STAFF *Lille, France*

Workshops and Tutorials

- **HRI 2026** – Workshop: "Responsible Outcomes and Operational Tools
  for Sustainability in HRI" *Edinburgh, UK*

Reviews

- **International Conference on HRI:** 7 (and 5x 1AC position)

- **International Conference on HAI:** 5 (and 1x 1AC position)

- **International Journal of Social Robotics:** 4

- **Australian Conference on HCI (OzCHI):** 3

- **International Conference on Affective Computing and Intelligent Interaction (ACII)**: 1

Academic Leadership

- **Alumni President** *2021 – 2022*
  University of Lille, France

- **Presentation of Master's** *March 2022*
  Cognitive Science Forum, France

Skills

Languages: French (native), English (fluent), Portuguese (good), German (previously fluent)

Certificate: Introduction to Programming with MatLab

Coding: HTML, E-Prime, PsychoPy, R

Fundings, Grants, and Scholarships

2023 - 2026: University Doctoral Scholarship

2022: Research Mobility Grant - French Government through the Program "Investissements d'avenir"

Prizes and Awards

2025 – 2nd Place Best Presentation Award | CSSE Postgraduate Conference

2025 – Honorable Mention | HRI'25 - Pioneer Paper | "Skepticism about Robots' Implausible Statements"

2024 – Research Student Publication Prize | University of Canterbury

Hobbies

Meteorites, fossils, minerals | Ex-member of the "Société Astronomique de France" | Running | Coffee latte art

Referees

Andrew Vonasch
PhD Thesis Main Supervisor
University of Canterbury
Psychology, Speech, and Hearing
Email

Christoph bartneck
PhD Thesis Co-Supervisor
University of Canterbury
Computer Science & Software Eng.
Email

Tatjana Nazir
Master's Thesis Supervisor
University of Lille
SCALab
Email