



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



COMPARATIVE STUDY ON AI FILM 'HELL GRIND' (2026) AND LIVE FILM 'AVENGERS ENDGAME' (2019)

Suresh Babu Menaka Sabarish ^{1,*} and Manikkam Kaliraj ²

¹ Scholar, M.Sc. Visual Communication, Hindusthan College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India – 28.

² Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Communication, Hindusthan College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India – 28.

* Corresponding Author

ORCID Details

Manikkam Kaliraj: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9078-398X>

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2026, 32(01), 1862–1885

Publication history: Received on 20 September 2026; revised on 26 October 2026; accepted on 28 October 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2026.32.1.2763>

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) is now used in almost every step of filmmaking, from writing scripts to editing and visual effects. In this paper, S.M. Sabarish compares AI-generated films with traditionally produced live films in terms of storytelling, visual quality, creative process, creativity and audience perception. Two example films are used: the live film Avengers: Endgame and the AI film Hell Grind. The paper is based on Uses and Gratifications Theory, which looks at entertainment, emotional and aesthetic gratification. The comparison shows two different ways of telling a story. Endgame depends on well-known actors, a trained crew and live cinematography, while Hell Grind is built from text prompts and AI-generated characters, and both still depend on human creative direction. A review of nine recent empirical studies on audience response shows that AI can widen creative options, but problems remain in character consistency, motion control and audience engagement, and AI still needs human input. These studies give mixed results on how authentic and engaging AI work feels. None of them puts a full AI film next to a live film and asks viewers to compare them. This paper fills that gap with a survey of college and film and media students chosen through convenience sampling. This research carries 23 respondents which was made by using quantitative method to acknowledge people's view on AI film and Live film; Hell Grind and Avengers Endgame

Keywords: AI Film, Live Film, Generative AI, Audience Perception, Uses and Gratifications, Hell Grind, Avengers: Endgame

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, generative AI has moved out of the laboratory and become a real part of filmmaking. AI is now used for writing scripts, editing and even predicting box office results (Zhu & Zhang, 2022), and it helps artists with character creation, visual style and storytelling (Zhang et al., 2025). Some systems can make a complete film from a short text and a few reference images (Huang et al., 2025). This has led to full-length AI films such as Hell Grind, a 95-minute film made

entirely on the Higgsfield platform (Bousquette, 2026). On the other side, big live films such as Avengers: Endgame follow the traditional way of using a cast, a crew and sets (Box Office Mojo, n.d.).

Most earlier studies only explain what AI tools can do. Zhang et al. (2025) point out that artists and researchers are still mostly disconnected, and that artists find it hard to keep a character consistent. Huang et al. (2025) note that many AI film systems give templated visuals and stories that are not engaging. Zhu and Zhang (2022) say that AI is still weak and cannot create human imagination and creativity on its own. Recent experiments show that viewers often cannot tell AI work from human work (Appel et al., 2025; Crosby & McKenzie, 2025; Hitsuwari et al., 2023), but human-made work is still often rated as more authentic (Bosch, 2024). What is missing is a direct comparison of a full AI film and a live film that also asks the viewers. This paper fills that gap by placing the two types of film side by side and asking viewers what they think about both.

The aim of this paper is to compare AI-generated films and traditionally produced films. Collected 23 respondents and got a clear opinion on people's response towards the AI film and Real film especially they admired the work flow like cinematography and consistency of character maintenance.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 AI tools and artist practices

Zhang et al. (2025) studied AI filmmaking tools and artist practices using data from the MIT AI Film Hack, a filmmaking hackathon held in 2023, 2024 and 2025 (with 8, 67 and 118 films respectively). Nearly all the films used AI image or video generation, and more than half used AI music or sound effects in 2024 and 2025. Artists said consistent character movement was the top need, followed by camera control and character consistency. Interestingly, the winning music piece in 2025 was made by a human composer, even though the judges did not know which pieces used AI. The authors conclude that AI workflows widen creative experiments, but problems remain in character consistency, detailed motion control and mixing AI output with real footage.

2.2 Automated film generation

Huang et al. (2025) introduced FilMaster, a system that makes a complete film from a text theme and reference images. They argue that earlier systems do not have real camera language and cinematic rhythm, so their films look templated and unengaging. FilMaster learns camera language from about 440,000 real film clips and then edits the film in a rough cut and a fine cut, using simulated audience feedback. The output can be edited in professional software. The authors also built a benchmark called FilmEval. In their tests, FilMaster scored on average 68.44% higher in a user study and 58.06% higher in automatic evaluation than earlier methods. They also admit that colour grading and varied transitions are not yet included.

2.3 Meaning and direction of AI films

Zhu and Zhang (2022) describe AI film in two ways: films that use AI as a technical tool (for scripts, editing and box office forecasts), and films that have AI as a subject or a character. They divide AI characters into system characters and humanoid characters, and show that films have moved from showing AI as a threat to showing it as a companion. They also say that AI is still at an early stage and cannot produce human imagination and creativity on its own.

2.4 Live film production

Traditional live film production has three phases: pre-production (script, storyboard, character design), production (direction and cinematography) and post-production (editing, effects and sound) (Zhang et al., 2025). AI tools now support each of these phases, and this is the process that AI films are compared with in this paper.

Table 1: Summary of core studies

Study	Year	Method	Key finding
Zhang et al.	2025	Survey of artists + case studies (MIT AI Film Hack 2023–2025)	AI widens creative options; consistency and motion control remain hard
Huang et al.	2025	System development, FilmEval benchmark, user study	FilMaster beats earlier systems in camera language and rhythm
Zhu & Zhang	2022	Qualitative discussion of AI films	AI films move from threat to companionship; AI is still weak

2.5 Recent empirical studies on audience response

Recent experiments look at how real viewers react to AI-made content. They are grouped below by theme.

AI-generated video and perceived authenticity Shi et al. (2026) recorded the eye movements of 40 participants while they watched real and AI-generated videos of physical scenes. Where people looked depended less on whether a video was really AI-made and more on whether the viewer believed it was real, and just knowing that a video might be AI-made turned easy watching into a search for flaws. Wolf et al. (2026) (N = 100) found that people who were first shown AI-generated videos, even with clear disclosure, later doubted real videos more, felt less sure about their own judgement and felt less socially connected.

Audience evaluation and emotion Fišer et al. (2025) showed 88 participants the same videos with either human-composed or AI-generated music. AI music made the pupils dilate more and felt more arousing, human music felt more familiar, and the positive or negative feeling stayed about the same. So the AI soundtrack was not weaker in emotional effect.

Human–AI creativity Mirowski et al. (2023) asked 15 theatre and film professionals to co-write scripts with an AI system. They saw it as a useful partner for ideas and world building, but not as something that can write a whole play, and they were worried about plagiarism and bias. Hitsuwari et al. (2023) found that haiku made with a human in the loop got the highest beauty ratings, and that participants could not tell human-made haiku from AI-generated haiku.

Comparative film reception Crosby and McKenzie (2025) ran a randomised experiment with 500 participants on film pitches (synopsis, director and casting choices) and found no clear bias against the AI-generated pitches. Bosch (2024) surveyed 105 Generation Z participants who rated six human-made and six AI-generated pieces in cinematography, photography and music. Human-made content was seen as more authentic and engaging, while labelling the AI content changed perceived authenticity only in some cases and did not change engagement in a steady way.

2.6 Research gap

Although earlier studies have looked at AI-generated filmmaking, creative processes and how audiences see AI-generated content, there is little research that directly compares full-length AI-generated films with traditionally produced live-action films in terms of storytelling, visual quality, emotional engagement and audience gratification. So this paper aims to fill this gap by comparing *Hell Grind* and *Avengers: Endgame* and looking at audience perceptions and preferences through a survey of college and film and media students.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This paper has two parts. The first is a case comparison of one live film and one AI film on storytelling, visual quality, characters, creative process and creativity, using published information and the reviewed literature. This part answers RQ1 and RQ2. The second is a survey of college and film and media students about their awareness, use and perception of AI in film production, based on the three gratifications. This part answers RQ3.

3.2 Films selected

Avengers: Endgame (2019) was chosen as the live film. It was produced by Marvel Studios, directed by Anthony and Joe Russo, and runs for 3 hours 1 minute. It is based on Marvel Comics characters and has a famous cast including Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Mark Ruffalo and Chris Hemsworth. Its look and sound come from a full crew, including a cinematographer, a composer, editors and a production designer (Box Office Mojo, n.d.). It was a huge worldwide hit, with a gross of about \$2.799 billion (Box Office Mojo, n.d.).production designer (Box Office Mojo, n.d.). It was a huge worldwide hit, with a gross of about \$2.799 billion (Box Office Mojo, n.d.).

Hell Grind (2026) was chosen as the AI film. It is a 95-minute action-fantasy about four thieves who fall into hell, and it was made entirely on the Higgsfield AI platform. According to the Wall Street Journal, each prompt gave about 15 seconds of footage, and the prompts were around 3,000 words long (Bousquette, 2026). It was shown in Cannes in May 2026 during the film market, not as part of the official festival programme, and it was made to show what the platform can do.

3.3 Sample selection

Convenience sampling was used. It is a non-probability method in which participants are chosen because they are easily available and willing to take part. It was selected because it is quick, low in cost, suits college-based research and is useful when time and resources are limited. The target group was college students and film and media students. The purpose was to collect responses quickly and understand their awareness, use and perception of AI in film production.

3.4 Tool and respondents

The survey used a questionnaire with rating-scale questions on entertainment, emotional and aesthetic gratification, storytelling, visual quality, creativity and overall satisfaction for both films. Responses were collected from 23 respondents.

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper follows Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) developed by Katz et al. (1973). The theory says that audiences are not passive receivers. They actively choose and use media to meet their own needs. Here, the theory helps to understand why viewers watch AI-generated films and traditionally produced films, and what they get from each. Three gratifications are studied:

- *Entertainment and enjoyment*: the pleasure and fun gained from watching the film.
- *Emotional gratification*: emotional connection, involvement and the impact of the story.
- *Aesthetic gratification*: appreciation of visuals, cinematography, effects and overall presentation.

Using this theory, this paper checks whether viewers see AI films and live films differently in storytelling, visual experience, emotional engagement, creativity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 1 shows the framework of this paper. The film type (live film or AI film) is compared through the three gratifications. The factors found in recent studies, namely perceived authenticity, narrative engagement and human creative input, are treated as things that may affect the viewer's response. They are checked in the survey through questions on how real the characters felt and how consistent the scenes looked, on attention, emotion and story clarity, and on whether AI can replace human filmmakers.

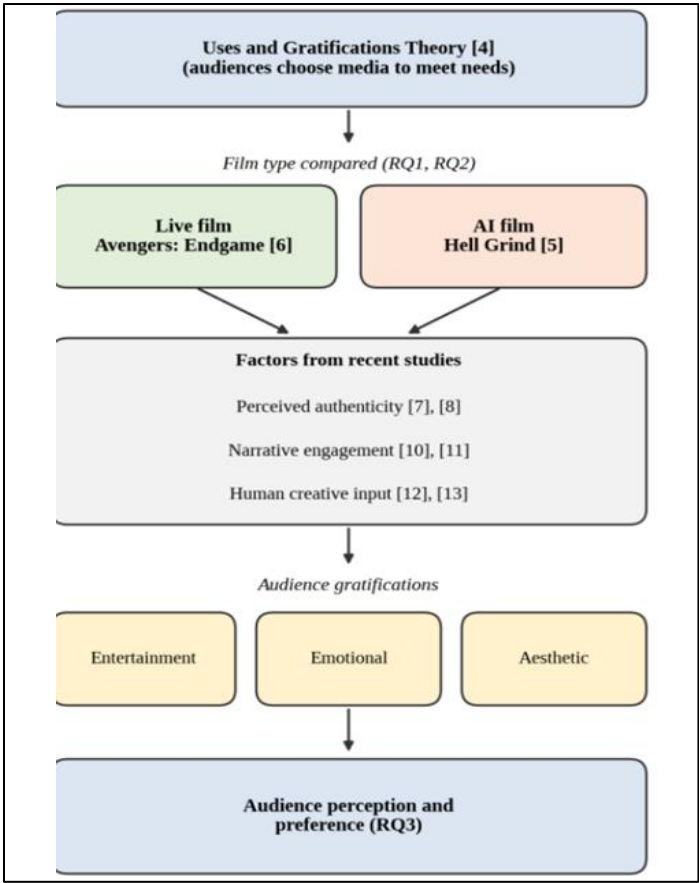


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of this paper.

Objectives

- *R01*: To compare AI-generated films and traditionally produced films based on storytelling, visual quality and overall filmmaking approach.
- *R02*: To understand the differences in creative processes between AI-generated filmmaking and conventional filmmaking.
- *R03*: To examine audience perceptions and preferences towards AI-generated films compared with traditionally produced films.

Research questions

- *RQ1*: How do AI-generated films differ from traditionally produced films in storytelling, visual quality and filmmaking style?
- *RQ2*: What are the major differences in the creative process between AI-generated filmmaking and conventional filmmaking?
- *RQ3*: How do audiences perceive and prefer AI-generated films compared with traditionally produced films?

5 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Case comparison (RQ1 and RQ2)

Table 3 compares the two films on storytelling, characters, visual approach and creative process. The main difference is in how each film is made. Endgame is made from live performance, with real actors, a cinematographer, a composer and editors shaping what the viewer sees and hears (Box Office Mojo, n.d.). Hell Grind is made from text prompts, where each long prompt gives a short clip of about 15 seconds that is then joined together into a film (Bousquette, 2026).

Table 2: Comparison of Avengers: Endgame and Hell Grind.

Point	Avengers: Endgame	Hell Grind
Type	Live film (2019)	AI-generated film (2026)
Made by	Marvel Studios; directors Anthony and Joe Russo (Box Office Mojo, n.d.)	Higgsfield AI platform (Bousquette, 2026)
Length	181 minutes (Box Office Mojo, n.d.)	95 minutes (Bousquette, 2026)
Story	Finale of a long-running superhero series based on Marvel Comics (Box Office Mojo, n.d.)	Stand-alone action-fantasy about four thieves who fall into hell (Bousquette, 2026)
Characters	Famous actors such as Robert Downey Jr. and Chris Evans (Box Office Mojo, n.d.)	AI-generated characters
Visual approach	Live cinematography with a cinematographer and production designer (Box Office Mojo, n.d.)	AI-generated shots from text prompts, about 15 seconds each (Bousquette, 2026)
Sound and editing	Composer and editors in the crew (Box Office Mojo, n.d.)	Clips edited together into the film (Bousquette, 2026)
Creative control	Directors guide actors, camera and sets	Creators guide the AI through long prompts (Bousquette, 2026)
Purpose	Worldwide theatrical release; about \$2.799 billion gross (Box Office Mojo, n.d.)	Showcase of what the platform can do (Bousquette, 2026)

On storytelling and visual quality (RQ1), Endgame’s story is carried by well-known actors and a series that audiences have followed for years. Hell Grind is a stand-alone story with AI-generated characters. The literature shows that the main visual problem for AI films is keeping characters and style consistent across shots (Zhang et al., 2025), and that AI storytelling still needs human input (Zhu & Zhang, 2022). Reports on Hell Grind point to the same problem, because keeping scenes consistent over a feature-length film was a main challenge (Bousquette, 2026).

On creative process and creativity (RQ2), Endgame is made through acting, camera work, sets and effects, so the filmmaker guides real people and real equipment. Hell Grind was made by writing long prompts, generating short clips and editing them into a film (Bousquette, 2026). AI does not remove the need for film skill. The makers say a real understanding of cinematography is still needed (Bousquette, 2026), and FilMaster itself learns camera language from real films and follows the rough cut and fine cut of live post-production (Huang et al., 2025). In both cases the final feel of the film depends on human creative choices.

5.2 Audience survey: approach and respondents

The survey findings are shown below as pie images and are linked to the objectives (RO) and research questions (RQ) in Section 5. All 23 respondents rated 30 questions on a five-point scale (5 = most positive, 1 = most negative) for Film A (Avengers: Endgame, the live film) and again for Film B (Hell Grind, the AI film). Each pie shows how many of the 23 respondents chose each answer and what share this is. In the text below, the top answer means 5 points, a positive answer means 4 or 5 points, a neutral answer means 3 points and a negative answer means 1 or 2 points.

The findings map to this research as follows:

- *RO1 / RQ1* (storytelling, visual quality and filmmaking style): the findings on visuals, camerawork and sound (aesthetic), on how real and consistent the characters and scenes looked (realism and consistency), and on story and characters (storytelling and characters).
- *RO2 / RQ2* (creative process): the findings on creativity, human creative vision and distinct style, and on awareness, use of AI tools and the need for human filmmakers.
- *RO3 / RQ3* (audience perception and preference): the findings on entertainment, emotional connection, and satisfaction and recommendation.

Figure 2 shows that 60.9% of the respondents (14 of 23) come from a film-related course and 39.1% (9) from other backgrounds. Students form the largest group at 56.5% (13), followed by working professionals at 21.7% (5), business or self-employed respondents at 17.4% (4) and one homemaker at 4.3%. About two-thirds of the respondents (65.2%, 15) are aged 22–25, while 17.4% (4) are 19–21 and 17.4% (4) are 26 or above. The sample is young and mostly student-

based, which matches the convenience sampling plan in Section 3.3, but it also means the findings describe young, media-aware viewers and not the general audience.

5.3 Findings, analysis and interpretation of this research

This section gives the findings and analysis of this research for each of the 30 questions. For every question, the pie on the left is for Film A (Avengers: Endgame) and the pie on the right is for Film B (Hell Grind). Each pie shows how many respondents chose each answer and what share of the 23 respondents this is. A short interpretation follows each pair of pies.

5.3.1 Q1. I enjoyed watching this film.

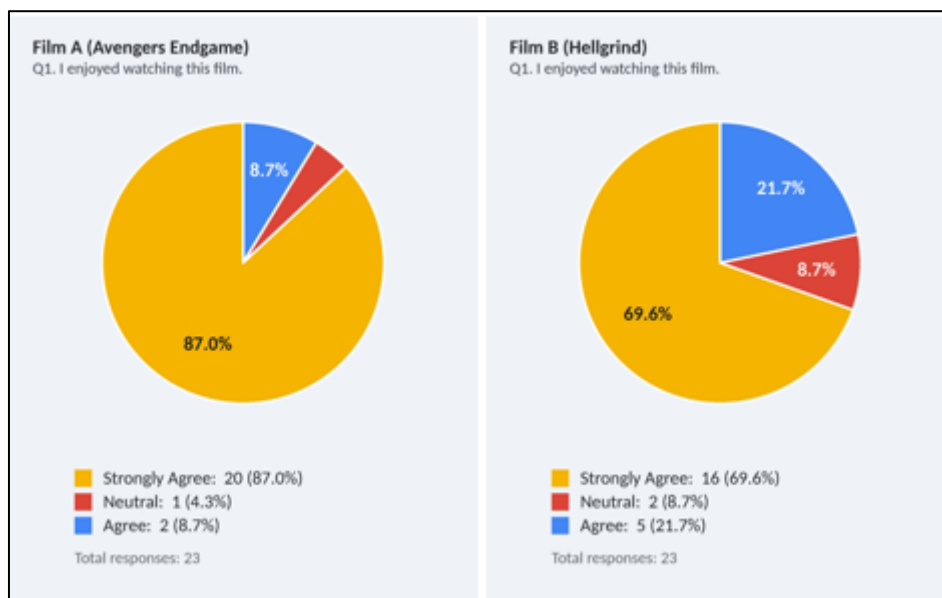


Figure 2: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to “I enjoyed watching this film.

For Avengers: Endgame, 87.0% ($n = 20$) of the respondents gave the top answer, 8.7% ($n = 2$) gave 4 points and 4.3% ($n = 1$) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 69.6% ($n = 16$) gave the top answer, 21.7% ($n = 5$) gave 4 points and 8.7% ($n = 2$) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 91.3% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 17.4 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the respondents enjoyed the live film more strongly, but both films got mostly positive answers.

5.3.2 Q2. This film held my attention till the end of the clip.

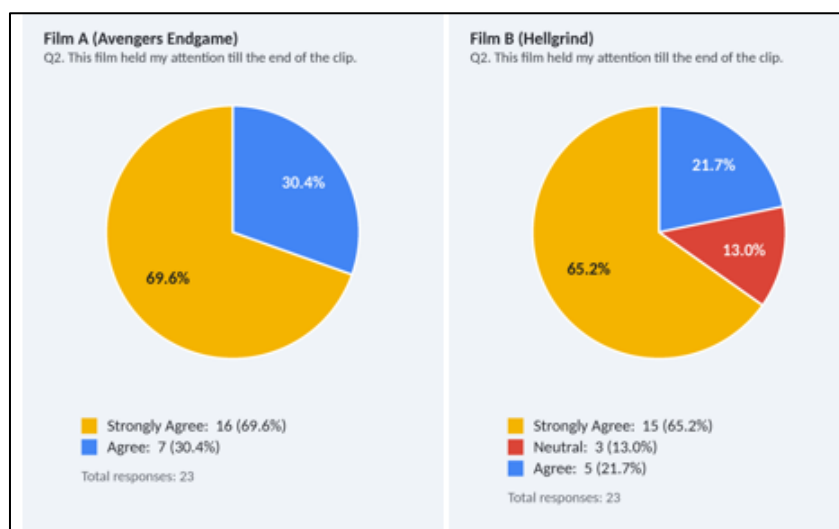


Figure 3: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to “This film held my attention till the end of the clip.

For Avengers: Endgame, 69.6% (n = 16) of the respondents gave the top answer and 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points. For Hell Grind, 65.2% (n = 15) gave the top answer, 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points and 13.0% (n = 3) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 100.0% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 87.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 4.4 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the live film held attention better, because every respondent was *positive about it*, while the AI film got three neutral answers.

5.3.3 Q3. I would like to watch more films like this.

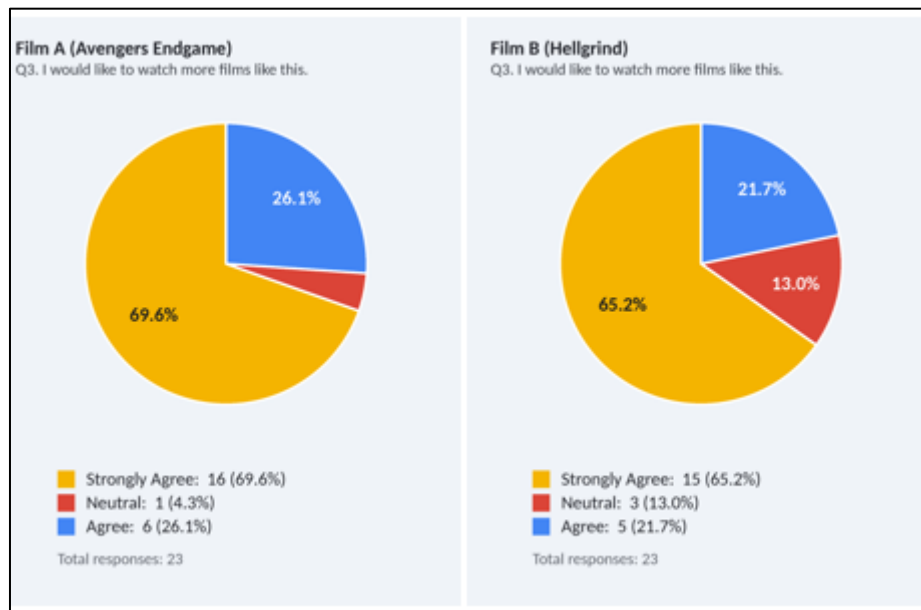


Figure 4: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to “I would like to watch more films like this.

For Avengers: Endgame, 69.6% (n = 16) of the respondents gave the top answer, 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 65.2% (n = 15) gave the top answer, 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points and 13.0% (n = 3) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 87.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 4.4 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the respondents were slightly keener to watch more films like Avengers: Endgame, but both films got mostly positive answers.

5.3.4 Q4. I felt emotionally connected to the characters.

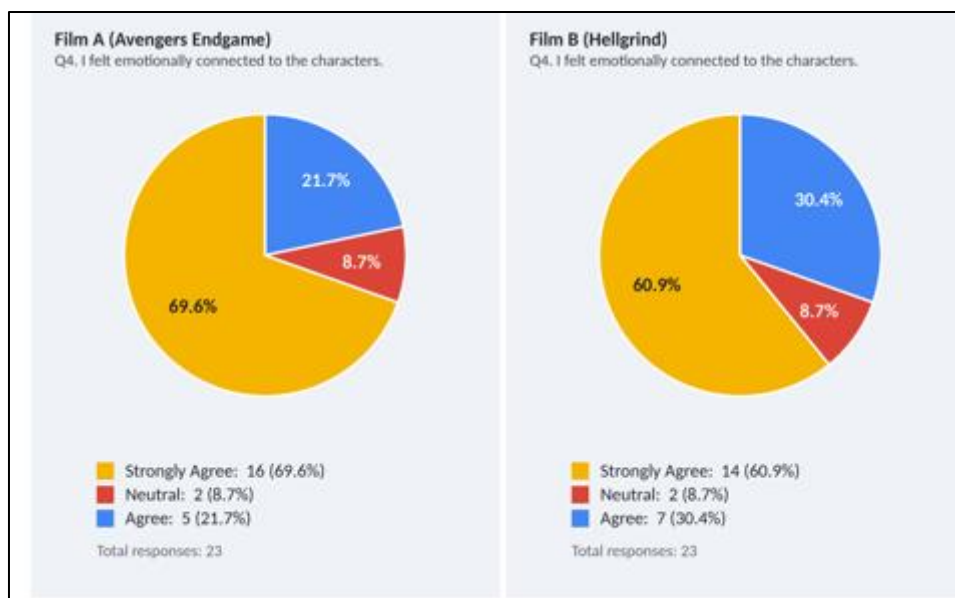


Figure 5: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to “I felt emotionally connected to the characters.

For Avengers: Endgame, 69.6% (n = 16) of the respondents gave the top answer, 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 60.9% (n = 14) gave the top answer, 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 91.3% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 91.3% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 8.7 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the live film made a slightly stronger emotional connection, although the total of positive answers was the same for both films.

5.3.5 Q5. The story made me feel strong emotions such as excitement, tension or sadness.

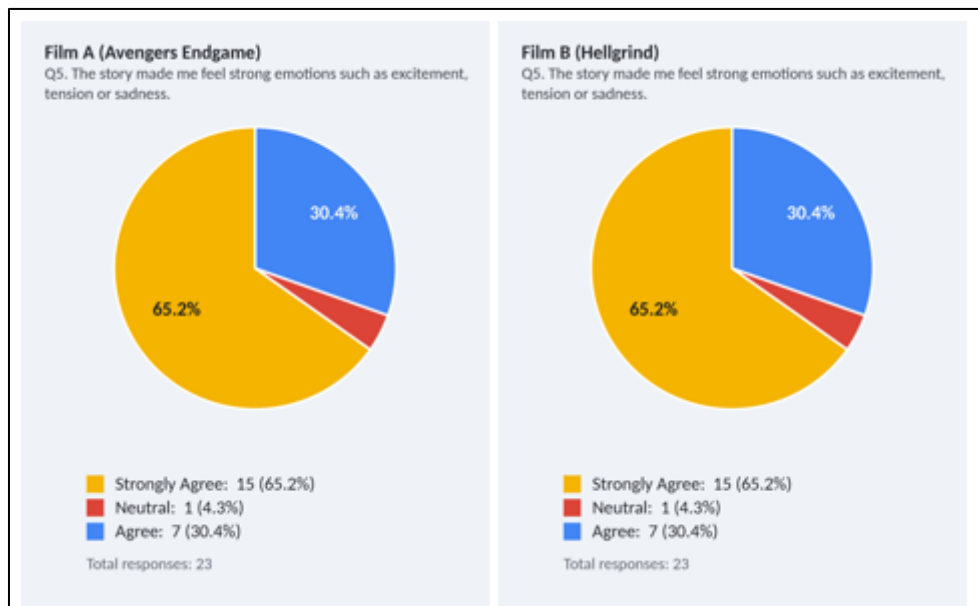


Figure 6: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to "The story made me feel strong emotions such as excitement, tension or sadness.

For Avengers: Endgame, 65.2% (n = 15) of the respondents gave the top answer, 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 65.2% (n = 15) gave the top answer, 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The share of top answers was the same for both films. So both films moved the respondents in the same way, which means the AI film can create strong emotions as much as the live film.

5.3.6 Q6. The emotions shown by the characters felt genuine.

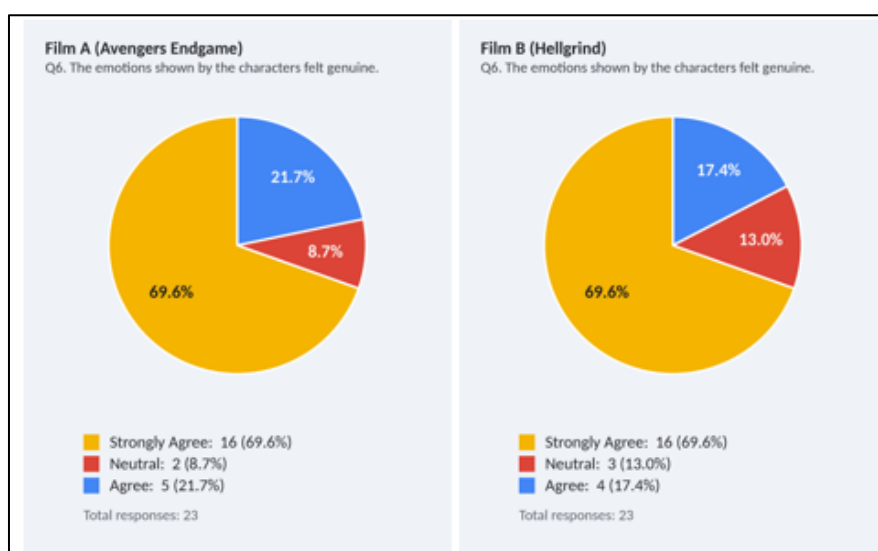


Figure 7: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to "The emotions shown by the characters felt genuine.

For Avengers: Endgame, 69.6% (n = 16) of the respondents gave the top answer, 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 69.6% (n = 16) gave the top answer, 17.4% (n = 4) gave 4 points and 13.0% (n = 3) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 91.3% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 87.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The share of top answers was the same for both films. So the feeling of genuine emotion was equally strong for both films, but the AI film got one more neutral answer.

Q7. The visuals looked impressive

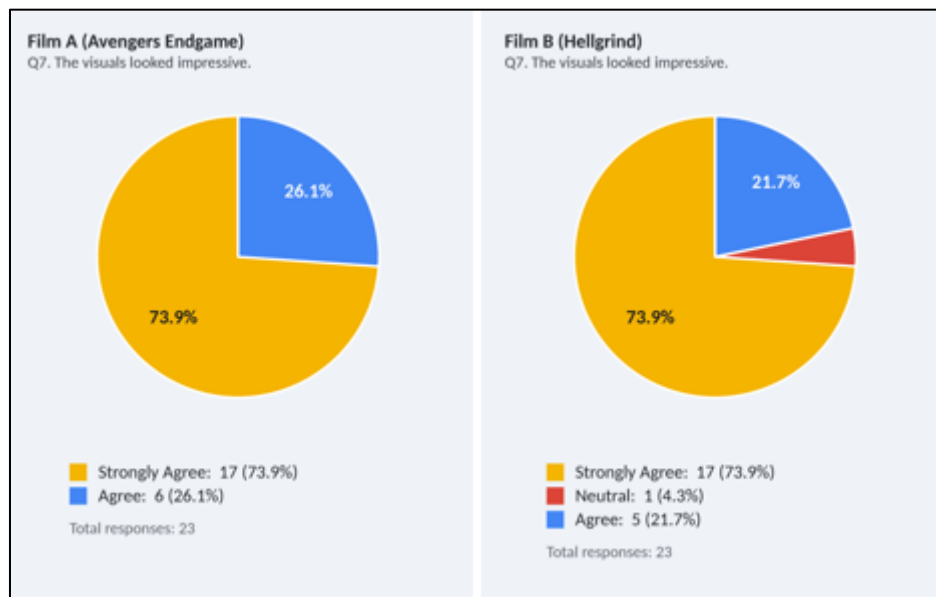


Figure 8: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The visuals looked impressive.

For Avengers: Endgame, 73.9% (n = 17) of the respondents gave the top answer and 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points. For Hell Grind, 73.9% (n = 17) gave the top answer, 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 100.0% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The share of top answers was the same for both films. So the visuals impressed the respondents equally in both films, and the AI film got only one neutral answer.

5.4 Q8. The camera work and variety of shots were effective.

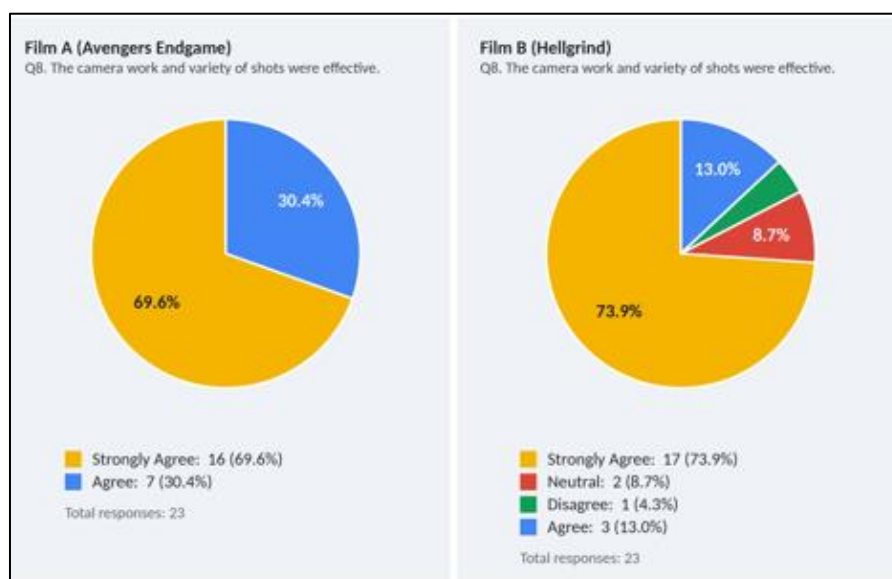


Figure 9: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to the camera work and variety of shots were effective.

For Avengers: Endgame, 69.6% (n = 16) of the respondents gave the top answer and 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points. For Hell Grind, 73.9% (n = 17) gave the top answer, 13.0% (n = 3) gave 4 points, 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer and 4.3% (n = 1) gave 2 points. Altogether, 100.0% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 87.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 4.3 percentage points more respondents for Hell Grind. So the camera work of the AI film got slightly more top answers, but it also got neutral and negative answers, while every respondent was positive about the live film.

5.4.1 Q9. The sound, music and effects added to the mood.

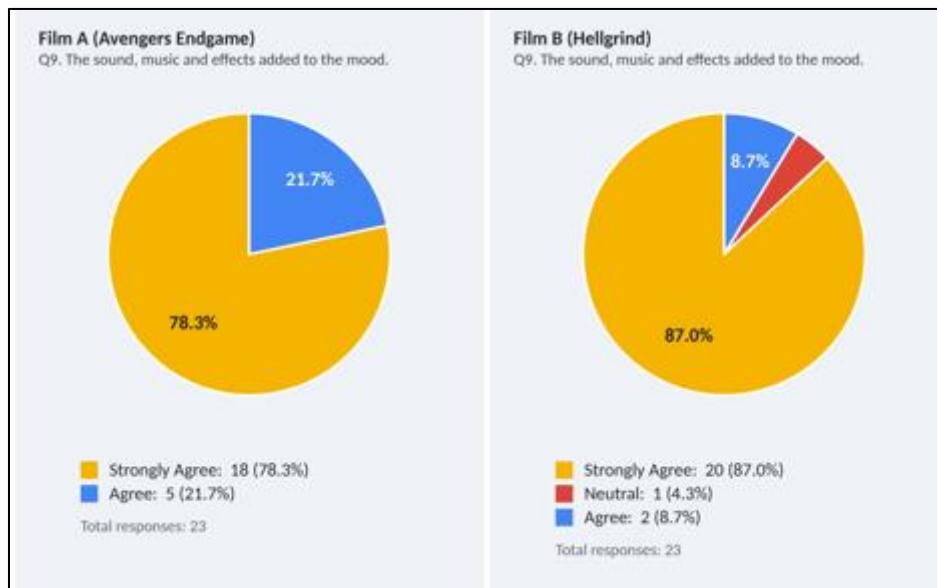


Figure 10: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The sound, music and effects added to the mood.

For Avengers: Endgame, 78.3% (n = 18) of the respondents gave the top answer and 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points. For Hell Grind, 87.0% (n = 20) gave the top answer, 8.7% (n = 2) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 100.0% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 8.7 percentage points more respondents for Hell Grind. So sound was a strong point of the AI film, and it got more top answers than the live film.

5.4.2 Q10. The characters and the world felt real and believable.

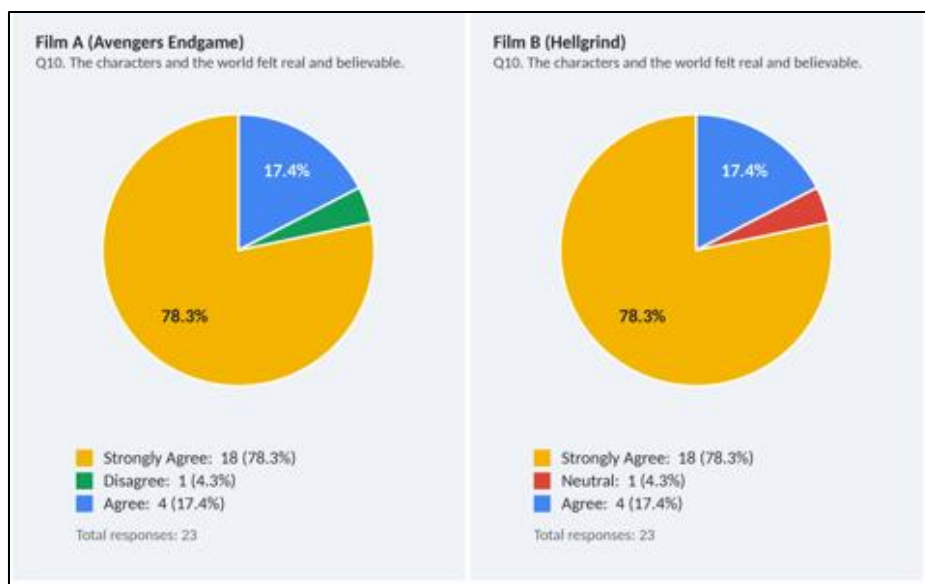


Figure 11: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to the characters and the world felt real and believable.

For Avengers: Endgame, 78.3% (n = 18) of the respondents gave the top answer, 17.4% (n = 4) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave 2 points. For Hell Grind, 78.3% (n = 18) gave the top answer, 17.4% (n = 4) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The share of top answers was the same for both films. So both films felt equally believable, with one negative answer for the live film and one neutral answer for the AI film.

5.4.3 Q11. The characters and scenes looked consistent throughout the clip.

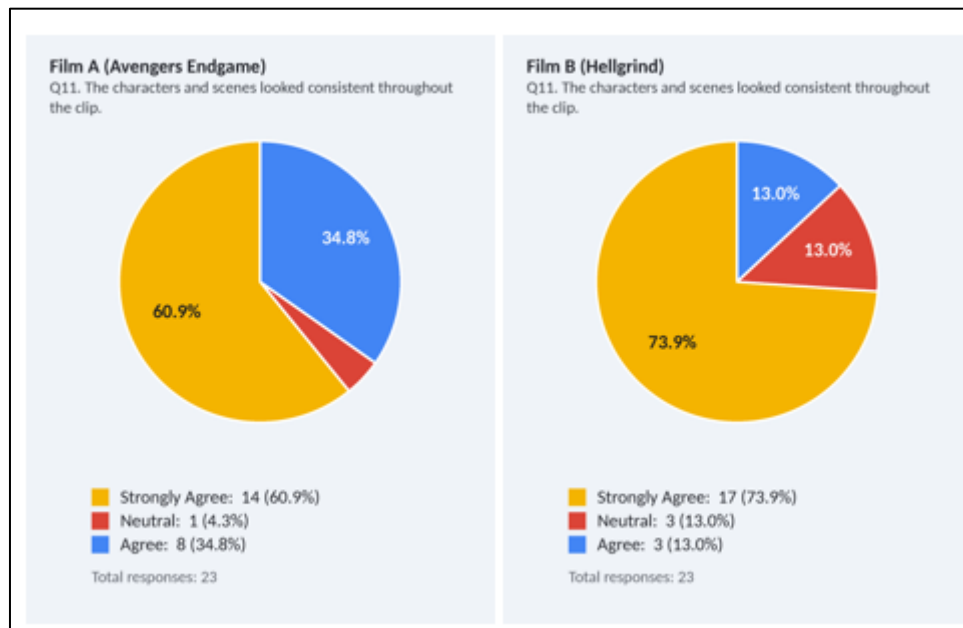


Figure 12: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The characters and scenes looked consistent throughout the clip.

For Avengers: Endgame, 60.9% (n = 14) of the respondents gave the top answer, 34.8% (n = 8) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 73.9% (n = 17) gave the top answer, 13.0% (n = 3) gave 4 points and 13.0% (n = 3) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 87.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 13.0 percentage points more respondents for Hell Grind. So more respondents strongly felt that the AI film was consistent, but its neutral answers made its positive total lower than the live film.

5.4.4 Q12. The movements of the characters looked natural.



Figure 13: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The movements of the characters looked natural.

For Avengers: Endgame, 73.9% (n = 17) of the respondents gave the top answer, 17.4% (n = 4) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 69.6% (n = 16) gave the top answer and 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points. Altogether, 91.3% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 100.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 4.3 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So every respondent found the movements in the AI film natural, even though the live film got one more top answer.

5.4.5 Q13. I was completely absorbed in the story.

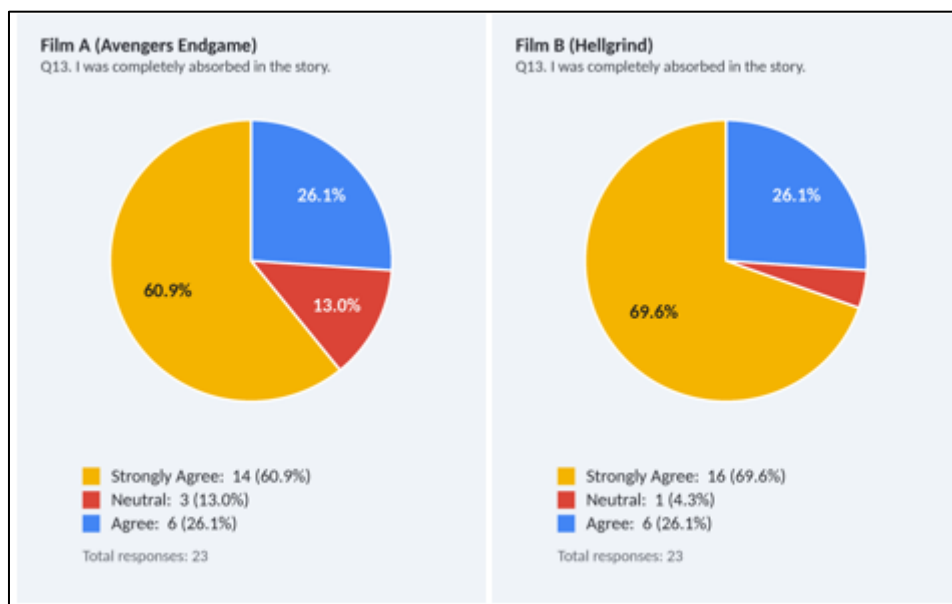


Figure 14: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I was completely absorbed in the story.

For Avengers: Endgame, 60.9% (n = 14) of the respondents gave the top answer, 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points and 13.0% (n = 3) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 69.6% (n = 16) gave the top answer, 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 87.0% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 8.7 percentage points more respondents for Hell Grind. So the respondents were absorbed in the story of the AI film slightly more than in the live film.

5.4.6 Q14. The story was clear and easy to follow.

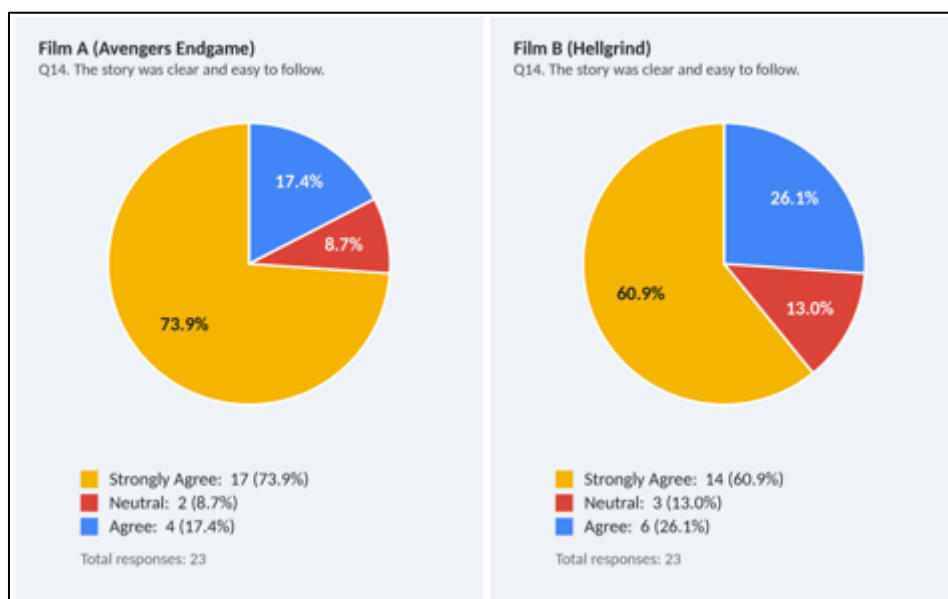


Figure 15: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The story was clear and easy to follow.

For Avengers: Endgame, 73.9% (n = 17) of the respondents gave the top answer, 17.4% (n = 4) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 60.9% (n = 14) gave the top answer, 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points and

13.0% (n = 3) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 91.3% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 87.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 13.0 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the story of the live film was clearer for the respondents, while the AI film got three neutral answers.

5.4.7 Q15. I wanted to know what would happen next.

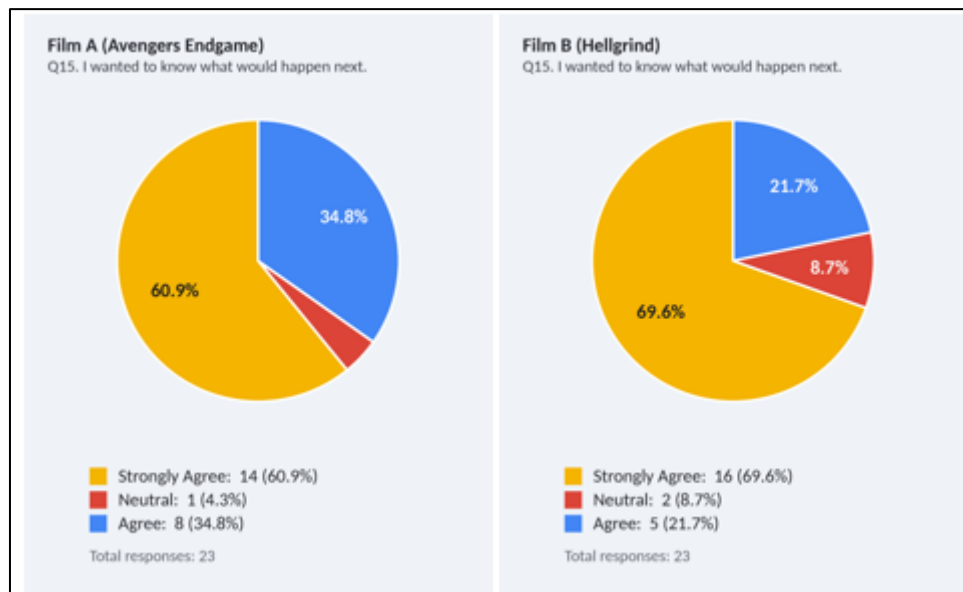


Figure 16: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I wanted to know what would happen next.

For Avengers: Endgame, 60.9% (n = 14) of the respondents gave the top answer, 34.8% (n = 8) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 69.6% (n = 16) gave the top answer, 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 91.3% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 8.7 percentage points more respondents for Hell Grind. So the AI film made the respondents more curious about what happens next, while the live film had a slightly higher positive total.

5.4.8 Q16. The film felt creative and original.

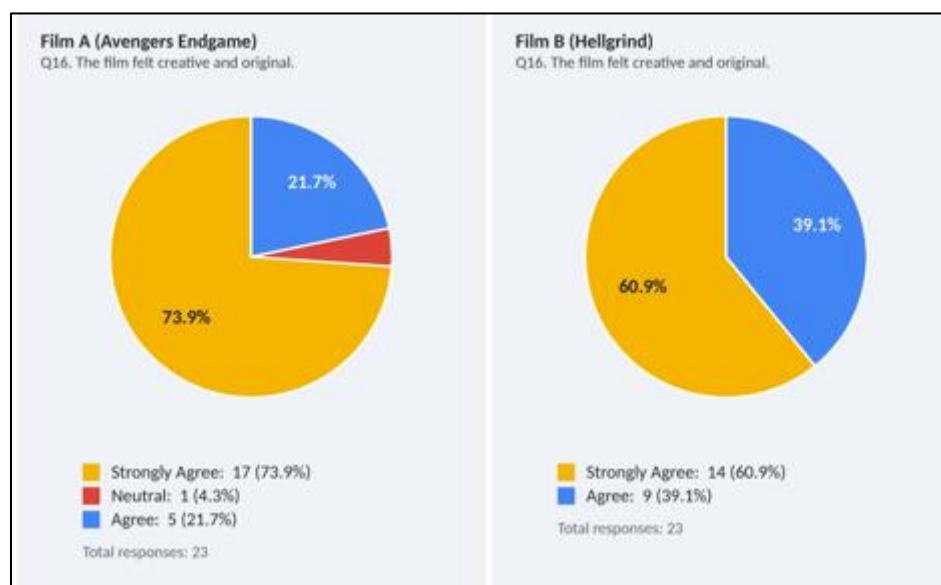


Figure 17: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The film felt creative and original.

For Avengers: Endgame, 73.9% (n = 17) of the respondents gave the top answer, 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 60.9% (n = 14) gave the top answer and 39.1% (n = 9) gave 4 points. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 100.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The

top answer was chosen by 13.0 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So every respondent found the AI film creative, but the live film got more top answers for being creative and original.

5.4.9 Q17. I could feel a human creative vision behind this film.

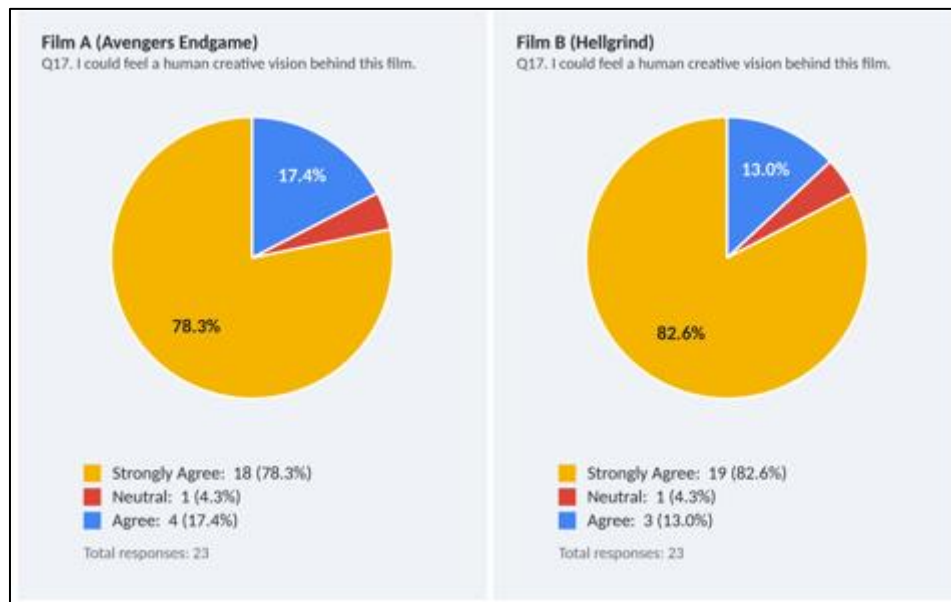


Figure 18: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I could feel a human creative vision behind this film.

For Avengers: Endgame, 78.3% (n = 18) of the respondents gave the top answer, 17.4% (n = 4) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 82.6% (n = 19) gave the top answer, 13.0% (n = 3) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 4.3 percentage points more respondents for Hell Grind. So the respondents felt a human creative vision behind both films, slightly more strongly in the AI film.

5.4.10 Q18. The film had a distinct style of its own.

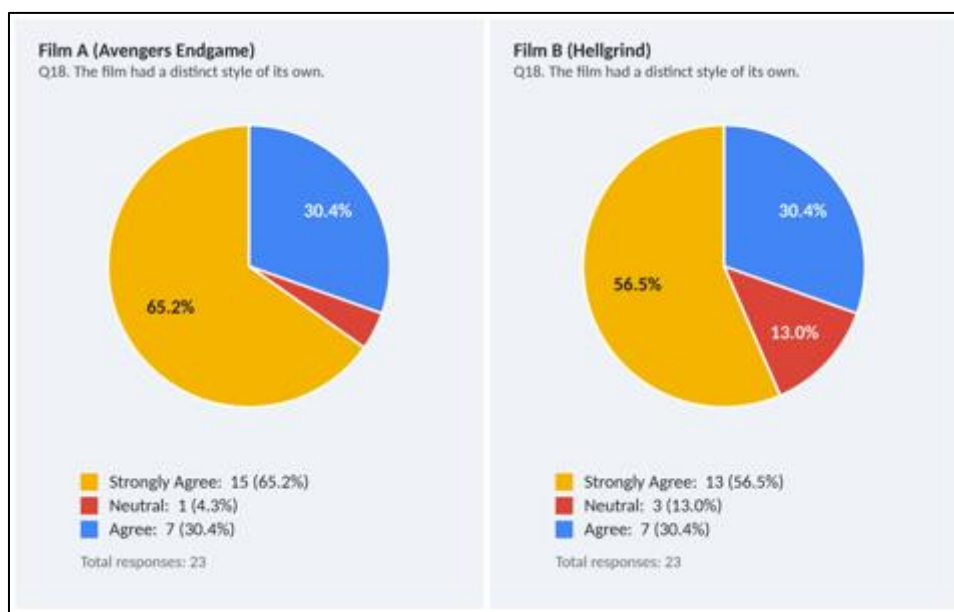


Figure 19: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The film had a distinct style of its own.

For Avengers: Endgame, 65.2% (n = 15) of the respondents gave the top answer, 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 56.5% (n = 13) gave the top answer, 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points and 13.0% (n = 3) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 87.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 8.7 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the style of the live film was clearer for the respondents, while the AI film got three neutral answers.

5.4.11 Q19. The story was well structured, with a clear beginning and development.

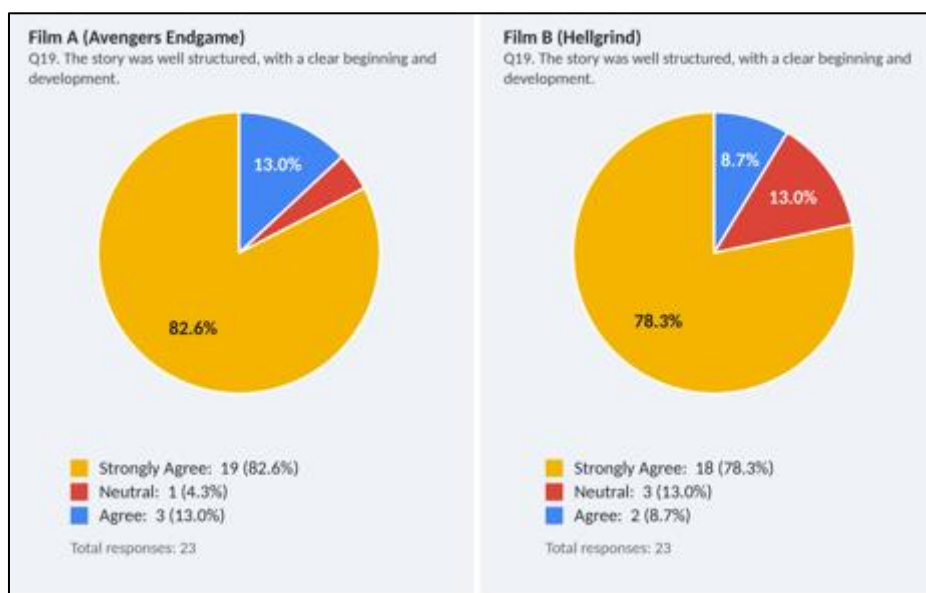


Figure 20: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The story was well structured, with a clear beginning and development.

For Avengers: Endgame, 82.6% (n = 19) of the respondents gave the top answer, 13.0% (n = 3) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 78.3% (n = 18) gave the top answer, 8.7% (n = 2) gave 4 points and 13.0% (n = 3) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 87.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 4.3 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the live film was seen as better structured, while the AI film got three neutral answers.

5.4.12 Q20. The characters were interesting and memorable.

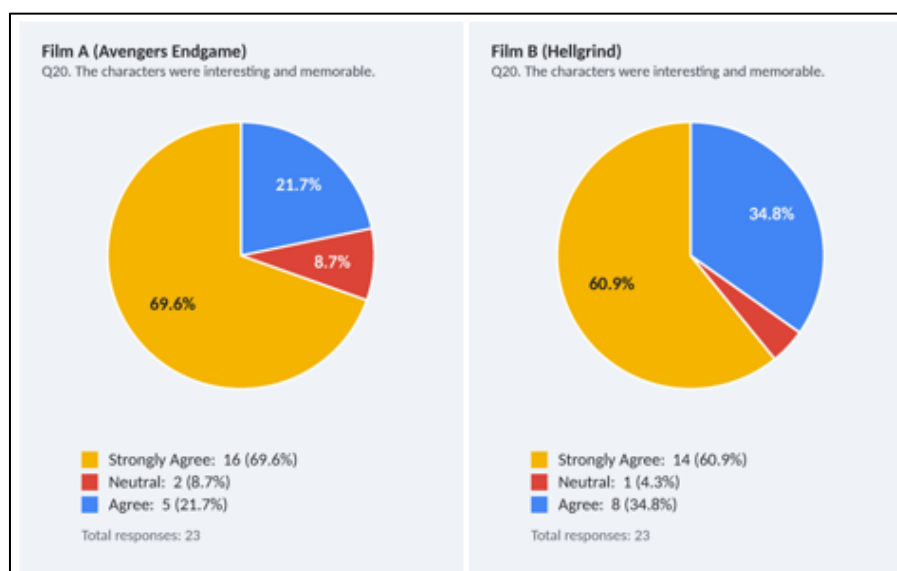


Figure 21: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The characters were interesting and memorable.

For Avengers: Endgame, 69.6% (n = 16) of the respondents gave the top answer, 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 60.9% (n = 14) gave the top answer, 34.8% (n = 8) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 91.3% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 8.7 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the characters of the live film were remembered more strongly, although the AI film got one more positive answer in total.

5.4.13 Q21. The actions of the characters suited the story.

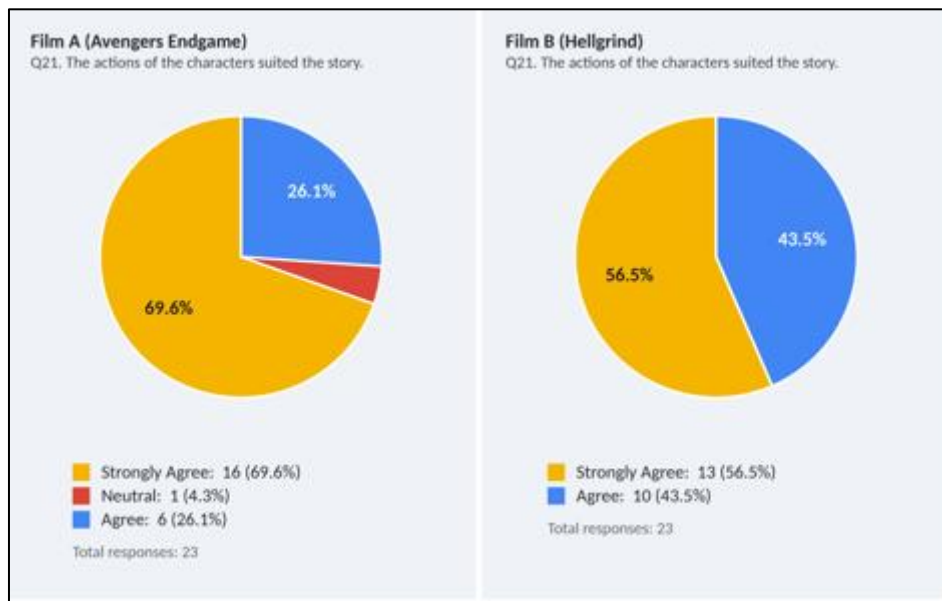


Figure 22: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to The actions of the characters suited the story.

For Avengers: Endgame, 69.6% (n = 16) of the respondents gave the top answer, 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 56.5% (n = 13) gave the top answer and 43.5% (n = 10) gave 4 points. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 100.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 13.1 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the actions of the characters suited the story in both films. Every respondent was positive about the AI film, but not as strongly as for the live film.

5.4.14 Q22. Overall, I am satisfied with this film.

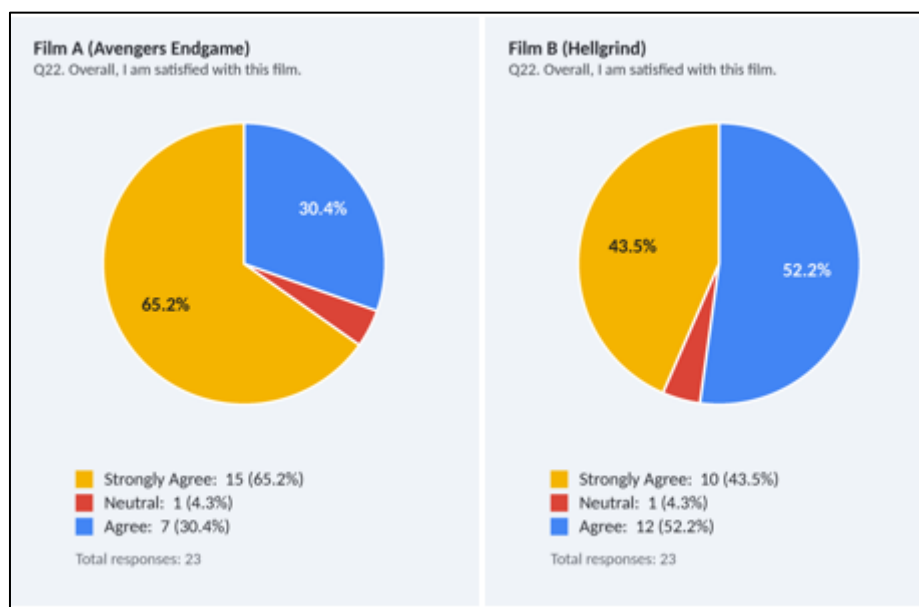


Figure 23: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to Overall, I am satisfied with this film.

For Avengers: Endgame, 65.2% (n = 15) of the respondents gave the top answer, 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 43.5% (n = 10) gave the top answer, 52.2% (n = 12) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 21.7 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the live film left many more respondents fully satisfied, although the positive total was the same for both films.

5.4.15 Q23. I would recommend this film to my friends.

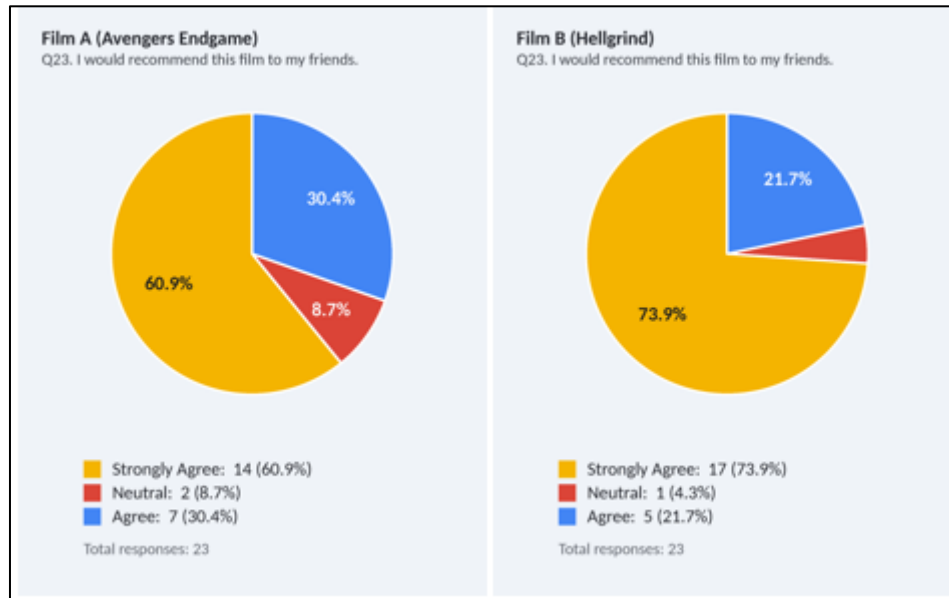


Figure 24: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I would recommend this film to my friends.

For Avengers: Endgame, 60.9% (n = 14) of the respondents gave the top answer, 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 73.9% (n = 17) gave the top answer, 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 91.3% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 13.0 percentage points more respondents for Hell Grind. So the respondents were more ready to recommend the AI film to friends, although both films got mostly positive answers.

5.4.16 Q24. I would like to watch the full film.

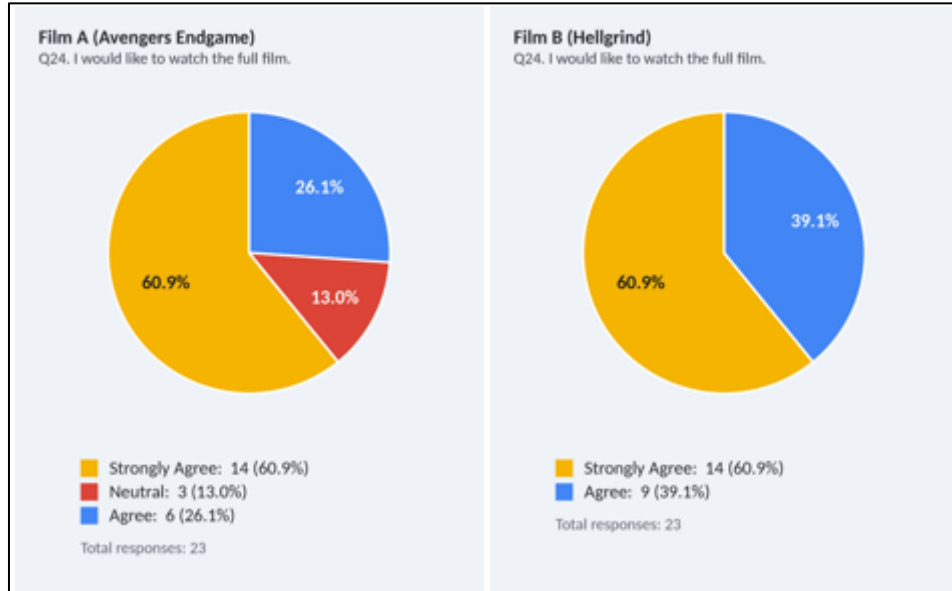


Figure 25: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I would like to watch the full film.

For Avengers: Endgame, 60.9% (n = 14) of the respondents gave the top answer, 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points and 13.0% (n = 3) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 60.9% (n = 14) gave the top answer and 39.1% (n = 9) gave 4 points. Altogether, 87.0% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 100.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The share of top answers was the same for both films. So the interest in the full film was equally strong for both, and every respondent was positive about the full AI film.

5.4.17 Q25. I am aware that full films can now be made using AI.

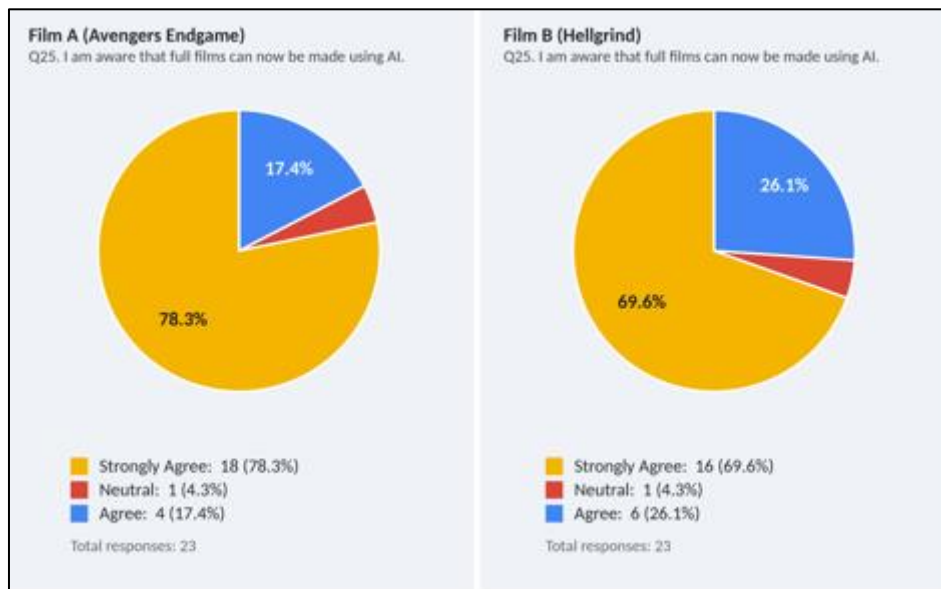


Figure 26: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I am aware that full films can now be made using AI.

For Avengers: Endgame, 78.3% (n = 18) of the respondents gave the top answer, 17.4% (n = 4) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 69.6% (n = 16) gave the top answer, 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 8.7 percentage points more respondents for Avengers: Endgame. So the respondents are well aware of AI filmmaking, with a slightly stronger response on the Avengers: Endgame side.

5.4.18 Q26. I have watched AI-generated films or videos before.

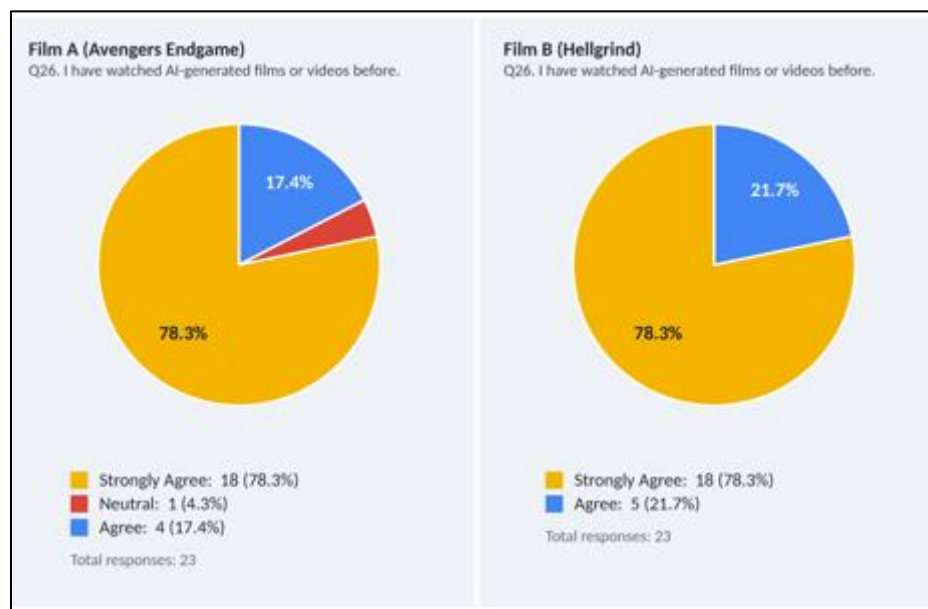


Figure 27: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I have watched AI-generated films or videos before.

For Avengers: Endgame, 78.3% (n = 18) of the respondents gave the top answer, 17.4% (n = 4) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 78.3% (n = 18) gave the top answer and 21.7% (n = 5) gave 4 points. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 100.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The share of top answers was the same for both films. So the respondents have already watched AI content, and Hell Grind was not their first experience of it.

5.4.19 Q27. I have used AI tools to create images, videos, scripts or music.

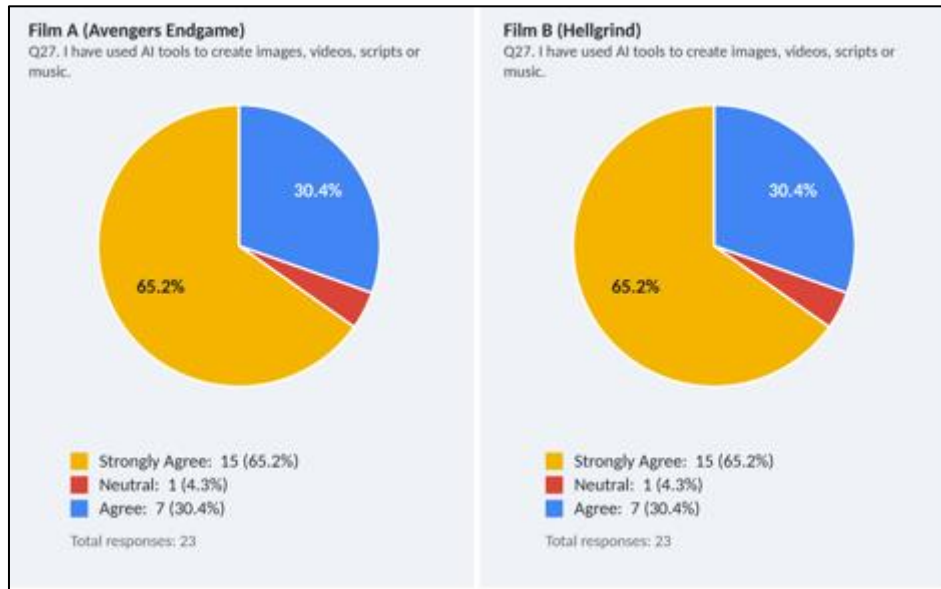


Figure 28: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I have used AI tools to create images, videos, scripts or music.

For Avengers: Endgame, 65.2% (n = 15) of the respondents gave the top answer, 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 65.2% (n = 15) gave the top answer, 30.4% (n = 7) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The share of top answers was the same for both films. So AI tools are already part of the creative life of the respondents, and the answers were the same on both sides.

5.4.20 Q28. I can usually tell whether a film is AI-generated or made with live shooting.

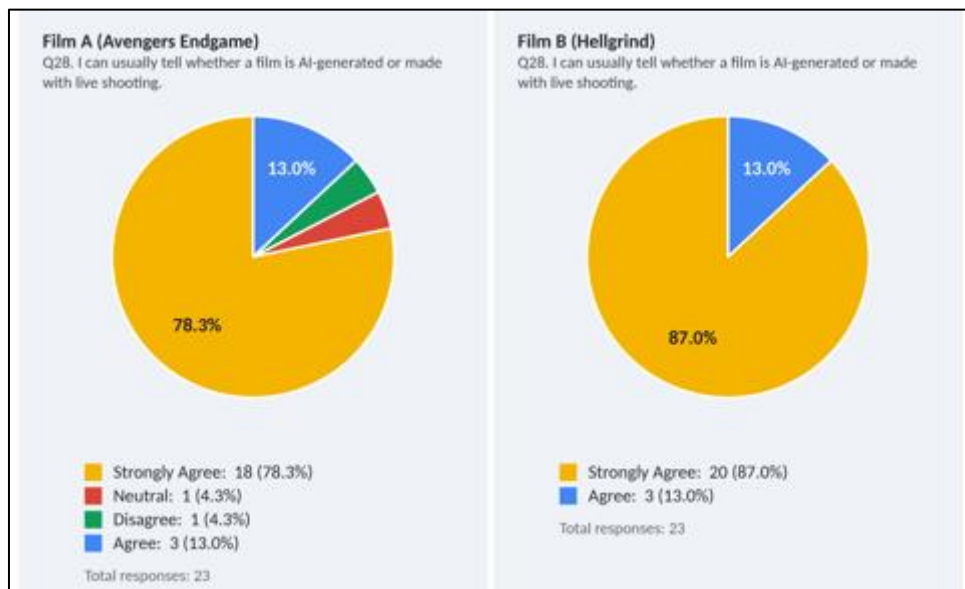


Figure 29: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I can usually tell whether a film is AI-generated or made with live shooting.

For Avengers: Endgame, 78.3% (n = 18) of the respondents gave the top answer, 13.0% (n = 3) gave 4 points, 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer and 4.3% (n = 1) gave 2 points. For Hell Grind, 87.0% (n = 20) gave the top answer and 13.0% (n = 3) gave 4 points. Altogether, 91.3% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 100.0% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The top answer was chosen by 8.7 percentage points more respondents for Hell Grind. So the respondents feel confident about telling AI films from live films, with a slightly stronger response on the Hell Grind side.

5.4.21 Q29. I would like to be told clearly when a film is AI-generated.

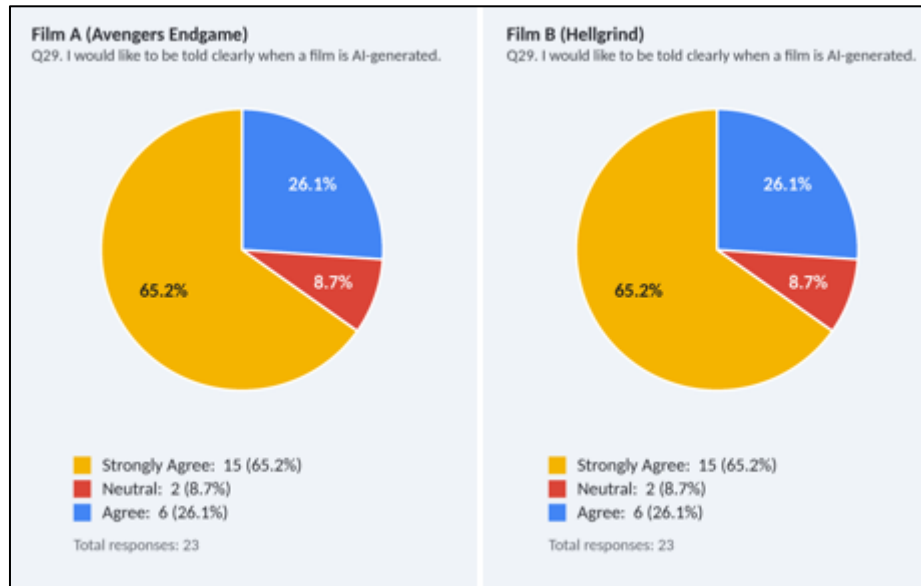


Figure 30: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to I would like to be told clearly when a film is AI-generated.

For Avengers: Endgame, 65.2% (n = 15) of the respondents gave the top answer, 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 65.2% (n = 15) gave the top answer, 26.1% (n = 6) gave 4 points and 8.7% (n = 2) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 91.3% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 91.3% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The share of top answers was the same for both films. So the respondents clearly want to be told when a film is made by AI, and the answers were the same on both sides.

5.4.22 Q30. AI films can match live films in the future, but human filmmakers will still be needed.

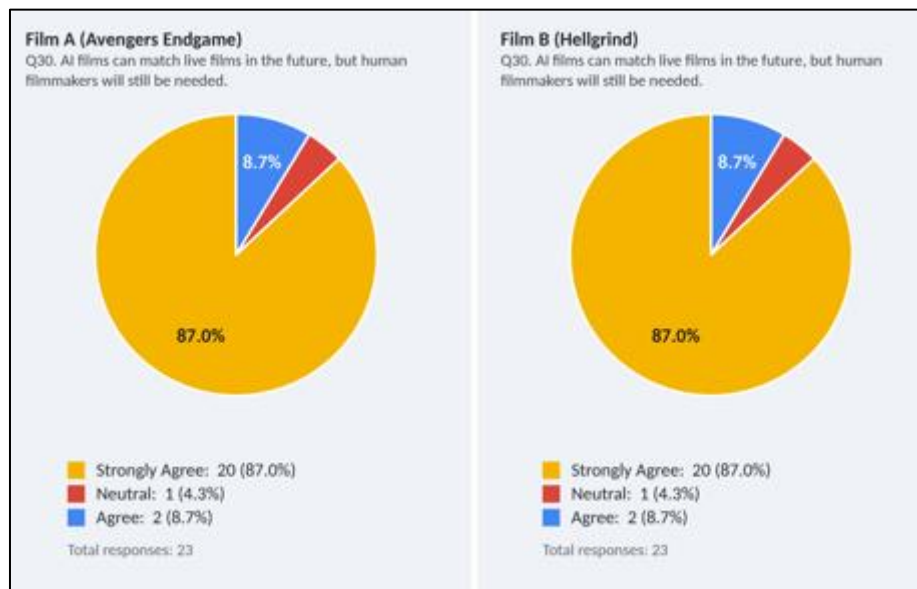


Figure 31: Responses of Film A (left) and Film B (right) to AI films can match live films in the future, but human filmmakers will still be needed.

For Avengers: Endgame, 87.0% (n = 20) of the respondents gave the top answer, 8.7% (n = 2) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. For Hell Grind, 87.0% (n = 20) gave the top answer, 8.7% (n = 2) gave 4 points and 4.3% (n = 1) gave a neutral answer. Altogether, 95.7% of the answers for Avengers: Endgame and 95.7% for Hell Grind were positive (4 or 5 points). The share of top answers was the same for both films. So the respondents believe AI films may match live films in the future but human filmmakers will still be needed, and the answers were the same on both sides.

Overall interpretation of this research

Taken together, the results show that the 23 respondents reacted well to both films. For almost every question, most of the respondents gave a positive answer for both Avengers: Endgame and Hell Grind. Across the first 24 questions, 94.6% of all answers were positive for the live film and 92.9% for the AI film. The live film got more top answers on 12 of these questions, the AI film got more on 7, and both were equal on 5. So the main difference between the two films is not whether viewers liked them, but how strongly they liked them. This is why the number of top answers is used below to compare the films.

The live film, Avengers: Endgame, was stronger on story, characters and overall satisfaction. More respondents gave the top answer for its story being clear and easy to follow (17 against 14), its characters being interesting and memorable (16 against 14), the actions of its characters suiting the story (16 against 13) and its distinct style (15 against 13). It also led on enjoyment (20 against 16), emotional connection to the characters (16 against 14) and feeling creative and original (17 against 14). The biggest gap was in overall satisfaction, where 15 respondents gave the top answer for the live film and 10 for the AI film, although 22 of the 23 respondents were satisfied with both films.

The AI film, Hell Grind, was close to the live film in what viewers can see and hear, and it was ahead on a few points. The visuals got the same number of top answers for both films (17 each), and 22 of 23 respondents were positive about the AI visuals. All 23 respondents found the movements of the AI characters natural, all 23 found the AI film creative and all 23 wanted to watch the full AI film. More respondents gave the top answer for its sound, music and effects (20 against 18), recommending it to friends (17 against 14), wanting to know what happens next (16 against 14), being absorbed in the story (16 against 14) and feeling a human creative vision behind it (19 against 18). Both films made respondents feel strong emotions (22 positive answers each) and both felt believable (22 positive answers each). One point where some viewers were less sure about the AI film was consistency: more respondents gave the top answer for its scenes looking consistent (17 against 14), but three stayed neutral, so its positive total was lower (20 against 22).

These results can be linked to the objectives and research questions. For the first objective (R01 / RQ1: storytelling, visual quality and filmmaking style), the AI film is close to the live film in visuals, sound and movement, but the live film is clearer and stronger in story, characters and style. For the second objective (R02 / RQ2: creative process), the respondents felt a human creative vision behind both films almost equally (22 positive answers each), which shows that they see human direction behind an AI film too. All 23 respondents found the AI film creative, although the live film got more top answers for being creative and original and for having its own style. For the third objective (R03 / RQ3: audience perception and preference), both films gave strong enjoyment and emotion, but the live film left more respondents fully satisfied and more strongly connected to its characters, while the AI film did well on recommendation, curiosity and the wish to watch the full film.

The last six questions are about the respondents themselves, so the answers are almost the same for both films. Most respondents know that full films can now be made with AI (22 of 23 for each film), have watched AI films or videos before (22 and 23 of 23) and have used AI tools themselves (22 of 23 for each film). They also feel they can tell an AI film from a live film (23 of 23 on the Hell Grind side and 21 on the Avengers: Endgame side), want to be told clearly when a film is made by AI (21 of 23) and believe that AI films may match live films in the future but human filmmakers will still be needed (22 of 23, with 20 giving the top answer). This means the opinions on Hell Grind come from informed viewers who already know about AI filmmaking. It also shows that they want openness about AI and still value human filmmakers. However, the confidence in telling the two apart is only what the respondents believe about themselves, so it should not be taken as proof of the skill.

Overall, the results show that the respondents enjoyed both films and found both strong in visuals and emotion. The live film gave a fuller experience in story, characters and satisfaction, while the AI film showed that it can already match a live film in sound, movement and visual impact. The respondents accept AI films as entertaining, want to be told when a film is made by AI and believe that human filmmakers will still be needed. Because the sample is small (23 respondents) and was chosen by convenience sampling, these results show the views of this group only and should not be applied to all audiences.

6 DISCUSSION

The survey shows that the 23 respondents enjoyed both films. Almost all of them gave positive answers for Avengers: Endgame and Hell Grind on enjoyment, attention, emotion and visuals. This means an AI film like Hell Grind can now give viewers the same kind of fun and excitement as a big live film.

At the same time, the respondents gave the live film stronger ratings for story and characters. More of them found the story of Avengers: Endgame clear, well built and easy to follow, its characters more memorable and its style more its own. The biggest gap was in overall satisfaction, where 15 respondents gave the top answer to the live film and 10 to

the AI film. One reason may be that the live film has famous actors and a story that many viewers already know, while the AI film has to win its viewers within a short clip.

The AI film did better on what viewers can see and hear. Many respondents rated its sound, movement and visuals as high as, or higher than, the live film, and more respondents were ready to recommend it to friends and wanted to watch the full film. Still, a few respondents stayed neutral about its camera work and the consistency of its scenes, which shows that keeping the scenes steady is a weaker point of the AI film.

The answers also show that the audience values human work. Respondents felt a human creative vision behind both films, most of them believe AI films may match live films in the future but human filmmakers will still be needed, and most want to be told clearly when a film is made by AI. From the Uses and Gratifications point of view, a viewer does not judge a film by how it was made. The viewer judges what the film gives: fun, emotion and visual pleasure. On these three points the AI film did well, and the live film gave a slightly fuller experience.

7 CONCLUSION

This paper compared the live film *Avengers: Endgame* and the AI film *Hell Grind* through the views of 23 respondents. The respondents enjoyed both films and found both strong in visuals and emotion. The live film was stronger in story, characters, style and overall satisfaction, while the AI film was equal to or better than the live film in sound, movement, recommendation and the wish to watch the full film.

The respondents also felt a human creative vision behind both films, want clear information when a film is made by AI, and believe that human filmmakers will still be needed in the future. So, from the respondents' point of view, AI films are already enjoyable and can come close to live films in what viewers see and hear, but a live film still gives a fuller story and a stronger feeling of satisfaction. Because the group is small and was chosen by convenience, these findings show the views of these 23 respondents only.

Limitations and Suggestions

Because convenience sampling was used, the survey results cannot be generalised to all audiences, and the sample is mostly students. Only one live film and one AI film were compared. *Endgame* is a very large blockbuster and *Hell Grind* was made as a platform showcase, so neither stands for all films of its kind. The film details come from published reports. Future studies can use more films and a larger, more varied audience, and can also look at ethics and ownership in AI filmmaking.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

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