Are Social Media Algorithms Responsible for Increased Anxiety Among Teenagers?

Clear thesis that states the position and lists the main reasons the essay will develop.

Social media platforms play a central role in teenagers' daily lives, and much of what young users see is shaped by algorithms. These systems decide which posts appear, how often content is repeated, and what topics dominate a user's feed. Social media algorithms contribute to increased anxiety among teenagers by amplifying comparison, reinforcing negative content loops, and limiting exposure to healthier perspectives.

Introduces the topic and establishes why algorithms matter in teenagers' daily online experiences.

Explains the first mechanism linking algorithms to anxiety through repeated social comparison.

One way algorithms affect teen mental health is through constant comparison. Platforms prioritize content that generates strong engagement, which often means polished images, idealized lifestyles, and viral trends. Teenagers repeatedly see peers who appear happier, more successful, or more attractive. Over time, this creates unrealistic standards and encourages self-evaluation that can increase anxiety and self-doubt.

Algorithms also reinforce emotional patterns. When a teenager interacts with content related to stress, appearance, or mental health struggles, the platform responds by showing more of the same. Instead of offering balance, the feed can trap users in a narrow emotional space where anxious thoughts feel constant and unavoidable. This repetition makes it harder for teenagers to step away from negative feelings.

Shows how algorithmic repetition can intensify anxious thinking instead of reducing it.

Acknowledges the opposing view and explains why it does not fully account for algorithmic influence.

Critics argue that algorithms are neutral tools and that anxiety comes from how individuals use social media. Personal responsibility does matter, but this view overlooks how little control users actually have over what they see. Teenagers do not choose their feeds from scratch. Algorithms quietly guide attention and behavior, often without users realizing it.

Social media algorithms are not the sole cause of teen anxiety, but they play a significant role in shaping online experiences. Recognizing their influence is an important step toward creating healthier digital environments and setting clearer boundaries for young users.

Reinforces the main claim and broadens the discussion to responsibility and platform design.