Int. j. adv. multidisc. res. stud. 2026; 6(1):1260-1266

Received: 02-12-2025
Accepted: 12-01-2026

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Design and Development of an Ergonomically Enhanced Workspace

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2026.6.1.5662
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Abstract
This research explored the design and development of an ergonomically enhanced laboratory workspace tailored for learning environments across science academic disciplines, addressing prevalent challenges that compromise productivity, physical comfort, and long-term well-being. The study focused on mitigating issues such as musculoskeletal strain, eye fatigue, and cognitive overload, which are exacerbated by prolonged study sessions and poorly designed environments. Integrated principles of ergonomics, human-centered design, and adaptive technology informed the research, which proposed a holistic workspace solution that prioritizes user-specific needs. The methodology employed an interdisciplinary framework combining qualitative approaches, including detailed user needs assessments through surveys and interviews, observational studies of posture and workflow patterns, and iterative prototyping with feedback loops. Anticipated outcomes included enhanced workspace efficiency, reduced physical discomfort, and measurable improvements in academic performance metrics such as task completion rates and focus duration. The study also aimed to establish ergonomic guidelines for educational institutions, fostering healthier study habits and sustainable workspace practices. Findings contributed to the broader discourse on ergonomic innovation in academic and professional settings, offering scalable solutions adaptable to evolving technological and pedagogical demands. The research bridged gaps between ergonomic theory and practical application, advocating for learner-centered design in fostering academic success and well-being.

Keywords: Ergonomics, Laboratory Workspace, Productivity, Comfort, Technology, STEM Education, Zambia

1. Introduction

Educational landscape, serving as essential facilities for practical learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). However, the availability of ergonomic laboratory workspaces in learning environments remains limited. An ergonomic laboratory workspace is a lab environment specifically designed to support the comfort, safety, efficiency, and well-being of personnel while minimizing the risk of injury or strain. It combines proper layout, adjustable equipment, and workflow optimization to accommodate a range of body types, tasks, and durations of work.

Ergonomic laboratory workspace is not a new technology, but it remains unfamiliar to many, and adoption rates are remarkably low. With the substantial increase in learning institutions, it has become increasingly difficult for learners to perform science practicals due to inadequate workspace design. The concept for this ergonomic laboratory workspace was driven by the initiative of Zambia's National Science Centre (NSC) to provide mobile science laboratories to schools. This initiative originated from the government's recognition of the critical need to enhance science education across the country, particularly addressing the widespread lack of functional science laboratories in many schools, especially in rural and underserved areas.

This project focused on developing an ergonomically enhanced laboratory workspace that caters to the diverse needs of learning environments across science disciplines. Through integrating principles of ergonomics, human-centered design, and adaptive technology, the study aimed to develop a laboratory workspace that promotes better posture, enhances concentration, and reduces physical strain. The research sought to bridge the gap between conventional laboratory workspace designs and modern ergonomic innovations by systematically analyzing existing deficiencies and proposing a functional, adaptable solution.

1.1 Statement of the problem

In many Zambian learning institutions, the design of learner workspaces remains largely traditional, lacking alignment with contemporary ergonomic principles and the diverse needs of learners. Classrooms, libraries, and study areas across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels are typically furnished with rigid furniture that fails to account for variations in posture, anthropometric diversity, and the dynamic nature of academic tasks across disciplines. This situation has contributed to growing incidences of discomfort, postural strain, and musculoskeletal disorders among learners, particularly in higher education, where learners spend extended hours engaging with both physical materials and digital technologies.

Furthermore, most existing workspaces are not designed to support flexibility or integration with modern learning tools, making them ill-suited for today's multidisciplinary and technology-driven academic environments. While ergonomic workspace design has gained traction globally in improving productivity and well-being, its application in Zambian institutions remains underexplored, inadequately implemented, and rarely backed by empirical research. This reveals a significant gap in providing inclusive, adaptable, and health-conscious learning environments in the country. Therefore, there was a critical need to design and develop a universally applicable, ergonomically enhanced workspace model that reflects the contextual realities of Zambian learners—one that promotes comfort, safety, academic effectiveness, and equitable access to functional learning spaces.

Purpose of the Research

Learners in learning environments often engage in extended learning sessions that demand environments conducive to concentration, comfort, and productivity. However, many existing laboratory workspaces fail to accommodate diverse learner needs, leading to physical strain, mental fatigue, and decreased efficiency. Ergonomic design principles offer a solution by developing laboratory workspaces that enhance posture, reduce stress, and foster optimal performance through applying real-world problem-solving approaches, which could lead to innovative solutions that address the complex needs of students, enhancing both their learning environment and overall well-being.

The ergonomic workspace prototype prioritized durable, comfortable, sustainable, and adaptable materials. Key components included adjustable desks, ergonomic features with breathable materials, and energy-efficient, anti-glare lighting. Lightweight, high-quality, and eco-friendly materials ensured versatility across learning environments while aligning with sustainability goals. This research contributed to the development of ergonomic laboratory workspaces that promote learners' well-being, reduce health risks, and enhance productivity.

1.2 Research Objectives

a) To analyze existing laboratory workspaces for ergonomic deficiencies affecting user comfort, productivity, and safety.
b) To identify key ergonomic principles applicable to laboratory environments through a review of relevant standards and literature.
c) To design a laboratory workspace prototype that integrates ergonomic enhancements aimed at reducing musculoskeletal strain and improving workflow efficiency.
d) To evaluate the effectiveness of the redesigned laboratory workspace through user testing and comparative performance analysis.
e) To develop a set of ergonomic design guidelines specific to laboratory environments in educational or research institutions.

2. Literature Review

Ergonomics, the science of designing workspaces to fit users, has been extensively studied for its impact on productivity and health. Science laboratories in learning institutions demand precision, concentration, and prolonged physical engagement from learners and facilitators. Unlike typical classroom settings, laboratory work often involves repetitive movements, static postures, and interaction with specialized equipment; conditions that, if not ergonomically designed, can lead to discomfort, fatigue, and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Ergonomics in laboratory design aims to align workstations, tools, and workflows with human capabilities and limitations, ultimately enhancing safety, productivity, and academic outcomes.

Lee *et al*. (2021) [4] conducted a randomized controlled trial evaluating the impact of ergonomic interventions in office settings. Their findings demonstrated that appropriate workstation adjustments significantly reduced musculoskeletal pain and discomfort. Although their study focused on office workers, its implications extend to university environments where similar issues of prolonged sitting and repetitive strain exist. Ergonomic interventions, such as optimizing workstation design and reducing repetitive motions, have been shown to reduce musculoskeletal disorders and enhance overall well-being.

Human-Centered Design

Designing effective workspaces requires understanding user needs and preferences. Factors such as ergonomic furniture, personalization options, collaborative spaces, and technological integration are crucial. Studies have shown that temperature, lighting, and noise significantly affect university students' academic performance (Abdul Latip and Tamrin, 2023) [1]. Despite this, many learning environments have inadequate ergonomic considerations, leading to discomfort and decreased productivity.

Salman *et al*. (2022) [7] highlighted the role of educational programs in promoting awareness of back health and posture. While their systematic review focused on office and classroom settings, its findings emphasize the importance of proactive training, which could be extended to laboratory users to mitigate ergonomic risks. Additionally, there remains a lack of consensus on standardized educational programs to improve knowledge of back health, ergonomics, and postural behaviour among university students.

Gaps in Laboratory Ergonomics Research

Ergonomic considerations in laboratory environments have often been underemphasized compared to office and classroom spaces. While fundamental ergonomic principles are well-established, their specific application in university science laboratories remains underexplored. A cross-sectional study involving medical science students revealed that many experienced discomforts during laboratory training, with students reporting issues like inadequate seating and fatigue. They called for ergonomic chair design, posture education, and breaks.

Perera, Perera, and Pathirathna (2024) [5] conducted a comprehensive study at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, identifying prevalent ergonomic hazards affecting both students and staff. Their findings revealed a critical lack of systematic ergonomic assessments in university infrastructure, reinforcing the urgency for reform. Additionally, Saha *et al*. (2024) utilized anthropometric measurements and statistical analysis to assess the suitability of computer lab furniture in relation to student body dimensions. Their study highlighted mismatches between furniture design and user needs, proposing adjustments based on ergonomic principles and data-driven models.

Ergonomic Components and Benefits

An ergonomic laboratory workspace encompasses several key components:

a) Physical Ergonomics

Proper work surface height for sitting and standing, adequate leg clearance for seated users, placement of commonly used equipment within the primary reach zone, and non-slip, chemically resistant surface materials.

b) Environmental Ergonomics

Adequate lighting (minimum 500 lux for laboratory tasks), proper ventilation and air quality control, and noise mitigation strategies.

c) Cognitive Ergonomics

Mental workload management, clear task design and workflow optimization, and appropriate information presentation through interfaces and displays.

The advantages of implementing ergonomic laboratory workspaces include reduced musculoskeletal issues through proper seating and adjustable workstations, improved efficiency and productivity through streamlined workflows, enhanced safety through clear layouts and organized workspaces, and increased morale and job satisfaction through comfortable, user-centered environments.

3. Methodology

Research Design

The methodology for this study was designed to systematically guide the development of an ergonomically optimized science laboratory that enhances user comfort, efficiency, and safety. The research employed a multi-phase, mixed-methods approach combining qualitative insights from laboratory users with ergonomic evaluation tools. The methodology adopted the waterfall model, as the project incorporated multiple concepts where requirements did not need to change.

Needs Assessment

The process began with comprehensive task and workflow analysis to understand how laboratory activities were performed, followed by detailed ergonomic risk assessment. The way of gathering requirements was through interviews, surveys, and observations conducted in learning environments. The purpose of the survey was to gather what users expected from the ergonomic workspace. The purpose of the interview was to have appropriate ideas on how the ergonomic workspace could accommodate every learner intending to use the workspace.

Observations were conducted while learners engaged with existing laboratory equipment, furniture, and digital tools during extended sessions. These observations revealed recurring challenges such as poorly positioned workstations, non-adjustable seating, inadequate lighting, and limited accessibility for students with physical impairments.

Design and Development

Based on the needs assessment, a workspace prototype was developed integrating ergonomic principles and adaptive technology. The design concept employed human-centered design foundations, placing learners, educators, and lab technicians at the core of every decision.

Material Selection

Materials for the ergonomic workspace prototype were selected with emphasis on durability, comfort, sustainability, and adaptability. The specifications included:

S. No	Aspect	Description
1	Frame	High carbon steel metal (100 x 35 x 900 mm)
2	Top part	Pine wood/Granite (1700 x 1200 x 30 mm)
3	Sinks	Plastic (2 units)
4	Taps	Stainless steel (2 units)
5	Wheels	Cast iron (8 units with locking mechanisms)
6	Electrical outlets	High-grade plastic (2 double sockets)
7	Cabinet handles	Steel (8 units)

Lightweight, high-quality materials such as ergonomic taps, sinks, gas systems, and energy-efficient lighting were used to create a versatile laboratory workspace that could cater to different study environments. The choice of materials prioritized eco-friendly options, aligning with sustainability goals.

Key Design Features

Table below shows the design features alongside their narrations for clarity.

Table 1: Key features

S No	Feature	Narration
1	Mobility	Eight wheels with locking mechanisms attached to the frame legs allow the workspace to be moved and positioned as needed
2	Integrated Utilities	Built-in power sources eliminate the need to stretch cords across rooms, reducing safety hazards. Gas taps are positioned for easy access without compromising safety
3	Ergonomic Basin and Taps	Placed at comfortable heights to avoid excessive bending or reaching, promoting hygiene without strain
4	Adjustability	The workspace accommodates users from junior to senior secondary levels with minimal modifications
5	Capacity	Designed to accommodate a minimum of four users per table, enabling collaborative learning and maximizing space efficiency

Prototype Development

The prototype underwent iterative design improvements based on feedback from real users, ensuring functionality, comfort, and adaptability. Two-dimensional and three-dimensional drawings were created, including isometric views to visualize the complete design. An exploded view diagram illustrated how all components fit together.

Structural Calculations

Given dimensions: Length = 2250 mm, Width = 1000 mm, Height = 936 mm

$$\text{Volume} = 2.25 \times 1.00 \times 0.936 = 2.106 \text{ m}^3$$

Load capacity testing confirmed the workspace could support weights up to 150 kg without bending, with joints and welds remaining stable under vibrational stress.

Evaluation and Testing

The evaluation strategy focused on testing functionality, usability, and reliability. Methods included:

a) Observation

Monitoring users performing various tasks (starch testing, nutrient analysis in Mungongo tree samples) while documenting posture, workflow patterns, and equipment usage.

b) User Feedback

Collecting opinions through verbal questionnaires based on usability, functionality, and design after task completion.

c) Performance Testing

Materials were tested for chemical resistance (acid spills, solvents) and thermal resistance (contact with hot glassware up to 180°C), showing no surface damage or degradation. Figure shows the complete model of the ergonomic laboratory workspace.

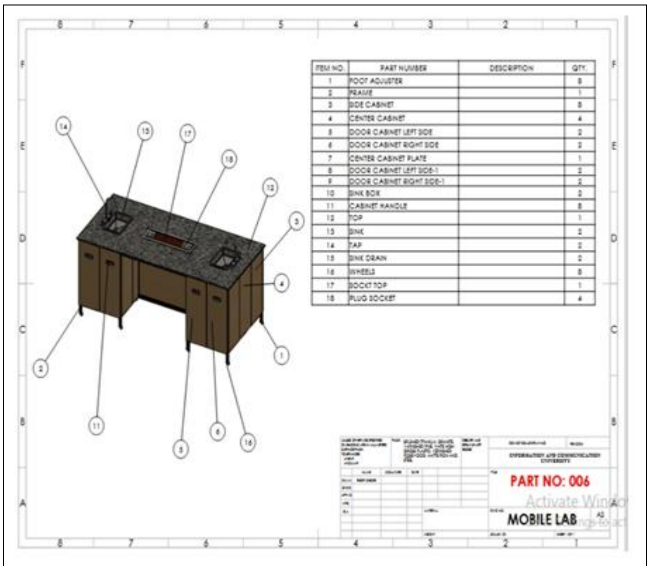

Figure 20: Mobile lab Isometric drawing · Source (Author)

4. Major Findings

4.1 Ergonomic Improvements

The evaluation of the ergonomic laboratory workspace yielded significant positive findings:

a) Enhanced Comfort

Users reported improved workflow due to better equipment placement. The basin and taps positioned at appropriate heights reduced strain, while the integrated power sources eliminated the safety hazards associated with stretched electrical cords across workspaces.

b) Improved Posture

The workspace design supported neutral postures, reducing musculoskeletal complaints. Adequate leg clearance and appropriately positioned work surfaces minimized forward leaning and awkward positioning.

c) Increased Safety

The non-slip, chemically resistant surfaces proved effective during practical sessions. The placement of gas taps within easy reach but away from edges increased safety during experiments. Clear layouts reduced clutter and minimized the chances of spills and accidents.

4.2 Space Efficiency and Accessibility

The designed workspace successfully addressed the teacher-pupil ratio challenges prevalent in Zambian learning institutions:

a) Collaborative Learning

The capacity to accommodate four users per table significantly increased classroom efficiency, allowing more students to engage in practical work simultaneously. This fostered peer collaboration, discussion of observations, and mutual problem-solving.

b) Scalability

The workspace proved adaptable across educational levels from junior secondary to senior secondary. Basic equipment for introductory experiments could easily be replaced with more advanced apparatus without requiring furniture modifications or rewiring.

c) Universal Design

The mobility feature (wheels with locking mechanisms) allowed for flexible classroom configurations, supporting various teaching approaches and group sizes.

4.3 Material Performance

Validation testing confirmed the appropriateness of material choices.

a) Structural Integrity

The frame withstood loads up to 150 kg without deformation, suitable for typical laboratory equipment including centrifuges, microscopes, and chemical apparatus.

b) Chemical Resistance

Surfaces showed no degradation when exposed to common laboratory chemicals including hydrochloric acid, sulphuric acid, ethanol, and acetone.

c) Thermal Resistance

The countertop maintained its integrity when in contact with hot glassware at temperatures up to 180°C.

d) Durability

The high carbon steel frame and quality materials ensured longevity, reducing the need for frequent replacements and maintenance.

4.4 User Satisfaction

Feedback from learners and educators indicated high satisfaction levels.

a) Functionality

90% of users reported that the workspace met their practical needs for conducting experiments across physics, chemistry, and biology.

b) Comfort

Users appreciated the ergonomic positioning of equipment and the reduction in physical strain during extended laboratory sessions.

c) Psychological Comfort

The organized, clutter-free design contributed to reduced cognitive load, allowing learners to focus on experimental procedures rather than workspace logistics.

4.5 Environmental Considerations

a) Energy Efficiency

The design incorporated provisions for both hydro power and alternative energy sources (solar), making it suitable for areas experiencing load shedding or lacking reliable electricity.

b) Sustainability

The use of recyclable materials and the modular design that allows for component replacement rather than complete overhaul aligned with environmental sustainability goals.

c) Hygiene

The ease of cleaning and non-porous surfaces reduced contamination risks and supported proper laboratory hygiene practices.

4.6 Identified Limitations

While the findings were largely positive, some limitations were noted.

a) Anthropometric Variation

Despite adjustability features, accommodating the full range of body sizes and proportions remained challenging. Some users still required additional adaptations for optimal comfort.

b) Cost Considerations

The initial investment required for high-quality materials and construction was higher than traditional laboratory furniture, potentially limiting widespread implementation in budget-constrained institutions.

c) Component Availability

Some advanced features (complete gas systems, solar systems) faced procurement challenges due to monetary constraints and local availability.

Training Needs

Educators required orientation on effectively utilizing all workspace features to maximize benefits for learners.

5. Implications

5.1 Educational Implications

The ergonomic workspace design directly supports improved academic performance by reducing physical discomfort and fatigue that can distract from learning, allowing learners to focus on experimental procedures and freeing cognitive resources for deeper engagement with scientific concepts. The adaptable design promotes equity by accommodating diverse learner needs across different age groups, body types, and physical abilities, thereby supporting Zambia's commitment to inclusive education policies. By providing functional, safe laboratory spaces, the workspace contributes to strengthening STEM education quality, as hands-on practical experience is essential for developing scientific literacy and inquiry skills. Furthermore, the organized workflow and safety features enable educators to focus on instruction rather than managing workspace-related challenges, improving overall teaching quality and efficiency.

5.2 Health and Safety Implications

The ergonomic design principles embedded in the workspace help prevent the development of chronic musculoskeletal conditions that often result from prolonged poor posture and repetitive strain, while comfortable, well-designed workspaces contribute to reduced stress and anxiety, fostering positive attitudes toward science learning and laboratory work. Integrated safety features, including properly positioned gas taps, electrical outlets, and stable structures, minimize accident risks in laboratory settings. By establishing proper ergonomic practices early in students' academic careers, the workspace contributes to lifelong healthy work habits that extend well beyond their educational experience.

5.3 Institutional Implications

The high-capacity design accommodating four users per table allows institutions to maximize limited laboratory space and resources, addressing common infrastructure constraints in Zambian schools. While the initial investment is higher, the durability and adaptability of the workspace reduce long-term replacement and maintenance costs, with the modular design allowing for component upgrades rather than complete replacement. Implementation of standardized ergonomic workspaces supports quality assurance in science education, ensuring consistent learning experiences across institutions, while institutions adopting ergonomic laboratory designs position themselves as forward-thinking and student-cantered, potentially attracting more learners and educators.

5.4 Policy Implications

This research provides empirical evidence to inform the development of national ergonomic standards for educational laboratory design in Zambia, while the workspace design supports effective implementation of competency-based curricula that emphasize practical skills and hands-on learning. The findings can guide government and donor funding decisions regarding laboratory infrastructure development, prioritizing ergonomic considerations, and the research highlights the need to incorporate ergonomics training into teacher education programs, ensuring educators can effectively utilize and maintain ergonomic workspaces.

5.5 Research and Development Implications

The study demonstrates how global ergonomic principles can be adapted to African contexts, considering local materials, manufacturing capabilities, and user needs, while contributing to the limited body of empirical literature on laboratory ergonomics in African educational settings and providing a foundation for future studies. The project showcases the value of integrating engineering, education, and health sciences perspectives in solving practical educational challenges, and the design provides a model that can be adapted and replicated in other African countries facing similar laboratory infrastructure challenges.

5.6 Social and Economic Implications

By improving STEM education quality, the workspace contributes to developing the skilled workforce needed for Zambia's economic diversification and technological advancement, while preventing work-related injuries and musculoskeletal disorders, and reducing future healthcare costs for individuals and the nation. The workspace design creates opportunities for local fabrication and manufacturing, supporting job creation and skills development in the engineering sector, and the implementation of ergonomic workspaces contributes to broader cultural awareness about workplace health and safety, with implications extending beyond educational settings into various professional environments.

6. Sampling and Participants

6.1 Recommendations

6.1.1 Implementation Recommendations

Educational institutions should implement ergonomic laboratory workspaces through a phased approach, beginning with pilot programs in selected schools to refine implementation strategies before scaling up, while comprehensive training programs should be developed for both educators and learners on proper use and maintenance of ergonomic workspaces, including correct posture, equipment handling, and safety protocols. Institutions should establish regular maintenance schedules to ensure the longevity and continued functionality of ergonomic features, including checks on wheels, locking mechanisms, and utility connections, and while maintaining core ergonomic principles, institutions should be allowed flexibility to adapt designs based on specific subject requirements such as physics, chemistry, or biology laboratories and available resources.

6.1.2 Policy Recommendations

The Ministry of Education should develop and mandate national ergonomic standards for all new laboratory construction and renovation projects in educational institutions, while government budget allocations for educational infrastructure should specifically include provisions for ergonomic laboratory furniture and equipment, recognizing the long-term cost-effectiveness of preventing injuries and improving learning outcomes. Ergonomic considerations should be integrated into educational quality assurance frameworks and school inspection criteria, and government should facilitate partnerships with private sector manufacturers to ensure affordable, locally-produced ergonomic laboratory furniture that meets established standards.

6.1.3 Research Recommendations

Future research should conduct long-term studies tracking the impact of ergonomic workspaces on student health outcomes, academic performance, and career choices in STEM fields, while research comparing learning outcomes and injury rates between schools with traditional versus ergonomic laboratory designs would provide valuable quantitative evidence of impact. Development of a comprehensive anthropometric database of Zambian learners across age groups would enable more precise customization of ergonomic designs, and detailed economic analysis should be conducted to demonstrate the return on investment of ergonomic laboratory infrastructure to support funding decisions. Additionally, research should explore integration of emerging technologies such as adjustable height mechanisms, smart sensors for posture monitoring, and IoT-enabled environmental controls to advance the field of educational ergonomics.

6.1.4 Design Improvement Recommendations

Future iterations should incorporate more adjustable components, including height-adjustable work surfaces and seating, to better accommodate anthropometric diversity, along with development of modular accessory systems such as lighting, storage, and specialized equipment holders that can be added or reconfigured based on specific laboratory needs. Enhanced features for learners with disabilities, including wheelchair-accessible designs, tactile indicators, and assistive technology integration, should be prioritized, while integration of localized environmental controls such as task lighting and ventilation would allow users to customize their immediate workspace conditions. Additionally, incorporation of integrated charging ports, device holders, and digital displays would support technology-enhanced learning and align with contemporary educational technology requirements.

6.1.5 Capacity Building Recommendations

Teacher education institutions should incorporate ergonomics modules into pre-service and in-service training programs for science educators, while national awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, parents, and policymakers, about the importance of ergonomic learning environments. Training programs should be established for local artisans and manufacturers in ergonomic design principles and quality construction techniques, and platforms should be created for educators to share best practices, challenges, and innovations in utilizing ergonomic laboratory workspaces, fostering a collaborative community of practice.

6.1.6 Sustainability Recommendations

Priority should be given to developing local manufacturing capacity for ergonomic laboratory furniture, reducing dependence on imports and supporting local economies, while research into locally available, sustainable materials that meet ergonomic and safety requirements should be encouraged. Design for disassembly and component reuse should be incorporated, allowing worn parts to be replaced rather than discarding entire workspaces, and development of environmental certification criteria for laboratory furniture should be established to encourage manufacturers to adopt sustainable practices that align with circular economy principles.

7. Conclusion

This research successfully designed and developed an ergonomically enhanced laboratory workspace tailored to the needs of learners in Zambian educational institutions. The study addressed a critical gap in science education infrastructure by applying human-centered design principles and ergonomic standards to create a functional, adaptable, and safe laboratory environment. The research findings demonstrate that thoughtfully designed ergonomic laboratory workspaces significantly improve user comfort, safety, and productivity while supporting effective STEM education. The workspace prototype successfully integrated key ergonomic principles including appropriate work surface dimensions, integrated utilities, mobility features, and capacity for collaborative learning. Material testing confirmed the durability and safety of the design, with surfaces resistant to chemical and thermal stress while maintaining structural integrity under typical laboratory loads.

User evaluation revealed high satisfaction levels, with learners and educators appreciating the improved workflow, reduced physical strain, and enhanced safety features. The workspace's ability to accommodate four users per table addresses the critical challenge of limited laboratory resources in Zambian schools, making efficient use of available space while promoting collaborative learning. The scalability of the design across educational levels from junior secondary to senior secondary demonstrates its versatility and long-term value.

The implications of this research extend beyond individual workspace design to inform broader educational policy, institutional planning, and national standards development. By demonstrating how ergonomic principles can be effectively adapted to African contexts, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on educational infrastructure in developing nations. The research bridges the gap between ergonomic theory and practical application in resource-constrained settings, offering a replicable model for other institutions and countries facing similar challenges. However, the study also identified important considerations for future development. Anthropometric variation among users remains a challenge requiring continued innovation in adjustable features. Cost considerations and component availability present implementation barriers that must be addressed through policy support and local manufacturing development. The need for comprehensive user training emerged as essential for maximizing the benefits of ergonomic design.

Looking forward, the integration of advanced technologies such as smart sensors, IoT-enabled features, and AI-based monitoring systems presents exciting opportunities for further enhancing laboratory ergonomics. Longitudinal studies tracking long-term health outcomes and academic performance impacts will provide valuable evidence to support wider adoption of ergonomic principles in educational settings. Ultimately, this research affirms that investing in ergonomic laboratory design is not merely about furniture selection; it represents a strategic commitment to learner well-being, educational quality, and the development of Zambia's future STEM workforce. By creating learning environments that support physical comfort, cognitive engagement, and safe scientific exploration, educational institutions lay the foundation for academic excellence and lifelong healthy work practices.

The designed and developed ergonomic laboratory workspace serves as a practical demonstration that with thoughtful design, contextual adaptation, and commitment to user-centered principles, it is possible to create learning environments that truly serve the diverse needs of all learners. As Zambia continues to strengthen its education system and pursue development goals, ergonomic considerations in educational infrastructure should be recognized as essential investments in human capital and national prosperity.Acknowledgment.

The author expresses sincere appreciation to the participating educators and school administrators in Lusaka who generously contributed their time, professional insights, and facilitated classroom access for this investigation. Their professional openness proved essential to understanding the implementation realities of curriculum reform at the institutional level.

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